

Staying Connected

Volume 22 - Issue 1

July 10, 2025

Sisters of St. Francis
of Mary Immaculate

Wherever You Go, I Will Go Forward Together

Our Summer Gathering on June 19-20, 2025, were full days. It is always good to be together, and the time was used to keep moving ahead of our need to be connected as we face the future. Our theme from the Book of Ruth, "Wherever you go, I will go" seemed particularly apt this year.

We gathered at Assembly Hall at Saint Clare Campus of USF, while associates gathered at JFC on Friday, to look at who we want to be as we go forward. We prayed, asked questions of ourselves and listened to one another. The two days culminated in our missioning for the year ahead. For these days we asked the assistance of Becky Mathis-Stump as facilitator and Sunny Ben Belkacem as a graphic recorder. Becky guided the days, the sharing, the breaks, and Sunny captured what we shared in beautiful graphic charts. They added a richness that was really appreciated and enjoyed.

We focused on moving forward in three major areas of our life together: Care for Mission, Care for Resources and Care for Members.

On Thursday Morning we started with welcoming and moved into our opening prayer. The theme for our days and the prayer was the story of Ruth and Naomi. Their journey, their losses, their moving forward gave a frame for our work. Thursday



Sunny Ben
Belkacem,
graphic
artist, and
Becky
Mathis-
Stump,
facilitator,
both hard at work!

Continued on page 2

Summer Gathering 2025 continued

morning we rewatched a video of a panel of three women who spoke at the LCWR Assembly. Each of them answered from their hearts the question, “Who do you want or need us to be in the future?” For many of us listening to it the second time, the thoughts were even more helpful. We also had two speakers from the Legacy Sub-committee for Spirituality/Charism /Mission: Julie Futterer and Missy Ferro former SFA/JCA students, presently USF and JCA employees. Their life experience with Joliet Franciscans and Franciscan values connected us to our rich past and rich future through them. Listening to them gave us an image of the legacy already expressed through those we ministered to and with.

Thursday afternoon, MJ gave us facts, statistics, and led us through thought-provoking questions on the values that we hope will guide our legacy planning going forward. Our discussions whetted our appetite for more. We intend to continue talking. On Friday morning we focused on the Care of Members. Once again there was a meaningful mixture of values and motivation as well as the practical needs. To help us look at both care for ourselves and care for others, Sr. Sue shared insights on mission-based caring from a speaker she heard during the conference in Assisi by David B. Couturier, OFM. Sue also invited two members from the Care for Members Legacy Subcommittee, both Sr. Anthony Veilleux, O.Carm. from St. Pat's

Continued on page 3



Photos on this page: Sr. Marianne Saieg, OSF Graphics: Sunny Ben Belkacem



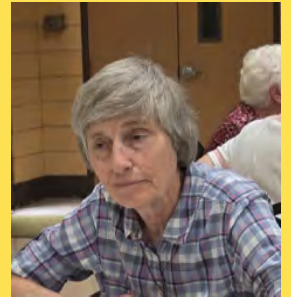
and Bihn Tram, our congregation nurse, to share aspects of caring of self and others through their experience.

Friday afternoon was an opportunity for Sr. Jeanne to share reflections in a talk entitled *Sisterhood: Lighting the Way for One Another*. Her talk included themes from the UISG meeting in Rome and the International Franciscan meeting in Assisi this past May.

We ended the two days joined by the associates for the Missioning Ceremony. Music and readings helped us focus our year around our theme, "Wherever You Will Go, I Will Go/ Forward Together." We then received from our missioning cards and sang, *A Fire is Meant for Burning*.

Additional photos on page 4

Photos on this page: Sr. Marianne Saieg, OSF



Photos on this page: Sunny Ben Belkacem

Jubilee 2025

The celebration commemorating the anniversaries of five sisters and one associate occurred on Saturday, June 21. The Mass began at 10:30 a.m. and Father Michael Jennrich was the presider. Sister Maria Bui was altar server and Sister Barb Kwiatkowski directed the choir composed of Joliet Franciscan Sisters and Associates. The musicians were Tony Berardi, Sister Jeanne Bessette, Anthony Kawalkowski, Diane Stocum and Sister Sharon Frederick. The Jubilee reflection was given by Sr. Marianne Saieg. (Pictured above)



Sr. Jeanne Bessette with Jubilarians: Sr. Margaret McGuckin, Sr. Marianne Saieg, Sr. Martha Eckstein, Sr. Elaine Kerscher, Sr. Mary Ann Hamer, and Presider, Fr. Michael Jennrich



The Motherhouse Chapel at USF was packed with friends, relatives and fellow sisters!



Following the Mass was a lovely luncheon of salad, lemon chicken, roasted potatoes, green beans, rolls, butter, carrot and chocolate cake for dessert, wine, lemonade and coffee.



2025 Jubilarians

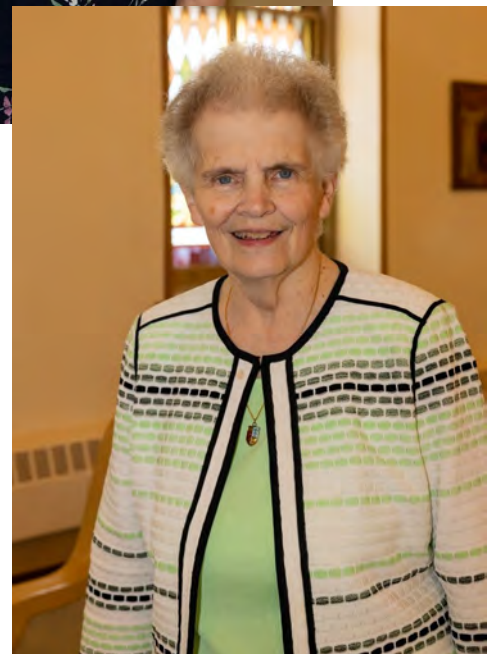
Sr. Margaret McGuckin (75)

Sr. Elaine Kerscher (60)

Sr. Marianne Saieg (60)

Sr. Martha Eckstein (60)

Sr. Mary Ann Hamer (40)





The Musicians
and Choir
did an amazing
job!



Jubilee Photos courtesy of Bill Buchelt,
Elan Photography, Downers Grove, IL



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Reflection: Blooming Where We're Planted

By Maria das Mercês Alves Barbosa

Once, during a Franciscan meeting, the friar who was leading the meeting said: "Flowers have no reason or purpose, they bloom just to bloom. Their spectacle does not depend on anyone's admiration; wherever they are born they provide the same beauty and grace, whether in the middle of the forest where no one will contemplate them, or in a simple or grand garden where they will be contemplated and admired by many."



LR Standing: Sisters Rosemary Fonck, Maria Aparecida Gomes, Beatriz de Sousa, Débora de Castro Alves, Lourdes Boyer, Maria das Mercês Alves Barbosa, Margaret Noser
LR Seated: Sisters Ann Freiburg, Teresa Noser, Mary Ann Clark

Last year, when I visited the sisters who had gone to live in retirement homes, I felt that they were trying to adapt to the new reality. They were open to accepting the new routine, but they still felt the need to adapt. A year after that first visit, now, visiting their realities again, I remembered this beautiful reflection made by that friar, which so impressed me with the simplicity and truth in his words that day. I realize that the sisters are more adapted to their new realities, but flourishing. Although his talk was in another context, these words seem perfectly suited to the reality of our elderly sisters now. As they are making their new realities a new experience of community, they are sowing hope, and they are flourishing where God planted them. They continue to positively touch the lives of diverse people who probably would not have



known them, nor could appreciate their life stories and vocations.

In view of everything I have seen and experienced, I want to thank our Lord who wants to count on us, wants to gift us with the beautiful calling of being Franciscans of Mary Immaculate, and wants to be with us, showing us lights in the midst of difficulties. It is God who draws from within us the beauty of serving where He wants to place us. And so, in this time of difficult passage, He molds us and shows us that in this life, He alone is enough. He entrusts us with new and precious missions. I have gratitude for your beautiful legacies, dear sisters. You are flourishing where God planted you.



Additional photos on next page



Additional photos on next page





Our Sisters from Brazil enjoyed a few days visiting Chicago!



Take me out to the ballgame...



Débora making friends with a polar bear at the Lincoln Park Zoo.



Sue, the Tyrannosaurus rex at the Field Museum was excited to have visitors from Brazil!

Thank You!

From One Heart & Grant Recipients

Thank you notes from the three One Heart Recipients in 2025. We've included a couple of the thank you notes that have come in for the JPIC Grants as well. Their messages of appreciation teach us so much.

From: South Suburban Immigrant Project

"SSIP would like to express our sincere gratitude for your donation! Your generosity and support for our mission means the world to us and we would not be able to do the work that we do without allies like you. Your donation will be used to help make a difference in the lives of immigrant families!

Thank you so much once again for your donation!
Sincerely,
The SSIP Team

From: Water by Women

Dear Sisters (and associates)

Because of your donation, many more of God's thirsty children will have clean water to drink. Thank you very much. [They have water projects in the Philippines, the Navajo Nation, Haiti, Uganda, Tanzania, Honduras, Zambia, Kenya and Bolivia.]

God's Blessings,
Emily
WBW – Volunteer

From: Casa Misericordia

Dear Sisters,
On this feast of St. Oscar Romero, martyred in the cause of justice for our sisters and brothers who suffer poverty and discrimination, I want to thank you and members of the One Heart Project committee for the gift of \$650.00. Truly, the monies will be used in service to those who continue to live in fear as they pursue avenues for asylum and documentation.

At this time, monies are needed for food, rent (shelters are full) and, of course, legal assistance. Immigration attorneys are in over-demand in the San Diego area. I wish I had photos at hand to show you some of our beloved people. However, they are very reluctant to have photos shared out of fear of ICE.

Keep us and our people in your prayer, please. Know that you are in our prayer as we are united in our care for the migrant person. In closing, I am very grateful to your Sister Marianne Saieg. Without her creativity and encouragement, I/we would not be where we are in making known the plight of those who courageously choose to cross the border.

We are truly One in Heart - thank you for the connection and the financial support.

In Mercy,
Mary Waskowiak, RSM
Founding Director



June 6, 2025

Peggy Quinn, OSF
1433 Essington Rd.
Joliet, IL 60435

Dear Peggy,

I want to thank you and the JPIC group for the \$5,000 donation to Casa de Misericordia. The check arrived two days ago – always a moment for me to be reminded that God takes care of us and this ministry with migrant people.

I wish I had photos to share with you. Our migrant people are in hiding. You may have seen on national news the raid by ICE agents on a restaurant here in San Diego. The people were handcuffed before a single question was put to them. Needless to say, they, family members, neighbors, and even our Mayor were enraged. We are seeing the unmarked ICE vehicles in our neighborhood. And, yes, people have been taken from their family homes. This morning the wife of the man taken from the family home was at our Resource Center, seeking assistance from an attorney. Pro bono attorneys are no longer available because of the demand on their time and capability to take on more clients. On occasion, I have chosen to use funds from our account to pay for attorneys.

So, the donation from your congregation is a sign of hope for me. We are still able to walk with and assist our people in a variety of ways. Having been taught in elementary school by the Franciscan Sisters from South Lake Drive in Milwaukee and raised by my Mom who was a Franciscan Third Order member, I love the spirituality that underlies the commitment to care and compassion. Needless to say, your own Marianne Saieg keeps me grounded in Francis, Clare and their ongoing presence in our world.

Thank you! I always say that the door of our house, our Casa de Misericordia is always open for you.

In Mercy,

Mary Waskowiak, RSM

Casa de Misericordia San Diego

619-895-0621 • 745 Beardsley Street, San Diego, CA 92113 • www.casademisericordiasd.org

4/10/2020

"Partnering with the local church to build a welcoming community for Toledo area internationals,
to share the hope and love of Jesus Christ,
and to empower internationals with skills to become successful"



Sisters of St. Francis
Attn: Peggy Quinn
1433 Essington Rd
Joliet, IL 60431

June 4, 2025

Dear Peggy

Thank you for your generous gift of \$2,500.00 to Water for Ishmael for our purchasing needs. Your donation is helping international women see how to pay it forward as they live in a loving community at WFI.

Ginny, a staff member, shares a moving story from our recent International Dinner and Culture Walk. "There was once a young mom who came to see me almost every day," she wrote. "She needed so much help with so many things and was so frustrated by how hard her life was here."

"Then came Water for Ishmael's annual International Dinner and Culture Walk. The woman brought traditional dresses from Somalia to display, and she asked if I wanted to try something on. Of course! I still love playing dress up. So I tried on one dress and handed it back, sure that play time was over. It was not. Beaming, she kept handing me dress after dress before she tied me in this complex, sar-like wrap dress that was all one piece with a separate shawl tied over it. Pride was written all over her face. Finally, she was the expert in something. She was the one helping. I was the one learning. What a beautiful role reversal!"

There is such beauty in moments like these, where women who may not feel that they have a voice at all find a voice in sharing their culture and experiences with our community. Your gifts make these moments possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janelle Metzger".

Janelle Metzger
Executive Director

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels (Isaiah 61:10 ESV)."

20 Arco Dr, Toledo, OH 43607
(419) 720-8089
www.WaterForIshmael.org

Franciscan Human Trafficking Joint Committee

Submitted by: Associate Therese Griffin



**ALLIANCE TO END
HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Founded and Supported by U.S. Catholic Sisters

**Franciscan Sisters Joint
Committee and the
University of St. Francis**



**Franciscan Sisters Joint Committee and
the University of St. Francis**

The Big Beautiful Bill Needs to Protect Unaccompanied Minors

This week, the Senate is scheduled to consider H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which makes a number of changes. Our alert today focuses on Unaccompanied Children and concerns with provisions in the bill.

Once the bill is passed by the Senate, it returns to the House for consideration. If the vote fails, the House and Senate must resolve differences before the legislation can be signed into law. Our goal is to highlight our concerns as the BBB continues to move through Congress.

ACT NOW

Thank you for taking action.

Message from LSAP Goals 1, 4 Subcommittee



If your parish or organization wishes to receive weekly bulletins, google Catholic Climate Covenant/Creation Care Corner Bulletin.

Creation Care Corner



*"Living our vocation to
be protectors of God's handiwork is
essential to a life of virtue."*

— Pope Francis

Cool Efficiently. Nearly half of the energy used in your home goes to heating and cooling. So making smart decisions about your home's heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system can have a big effect on your utility bills - as well as on fossil fuel energy consumption and Creation Care! Cooling tips include:

- Cover windows with drapes or shades especially on south and west facing windows.
- Weather-strip doors and windows, then add adequate insulation to keep the heat out.
- Regularly maintain home HVAC equipment and change filters. Programmable thermostats also save money.
- During the hottest part of the day, turn off anything that produces heat such as stoves, dishwashers, lights, etc. Also, consider turning up the thermostat temperature several degrees.
- If your AC is old, consider replacing with an Energy Star rated unit. Better yet, see if replacing it with a highly efficient heat pump will work for you (which can both heat and cool your home). For more info: energystar.gov/products/energy_star_home_upgrade

The Associates Gathering

By Darcy Mason, Associate Director

During our summer gathering our associates met at the Joliet Franciscan Center to discuss how to best support each other, our Franciscan sisters and local ministries. After lunch and time to socialize we shared our thoughts concerning different opportunities to meet throughout the year. Our next gathering will be at the Joliet Franciscan Center on August 20 at noon. We will share pizza and then watch the video in which we interviewed many of our sisters residing at Our Lady of Angels Retirement Home. All sisters and associates are invited to attend.

The associates joined the sisters at USF's St. Clare Campus Assembly Hall on Friday afternoon to participate in the annual Missioning Ceremony.





Pizza and a Video

August 20, 2025

12:00 Noon

Joliet Franciscan Center
1433 Essington Road

Join our sisters and associates for
pizza followed by a viewing of the
2019 OLA
"Joliet Franciscan Stories" video.

RSVP By **August 11** to Darcy
708-508-7795
dmason@jolietfranciscans.org

*A Jubilarian
Thank You!*

Dear Sisters and Associates,

Thank you for making my Jubilee a special and memorable occasion. Your presence and participation in the Liturgy made the day so special. Your wishes, support and remembrances made the celebration a true blessing. My gratitude goes out to each of you for your love and encouragement over these many years. The Jubilee is now a cherished memory.

Margaret McGuckin, OSF

July 11 – National Blueberry Muffin Day

National Blueberry Muffin Day on July 11 gives us a great reason to get up in the morning and celebrate! Americans love their blueberry muffins so much, it's their number 1 favorite muffin flavor. Whether it is for breakfast or a snack, blueberry muffins are melt-in-your-mouth delicious.

While enjoying a delicious blueberry muffin, consider the powerhouse the blueberry is. This once wild berry became domesticated during the early 1900s thanks to the observations of Elizabeth Coleman White and the research of Dr. Frederick V. Coville. Before their efforts, wild blueberries were never successfully transplanted and raised in any farming operation for personal or commercial production. The only way to enjoy fresh blueberries was to seek them out where they grew naturally.

Today we can enjoy the abundant potassium, vitamin C and B6, and other health benefits of the blueberry much more readily than they did 120 years ago. We bake them into muffins and eat them by the handfuls.

HOW TO OBSERVE NATIONAL BLUEBERRY MUFFIN DAY

While celebrating the day, be sure to make a few for co-workers and family, too. It's not a celebration if you don't share. It is America's favorite muffin after all. If you don't bake, be sure to stop by your favorite bakery and pick up a few.

Recipe Corner: *Blueberry Muffins*

Ingredients for the blueberry muffins:

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cups granulated sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
1/2 cup butter melted
1/2 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups (1 pint) fresh blueberries washed,
drained, and picked-over, or frozen (see note 1)

For the streusel topping:

1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons butter cold

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Prepare a muffin pan with cupcake liners. In a large bowl sift together 2 cups flour, 1 cup sugar, baking powder, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk eggs until smooth. Add the 1/2 cup melted butter, milk, and vanilla, and whisk until combined. Add egg mixture to flour mixture and stir until combined. (Dough will be lumpy.) Fold in blueberries.

To prepare the streusel topping, in a medium bowl combine 1/4 cup flour, 2 tablespoons brown sugar, 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, cinnamon, and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Using a pastry cutter, cut in butter until topping is crumbly and coarse.

Fill prepared muffin cups with batter. Top each muffin with streusel topping, about 1 tablespoon each. Bake until muffin centers bounce back when lightly pressed, about 18 to 22 minutes. Cool muffins on a rack for several minutes before removing from pan. Cool completely and store in an airtight container, up to 4 days.



Facebook Prayer Authors

July	Louise Johnson, associate
August	Sr. Mary Frances Seeley
September	Sr. Karen Berry
November	Sr. Rosemary Huzl
December	Sr. Marianne Saieg

If you would like to volunteer for October 2025, or any time next year to be a Facebook Prayer Author, please contact Karen Garifo at kgarifo@jolietfranciscans.org.

Thank You!

Staying Connected

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of Mary Immaculate

1433 Essington Road
Joliet, IL 60435-2873
Phone: 815-725-8735
www.jolietfranciscans.org

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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