

Staying Connected

Volume 22 - Issue 10

May 7, 2026

Sisters of St. Francis
of Mary Immaculate

Scenes from Brazil



Goiânia today - city of 3 million people!



Sisters with João, our handyman of 30+ years



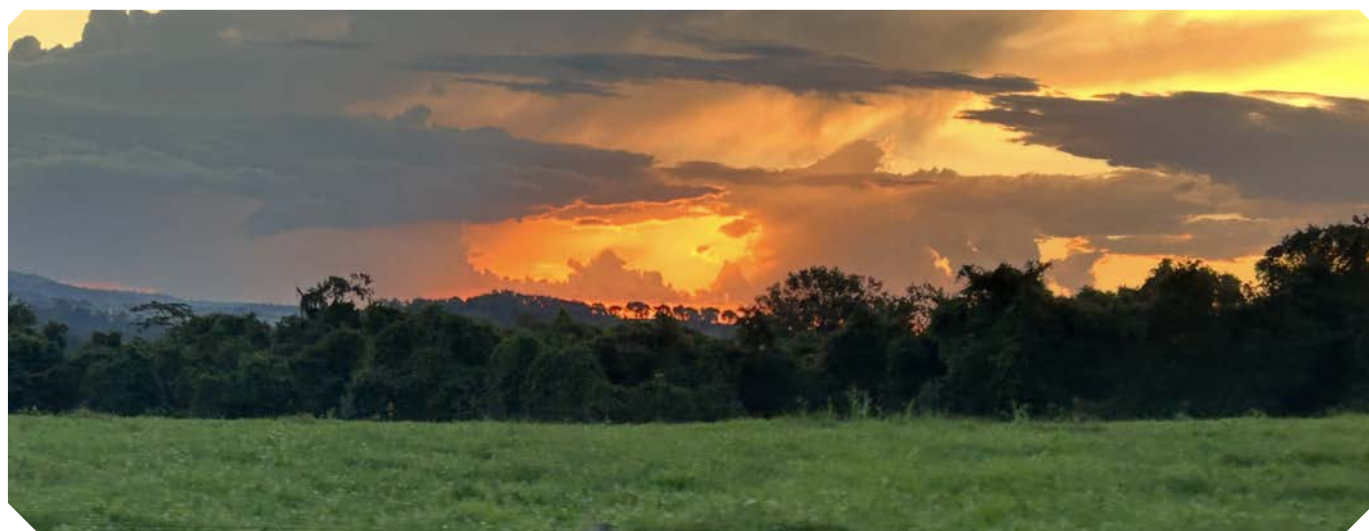
Sipping ice cold coconut water at a Sunday fair



**Sunday dinner in
Hidrolândia**



Waterfall near Pirenópolis



Sunset near Anápolis

Brazil continued on next page

Visit to NEW HOPE Drug Rehab Facility, Santa Helena



Graceli with administrators and resident



Receiving JPIC funds for shower room renovation



Residents prepare all meals



Brazil continued on next page



Dining Room



Slaughterhouse



Laundry is done by hand

New Hope Community Farm is an entirely self-sufficient program for men recovering from drug addiction. Up to 40 residents can spend nine months in the program, which has very little recidivism. Sr. Jeronima worked here for five years. Sr. Débora helps out now. Our associates Graceli and Vincente serve on the board of directors and as volunteers.





Our project: Shower room renovation



***At the
New
Hope
Farm***



Ohio Sisters and Associates Gather

By Rita Travis, Associate

The Ohio group of Joliet Franciscan Sisters and Associates gathers twice a year in Columbus. With Sister Marie Miller as hostess, the group shares a meal, has prayer and reflection and catches up with one another. The April 11 gathering was special as it celebrated Sherry Bockus on her 40th anniversary as an Associate. The group is usually joined by Fr. Charles Klinger, who is the retired pastor from St. Paul in Westerville. Sisters and Associates gather from the Columbus area, Logan, Dayton, and Carrollton.



Fr. Charles Klinger, Sr. Marie Miller, Kathleen Rossman, Sherry Bockus, Karen Fleshman, Sr. Margaret Hoffman, Sr. Martha Eckstein.

From the Archives

By Elizabeth Piskorski, Archivist

Dear Sisters and Associates,

Hello from your archivist!

Recently, I have been diligently working on preparing some new exhibits about the wonderful history of the Joliet Franciscans. As I began to plan, I started wondering what the community members were curious about.

I thought I could ask a couple of questions to get a better idea of what congregation history is enjoyable. There are certainly pieces that I have come across that I find very interesting.

As for things I have found very interesting, as you know I have been processing the St. Francis Academy collection. You'll find here two photographs of early St. Francis Academy classes, including one from 1882 and one from 1897. The 1882 class was taught by Sr. Stanislas. On the chalkboards, you'll notice that the teacher has written "St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois," providing us viewers with some very helpful metadata.

Please find the survey included in this mailing. It should not take more than a few minutes to complete.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth



The Voting Rights Act Drastically Weakened

By Sr. Lois Prebil



On August 6, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Voting Rights Act (VRA). It was a major moral achievement of the Civil Rights Movement designed to eliminate illegal racial discrimination in voting. It enforced the 15th Amendment, abolished literacy tests and poll taxes, and established federal oversight (preclearance) in areas with histories of voter suppression. The primary goal was to ensure that no citizen was denied the right to vote due to race or color, ensuring more equitable political participation.

Section 2 is a key provision of the Act. It is a permanent, nationwide provision that prohibits voting practices or procedures that discriminate based on race or language minority status.

On April 29, 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court (6-3) significantly narrowed the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in *Louisiana v. Callais*, ruling that using race as a predominant factor in redistricting—even to comply with section 2 to create minority-majority districts—is unconstitutional. The decision weakens the "effects" test, requiring proof of intentional discrimination rather than just discriminatory results, impacting future congressional maps. It effectively favors "race-neutral" maps, even if they result in lower minority representation.

Political Implications: The ruling allows for increased partisan gerrymandering and limits the creation of majority-minority districts, creating a new wave of redistricting battles ahead of the 2026 elections.

In a meditation* on the Voting Rights Act by Rev. Cameron Trimble, she says, "When political systems

make it harder for certain communities to exercise power, those communities become easier to ignore. . . . Theologically, this matters because scripture consistently asks who is being pushed outside the circle of concern. . . . Again and again, scripture focuses on widows, immigrants, the poor, and those with little power, because they were most often left out of the community's protection."

As she concludes the meditation, Rev. Trimble says, "The question is whether we keep acting as if democracy is someone else's job to protect, or if we realize its survival depends on everyday people choosing, again and again, to include everyone in the circle of human dignity."

* What Remains of the Voting Rights Act?

A Prayer for Moral Courage

by Rev. Cameron Trimble

Divine One,
we confess how easy it is to grow tired.

The problems feel large.
The systems feel heavy.
The future can feel uncertain.

Do not let exhaustion harden into indifference.

Keep our moral imagination alive.
Help us remember that democracy is not sustained by institutions alone, but by people willing to protect one another's dignity.

Give us courage when we feel discouraged.
Give us clarity when the language of justice is distorted.
Give us endurance for the long work of building a society where every voice matters.

And when we are tempted to withdraw, remind us that hope is not passive.
It is practiced.

Amen.

Franciscan Human Trafficking Joint

Committee

By Therese Griffin, Associate

National Red Dress Day of Awareness

May 5th First observed in Canada on May 5th, 2010, Red Dress Day is a national day of awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people (MMIWG2S).



A wall mural located in Muskogee, Oklahoma was completed by Muskogee (Creek) citizen Maddie Lamb to help bring awareness to the MMIW movement. Source: MVSKE Media

To raise awareness about the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women in the USA and Mexico, consider the following statistics:

- In the USA, Indigenous women are murdered at a rate 10 times higher than the national average.
- Approximately 1 in 3 Indigenous women will experience sexual violence in their lifetime.

- In Mexico, over 1,000 women were reported murdered in 2020, with many cases linked to organized crime.
- The National Crime Information Center reported over 5,700 cases of missing Indigenous women in the USA in 2016.
- Many cases of missing and murdered

women go unreported or unsolved, highlighting systemic issues in law enforcement.

- Advocacy groups emphasize the need for better data collection and reporting to address this crisis effectively.



Marshals - TV Series 2026

Highly recommend: Marshals

The spin off takes place in Montana US Marshals unit while the reservation tribe is often discussed within the broader context of Montana's reservation, this plotline focuses on the environmental and health impact on a Montana reservation. It shows how Native communities frequently highlighted the challenges on reservations.

Note from the author:

In November 2025 I, Therese, was in Joliet. Sr. Lourdes and I visited our sisters at St. Pat's. When Sr. Grace Ann was transported to the dining room within a few minutes she said, "I hear Therese Griffin's voice." Over the years we have connected in person and by phone. I was honored that she recognized my voice immediately.

I am writing our Human Trafficking article in the name of Sr. Grace Ann as we remember our Native sisters and children that end Missing and murdered Indigenous people.

Loving Creator, Hear Our Prayers...



Spring Luncheon Festivities St. Patrick's Residence-April 8, 2026



Message from LSAP Goals 1, 4 Subcommittee



Consider asking your parish to subscribe through Catholic Climate Covenant/Creation Care Bulletin.

Creation Care Corner



Pope Leo on Climate Justice, Ecological Conversion and Integral Ecology

Pope Leo XIV celebrated the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, *On Care for Our Common Home*, during a recent international conference on climate justice. He continued his predecessor's call for the need for ecological conversion and concrete action to protect creation. He renewed his "strong appeal for unity around integral ecology" and urged that caring for our common home, and listening to the cry of the earth and the poor, "do not appear as mere passing trends."

In his call to action, Leo stated that "Everyone in society, through nongovernmental organizations and advocacy groups, must put pressure on governments to develop and implement more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls." He said, "Citizens need to take an active role in political decision-making at national, regional and local levels." He emphasized that "Only then will it be possible to mitigate the damage done to the environment."

Pope Leo noted that "we can grow in hope by living out the interdisciplinary approach of *Laudato Si'*." www.usccb.org/news/2025/world-must-come-together-fight-climate-change-pope-leo-says

May 14-National Dance Like a Chicken Day!

National Dance Like a Chicken Day on May 14 encourages everyone to dance like a chicken! This day entertains from start to finish with people flapping their arms and strutting chicken-like.

#DanceLikeAChickenDay

Everyone has probably danced the "Chicken Dance" at least once in their lifetime. This silly fun song is popular at wedding dances, Oktoberfest, and other celebrations, too. The song gets people of all ages up and moving on the dance floor.

Written in the 1950s by Werner Thomas, a Swiss accordionist, the Chicken Dance didn't even make it to the United States until sometime in the 1970s. The Chicken Dance is associated with polkas or oom-pah-pah music. Originally written with the name *Der Ententanz* (The Duck Dance), rumors suggest the song was written as a drinking song for Oktoberfest. The song's title later changed to *Vogeltanz* (The Bird Dance).

Upon arriving in America in the 1970s, the song acquired choreography with repetitive beak, wing, and tail motions, as well as the new name, The Chicken Dance.



Recipe Corner:

Easy Almond Macaroons

Ingredients:

1 cup sugar
1 - 8 ounce can almond paste
2 egg whites

Directions

Combine sugar and almond paste in large bowl; mix with fingers until well blended. Add egg whites gradually, using just enough to moisten. Mix with wooden spoon. Roll lightly into walnut size ball; flatten slightly. Place about 2 inches apart on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper sprayed with non stick cooking spray. Bake in preheated 325 F. oven about 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from oven. Cool slightly. Remove with spatula. Yield about 2 dozen.



Thankful to All Who Served

FACEBOOK PRAYER AUTHORS

May	Sr. Rosemary Huzl
July	Sr. Marianne Saieg
October	Sr. Marianne Saieg

Volunteers needed for the rest of 2026 to be Facebook Prayer Authors!

Contact Karen Garifo if you are willing to volunteer. Thank you!

kgarifo@jolietfranciscans.org

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