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The Whitehall FRANCISCAN

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God



God's Extravagant Love

A message from General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, OSF

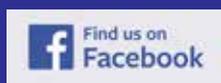


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God is love. . . . This is love: not that we have loved God, but that God loved us. (John 4: 8-10)

Every so often we experience something that leaves us absolutely speechless. It might be a gift, a kindness, a phone call or a visit. Since we were not expecting it, we are touched deeply by the other's attention, time, and extension of self. We are preparing to celebrate one of the greatest mysteries of our Christian tradition, the Incarnation, our God choosing to become human. What more could God do to convey such extravagant love? We do not merit this love, it is freely given. This extravagance is an expression of the deepest self-giving and profound love of our God.



The incarnation is a doctrine too fantastic to be false.

~Eric Doyle, OFM

Some years ago I was part of a team of Franciscans designing a program with the title *God's Extravagant Love*. It was an opportunity to consider the richness of our Franciscan spirituality and theology. Not only was the title striking to me but the experience of delving more into our own rich tradition was phenomenal. Franciscan spirituality is described as being Christocentric because Francis of Assisi fixed his eyes on Jesus Christ and his heart on the mystery of a God who became human, gave himself completely and continues to be with us.

This season calls us not only to ponder this gift and mystery, it also invites us to ponder how to respond with a spirit of love, generosity and selflessness. What will you do for another this season as a way of recognizing and extending incredible God's love? What will be the extension of yourself that you will share?

In January our congregation will celebrate our General Chapter in Brazil. This gathering of community members calls us to look back, look forward and look around. We look back to see how we have lived the gospel life, forward to be attentive to where God is calling us and look around to see who are the sisters with the skills and capacities to lead our congregation in the next phase of our journey. We ask for your prayerful support that we may be attentive to the Spirit of God at work within us, that we may be grateful for the many blessings and gifts we have received and that we may be open and courageous to go forward confidently and joyfully to where God's Providence beckons.

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, . . . all things were created by him and for him. Christ is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1: 15-17)

2017 General Chapter

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God will convoke a General Chapter in São Paulo, Brazil from January 8 - 18, 2017.

Like most communities, we are mandated by our Constitution, the Rule by which we are organized and live, to have General Chapters every four years. Our General Chapters include certain common tasks; namely, taking a long and honest look at the state of affairs of our Congregation and selecting the Sisters who will serve as our leaders for the next four years. All major decisions are made by consensus during this time of intense listening and discerning God's will for the our mission in the Church and in the world.

Participation in our General Chapter is generally open to all those who meet the delegate criteria and whose circumstances allow them to

actively participate. Sister delegates are approved by members of the congregation. Those who cannot be delegates contribute through prayer and engaging in meaningful conversations and discernment.

General Chapter consists of two parts. The *Chapter of Affairs* is a time to reflect upon the past four years and assess where we have been, how we have fulfilled the acts of the previous Chapter and what we have accomplished for Christ and His Church. Then we plan our decisions and directions for where our efforts can best be directed going forward.

During the *Chapter of Elections*, held in the final days of General Chapter, leaders are chosen for the next four years. There are no posters or campaigning. Instead, the delegates focus on the leadership qualities that will be needed

to carry the community forward. They pray. They listen to one another and each person nominated. Then, they pray again. Over several days, they vote first for a General Minister and Assistant General Minister, then for the councilors.

When the General Chapter closes, sisters return to their ministries, and the new leaders form themselves into a collaborative team. However, the Spirit that hovered over the days of the General Chapter lingers on not only in Brazil but in the United States and wherever else a Sister lives or ministers.

Please pray for peace and discernment, and for openness to all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Note: A full report on the 2017 General Chapter will appear in the next Whitehall Franciscan issue.

Where Providence Leads, We Faithfully Follow

On September 17 – the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi – the transfer of our Generalate (Congregational Offices) to Brazil was completed with a special Liturgy and service celebrated with our Sisters in Brazil. As we share news of this joyful moment in our Congregation's history, we also wish to address some questions or concerns.

What does this mean for our Sisters and ministries in the USA?

The transfer most affects our leadership team who now work primarily out of Brazil, but continue to actively engage with our Sisters, ministries and administrative office in the USA. Our mission in the USA remains unchanged. Our Sisters continue to live in the USA and engage in ministries and outreach. The Franciscan Child Day Care Center remains a sponsored ministry. Our friends and benefactors continue with us on our faithful journey as Associates, Auxiliary members, prayer partners, donors and volunteers. Our USA administrative offices also remain in Pittsburgh, PA.



The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God leadership team (left to right) Sisters Selma Maria dos Santos, Barbara Zilch, Joance Conceição dos Santos, Joanne Brazinski (General Minister), Maria Goretti Avanzi and J. Lora Dambroski.

How does having the Generalate in Brazil benefit the Sisters and their Mission?

Our Generalate's location is where it can best serve our shared mission. With 42 Sisters, several women in formation, 3 schools and 5 missions (and growing) - Brazil is where our Sisters in leadership are most needed at this moment in our history. The poverty in some areas of Brazil is unimaginable, and communication with ministries in poorer and more rural areas is challenging – even within Brazil. Our 27 Sisters, Franciscan Child Day Care, ministries and collaborative efforts in the USA remain a priority, but the needs are different and more manageable via phone, e-mail and teleconferencing. Also, with our leadership serving where they are most needed and travelling less, we can redirect resources in the USA to where they are most needed, such as for the continued care of our senior Sisters.

Where will my donations go?

All donations received in the USA will continue to first go toward the needs of our Sisters, ministries and outreach in the USA – unless a donor requests otherwise. We continue to operate as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, and all donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

For more information, please contact us at info@osfprov.org or 412-885-7232.

The First Christmas Crèche

Crèche is today's fashionable term for what most of us grew up calling a Christmas crib set. Crèche may sound highbrow, but it's actually French for the trough where fodder for animals is set out. Like manger, it emphasizes the lowly aspect of Jesus' birth.

There is no more familiar scene to Christians than the crèche – with its mother and child and the father bending over protectively. They are in the humble stable, watched by animals and kneeling shepherds. Above the tableau is a hovering angel. In the background are the twinkling lights of the little town of Bethlehem.

Where did this long-standing custom or tradition come from?

The Christ Child in the manger and other pictures of the story of Bethlehem have been used in church services from the first centuries. But the crib in its present form and its use outside the church originated with St. Francis of Assisi.

It was in 1293 that the first crèche was celebrated in the woods of Greccio near Assisi, on Christmas Eve. Francis had long been nurturing a heartfelt desire to celebrate Christmas in a wonderful new manner. He wanted people to remember that Jesus was born in a humble stable. His plan was to have midnight Mass celebrated in the presence of a realistic representation of the humble grotto of Bethlehem, complete with live animals. “For I wish to do something that will recall to memory the little Child who was born in Bethlehem and set before our bodily eyes in some way the inconveniences of his infant needs.” According to St. Bonaventure, he even obtained the approval of Pope Honorius, so that he would not be accused of willfully introducing novelty into the sacred ceremonies.

There lived in town a nobleman by the name of Giovannai Velita, a very holy man who was devoted to the brothers. It is said that Blessed Francis loved him with a special affection because he despised the nobility of the flesh and strove after the nobility of the soul.

Francis called upon Giovanni about two weeks before Christmas and said to him, “If you desire that we should celebrate this year’s Christmas together at Greccio, go with haste and diligently prepare what I tell you. For I wish to do something that will recall to memory the little Child who was born in Bethlehem.” When the good and faithful man heard these things, he ran with haste and prepared the place all the things the saint had told him.

The brothers were called from their various places. They joined with the crowds of local residents, field workers and shepherds; all were drawn towards the manger where Francis knelt. They brought candles and torches to brighten the night. Greccio became the new Bethlehem. Solemn Mass was sung. St. Francis, dressed in deacon’s vestments (it is said that out of humility he never attempted to become a priest), sang the Gospel in a voice described by his biographer, Thomas Celano, as sweet, clear, strong and sonorous. He then spoke to those gathered about the first Christmas and the



miraculous impact that placing their faith in Christ, the baby born in a simple manger in Bethlehem, could make in their lives. He urged them to reject hatred and embrace love, with God’s help.

St. Francis’ idea of bringing Bethlehem into one’s own town spread quickly all over the Christian world, and soon there were Christmas cribs in churches and homes. The Moravian Germans spread this custom to the United States. They called it Putz.

If you’ve set up a Nativity scene in your home, maybe the “supporting characters” you’ve arranged in the stable are waiting for you to lay the Star of the show – the baby Jesus – in the manger on Christmas Eve. Whether it’s under your tree, small enough to fit in the palm of your hand or full of lights in your yard, a movable model of the Incarnation not only completes the Christmas décor, but offers a tangible means for reflecting on the source of our joy this season.

We invite you to become a partner in our Franciscan mission.

No matter how small your estate is, creating a current, valid will is the most important step in careful planning for your loved ones and for those charitable organizations you wish to support. A charitable bequest is simple, convenient and among the easiest ways to offer support to the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God and their mission for years to come. Including the Sisters in your will does not affect your current income and may favorably impact estate taxes. As with any planned gift, please consult with your attorney and/or tax advisor before making any decisions.

For more information about including the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God in your estate plans or other ways to support to our Franciscan mission, please contact our Development office at (412) 885-7223 or development@osfprov.org

The Ministry of Spiritual Direction

“Spiritual direction is, in reality, nothing more than a way of leading us to see and obey the real Director – the Holy Spirit hidden in the depths of our soul.” ~ Thomas Merton

Many, many years ago, people who wanted to live more fully for God – to know Him more intimately in their daily lives and see themselves in His more truthful light – would often seek the guidance from an ascetic who was, more than likely, living in a desert. In many ways, those ascetics were the first spiritual directors.

Hundreds of years later, those of us who seek spiritual direction have it much easier – no desert experience required. Indeed, times have changed and the ways in which we seek, find and experience spiritual direction has changed as well. But the need for it has remained the same. Fact is, all throughout the history of the Church, spiritual direction has had an important place in the Christian life.

What exactly is spiritual direction? First and foremost, it is a way to grow closer to God. Since God communicates with each person uniquely, it often helps to have another person to talk with about how you experience God. Spiritual direction provides an opportunity to notice, reflect, discern and discover where God is present in the life of each person.

Spiritual direction is NOT psychotherapy, counseling or any other type of therapy. It is not a dependent relationship in which your director holds all the wisdom and answers to your problems. It is not marriage counseling nor is it a self-help course. All of these have their proper place, but they are not spiritual direction. The director does not tell you what to do, but rather helps you discern what God may be calling you to do.

A spiritual director has been called by God and the community and he or she is trained to companion another person, listening to that person’s life story with an ear for the movement of the Spirit. This could involve looking at one’s prayer life, relationships or their encounter with God through the amazing beauty of creation.

Perhaps the term “spiritual director” is somewhat of a misnomer because the real director is always the Holy Spirit. A spiritual director listens, encourages, guides, challenges, accompanies and prays with the individual to discern the movement of the Spirit in his or her life. The spiritual director helps to free a person to more deeply discover God and share in his or her life journey. The spiritual director does not “direct” in the sense of giving advice and solving problems. Rather he or she helps a person respond to God’s invitation to a deeper relationship.

People seek out spiritual direction for many different reasons such as they may be at a crossroads in their life, they may be in transition from a divorce or death of a loved one, they may have been traumatized and need a safe place to share their story or they may be questioning their faith and want to deepen it.

Who might benefit from spiritual direction?

- Anyone who is hungry for deeper meaning, who feels that there must be something more to life.
- Anyone who desires to grow in intimacy with God.
- Those who find themselves touched deeply by their personal life and the events of the world.
- Those feeling fragmented, disjointed, out-of-touch and distant from God.
- Those who desire to become more sensitive to God’s action in all the areas of their lives.

Finding a spiritual director you are comfortable with is a critical part of the discernment process. There are many avenues for spiritual direction in the diocese in which you reside. Many retreat houses and parishes have spiritual directors who can work with you. Also, many religious communities have trained spiritual directors. In fact, several of our sisters are actively engaged in the ministry of spiritual direction.

Visit our website at www.osfprov.org/ministries/spiritual-direction for more information, or contact us at 412-885-7232 or info@osfprov.org.



In her spiritual direction ministry, Sister Althea Anne Spencer's (right) listens and helps clients discern a deeper relationship with God.

Gun Violence is Preventable

In today's world, violence seems pervasive to society. It has become so much a part of the fabric of our world that it can be difficult to connect the dots between the cause and effect. We are surrounded by violence that takes many forms: war; regional and ethnic conflicts; nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; drones; cultural violence in films and video games; and, especially in the United States, thousands of deaths each year by guns.

Any American with even a glancing familiarity with the news can rattle off the litany of cities and towns transformed into metonyms for gun violence: San Bernardino, Colorado Springs, Orlando, Charleston, Fort Hood, Sandy Hook.

Though these mass shootings demand nonstop coverage, it's the thousands of shootings taking place in parking lots, bars, schools, bedrooms and street corners across America that are responsible for most gun injuries and deaths. Add to this the roughly 21,000 Americans who take their own lives with firearms annually.

No official figure exists, but there are thought to be about 300 million guns in the United States, held by about one-third of the population. That is nearly enough for every man, woman and child in the country.

This level of violence makes our country an extreme outlier when measured against the experience of other advanced nations. In Germany, for example, being murdered with a gun is as uncommon as being killed by a falling object in the U.S. Gun homicides are just as rare in several other European nations, including the Netherlands and Austria.

In Poland and England, only about one out of every million people die in gun homicides each year. In Japan, where gun homicides are even rarer, the likelihood of dying this way is about the same as an American's chance of being killed by lightning – roughly one in ten million.

But gun violence is not inevitable. It can be prevented through a comprehensive approach that keeps families and communities safe.

Importantly, too, prevention does not require predicting who will be violent. Just as aviation safety regulations make air travel safer for everyone, common sense measures to prevent gun violence make communities safer for everyone.

As members of the Franciscan Federation, our congregation supports the resolution adopted at this year's Federation conference: *Be it resolved that we, as members of the Franciscan Federation . . . in the tradition of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, denounce all forms of gun violence that is tearing apart the social fabric of society and leaving children dead in our streets and families afraid in their homes. . . . We pledge to work for the elimination of gun violence by committing ourselves to respect for life by cultivating a culture of life that explores nonviolent living and to advocate for each individual, family, school and neighborhood so that our communities can once again become places of peace and beacons of life movements.*

- On an average day, 91 Americans are killed with guns.
- There are more than 12,000 gun murders every year in the United States.
- 62% of firearms deaths in the U.S. are suicides.
- Seven children and teens are killed with guns in the U.S. on an average day.
- In an average month, 51 women are shot by a current or former husband or boyfriend.
- America's gun murder rate is 25 times the average of other developed countries.
- The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of a woman being murdered by five times.

We support:

- Rights of individuals to lawfully own guns for protection and recreational purposes
- Universal background checks on all gun purchases;
- A waiting period before purchasing a gun
- Banning assault-style rifles
- Limiting access to all military or police-style guns
- Requiring that all guns be sold and registered through licensed entities
- Expanding and funding mental health care services.

We encourage everyone to:

- Respond prayerfully by engaging in prayer services and events with prayers for peace and an end to violence
- Become better educated about the issues of gun violence
- Engage in advocacy efforts such as petition and post card campaigns, calls, letters and visits to your legislators, letters to the editor, nonviolent marches, vigils and demonstrations and other advocacy opportunities as they arise
- Encourage all church leaders to promote gun control as a life issue

Reflection on the Prayer of St. Francis

We are deeply troubled by the violence that continues to plague our world and we stand in solidarity with all victims of violence wherever they may be. We know that borders are not of God's making and that violence cannot be overcome by more violence. We reject hatred, bigotry and racial profiling in the name of religion or freedom or as a solution to our problems. We offer this Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi along with some questions for reflection.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace - *Can I overcome fear and stand for accepting all people as brothers and sisters?*

Where there is hatred, let me sow love - *Do I have the courage to make it clear to everyone that I choose love, compassion and support over widespread fear of beleaguered refugees?*

Where there is injury, pardon - *Can I incorporate the belief that hate cannot ever overcome hate?*

Where there is doubt, faith - *Can I test my faith enough to research and learn that Islam is a religion of peace and enlighten others with what I learn?*

Where there is despair, hope - *Can I imagine the deep despair each stranded refugee feels as countries close and tighten their borders?*

Where there is darkness, light - *Can I reject the idea that the problems are so huge I can't do much, that's all too depressing to think about?*

And where there is sadness, joy - *Can my response to this crisis be driven by imagining the joy of even one refugee who, finally, is welcomed with opened arms?*

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love - *Is this what God asks of me, now in the anxieties of our time?*

For it is in giving that we receive; it is pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life - *And isn't this what our faith teaches are the tests of our life on Earth?*

Note: From Imagine One – newsletter of the Congregation of St. Joseph, Cleveland, OH. Used with permission.



Franciscan Federation Celebrates 50th Anniversary



Sisters J. Lora Dambroski, Barbara Zilch, Joanne Brazinski, Eliana da Silva and Althea Anne Spencer at the 2016 Franciscan Federation.

The spotlight on this year's Franciscan Federation Conference was their 50th anniversary. Every facet of the conference – from presentations and logos to honorees – contributed toward the theme: “Fifty Years of God's Love and Mercy.” The various presentations invited attendees to view those 50 celebratory years by recalling the past, examining the present and looking to the future. Presenter Sr. Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF, invited participants to view the 50 years as “decades in which the Spirit of the Lord has guided the federation to operate from its evangelical core and to hold up a light – internationally – of the specific charism of the Third Order Regular.” Sr. Edna Michel, OSF, encouraged participants to “utilize and recall memories from the past in order to summon the future.” David Couturier, OFM Cap., also looked to the future with a special focus on economics and the concerns of the millennial generation.

This year's honorees also represented the conference's theme of celebrating 50 years of God's love and mercy. Special recognition was given to the men and women who, over these 50 years, served as either president or executive director of the Franciscan Federation. With two of our sisters honored for their leadership, our congregation's involvement and contributions were evident. Sister Marian Blodis served as Executive Director from 1990-91 and Sister Joanne Brazinski served as president from 1999-2000. Congratulations, Franciscan Federation on your 50th anniversary!

Celebrating the Franciscan Spirit

2016 Autumn Gala

Spirits were high as, once again, friends and benefactors of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God gathered to enjoy a memorable evening at our 12th annual Autumn Gala, held at the South Hills Country Club on October 6. Net proceeds from the event go towards our Sisters' ministries as well as help defray costs associated with the care of senior members.

As mentioned in a previous *Whitehall Franciscan*, Trudy Comba was honored with the annual San Damiano Award that pays tribute to an individual or organization who has demonstrated a long-time commitment to our Sisters, mission and ministries. Trudy is a long-time supporter of the congregation and has a special personal connection to several of our Sisters.

The basket raffles, among the best in the Gala's history, plus the "grand prize" drawing for our October cash raffle, a great menu and fellowship among the attendees and Sisters made for a delightful evening. It's always a wonderful occasion when Sisters and friends can gather for an evening of celebration!

It is difficult to find the words to properly say thank you to all the persons who are responsible in making the Autumn Gala such a success. That said, the Sisters congratulate the Autumn Gala committee, so ably headed by Development Director Robyn Moeller, for their help and guidance. We continue to be appreciative for all those in attendance, those who purchased raffle tickets or donated prizes, and the staff who help make this evening possible. A special thanks also goes out to all our sponsors; a list of these benefactors appears to the right.



San Damiano Award honoree Trudy Comba (2nd from left) with her family (left to right) Michelle Comba, Ann Margaret Winn, Molly Metcalfe, Quinn Metcalfe and Kathryn Metcalfe.



Thank You, Autumn Gala Sponsors

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SPECIAL THANK YOU

St. Casimir Alumni Association

for being the Autumn Gala's major underwriter for the 12th consecutive year

Linda Cline

for serving as our South Hills Country Club sponsor

In Prayerful Remembrance



Sister M. Beatrice Siratavic, OSF

Born: August 16, 1919

Entered our community: August 15, 1938

Returned to God: August 6, 2016

Sister M. Beatrice Siratavic, OSF, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God for nearly 78 years, heard the words of her God: “Well done, good and faithful servant” on August 6, 2016, at the age of 96.

Sister Beatrice was born Natalie Siratavic in Philadelphia, the youngest of four children of Kasimir Siratavic and Julia Klug, immigrants from Lithuania. Like so many of our sisters from Philadelphia, Natalie attended St. George School, where our community taught for many years. Not surprisingly, two of our members, Sisters Cecilia and Aurelia, were her classmates. Upon the occasion of her 65th Jubilee, Sister Beatrice talked about the “care, support, interest and example of my fifth grade teacher that led me to seek higher things until I made my choice” to enter the community.

In 1938, Sister Beatrice began a 15 year period in teaching that included schools in Elizabeth, NJ, and Detroit, MI, plus our own St. Francis Academy. She also earned her Bachelor’s degree in Education at Duquesne during this time.

But it was her ministry in Brazil that Sister so cherished. In her words, “the most challenging and fruitful years” of her life. At first, she had a difficult time learning Portuguese and was determined to return to Pittsburgh. Always open to whatever God had in store for her, however, she stuck it out, and remained for the next forty years.

It was here that she worked principally in schools teaching religion as well as English as a second language. She also served as a regional and local superior, a hospital aide in Pedro Leopoldo, as well as in the mission’s finance office. Here, Sister found the “warm, simple, friendly, God-fearing, prayerful people of the village that ignited a deeper appreciation for the things of God.”

Upon her return to the motherhouse, Sister Beatrice assumed the role as the congregation’s assistant archivist, where she worked diligently with the congregational archivist to make sure that information on the community, its members and achievements were never lost, but rather to be shared with other community members and interested lay persons.

Though tiny in stature, Sister Beatrice’s grace, wisdom and sense of humor embraced all around her. Her favorite quote reads, “Sing joyfully to the Lord, Serve the Lord with gladness.” She certainly tried to spread joy and happiness in all that she did.

Congregation Remembers Nancy Lippert

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God were saddened by the death this past summer of Nancy Lippert, a long-time friend and supporter of the congregation. An active alumna of St. Francis Academy, Nancy was also one of the founders of the congregation’s Pittsburgh Auxiliary.

During her professional career, Nancy was Director of the Office of Electronic Media for the Pittsburgh Diocese and television producer of “The Teaching of Christ,” hosted by (then Bishop) Cardinal Donald Wuerl, which ran for 17 years and won 24 national awards. She also produced “Catholics,” hosted by Rev. Ronald Lengwin and “To Teach as Jesus Did,” hosted by the late Bishop Anthony Bosco. As Chair of Christian Associates Television Ministry Committee, she coordinated WPXI-TV’s mass for shut-ins as well as cablecasts of daily mass and special events from St. Paul Cathedral and St. Mary of Mercy Church in downtown Pittsburgh.

Nancy was also a proud recipient of the *Manifesting the Kingdom Award* and took great comfort in the contribution her television productions made to faith formation and education. In addition to her being a volunteer for the congregation, she was also PR Director of Pennsylvanians for Human Life, Southwest Region.

Nancy was an accomplished seamstress, hostess, avid tennis player and fan. She loved to read and even wrote a book. She was a Christmas enthusiast her entire life but was happiest when celebrating her birthday each year with childhood friends.

She is survived by two daughters, Irene McTiernan and Linda Hindmarch, and four grandchildren.



Sharing Our Mission

Associates Embrace Franciscan Spirituality and Values

Those seeking a deeper more meaningful connection to the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God are often called to serve as Associates. Embracing Franciscan spirituality and values through a non-vowed commitment, Associates may be women or men of varied ages, backgrounds and faith traditions. Members share in our mission through engaging in prayer, community and ministry while maintaining their own homes, families and lifestyles.

In recent years, Providence has reenergized our Associates' focus on outreach that embraces our Franciscan mission - especially the call to care for all creation. Recent outreach included organizing collections of clothing and blankets for local homeless shelters, as well as partnering with the Sisters for our annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. In addition, members continue to engage in prayer ministry and volunteer works supporting our Sisters and ministries, including serving on committees, administrative support and accompanying Sisters on errands and doctors appointments.

Blessings, Associates as you continue to confidently, joyfully, go forward with us on our faithful journey.

For more information about our Associate program please contact us at 412-885-7232 or info@osfprov.org.



For the past several years our Associates have assisted with our annual Autumn Gala fundraiser. Pictured (left to right) are our Associates Joan Ammon, Carol Stasik and Audrey Patterson giving their time to assist with an Autumn Gala mailing in 2015.



Childcare is in our Hearts and Children are the Heart of our Center!

The Franciscan Child Day Care Center has provided a child-centered environment for over 30 years. Our secure center in Pittsburgh's South Hills 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**.

Phone: 412-882-5085

E-mail: fedcc@osfprov.org

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

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Spiritual Direction

Through Spiritual Direction, Sisters accompany persons on a spiritual journey, helping them to reverence their sacred story. The purpose of direction emphasizes growing closer to God. It is not psychotherapy, counseling or life planning. Spiritual Direction is specific to your spiritual journey and encourages you to explore the movement of God within your life.

Our Spiritual Directors are also experienced in group facilitation, and are available to facilitate group meetings or retreats.

**To schedule an appointment,
or for more information, please contact:**

Sister J. Lora Dambroski, OSF
412-885-7404 or sjldambroski@osfprov.org

Sister Althea Anne Spencer, OSF
412-708-3470 or saaspencer@osfprov.org

Therapeutic Massage

Therapeutic massage offers physical, emotional and spiritual benefits. Sister Althea Anne Spencer, OSF, is a licensed massage therapist, a member of the American Massage Therapy Association and NCBTM Board certified with over 20 years experience as a massage therapist. Through massage therapy, she will assist you in finding your balance of body-mind-soul.

Sister Althea Anne's massage therapy office is located at

St. Sylvester Parish
3754 Brownsville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15227

**For more information, current rates
or to schedule an appointment, please contact**

Sister Althea Anne Spencer, OSF
412-885-7233 or saaspencer@osfprov.org