

Staying Connected

Volume 21 - Issue 10

April 3, 2025

Sisters of St. Francis
of Mary Immaculate



Happy
Easter!

Living Paschal Mystery

By Associate Elizabeth Bach Luong

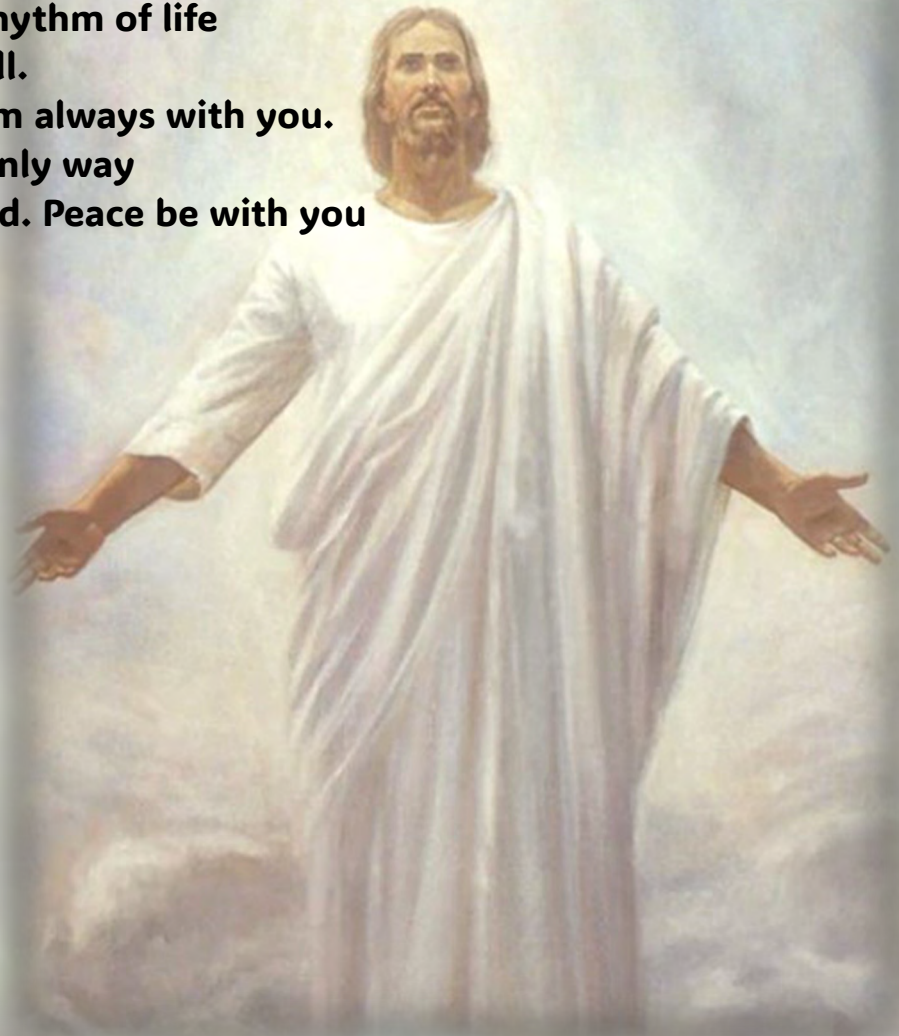
***"Sing a new song to the Lord
for He has done marvelous deeds" – Psalm 9***

Last night, in my dream
I encountered and having a dialogue with resurrected Jesus
From the cross Jesus invited me: - You can take it from here
By following Jesus, I am incorporated into the Paschal Mystery
On Holy Thursday; I try to find my way to love, to be holy
To the joy of Jesus when I received first Communion
When I see the first beam of sunrise through my window
When a flower softly opens its petals
When I see happiness and trust in a child's eye
When I sit in front of the easel; and having a pen in my hand
-Jesus: You are always welcome to my banquet

I 've been experiencing repeated Good Friday:
Imperfection, shame, endless loss, grief, pain, failure
I thought I can't take it anymore
- Jesus says:
Fear not. It's okay. It's okay. It's okay
You are not alone

**My Holy Saturday is like a sunny day
Where I wait for hope and live for hope
Life is too short. Although life is not as I expected it to be
Although my life is shattered, it is still whole.
It maybe painful, but it is not always bad
My suffering and joy and hope are dancing inside the tomb of Jesus
I am a survivor**

**Easter Sunday:
I trusted that Easter is coming to all of us
I am filled with the newness of life, I am refreshed, I am free!
Love is the last of this rhythm of life
-Jesus: All should be well.
I was, I've been, and I am always with you.
The way of love is the only way
Remember: Be not afraid. Peace be with you**





I Jesus is condemned to death



V Simon of Cyrene helps
Jesus carry the cross



II Jesus takes up his cross



VI Veronica wipes the face of Jesus



III Jesus falls the first time



VII Jesus falls the second time



IV Jesus meets his mother



VIII Jesus meets the women of
Jerusalem

Kay Francis Berger's Kankakee House of Prayer Stations of the Cross

By Sr. Anita Beloin

Early in Christian history pilgrims would walk the Via Dolorosa ("Sorrowful Way") in the Holy Land following the footsteps of Jesus. Devotion to the "Stations of the Cross" grew when the Franciscan friars were given custody of the Holy Land sites in 1342. Desiring to spread the devotion further, the Franciscans developed replicas of the Stations (stopping places) on the Via Dolorosa for those unable to come to the Holy Land.



IX Jesus falls the third time



XII Jesus dies on the cross



X Jesus is stripped of his garments



XIII Jesus is taken down from the cross



XI Jesus is nailed to the cross



XIV Jesus is placed in the tomb

The Sisters at St. Clare House of Prayer in Kankakee were gifted with hand sculptured clay Stations of the Cross, lovingly crafted by Sister Kay Francis Berger. The Stations were placed in a wooded area near the banks of the Kankakee River. The Stations have been, and continue to be, a graced place of prayer. The House of Prayer Sisters moved to Joliet, but the stations remain now under the care of One Heart, One Soul Spirituality Center.

Photos courtesy of Associate Jeanne Foley

Book Review:

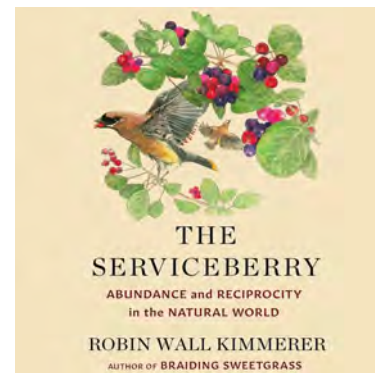
The Serviceberry

By Sr. Margaret Hoffman for the 5 State Local Chapter of Your Sisters

It seems hard to believe that our local chapter group began meeting on zoom six years ago, but we trace our beginnings to Covid-19, and here it is 2025! On our email we are billed as “5 state local group” because we reside in Arizona, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and New York. Periodically we discuss the local chapter topics when they are assigned, but otherwise we convene every four to five weeks just to stay in touch given the distances between us. We began by talking about personal topics just to get to know each other better. Now, we always recall our individual memories of our deceased Sisters after each funeral, mention any prayer intentions we have, and move on to a discussion topic of which we are aware ahead of time. On March 21st we had our first book discussion which may become a regular feature of the group in time---or not.

Our first book discussion was on the recent reflective selection called *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. This is a short book, 105 pages complete with about ten lovely illustrations scattered throughout and on the cover and flyleaves. In the text, the author reflects on the shrub or small tree of the title. Its name in Potawatomi includes those for blueberry, strawberry, raspberry, apple, maize, and wild rice—and is also the word for “gift.” The many varieties of the bushes welcome the birds and other creatures and freely give in nature’s spirit of reciprocity. The key concept presented early in the text is that a gift given benefits the recipient as well as the giver in that a gift urges one to further share with another.

It is clear from the beginning that the roots of the berries named were known to the



indigenous people of our land and that at the heart of those original cultures was a strong theme of giving in return for what one receives.

A month in advance, we all nine agreed to read the selection for our next meeting and to discuss our reactions, reflections, and lessons gleaned. We think that our experiment with this short volume may be something we wish to do again.

The aspects of the book that we found worth sharing centered on appreciation for the part that nature and her creatures encourage by their constant dependence on each other, the concepts of deprivation and scarcity that may have moved our parents and grandparents to form patterns of saving, accumulating, even hoarding, and the beauty and example that nature gives that would enrich our lives in this era of relative abundance.

We observed that the author saw the native American concept of reciprocity as the opposite of ‘growing the economy.’ We wondered if our vow of poverty made us feel more entitled to expect others to favor us with their services. The author reminded some of what our mothers might have said, namely, “If you can’t have what you love, love something else.”

One sister commented on the depth of the writer as “a mystic, a contemplative.” Our discussion took us to the area of the relationships of people and nature in the sense of the “oceanic economy,” the Cantic of the

Sun,” animism, the way that coming face to face with a lizard, a cow, a cat, a horse, can unite us to other creatures in a very intimate way.

Among us some were familiar with the author’s reference to the “three sisters” of corn, beans, and pumpkin (squash), having taught the young , especially around Thanksgiving time, about the Native American tradition of planting these seeds in the same plot, not separately, as is routinely done today.

We found a caution in the book of not dismissing that which we do not understand and of remembering, “No charge to neighbors” as shown in a more recent custom of the small boxes even in suburbia inviting people to take a book, some produce, some canned or boxed food----for nothing! Several of us said that we would re-read the book slowly and prayerfully again. And we left open the opportunity for another book discussion, maybe something you might wish to try also.

Franciscan Human Trafficking Joint Committee

Alliance to End Human Trafficking

Submitted by: Associate Therese Griffin

Making Space for Justice and Compassion

by Katie Boller Gosewisch, Executive Director



Lent is a season of reflection, sacrifice, and renewal time to examine our hearts and align our actions with our deepest values. As we journey through these days, we are called not only to prayer and fasting but also to acts of justice and mercy.

At our conference, I had the privilege of listening to survivors and advocates who reminded me just how much courage it takes to

stay present. One conversation stood out: a survivor leader shared that what she wanted most - more than resources, programs, or even justice - was for someone to truly listen without judgment or agenda. She had spent years being told what to do, how to heal, who to be. But what she needed was simple: for someone to sit with her, to acknowledge her pain without trying to fix it, and to remind her she wasn’t alone.

That conversation challenged me. So often, we feel pressure to find the right words, the right solutions, the right way to help. But maybe one of the hardest and holiest things we can do is to simply stay present. Not rushing to fix or solve, but bearing witness to someone else’s journey, even when it’s messy and uncomfortable.

During the conference, we also heard from advocates working on the front lines of anti-trafficking efforts. Their message was clear: the work of justice is long and often discouraging. There are no quick fixes. And yet, their faith and resilience reminded me that even small acts of presence—showing up, listening, believing survivors, standing alongside them - can be transformative.

Lent is a reminder of that kind of presence. It’s tempting to think that justice work, or faith in action, is about grand gestures. But more often, it’s about the small, daily choices to show up - to listen when someone needs to be heard, to speak out when silence feels safer, to stay when leaving would be easier.

This Lent, I’m asking myself: Where am I being called to stay present? Where am I being asked to listen without fixing, to sit with discomfort rather than avoid it? And how can I create space for others to do the same?

Lent is about choosing, day by day, to live with more compassion, more courage, and more presence. I hope we can all make space—not just to reflect, but to truly show up for one another.

Sharing Cultures

By Sr. Lois Prebil

The first of four “Sharing Cultures” took place on Tuesday evening, March 25. On Zoom, our presenters answered the question, “What do I want people to know about my Culture?” They were African American (Shaun), Jewish (Rita), Latinx (Maria) and Ukrainian (Natalija). Each gave an interesting and touching picture of their culture. Two of them showed pictures along with their verbal presentations.

The fifty-some participants from coast to coast, which included 20 Joliet Franciscan sisters and associates, were asked, “What did you hear that you didn’t know?” and “What questions do you have?” We learned afterwards that participants learned something new and thought-provoking things about these cultures.

We learned about Soul Food, Ashkenazi culture, Day of the Dead and the effect of the war on Ukrainian people from people who have these as integral parts of their lives. More than learning about the differences, we learned about commonality and similarities of cultures.

Email Deacon Tom Marciani to get a LINK for the upcoming meetings.
tpmarciani@gmail.com

If you already registered, you do not have to register again.



Message from LSAP Goals 1, 4



Message from LSAP Goals 1,4 Subcommittee

Thanks to Catholic Climate Covenant and especially to Andy Panelli for making this message available.

Creation Care Corner



Pope Francis Earth Day Message

"Thus we live in this common home as one human family in biodiversity with God's other creatures."

"Because of our selfishness we have failed in our responsibility to be guardians and stewards of the earth. 'We need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair' (LS 61). We have polluted it, we have despoiled it, endangering our very lives. For this reason, various international and local movements have sprung up in order to appeal to our consciences. I deeply appreciate these initiatives; ... we have no future if we destroy the very environment that sustains us."

"In today's celebration of Earth Day, we are called to renew our sense of sacred respect for the earth, for it is not just our home but also God's home."

"...let us pledge to love and esteem the beautiful gift of the *earth*, our common home, and to care for all members of our human family." *General Audience, Library of the Apostolic Palace, excerpts 4/22/2020*



Message from JPIC



From the Center

By Carol Mecko, OSF

LSAP Goal 6: Ecological Spirituality

"I ... entered the holy place.
I walked continually in each of
the four directions,
always returning to the center
as you had instructed me."
(Black Elk)

Great Mysterious, Da Ku Wakan Skan Skan, "Someone Sacred Moving," you are the Vast Incomprehensible One. You are Love! Out of Your Love, You created all! Have compassion on your people: 2-leggeds, 4-leggeds, wing-ed ones, swimmers, crawlers, plants, minerals all around this Earth Globe, the sun, the moon, the stars the planets into the expanding Universe and Cosmos. Give us Your compassion that we might live in right relationship with all - "Mitokuye Oyasin." You have given us your Sacred Hoop, held in place by Skan (Sky) and Unci Maka (Mother Earth). Help us as we walk the Black Road of life's challenges. Teach us to walk the Good Red Road (from the South, that place of power to grow, to the North, that place of saging into wisdom.) Help us to stand in the Center of our Being where the Tree of Life grows.

Draw us to the wakan (sacred) Heart Center, to be still and BE In Your Presence. Amen. Ho!

(see Carol Mecko's drawing on the left).

Pre-Earth Day Celebrations

By Sr. Jane Nienaber



On two beautiful days in March, *Laudato Si'* Action Plan Committee for Goals 1 and 4 celebrated Spring, planted seeds, laughed, sang with and prayed with our Joliet Franciscan sisters who reside at the four local senior residences. They were truly pre-Earth Day Celebrations! The committee went "on the road" and took their plan for celebration to StoryPoint, Heritage Woods, St. Patrick's Residence and Villa Franciscan.

Conversation, planting of seeds and singing took place within the celebration, "Spring into Earth Day."* For the planting of seeds in small clay pots, sisters had the option of marigolds, cosmos, zinnias and wildflowers! There is *hope* to see their shoots coming up within a few days! A miracle?

As a closing, each one present was given Life Savers as a symbol that we are called to Save the Earth!

The committee felt most welcome at each of the residences. The sisters and committee were grateful that coordinators of the residences and congregation leaders joined these celebrations!

LSAP Committee for Goals 1 and 4

Associate Carol Baranski
Associate Janine Hicks
Sister Brigid Jacobs
Associate Pam Leddy
Sister Jane Nienaber

*"Spring into Earth Day" (page 12) is included in this "Staying Connected." All are invited to use it on Earth Day, April 22nd.



PLANTING DEMONSTRATION



STORYPOINT - Romeoville

Bottom Row - Sisters Mary Lou Marchetti, Brigid Jacobs
Top Row - Coordinator Sandi Salois, Mary Ann Hamer



HERITAGE WOODS - Minooka

Sisters Rosemary Fonck, Lourdes Boyer, Ann Freiburg,
President Jeanne Bessette, Coordinator Rosemary Huzl



**"TOUCH THE EARTH WITH
GENTLENESS"**



Villa Franciscan - Joliet

Sisters Janet Tucci, Coordinator Kathy Salewski, Kathleen Bushur,
Joanne Marusa, Councilor Peggy Quinn, Helen Zulka



LSAP Goals 1 and 4 Team

Sister Brigid Jacobs, Associate Pam Leddy, Associate Carol Baranski,
Sister Jane Nienaber, Associate Janine Hicks

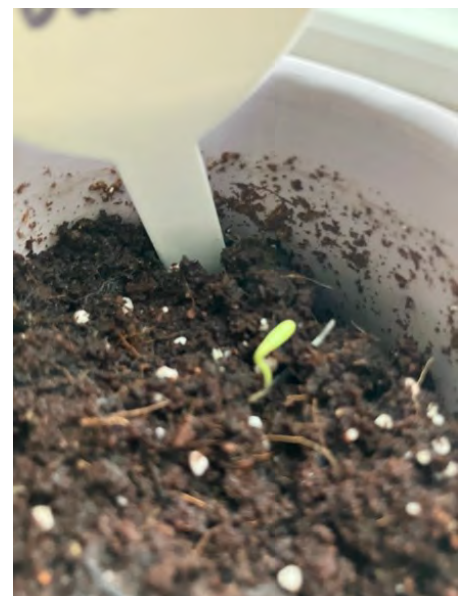


BE A LIFE SAVER! SAVE THE EARTH!



ST. PATRICK'S - Naperville

Bottom Row - Sisters Joan Clare Wisner, Grace Ann Rabideau, Paula Bingert,
Mary Jean Morris, Marge Krieger
Top Row - Pat Skowronski, Odelia Kloc, Councilor/Coordinator Susie Bruno, Phyllis Pitz



1ST REPORTED SEEDLING

At Heritage Woods - 3 days after planting
by Sr. Lourdes Boyer

Spring Into Earth Day

By Sr. Brigid Jacobs

Leader

Blessed are you spring,
Free gift of the earth.
You are a gospel of good news
For the poor and rich alike.

Reflection

How does the unfolding of spring speak to you?
Why celebrate Earth Day in spring?
(Quiet and sharing)

Response (after sharing)

How quietly the earth breathes forth new life.
How eagerly the sun brings forth spring.

I AM LISTENING

I am listening to seeds breaking open,
To roots growing strong beneath the ground,
To green shoots rising up from winter wombs,
I am listening to thorns blossoming,
To barren branches laughing out new growth,
To wildflowers dancing through meadows.

I AM LISTENING

I am listening to the sky with its many
changing moods,
To flashes of lightning, peals of thunder,
To opening buds and greening grass.
I am listening to the breaking forth of light in
the vestibule of dawn.
I am listening to the freshness of the morning.

I AM LISTENING

I am listening to the raindrops
Giving hope to thirsty gardens.
I am listening to the orchards
Pregnant with new life.
I am listening to the flowers
Bursting forth in rainbow colors.

I am listening to winter
Handing over spring.
I am listening to the poetry of spring.

I AM LISTENING

PLANTING

Song: *Touch the Earth*, by Kathy Sherman, CSJ

Chorus:

Touch the earth with gentleness
Touch the earth with love
Touch her with a future
By the way you live today
God has given us the power
To create the world anew
If we touch the earth
Together, me and you.

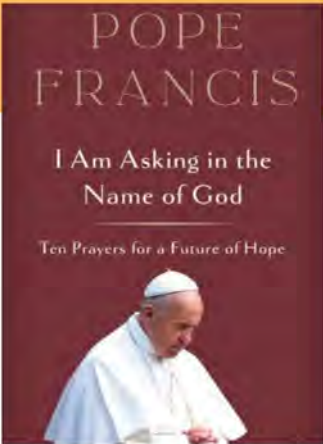
CLOSING PRAYER (Together)

Earth Day
Creator of worlds beyond our knowing.
This earth is known to us
And often feels like ours.
Yet, where we walk and work
And love and laugh
And rest and play
And swim and build
And tend and reach
And sleep and eat
And love...
Is only for our use today.
Throughout these days
May we walk as stewards...
Lightly
Mindfully
And gratefully
Honoring you
And respecting those with whom we share the
gift
Of sunlit sky,
And budding trees,
Flowering bush
And warming breeze.
TO SAVE THE EARTH
AMEN



The billboard pictured above will be displayed from Friday, April 18 through Thursday, April 24 at these locations:

- ♦ **Bolingbrook** - Weber Road & Boughton Road (Weber Road East side, Boughton Road facing Southwest)
- ♦ **Joliet** - Essington & Theodore (Essington West side, Theodore facing Northeast)
- ♦ **Joliet** - Maple & Walnut (East side - Maple South side, Walnut facing Northeast)
- ♦ **Plainfield** - Rt 59 & Caton Farm Road (Route 59 facing North, West side .25 miles from Caton Farm Road)
- ♦ **Romeoville** - Weber Road & Renwick Road (Weber West side, Renwick facing North)

 POPE FRANCIS I Am Asking in the Name of God Ten Prayers for a Future of Hope “Ten Prayers for a Future of Hope”	Please join us for a Prayer Breakfast and Reflection Thursday, May 8, 2025 9:30 am - 11:00 am Joliet Franciscan Center 1433 Essington Road Joliet, IL 60435 RSVP 815-725-8735 x116 or kgarifo@jolietfranciscans.org by Friday, May 2nd <i>Space is limited.</i>
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What a night at JCA's Casino Royal !



The Queens of Blackjack!

Phyllis, Jeanne, Rosemary, Sue,
Janine, Sharon and René have
some fun while supporting
JCA's Jubilate.



April 10 — National Erase Self-Negativity Day

April 10 means today is National Erase Self-Negativity Day on the National Day Calendar. We are spending the day encouraging everyone to take steps toward erasing the influence negative self-talk has on our lives. It's also a day where we will focus on changing this negative habit into a time of personal empowerment.

Some people think speaking negatively to themselves is a way for them to identify their downfalls or shortcomings and move forward. Even though we may believe negative self-talk is a reasonable and a harmless thing to do, this type of behavior can significantly damage self-esteem over time. Speaking negatively to ourselves is a habit. A bad habit. The good news is we can begin to erase the habit of negative self-talk starting today on National Erase Self-Negativity Day.

Identifying 5Cs of Negative Self-Talk

Each of us has a critical inner voice. This voice can be motivating, or it can do more harm than good. Many of us can easily become trapped in a cycle of negativity, with one critical thought leading to the next. This cycle can stop us from being able to move forward and damage our confidence. These words, if left unchecked, could potentially lead to mental health issues. It is important that we are aware of the **five key types of negative self-talk**.

1. Complaining is voicing dissatisfaction about something. Complaining is a form of negative self-talk and over time is a habit that prevents growth and progress. Complaining becomes less negative when we provide a solution or alternative to the complaint.

2. Criticizing is pointing out what you don't like whether that's about yourself, someone else or a situation. Criticism is often a negative habit that starts from within that works its way out into our environment. Rather than criticizing, try framing it as positive feedback to help yourself learn and grow.

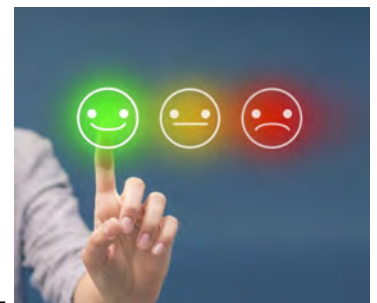
3. Concern can happen when we feel we are losing control, thus creating a spiral of negative thoughts. The best way to show concern is to present ideas that counteract your negative thoughts.

4. Commiserating is when we gather with our friends and family to share "life" experiences, including things that are upsetting. Sharing grievances can be therapeutic, but it can also be the perfect time for negative self-talk. By simply adding a few positive remarks to any negative conversation, your mind will create a positive outlook and allow for encouraging responses from others, too.

5. Catastrophizing is negative self-talk that paints a picture of the worst case scenarios in our mind and makes problems seem bigger than they really are. Learning to accept situations for what they are will help you focus on finding a more constructive way to deal with the problem at hand.

Self-negativity is a habit that can be changed with work and commitment. In fact, the key to erasing self-negativity

is through awareness and small habit changes. As negative thoughts arise, lighten them by reframing your mind with a positive mindset by catching, checking, and erasing it.



Recipe Corner: Theresa's Bean Pepper Dip

Ingredients:

Rinse and dice

- 2 green bell peppers
- 2 red bell peppers
- 1 yellow pepper
- 1 orange pepper
- 1 red onion
- 2 jalapeños



Drain and rinse

- 1 can corn
- 1 can dark red kidney beans
- 1 can light re kidney beans
- 1 can great northern beans
- 1 can black beans



Pour over top

- 3/4 cup cider vinegar
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons oil (Smart Balance)

Enjoy!

Recipe submitted by Theresa Flowers

Feel free to submit your
recipe that you would
like to share!!!



Artwork @ Sr. Kay
Francis Berger OSF

Associate Relationship 50th Anniversary April 26, 2025 University of St. Francis Motherhouse

If you would like to attend but
have not sent in your RSVP
please contact Darcy at
dmason@jolietfranciscans.org or
708-508-7795 to ensure a correct
headcount for lunch.

Facebook Prayer Authors

April
May

Sister Peggy Quinn
Sister Phyllis Wilhelm

Staying Connected

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If you would like to submit an item for *Staying Connected*, or if something you have requested to be published is inadvertently omitted, please e-mail
Sister René Simonelic at
rsimonelic@jolietfranciscans.org or Renée Cipriani
at rcipriani@jolietfranciscans.org