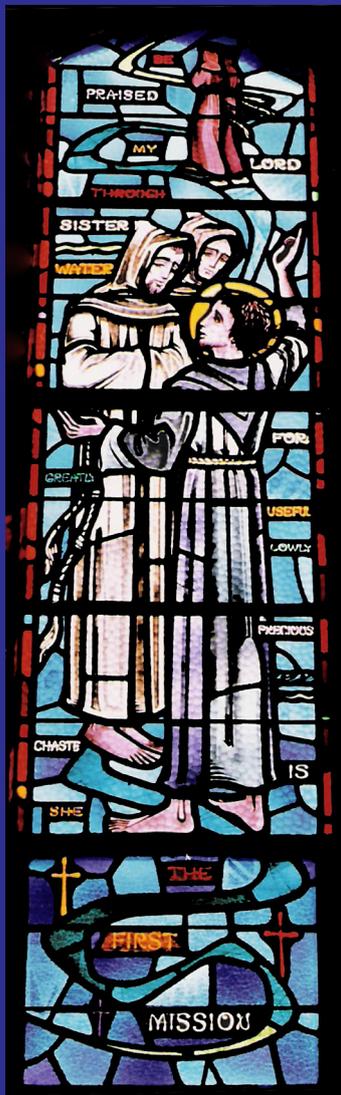


The Whitehall FRANCISCAN

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, they are
a new creation: old things are passed
away; behold, all things are made new.*

2 Corinthians 5:17



Human Dignity

A message from General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, OSF

It seems that lately we are hearing more and more about the horrors of Human Trafficking. We are also confronted with possible ways to address this reality and do our part in making a difference.

As we have watched the news in the last weeks and seen the pictures of the atrocities happening in Iraq and Syria we can hardly believe what our eyes are seeing and our ears are hearing. This is the 21st century and in our day crucifixions are happening, children are being buried alive and innocent people beheaded. It all seems from another world or another time, and yet it is occurring in our time and in our world. We pause and ask ourselves – how could this possibly be happening? How could human persons be so cruel to one another?



It seems more than ever our world is in need of remembering why we are here.

Let us keep in mind how great a dignity God has given us because God created us and formed us in the image of the beloved Son according to the flesh and in God's own likeness according to the Spirit. (TOR Rule #14)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creatures. For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16)

We might each ask - How do I proclaim these truths with my very life? As we hear about human trafficking, kidnapping, suffering of all kinds, our hearts and minds grapple with the questions – what is happening to human dignity? How are we treating one another? What can we do in the face of such violence and tragedy?

Perhaps the people of every age have also asked these questions – there are always actions that can be taken to let our voices be heard, to alert others to the present reality, to try to get our world leaders to respond in humanitarian ways. However, one of the things that can easily happen under the weight of such violence and tragedy is that we can feel powerless - *What can I do? I am only one person.* Often because we feel that there is no response that can really help the situation we stand by and do nothing except grieve that such a reality exists.

As we ponder the fact that each of us **is** one person, one voice – we remember persons like Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Francis of Assisi, Nelson Mandela, etc. These persons could have easily said – *I am only one, what can I do?* Each of these individuals changed the reality in which they were living by voicing their convictions, living values that were foundational in their lives, challenging others to see truth, finding alternative ways to deal with conflicts, believing in and respecting the human dignity of every person. God created us with human dignity – it was established in the Incarnation, confirmed in the Passion and continues to be nurtured in the Eucharist. Perhaps we need to once again remember the challenging words – **You must become the change you want to see.** (Gandhi)

Whose human rights will we acknowledge?

Whose human dignity will we respect?

For whose well-being will we assume responsibility?

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3603 McRoberts Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234
(412) 882-9911
www.osfprov.org



facebook.com/osfprov

Editorial Board:

- Sister Joanne Brazinski, OSF
- Sister Barbara Zilch, OSF
- Dennis Wodzinski, Archivist
- Contributor: Nick Rodi
- Layout and Design: Robyn Moeller
- Proofreader: Sister Margaret Markey, OSF

Cover Image: Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God

SISTERS' WEBSITE RECEIVES MAKEOVER

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God website – www.osfprov.org - received a makeover for 2015. A valuable tool in fulfilling our mission, the site has been redesigned to better serve those seeking to learn more about our Sisters, ministries and outreach. In addition to the new look and updated content, the site is now accessible on desktops, laptops, phones, and mobile devices. Special features on the website include:

- **Online Prayer Requests**
- **Events Calendar**
- **Electronic Version of the *Whitehall Franciscan***
- **E-mail Newsletter Sign-up**
- **Online Giving Opportunities**

A special thank you to InterGroup Communications' Sharon Liotus and Mike Gualtieri for their design and technical support, and our recently retired development director Nick Rodi for his writing talents.



Catholic Sisters were honored during Women's History Month with the 2nd National Catholic Sisters Week from March 8-14. This week intends to shine a light on the good works and good will of all Catholic Sisters - past and present. The Sister of St. Francis of the Providence of God pray that this project continues to bring awareness to the needs of those whom we serve, as well as serve as a resource and inspiration for those called to religious life.

Ways to Keep the Spirit of National Catholic Sisters Week

- **Pray** - Please keep our Sisters and ministries in prayer. Also, pray for those who are called to religious life and discerning their vocations.
- **Join Us in Ministry** – Our Auxiliary, St. Francis Academy Alumnae Association, St. Casimir Alumni and Associates provide much needed support for our Sisters, ministries and outreach efforts, and are always seeking new members. Gifts of time and donations are also greatly appreciated.
- **Share Your Sister Stories** - Help us honor the life and service of our Sisters by sharing how our Sisters influenced your life. Sister stories and photos can be shared on our Facebook page – www.facebook.com/osfprov.

As part of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundations' Catholic Sisters Initiative, National Catholic Sisters Week is supported by a \$3.3 million grant to St. Catherine University. We are grateful for the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's generosity, as well as for all the good works on behalf of Catholic Sisters and ministries. For more information about National Catholic Sisters week, please visit www.nationalcatholicsistersweek.org.

St. Anthony and 13 Tuesdays of Prayer

Praying for special intentions each Tuesday of the 13 weeks leading to the feast day of St. Anthony has been an observed tradition of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God since 1936. This year the Sisters will continue the tradition each Tuesday from March 17 through June 9, 2015. A special Liturgy will be held on June 13- the feast day of St. Anthony - in Mary Immaculate Chapel.

As always, we will keep all of our friends and benefactors in prayer. If you have a special prayer intention you would like the Sisters to pray for during the St. Anthony Devotion, please use the enclosed envelope to send us your request. You may also call (412) 882-9911 or e-mail info@osfprov.org.

Note: St. Anthony Devotion pamphlets are available by request.



Image: Uwe Bumann/Shutterstock

We are God's Hands and Feet and Heart By Sister Elise Mora

Sister Elise Mora, OSF, is a member of our congregation and currently serves at St. Bonaventure University in Olean, NY as an adjunct professor teaching Spanish. During the university's recent winter break, she travelled to Bolivia to spend time with Sisters Elenice M. Costa and Luzia Ferreira, who work among the residents of Riberalta.

A year ago, I was asked by our General Minister, Sister Joanne, if I would consider spending time with two of our Brazilian Sisters who had begun a new ministry in Riberalta, Bolivia. I was to witness how they lived among those they ministered to, what their needs might be and, above all, help assure them that their American Sisters fully support their efforts. Importantly, too, I speak Spanish, the native language of Bolivia, and I have had many years' experience working among the inner city poor.

My itinerary included a day in LaPaz, a huge, bustling and confusing city of a million residents, surrounded by the majestic Andes Mountains. The begging that I witnessed there broke my heart. Many of those doing the begging were "Cholitas," the name for indigenous Quechua or Aymara women. Even children and the very aged beg in the streets and from every doorway.

Riberalta, the site of our mission, is a city of 80,000 inhabitants located in the northernmost part of Bolivia, close to the Brazilian border and adjacent to the Amazon River Forest. Departing from the LaPaz airport, I was somewhat taken back when boarding the plane became a free-for-all, everyone clamoring to get to their seats. Arriving in the Riberalta's tiny ramshackle airport, the luggage was deposited willy-nilly in the middle of a red mud field where passengers climbed over one another to retrieve their bags. Fortunately, Sister Luzia, one of our young Brazilian Sisters accompanying me, was able to climb into the chaos to rescue my suitcase. We then took a "taxi," which was simply a motorcycle pulling a three-seat wagon, to the convent.

Riberalta is extremely poor. Mostly, the residents do day labor, when they can find it, to feed their families. One rarely sees a car. Motorcycles are the primary mode of transportation. However, not everyone can afford one, so they rely on taxi motorcycles. *Not the ones with the attached three seats*, but rather passengers ride sitting behind the driver. Sister Luzia and Sister Elenice, the other Brazilian Sister living here, both ride sideways, more demurely than I did. I had to hold on to the driver for fear of falling off!



In Riberalta, Sister Luzia's ministry includes a Children's Program that offers solidarity and support for children and their parents in the formation of Christian values and development of a better quality of life through tutoring, prayer and shared family activities.

things. I was told that drug growers have cleared sections deep in the Amazon interior to grow coca (cocaine) and whatever else they harvest. They are accessible only by small planes and untouched by the law.

Because of the continuous rain, we were limited in our activities in Riberalta. However, I saw enough of the city to get a good



Sister Elise takes a taxi motorcycle through the streets of Riberalta during her recent trip to Bolivia.

The house our Sisters live in is a cut above the others, but not by much. It belongs to the Vicariate (we would say Diocese) and has no running water, no hot water, no flushing toilets, no showers, no washing machine and there is no car. They lug their water into the house twice a day from an outside faucet. Moreover, they never know exactly at what time the city will turn it on or off. Just to wash one's hands is a challenge! As for pouring cold water over oneself in lieu of a shower, what more can I say! The Sisters do all their laundry by hand, including towels and sheets. When food shopping, they buy only as much as they can carry on a motorcycle and still hold on.

Unfortunately, I didn't get to meet many of the people that the Sisters serve. This was the "vacation" time from school when entire families leave town to go off and harvest hazelnuts, *in much the same way that illegal and legal farm workers do here in the U.S. when the crops are ready.*

One day, Sister Elenice and I accompanied an American from St. Louis, who works for the Bishop as an advisor, on a trip into the Amazon Forest – by car. The effect of the massive cutting down of trees in the Amazon became apparent immediately. As you know, the Amazon is one of the Earth's leading sources of oxygen, but the forest is being cut to raise cattle, among other

Continued on page 5

WE ARE GOD’S HANDS...(continued from page 4)

sense of who the people are that our Brazilian Sisters work with, as well as their needs. I also learned much about the Sisters themselves – about what they do, how much they are willing to do without, how very hard they work, how dedicated to the poor they are and about their big, generous hearts. I have great admiration, respect and love for them. It was a privilege to be there.

Now that I am back at St. Bonaventure’s, the memories linger. The painful ones, I would prefer to forget, but that’s not likely. I came away enriched by the experience and grateful for the opportunity to again look directly into the face of suffering humanity. And while I am grateful for the life that I live, the question that always comes to mind is that perennial and unanswerable one: Why must so many people suffer so much? Why are they born into misery, live in it and die in it? Actually, I think we do know. I believe it was Mother Theresa who said: **“WE are God’s hands and feet and heart.”** So, while we are asking for miracles, God is waiting for us to **be** the miracle.



A home in Bolivia similar to those in Riberalta.

Precious Franciscan Manuscripts Visit NYC



I never thought I would have had these in my hands,” exclaimed Rev. Pierangelo Massetti. What Fr. Massetti was referring to was an assortment of priceless manuscripts that he and his team of two other monks and three restoration experts restored over a period of 6 months at the Praglia Abbey, near Padua, Italy.

The documents are part of the collection of medieval manuscripts from the Sacred Heart Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, and embody the most ancient artifacts of St. Francis’ life and theological tradition. While the actual signature of St. Francis is nowhere to be found in these documents, historians agree that he most likely dictated his writings. However, they also concur that his hand most certainly touched the papal bulls, also part of this collection, written in the 1220s, recording the Pope’s messages to the newly established religious order.

Leaving Italy for the first time in 700 years, the documents were initially on display at the lower House of Parliament in London, followed by a private showing at the United Nations headquarters, November 17 through November

28. They were then open to the public at the Brooklyn, NY, Borough Hall until mid-January in an exhibition, “Friar Francis: Traces, Words and Images.” It is the biggest exhibition ever to be held at Borough Hall.

The exhibition has been requested by museums and foundations all over the world, from Russia to Argentina. The friars of the Sacred Heart Convent are, however, reluctant to let the founding texts of their order trot the globe and will rather house them in their library after January.

Among the documents, the highlight was Manuscript 338, a miscellaneous collection of medieval texts inscribed by at least nine different amanuenses (persons who write what another dictates). It contains “Canticle of the Sun,” a praise and thank you to the Lord for such creatures as ‘Brother Fire’ and ‘Sister Water.’ For this manuscript, the challenges to Fr. Manssetti and his staff were to restore the original cover, in 13th century wood covered in goat leather, and then reconstruct the missing fragments.

These restoration experts also repaired the fissures of much of the original parchment manuscripts with Japanese vegetable fiber or a bovine membrane. Five of the manuscripts were initially unbound, parchment by parchment, and eventually reassembled and stitched back together with a linen thread. Artifacts also included a parchment with the early recounting of the life of St. Francis, commissioned around the time of his canonization in 1228. A more comprehensive telling of St. Francis’ life was also displayed, a book written by his first biographer, Thomas of Celano, in the 1240s.

“St. Francis was a man, a saint, of the people, who truly stood with those who are the least every day,” said Ken Hackett, the U.S. ambassador to the Vatican. “We can see Pope Francis exemplified in his trace as he puts into practice every day his advocacy for the marginalized and the disadvantaged.”

Editor’s note: Our own Sisters Francine and Joan of Arc had the distinct privilege to visit this Franciscan exhibition in Brooklyn due to the generosity of one of our congregation’s most loyal benefactors. They were both in awe of these manuscripts, especially as Franciscan women religious.

Faith Leaders Sign Declaration Against Modern Day Slavery

For the first time in history, both Sunni and Shia leaders joined with Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, Jewish, Hindu and Buddhist faiths to publicly work together to eliminate modern-day human slavery. Assembled at the Vatican, they signed a *Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery* on December 2, 2014, the World Day for the Abolition of Slavery.

Shortly after his election, Pope Francis sent Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, a handwritten note saying, "It would be good to examine human trafficking." That was the spark that led to the formation of the Global Freedom Network (GFN), an initiative spearheaded by Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Andrew Forest, chair and founder of the Walk Free Foundation, with the mission of eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking by the year 2020.

In signing the declaration the Pope urged governments, businesses and all people of good will to join forces against this "crime against humanity."

The declaration states, "Modern slavery . . . fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity. We pledge ourselves here today to do all in our power, within our faith communities and beyond, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked so that their future may be restored."

"Today, we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human and moral imperative," said the joint declaration, read aloud in English by a man from Ghana and in Spanish by a woman from Mexico, both former victims of human trafficking and forced labor.



Photo: Kay Chernush for the US State Department

Note: To read and sign the declaration, please visit www.globalfreedomnetwork.org

How You Can Help

- **PRAY** for the victims of human trafficking, many of whom are young children.
- **VOLUNTEER** at a safe house that helps trafficking victims rebuild their lives. Many victims need assistance with earning a high school diploma, getting a job and finding housing.
- **SPEAK UP.** Contact your congressperson or senator to express your support for legislation that helps human trafficking victims and prohibits this egregious crime.
- **LEARN.** There is plenty of information online about human trafficking and the impact it has on the lives of people around the world. Learn more about human trafficking by visiting
 - polarisproject.org
 - unodc.org
 - humantrafficking.org
 - franciscansinternational.org

If you suspect a Human Trafficking Situation, contact
National Human Trafficking Resource Center
1-888-373-7888
or text BeFree (233733)

WHAT IS YOUR SLAVERY FOOTPRINT?

How many slaves work for you? The answer may be more than you think. From your cup of coffee to your computer to the shirt you are wearing—there are few products not touched by slavery. Even if a product is not directly produced using slave labor, slavery can be found in the supply chain. Many of these slaves are children.

The graphic on the right shows items included on the US Department of Labor’s “List of Goods Produced by Child or Forced Labor.” The prevalence of slavery represented by this list feels overwhelming. However, each one of us can help stop this type of slavery by becoming informed consumers.

How do you know if what you buy is slavery-free? Some products are easier to identify because they are certified as *Fair Trade*, *Equal Exchange*, *GoodWeave* and *Rainforest Alliance*. For companies or products without these certifications, you can go visit **Free to Work**’s website (free2work.org) to see their ratings.

If you would like your favorite products to be slave-free, write companies and tell them that you will only buy their products if they can certify they are made without slave labor. Your voice can make a difference. Recently, due to the urging of fans, *Harry Potter* chocolates announced that all of their products will be fair trade certified by the end of 2015.

To learn more about your slavery footprint, visit slaveryfootprint.org.



Graphic created at Tagxedo.com

The Story of Lena

This is a recounting of a young woman held in captivity by human traffickers. It needs no introduction. It speaks for itself.

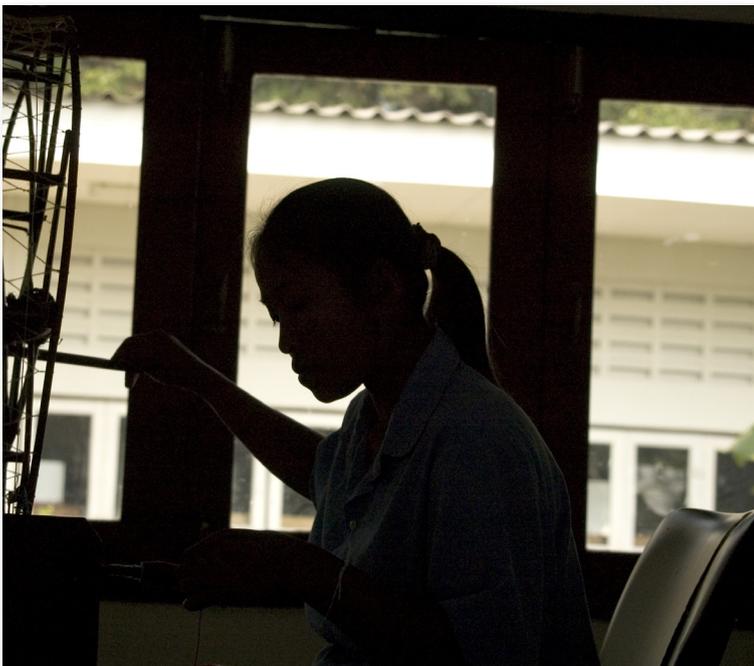


Photo: Kay Chernush for the US State Department

You can’t use my real name. Or even the name they gave me in China. I don’t even know what my name should be. I am not the same person who left this village two years ago. My body came back but my soul is somewhere else. No one recognizes me anymore and everyone who comes to see me . . . I think they come to stare at me because I am dirty now. I am filthy inside and my soul is empty. I don’t know if I can live this way. My mother comes to my room and says, “Lena, you were such a friendly person. I miss you the way you were,” and I say, “Mama, I am different. Something died in me. I think it was happiness.”

I never thought this would happen to me. I was sixteen when they came to my village. They looked very nice and offered jobs in China to the girls in our village. The program looked very good. Three months of cooking school with all expenses paid. Then guaranteed work for one year in an expensive Chinese hotel. Nine other girls and I signed their contracts. They didn’t give us time to read them or take them to our parents. I thought our parents would have to sign them because we were still in school but they told us it was not a problem. They were in a hurry and we signed the papers before all the places were gone.

We were so excited when we got our tickets and visas to China and the nice people who came to the village escorted us to the plane. Our families thought we would make good money and be able to help at home. But then, everything was different. Our escorts on the flight treated us like we were criminals. In China, they burned our passports.

When Masha tried to fight them, they beat her and raped her in front of us. There was no cooking school or jobs. They first day in China they took us to a morgue to show us the bodies of two girls who had jumped out of the window to try and get away. They told us there was no way out until we had worked as prostitutes long enough to pay back our debts for tickets and expenses. But they kept all the money.

I am home now because our brothel was raided by police six months later and I was deported. You might think I am lucky, but I am not. Someday they will come back for me and if I do not go, they will kill me and maybe my family. Once they come to your village and you sign the paper, your life is over. I wanted to be a teacher.

In Prayerful Memory



Sister Mary Loretta Keserauskas, OSF

Born: October 28, 1916

Entered our community: February 2, 1939

Returned to God: December 1, 2014

Sister Mary Loretta Keserauskis, OSF, a Sister of St. Francis of the Providence of God for 75 years, passed away on December 1, 2014, at the age of 98. The fifth of six children, Sister Loretta was born and raised in East St. Louis, IL. After graduating from high school, she worked for her brother at his furnace company. Having contact with our sisters who had opened a school in East St. Louis, including driving the family car for their needs during high school, she eventually decided to enter the congregation in 1939, at age 22.

Sister Loretta had a long career teaching kindergarten, grades one or two or a combination of both. Perhaps her most challenging year was opening St. Michael's School in Coopersburg, MI, while at the same time being both principal and the first/second grade teacher. There is little doubt of how she inspired these students as they paid for her flight to attend their high school graduation several years later. In 1964, she was asked to open the new elementary school in Kearney, NJ, becoming its first principal while again teaching first and second grades. Sister Loretta's 48 years in education ministry included thirteen years at St. Valentine School in Bethel Park, as well as schools in Detroit, Grand Rapids, New Kensington, PA, Dubois, PA, and Mount Vernon, IL. She later taught in the RTR tutoring program at the motherhouse.

Attending Detroit University, Aquinas College, Mount Mercy College and Duquesne, Sister earned her bachelor's degree in Education. She also took courses in administration at St. Louis University and Seton Hall.

In 1989, Sister Loretta formally retired, but she remained quite active, becoming a driver for the sisters as well as coordinator for other drivers. In 1999, she was asked to spend time in Danbury, CT, to assist other sisters in their ministries. Although asked to stay for a month, she spent five years there ministering to the elderly. She told others, "Since I bring the Eucharist to the elderly or the ill, I feel that I am a Christ-bearer who carries the Lord to those who long for Him."

Sister Loretta was a strong believer of going "where Providence sends us," asking that a reading from a letter to the Hebrews be read at her wake service wherein Paul described the gift of self which is asked of all of us.

Sister Mary Georgene Utaris, OSF

Born: February 23, 1915

Entered our community: July 13, 1931

Returned to God: December 13, 2014

Sister Mary Georgene Utaris, OSF, passed away on December 13, 2014, at the age of 99, in her 83rd year as a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God. The youngest of seven children, Sister Georgene was born and raised in the small coal-mining community of Shenandoah, PA, where she was a member of St. George Parish. After grade school, she enrolled in St. Francis Academy in Pittsburgh and entered the congregation upon her graduation in 1931.

A graduate of Duquesne University with a bachelor's degree in Education, Sister Georgene helped shape the lives of many children in her 38 years as an elementary teacher in New York, Connecticut, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, including 12 years at St. George School in Philadelphia. She was known for her classroom art, as well as for her many paintings that decorated the motherhouse interior.

After years of teaching, Sister Georgene followed a call to a new ministry becoming a patient visitor at the congregation's Good Samaritan Hospital in Mt. Vernon, IL. This was followed by a period in the motherhouse as an infirmary aide to our older sisters. Later, Sister was active as an assistant in the congregation's Archives department while still finding time to work as a receptionist. Eventually, time and ill health forced her into the final ministry of her community life, that as a Minister of Prayer. Even then, she continued to employ her artistic skills for several years to produce pieces of art that were sold in the congregation's gift shop.

Sister Georgene will be remembered for her special love for the Eucharist and could often be found in chapel in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. On the occasion of her 75th anniversary of religious commitment, Sister Georgene chose these three words to describe herself: *Happy*, having reached a state of joy entering her twilight years; *Grateful* to God and her community for an enriched life as a woman religious; and *Prayerful*, as she looked forward to her final days filled with prayer for her religious community and those who ask for prayerful remembrance.





Sister Mary Monica Belskas, OSF

Born: June 15, 1918

Entered our community: September 12, 1937

Returned to the Lord: December 18, 2014

Sister M. Monica Belskas, OSF, returned to our Lord on December 18, 2014, in her 77th year as a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God. She was a native of Cherry, IL, a small former coal mining community in northcentral Illinois. The third of four siblings, she attended the local St. Anthony School before moving on to St. Francis Academy. Sister was always quick to say that the greatest influence in her life was her mother, once stating, “The respect for the sisters that I learned from my mother carried over into my years of ministry.”

Equipped with the knowledge gained from a variety of courses, conferences and workshops, Sister Monica’s ministry centered about housekeeping and took her from Los Angeles to Elizabeth, NJ, and various sites in between, culminating in her being named executive housekeeper at the congregation’s Good Samaritan Hospital in Mt. Vernon, IL, a position she held from 1963 through 1989.

Sister took delight in her work and was once told that she and her crew maintained the “cleanest hospital in the Midwest.” She fondly earned the title “The White Tornado,” as whatever cleaning task she and her staff undertook, ended up spotless. She returned to the motherhouse in 1989 and supervised the housekeeping and laundry departments for the next ten years. One of Sister’s other passions was decorating for the Christmas holidays, and she was well known for her creations during the holiday season at the hospital.

Sustained by a deep prayer life, Sister Monica said the following when asked about her life as a religious: “I must say that being a Sister of St. Francis is a cause dearest to my heart as well as the fact that I am able to pray for others and be of service to them. To anyone interested in religious life I merely say, Come and see!” Sister Monica often described how this verse gave her much consolation and it offers a portrayal of how she led her life: *Come to me all you who are weary, labor and thirst, and I refresh you for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

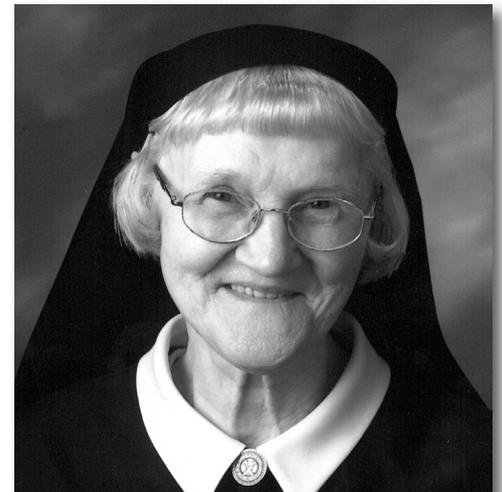
Sister Mary Florence Curlonis, OSF

Born: March 25, 1922

Entered our community: September 8, 1939

Returned to the Lord: January 6, 2015

Sister Mary Florence Curlonis, OSF, celebrated 92 years on this earth, with 75 years as a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God. The youngest of three children, Sister Florence was born and raised in Philadelphia, attending St. George’s School where she was introduced to our Franciscan sisters. Afterwards, she graduated from John W. Hallahan Catholic Girls High School, along with 976 other girls, before entering our community in 1939. Although she had already decided to enter the congregation, our Sister Lucille encouraged her to attend her senior prom, wherein she recalled, “It was a memorable occasion, the only blight being that five other girls had the same gown as mine!”



Resurrection Invitation

By Sister M. Florence Curlonis

What lies here in these caskets:
Hurtful memories of long ago?
Failures, sins, misunderstandings?
Break their bones, and ready them for burning!

Lo! Behold! The brilliant, splendid
Light of Christ!

His light, flowing from a Heart of
Infinite Love, compassionate mercy,
Obliterates all that has lain in these caskets.

Oh! Wonder and Glory of our resurrection –
Refulgent with the radiant beams of
His Resurrection and Ascension to Glory!
Our heaven begins on this lighted way to
Heaven!

A graduate of Duquesne University, Sister Florence dedicated over 25 years to teaching grades one through four. Upon earning a Library Science certificate from Edinboro University, she became a school librarian for 30 years at St. Gabriel’s School, St. Francis Academy and our own convent library.

One of Sister Florence’s favorite passages was from the Book of Proverbs, 17:22: “A merry heart does good like good medicine.” Sisters, students and employees here at the motherhouse recall the quotes and jokes that Sister would have on hand whenever conversation lulled.

Sister Florence took her spiritual development quite seriously, spending a lifetime seeking healing and ongoing conversion. She authored several poems wherein she reflected upon her experiences as a religious.

In her autobiography, Sister Florence began by comparing her life to a kaleidoscope that reflected many colors. She reminds us that in life we can experience dark, even though the patterns might be beautiful. But we need only turn the kaleidoscope to get greater clarity, different designs and more light. In dark times, Sister Florence was always able to turn the kaleidoscope.

What You Should Know About Wills

The first thing to mention – it is most important that every adult have a Last Will and Testament. It is important for your family and all those people and charities with whom you wish to share your earthly goods.

You can perpetuate your good works and share in the spiritual benefits of the Franciscan family by including the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God in your Last Will and Testament. God's work thus becomes your own and remains such even as eternal life begins.

In this brief article, we cannot tell you everything you should know about making a will, but we do wish to point out a few important facts.



1. **You Must Have a Will.** If you plan to remember the Sisters in your will, you must have a will! A note left with relatives, a promise or verbal request has no effect under the law, and your true wishes many never happen.
2. **Consult an Attorney.** Do not try to write a will yourself. It really costs very little to have a lawyer draw up a will. Properly done, it can save your estate a great deal in taxes, bonding, probate costs and other possible expenses.
3. **Other Helpful Gifts.** Besides the gift of money, remember that property, securities (stocks and bonds) and life insurance are welcome. There can be tax advantages in giving these.
4. **Let Us Know.** If you have remembered the Sisters in your will or plan to do so, please tell us. We would like to thank you rather than the executor of your estate.
5. **Remembering Charities.** It is good to remember charities in your will just in case your relatives pre-decease you. Note well, without a living beneficiary, the state becomes your beneficiary.
6. **Legal Title.** The Sisters' legal title is the **Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, 3603 McRoberts Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234.**
7. **Other Important Forms.** When you make your will, you should also complete other important forms at the same time, such as Power of Attorney – in case you should become incapacitated – for health care purposes.

Note: This information is not intended as legal or tax advice. For legal or tax advice, please contact an attorney or your financial advisor.

Robyn Moeller Named Development Director



The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God are pleased to announce the appointment of Robyn Moeller as the Director of Development.

In this position, Robyn will be responsible for promoting the understanding and support of the mission and ministry of our congregation. Chief among her responsibilities are managing activities relating to the planning and coordination of fundraising and public relations efforts. She replaces Nick Rodi, who recently retired as the development director, but who will remain with the congregation in a part-time capacity as a development consultant.

A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with a B.A. in Communications and English Writing, Robyn began her work career with the congregation as a communications intern prior to being named development assistant in 2005. During her time with the congregation, she has had responsibility for the Spring Fling, the Autumn Gala and soup sales, among other events. She also has handled public relations, production and maintenance of our website, social media, our donor database and graphic arts production. She also serves as co-chair for the Collaborative Communications Committee of the Catholic Sisters Leadership Council.

Born and raised in Connellsville, PA, Robyn now resides in Shaler Township with her husband, Chris, who works for Giant Eagle Market District as a graphic artist.

Franciscan Spirit and Life Center

3605 McRoberts Road • Pittsburgh, PA 15234-2314
(412) 881-9207 or fslc@osfprov.org
NEW: www.osfprov.org/ministries/spirit-life-center

The Center is Available for Meetings, Retreats or Programs

The Franciscan Spirit and Life Center is located on the grounds of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God campus in Pittsburgh, PA. The Center's facilities, its warm hospitality and peaceful surroundings make it an ideal site for:

- ♦ Retreats
- ♦ Meetings
- ♦ Conferences
- ♦ Seminars
- ♦ In-Service days
- ♦ Adult Education Programs
- ♦ Days and Evenings of Recollection

Our Facility includes:

- ♦ Wireless Internet Access.
- ♦ A variety of meeting rooms equipped with audio-visual equipment.
- ♦ The option of having meals prepared by staff or catered. By special arrangement, you can also choose to prepare your own meals in our on-site kitchen.
- ♦ Single and double bedrooms furnished with bed linens and towels. We can accommodate up to 25 persons.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Connecting Women's Wisdom

Sunday, March 22 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM

**Sisters of St. Francis Motherhouse Lecture Hall
3603 McRoberts Rd. • Pittsburgh, PA 15234**

Take time to focus more clearly, breathe more deeply and live more mindfully. *Connecting Woman's Wisdom* includes a liturgy service in Mary Immaculate Chapel followed by brunch with the Sisters and a program featuring group sharing, quiet reflective time and a presentation on a topic relevant to woman today.

FREE-WILL Program

Space is limited, and registration is required.
To register, or for more information, please call
(412) 885-7406 no later than **Monday, March 8.**

Mother's Day Brunch

Sunday, May 10 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

**Sisters of St. Francis Motherhouse Lecture Hall
3603 McRoberts Rd. • Pittsburgh, PA 15234**

\$15 per person; \$8 for children age 8 and under

Space is limited, and registration is required.
To register, or for more information, please call
(412) 885-7403 no later than **Tuesday, May 5.**

The Hermitages

Peace, Reflection and Renewal

\$20 per day

\$38 overnight

\$250 per week

Small additional fee for Hermitage #2 w/fireplace

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION (by Appointment)

Sister J. Lora Dambroski, OSF (412) 885-7408

Sister Althea Anne Spencer, OSF (412) 885-7406

Sister Carolyn Bodenschatz, CSJ (412) 819-0135

COUNSELING (Individual & Couples)

Sister Nancy Langhart, OSF (412) 882-9911

THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE

Sister Althea Anne Spencer, OSF* (412) 885-7233

**licensed massage therapist, a member of the American Massage Therapy Association and NCBTM Board certified*

Tai Chi

With Gurney Bolster, MA, Dance Therapy

Certified Tai Chi Instructor and Movement Analyst

Tai Chi focuses on gentle, flowing movement and centered relaxed posture. Regular practice of Tai Chi has been shown to:

- ♦ Improve Balance, Gait & Coordination
- ♦ Increase Muscle Strength
- ♦ Improve Focus & Concentration
- ♦ Prevent Falls-Reduce Stress
- ♦ Lower Blood Pressure Improve Overall Psychological Health

Gurney teaches a form of **Tai Chi endorsed by the Arthritis Foundation** as a safe exercise that may diminish pain and prevent falls. Satisfied clients include adults 50+, persons with chronic pain, those working sedentary jobs and others seeking a more healthy and active life.

Monday Evenings

March 23 - June 1
(No Class Memorial Day)

Continuing Class: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Introductory Class: 7:15 PM - 8:15 PM

Cost: \$80.⁰⁰ for 10 classes

Wednesday Afternoons

March 25 - May 27

Introductory Class: 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Continuing Class: 2:15 PM - 3:15 PM

Cost: \$80.⁰⁰ for 10 classes

**Franciscan Spirit and Life Center
3605 McRoberts Rd. • Pittsburgh, PA 15234**

To register or for more information, please contact Mimi DiGregory at **412-881-9207** or mdigregory@osfprov.org.



Sisters of Saint Francis of the Providence of God
Confidently, Joyfully, We Go Forward!

3603 McRoberts Road ♦ Pittsburgh, PA 15234-2314

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pittsburgh, PA
Permit No. 2544



**CHILDCARE IS IN OUR HEARTS AND
CHILDREN ARE THE HEART OF OUR CENTER!**

(412) 882-5085

fcdcc@osfprov.org

NEW: www.osfprov.org/ministries/day-care-center

The Franciscan Child Day Care Center (FCDCC) has provided a child-centered environment for over 30 years. Our secure center is a *Keystone STARS* facility. We care for **infants, toddlers and preschoolers**, as well as provide care for **school age children** in our **Before and After Care Program** and **Summer Program**.

Full and part time care plans are available.

UNITED WAY CODE: 3485

Labels For Education Participant



LabelsForEducation.com

SOUP TAKE OUT



Price: \$5 per quart (includes 2 rolls)

To Order: Please call (412) 885-7232 by the Deadline

Pick up: 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

3603 McRoberts Rd. * Pittsburgh, PA 15234

APRIL MENU

Pick-up: Wednesday, April 15

Order Deadline: Thursday, April 9

**Choices: Wedding, Greek Chicken,
& Hearty Pea Soup (w/ham)**

MAY MENU

Pick-up: Wednesday, May 13

Order Deadline: Thursday, May 7

**Choices: Wedding, Pesto Chicken &
Roasted Eggplant Bisque**

All proceeds benefit the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God