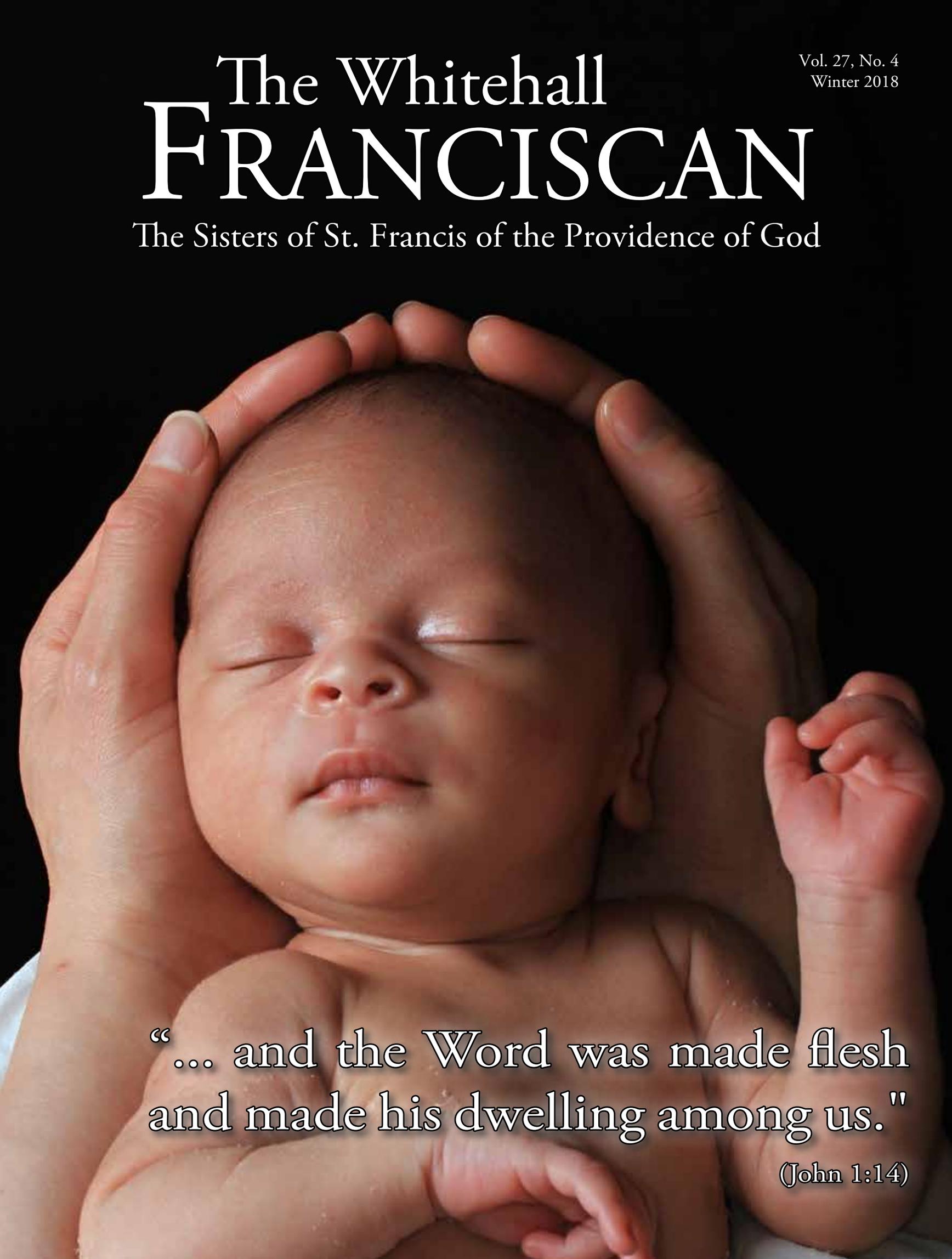


# The Whitehall FRANCISCAN

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Winter 2018

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God



“... and the Word was made flesh  
and made his dwelling among us.”

(John 1:14)

## Mission Statement

We, Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, commit ourselves to the evangelical life of continuous conversion in the tradition of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis.

Called together by a good and provident God, we cultivate an intimacy with God that is nourished by Scripture and Eucharist and a reverence for all creation.

Faithful to our Charism, we go to those whom Providence sends us, and conscious of our mission in the Church, we witness to the Kingdom by our lives of service.

We will be instruments of justice and peace among those in need of evangelization, healing, and reconciliation, especially the poor and oppressed.

In simplicity and joy we want to be signs of hope, for we believe that Jesus Christ is with us in the power of His Resurrection.

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# Human - Tender, Loving, Caring, Connected

A message from General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, OSF

Recently I was traveling by plane and the given flight had five infants on board. Now you know what happens when the plane takes off or experiences turbulence. Babies cry! Imagine the chorus of five from different parts of the aircraft. What was fascinating was the reaction of the adults - the parents, airline personnel, passengers around the infants. In each case, the infant seemed to call forth the best in people. The adults made weird noises, funny faces, rattled keys and reached out. In each case, the baby seemed to invite all around to simply be human, to respond to another's cry, to be attentive to the other's need. The adult responses all seemed to communicate - don't be afraid, we are here, we are all in this together!

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, it is always good to reflect on the real meaning of this special time of the year. *God so loved the world . . . and the Word was made flesh.* Perhaps one of the gifts of Christmas is that it invites us to reflect on what it means to be human, to be tender, to be loving, to be caring, to be connected. From the first moment that the hands of another human being lift us from the womb, we must rely on others to feed us, protect us, teach us and love us into life. *"This is our fate. This is what it means to be human . . . Our mutual need is both human and holy."* (No Room at the Table: Earth's Most Vulnerable Children by Donald Dunson).

Our world seems to be getting more violent and more exclusive. Our political, economic and social structures are at times dehumanizing. There is a need to recover the graces of a deeply relational culture that gives us the courage, strength and the possibility to create the world we dream of and believe in. Christmas reminds us that Christ came as a helpless vulnerable child - needing others, relying on others, trusting



Sister Hilária de Oliveria embraces one of the infants she cares for at the Franciscan Child Day Care Center in Pittsburgh, PA.

others. The celebration of the birth of this Child calls us to be attentive to the vulnerable around us - the immigrants, the imprisoned, the homeless, the person next to us, as well as the one who worships in the pew behind us. Pope Francis reminds us "God's own dwelling in our midst fosters solidarity, fraternity, and the desire for goodness, truth, and justice." (Joy of the Gospel)

Christmas invites us to celebrate the fact that our God became human to teach us how to live and love as members of the same human family. *"This intimate solidarity helps us to see God anew, to believe that we can become the people we have never yet been and to believe we are loved and lovable."* (In the Footsteps of Francis and Clare by Roch Niemier) As we celebrate this season, let us be attentive to the infants around us as well as the child within us desiring to know love, tenderness, presence, peace.



Sister Marlene Aparecida Avansi with a young patient in Óbidos, Brazil, where she serves as a doctor and surgeon.

# Called Together by Providence

## LCWR Assembly Explores Call to Foster Communication

Each year, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) holds a national assembly. This gathering provides members with opportunities for education, reflection on pertinent issues, networking, prayer and celebration. This year's assembly was held in St. Louis, MO, where Sister Janet Gardner participated on behalf of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God.

Approximately 800 participants explored the theme “Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Communion” at the annual LCWR assembly in St. Louis, MO, held August 7 – 10.

The assembly focused on the urgent need to foster communion and connection in a world plagued by polarization, division and fractures of communion. “With all the destruction of the earth and the suffering throughout the global community, the conference recognizes that we, as a planet, are at a significant crossroads and that a shift in consciousness is desperately needed so that the course of the world changes,” said Sr. Annmarie Sanders of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, LCWR’s associate director of communications. Sanders also said that the strong response to last year’s assembly – which also focused on “being the presence of love” – is what kept the theme in play this year.

The four days were spent addressing a broad spectrum of topics, including theology, racism, love, communion and more was a demonstration of what happens when almost 800 women religious leaders gather in one place. The assembly provided renewal for the responsibilities facing leadership and included contemplative pauses to reflect on the theological speeches and moments of action through a silent protest against racism.

In her presidential address, Sister Teresa Maya, CCVI, noted the numbers of women religious, “We will become lighter and itinerant, we will be fewer. However, we will be enough, we will be what God needs today. We will bring with us our call to community and our stubborn conviction that Christ’s suffering in God’s people requires our response.”

Sisters shared how their communities are addressing racism and others reflected on the keynote speeches that challenged



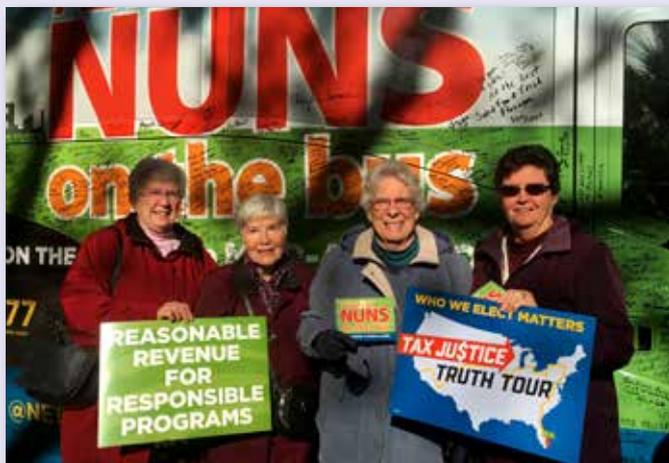
them as leaders. More than 60 Sisters in the fight against the death penalty gathered in a lunch session to brainstorm how to better organize as a network.

Sisters regularly broke into reflection groups following sessions and addresses, with a Sister designated as each group’s “listener” to share what had come up with the rest of the assembly.

The participants also demonstrated this commitment by leaving the meeting area and walking outside to the steps of the St. Louis Old Courthouse where Dred Scott sued for his freedom in 1846. There, members stood in silent prayer to remember victims of racism and to pray for the systematic elimination of racism throughout the nation and the world.

For more information, please visit the LCWR website at [www.lcwr.org](http://www.lcwr.org).

## Nuns on the Bus



October 8 through November 2, the nuns were back on the bus advocating for justice and peace, including raising concerns about how policies and tax codes affect those in need, especially the poor, elderly, sick and children. On October 22, our Sisters Mary Ann Lostoski, Elise Mora, Peg Markey, and Janet Gardner (pictured left) joined the nuns and others at a "rally for the common good" after they visited the office of U.S. House of Representatives’ member Keith Rothfus in Beaver, PA.

*Editors Note: The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God does not endorse any candidate or particular political party. Each individual Sister is free to vote and advocate for whomever she feels is the best candidate. However, we do encourage prayerful discernment and contemplation, as well as peaceful and respectful dialog with leaders - and others who may have different opinions and beliefs.*

# Providential Adventure

## Associates Visit our Sisters in Brazil

By Kathy Antoniazzi

*In August 2018, Kathy Antoniazzi and Rosemary Byrd were our first USA Associates to visit our Sisters and Lay Fraternity in Brazil. We asked Kathy to share their adventure and experiences.*

Life is full of adventures and that is what fellow Associate Rosemary Byrd and I were counting on when we decided to head to Brazil to visit with the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God who make their home in South America. Neither of us were familiar with the customs or culture of Brazil and we were thankful when Sister Eliana da Silva offered to be a fellow adventuress and joined us as we headed South on our journey. Many thanks go out to the Sisters' administrative assistant, Louanne Davis, for making the travel arrangements for us and ensuring that we were prepared with documentation and contact information before we left.

The Sisters we met in São Paulo were so kind and thoughtful and helped us to settle into their lovely home. Our accommodation during our visit was a house named "Paz e Bem", or "Peace and All Good", the Portuguese translation of St. Francis' greeting to those he met. Language was a barrier for some but many could communicate in English and all the Sisters made us feel welcome with their smiles and friendly faces. Sister Joanne Brazinski and her niece, Andrea Brazinski, were also part of our touring party to experience the sights, sounds and flavors of Brazil.

We had heard many stories from our American Sisters of their teaching experiences in Brazil, and we were able to get a sense of what education in a Brazilian environment was like by touring one of the Sisters' sponsored schools - Colégio Franciscano Pio XII. We were impressed with the resources that were available to the students of the school, and were greeted with a common sense of friendliness as we spent the



*Kathy (second from left) and Rosemary (second from right) with Sisters and Lay Fraternity Members in Brazil.*

morning on the campus. Some of the offerings the school has that stood out to us were the animals and gardens which were kept to teach urban dwellers about rural life. A peacock, a snake and some turtles were creatures that would definitely make learning fun and memorable for the children.

One of the reasons that we chose August to travel to Brazil was that it would coincide with the Sisters' celebration of their 80 years of ministries in South America. We joined the Sisters and their lay community members at a Mass and reception which highlighted the impact they have made over the years. Sister Joanne brought headsets for us and we were able to follow along with the Mass as she interpreted the readings and responses. At the reception we were able to enjoy Brazilian treats and were entertained by some song and dance routines provided by students from another of the Sisters' schools. Before we left the school grounds, we spent some time sharing with members of the Lay Fraternity - our Brazilian Associate counterparts. We heard how they had been influenced by the Sisters and decided to make an effort to live their lives in a manner modeled by St. Francis of Assisi and promoted by the Community. Thanks to Sister Joanne for interpreting again, so that all could get a sense of our shared commitment.

We ventured away from São Paulo and headed to see the Iguazú Falls in Southern Brazil, near the Argentinian border. The Falls make up the largest waterfall system of the world and are a marvel to behold. Part of the beauty of the Falls is that it is not commercialized and our excursion to get close to the scenic area included a thrilling boat ride down river. Our walk back from the boat was filled with picture-perfect moments, each more breathtaking than the next. God blessed us with a sunlit day to explore this wonderful place.

Another interesting place on our tour of Iguazú was a stop at a Mosque. There is a large Muslim population in this part of



*Rosemary and Kathy with children from Colégio Franciscano Pio XII.*

*Continued on Page 7*

# Education Ministry

Education is at the core of our congregational history. For over 96 years our Sisters have educated thousands of children from kindergarten through high school in Catholic schools throughout the USA and Brazil, as well as through missions and universities. Today, our education ministry continues with our schools in Brazil and our Franciscan Day Care Center in the USA, as well as Sisters who serve as educators and administrators in both countries.

In São Paulo, Brazil, more than 3,500 students attend primary, elementary and secondary schools sponsored and/or staffed by our congregation. These schools include Colégio Franciscano São Miguel Arcanjo (St. Michael the Archangel), the first co-educational Catholic school in the city; Colégio Franciscano Nossa Senhora do Carmo (Our Lady of Mount Carmel); and Colégio Franciscano Pio XII (Pope Pius XII).

Recently, several of our schools in Brazil initiated a program wherein Portuguese-speaking students learn English as a second language. These Students will learn through being immersed in English. Time will be spent not only learning and practicing English, but also studying other traditional subjects using English.

On a smaller scale, in the USA, our Sister Elise Mora volunteers to teach English-speaking elementary students a second language, Spanish, at St. Thomas More School in Bethel Park. Our Franciscan Child Day Care Center also introduces children to sign-language and foreign languages at an early age. (Read more about their new curriculum on page 9.)

In addition to schools, our Sisters in Brazil manage and staff the St. Clare-St. Francis Social Center, serving children from the area's poorest families in a before-and-after school program. Our Sisters also took over the administration of a school in the impoverished area of Barbacena in Brazil. Renamed St. Francis of Assisi School, our Sisters work diligently to instill a genuine learning atmosphere, purchased uniforms and sneakers for the students and installed showers as many of the children lack indoor plumbing at home.

This is only a broad overview of our education ministry and outreach. In future editions of the Whitehall Franciscan, we hope to share more in-depth articles about our Sisters serving in education ministries both in the USA and Brazil. For more information, please visit [www.osfprov.org](http://www.osfprov.org), or contact us at [info@osfprov.org](mailto:info@osfprov.org) or 412-882-9911.



*Sister Elise Mora teaches Spanish classes a few days a week at St. Thomas More School in Bethel Park, PA.*

## Associate Commitment



*(First row, left to right) Audrey Patterson, Chris Lipinski, Mary Ann Garfold, (second row, left to right) Rosemary Byrd, Johannah Jones, Michaele Fisher; Pat Enscoe, Margo Fitipaldo, (Back row, left to right) Sister Barbara Zilch, Barbara Sawyer, Kathy Antoniazzi, Mary Ann Abt, Lori Vallarian, and Janet Maddock.*

On Saturday, September 8, 2018, our Associates in Pittsburgh renewed their commitment to the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God and our shared Franciscan mission. In addition to the Commitment service, Associates and Sisters attended a retreat with presenter Dr. Maureen Crossen who challenged those present to incorporate a spirit of contemplation in their daily busy lives. The special day concluded with a shared meal graciously prepared by our Associates.

Thank you, Associates, for continuing with us on our journey. May God bless you and keep you!

*If you are interested in joining the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God as an Associate, please contact Sister Barbara Zilch at 412-559-7502.*

# *Sisters Never Retire*

## A Ministry of Prayer and Presence

“I’m busy, honey,” said Sister Dolorita Butkus, age 96. “From 4:30am to 11:00pm,”

Though considered “retired” from active ministry, our senior Sisters still have work to do. Continuing to live our mission, they remain engaged in the ministry of “prayer and presence.”

“God is the center of our life, and we’re to be the presence of the Lord wherever we’re at,” said Sister Dolorita. “Silently, or through actions.”

Presently, Sisters Dolorita, Marita Dargis, Berenice Petrauskas, Miriam Racas and Lillian Yurksaitis are called to minister through their presence at Presbyterian Senior-Care’s Westminster Place in Oakmont, a north-east suburb of Pittsburgh, PA. Sister Theresa Codispoti ministers through her presence at Baptist Homes Society Community in Pittsburgh’s South Hills.

“We live our mission by kindness, by expressing sympathy at the loss of a loved one, by listening to someone who’s received a diagnosis of cancer or imminent death,” said Sister Dolorita, who was one of our pioneer Sisters who first moved to Westminster Place in 2015. “We’re able to listen, and to pray with them as they wish.”

As the most recent Sister to make the transition to Westminster Place, Sister Miriam, 93, feels that the ministry of presence includes being cognizant of the little things that make a huge impact, like “greeting others with a smile, expressing gratitude, and listening.” Fitting her contemplative nature, she also chooses to engage residents through participation in a Bible study group of mostly non-Catholic Christian residents.

“It’s really nice to come together to strengthen our



*Sisters Dolorita (front), Miriam, Marita, and Lillian in Westminster Place’s dining room, which is one of the places neighbors and staff know they may find the Sisters to talk or share prayer requests.*

faith,” said Sister Miriam recalling a recent discussion on ways to pause during the day, refocus, and be aware of God’s presence. “It’s an open group. Everyone is given the opportunity to speak.”

“I’m grateful that I’m in an ecumenical setting,” said Sister Theresa, 77, who has resided in the Baptist Homes Society Community for three years. “We get many prayer requests from people of different religious traditions. They are all comforted and believe in the importance of a community of prayer.”

“A lot of people don’t want to be in an assisted-living facility. There’s loneliness, anger - people who are experiencing a lot of hurt,” said Sister Theresa. “We can’t change things. We try to listen, pray for them, and encourage them.”

In both Westminster Place and Baptist Homes, residents and staff seek our Sisters for prayers, as well as counsel and comfort following painful and upsetting news and events. “They come to me because they know I am a Sister,” said Sister Miriam.

“Sisters being here has made a difference for the residents,” said Sister Marita, who added that Westminster Place is offering more Catholic Masses and activities for Catholic residents.

“Eucharistic ministry of St. Winifred Parish is a great source of encouragement,” said Sister Theresa of the Catholic experience in the Baptist Homes Community. She also engages in faith sharing with more infirm residents of neighboring Baptist Manor, as well as outreach to families.

At Westminster Place, our Sisters are blessed by the Eucharistic ministry of St. Irenaeus Parish, as well as their



*Sister Theresa with Baptist Home’s Activity Director, Dionne Rose, who has helped Sister adapt to using communications technology, such as e-mail on an iPad and Facebook. These new skills help Sister maintain relationships with Sisters, family and friends.*

*Continued on Page 9*

## Providential Adventure (continued from page 4)

Brazil and we ventured in to visit and learn about their beliefs and worship customs. We were required to don veils before entering into this place of worship and that led to a few smiles. This reminded me of my religious education at St. Francis Academy, where our religion classes led us to a variety of nearby Pittsburgh churches to learn about other denominations and gain a better understanding of how our Catholic faith differed from alternative beliefs.

Our travels also took us to Rio de Janeiro for a day and our itinerary included the opportunity to tour this city on the South Atlantic coast and visit the must-see scenic spots of the Christ the Redeemer statue and Sugar Loaf Mountain. Both places offered beautiful panoramic views of the Brazilian coastline. Once again we were blessed with beautiful blue skies the showed the best of what the city has to offer. Our trek to the top of these locations required tram and train rides and added to our list of transportation types for the trip on the whole.

Brazil has the largest Catholic population in the world and that devotion to the our own faith was obvious when we visited the Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida. The number of worshippers paying homage to the Patroness of Brazil was awe-inspiring and the Basilica itself was a majestic masterpiece. What made this place of worship unique for us was the collection of tributes sent in by those who had petitioned for miracles and had remembered their promise to Our Lady when the favor was granted. The number of pilgrims making prayerful requests with lighted candles was astounding and we couldn't help but petition for our own special requests in this very special place.



*Rosemary, Kathy, Andrea Brazinski, and Sisters Joanne and Eliana visit Iguazú Falls.*

Previously I mentioned the tastes of Brazil, and taste we did! We had so many memorable meals during our visit with the Sisters. Some meals were held in the quiet comfort of the Paz e Bem dining room with delicious family-style meals. I appreciated the rice and beans tradition, which is served almost everywhere for lunch and dinner. Breakfast always included freshly baked, crusty bread and fresh fruit and juices were readily available. We also enjoyed some Brazilian pizza and

sampled the offerings at several churrascaria restaurants which feature Brazilian-style barbecued meats. The São Paulo Sisters graciously gathered together before we left for home and hosted a barbecue for us. The tasty treats were so good and the atmosphere was fun and relaxed, a fitting end to a busy and informative visit.

Rosemary and I are very grateful that we had this opportunity to experience Brazil with the Sisters. We asked a lot of questions as we toured and got to know a lot about the customs and culture of a wonderful country. It is hard to address questions about what we liked the best because there was so much to take in and appreciate. We thank our Brazilian Sisters as well as Sisters Joanne and Eliana for giving so much of their time to make this a memorable visit. We are truly blessed to be Associates of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God.



*Sister Joanne, Andrea Brazinski (Sister Joanne's niece), Rosemary, Kathy, and Sister Eliana at a celebration of our Sisters' 80 years in Brazil.*

## 2018 Donor Appreciation

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God would like to thank everyone who supported our mission through a donation in 2018. Greatly appreciated by our Sisters and those we serve, your generosity is vital to our ministries, outreach, and the continued care of our senior Sisters.

Sharing our Franciscan values, we know you care about how your support affects our mission. To lessen our carbon footprint and be better stewards of your generosity, we have decided to scale back to three issues of the printed edition of our *Whitehall Franciscan* for 2019. Our annual donor appreciation will also continue to be published online at [www.osfprov.org](http://www.osfprov.org).

If you would like a printed copy of our donor appreciation, or wish to not be listed in our online donor appreciation, please contact our Development Director Robyn Moeller at [rmoeller@osfprov.org](mailto:rmoeller@osfprov.org) or 412-885-7232.

# Immigration Reform

## Who Benefits from Imprisoning Immigrants?

**D**ue to natural disasters, war, and political unrest the world is facing an unprecedented migrant crisis, including persons and families seeking refuge in the United States. Nightmarish as the past few years have been for asylum seekers threatened by detention, deportation or separation from family members, it has been a profitable time for private prison companies that have benefitted from the United State's immigration policies.

More than 70 percent of immigrants detained by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are held in privately-owned prisons. A recent report by the Migration Policy Institute observed that CoreCivic and GEO Group, the two biggest operators of private prisons in the U.S., have earned a significant portion of their revenue from “detaining immigrants, including those identified for removal, asylum seekers and others awaiting a hearing in immigration court and those in the process of being deported.”

In two decades these two companies have made over \$12 billion in profits. Since the 2016 alone, CoreCivic's stock price has climbed 120 percent and GEO's has gained 80 percent. It looks like the news is getting even better for the private prison industry. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) forecasted that in 2018, there would be a 23 percent increase over the already historic number of people it locked up in 2017.

### Is There an Alternative?

It is not a crime to seek asylum at ports of entry into the United States, and those doing so are willingly registering with the government and complying with present policy and law. There are better and much less expensive alternatives to handle the crisis at the border. Considered the least-restrictive alternative for asylum-seekers who come to the United States, the Family Case Management Program is one example of an effective alternative to detention facilities. Essentially a counseling program, it operated in Chicago, Miami, New York, Los Angeles and Baltimore/Washington, beginning January, 2016. As part of the program, social workers connected asylum-seekers to legal representation, guided them through the court system, and helped them receive housing and healthcare, as well as schooling for their children. Asylum-seekers also had to demonstrate that they legitimately feared returning to their country of origin in order to qualify.

The program was universally praised by immigration advocates for both its high rate of compliance and its ability



to help migrants thrive in a new country — until the current administration discontinued the program.

The reason? Opponents argued family detention is necessary because people won't show up for court otherwise. However the program was delivering near-perfect compliance. With most of the families having legitimate arguments for obtaining legal asylum status in the United States, there was also publicly expressed concern for cost.

### What about Costs?

It's important to understand just how expensive it is for the government to house, shelter, and feed asylum seekers under the current policy using detention facilities. In its budget request for fiscal year 2018, DHS said that it would cost just over \$300 per person in family detention.

Meanwhile, according to the Associated Press, the Family Case Management Program cost the government \$36 per family per day. Immigrant advocacy groups have urged Congress to shift more DHS funding from detention to such alternatives as the administration ramps up border enforcement. Their voices seem to be drowned out by the interests of the private prison industry.

Now is the time for comprehensive immigration reform. Less expensive policies exist and have been proven to work better than present policies using detention in private and federal prisons. More importantly, there are alternatives that are far more Christian and American than separating families, or keeping them together in jail with no end in sight.

Join  
Our  
Mission

**T**he Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God join the Catholic community - including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Franciscan Federation, and Leadership Council of Women Religious – in opposing enforcement-only immigration policies and seeking comprehensive immigration reform that includes family reunification, a path to earned legalization, worker protections, and an effective and humane border policy. Learn more about the Catholic Church's stance on immigration reform on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website:

[www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration)

## Sisters Never Retire (continued from page 6)

daily contemplative prayer and unique ways of sharing the love of Christ. Sister Dolorita participates in a rosary prayer group, distributes Divine Mercy prayer cards, and visits dying patients in the adjacent Willows long-term care facility. After meals in the dining hall, Sister Marita cares for the environment by collecting aluminum cans for recycling.

“You make so many friends here. They are all beautiful people,” said Sister Lillian, 86. Gifted in using new technology, she also maintains relationships with friends and family via e-mail and Facebook.

“Connection is important,” said Sister Theresa. “I wanted to maintain a presence in the neighborhoods we served in the South Hills.”

Sister Theresa regularly attends faith sharing with our Sisters at Nativity Convent, as well as gatherings of two St. Francis Academy Alumnae groups. She also offers a comforting presence to local friends who find themselves needing care or rehabilitative services at Baptist Homes. Sister Theresa was grateful to be able to visit and connect with one of our Associates, who was temporarily in an adjacent residence.

Sister Miriam was able to reconnect with parishioners and former students from nearby Mount St. Peter Parish and School, where she served for several years in the 1970s. Initial encounters were through interactions at Westminster Place— one parishioner was on staff and a former 8th grade pupil served as a Eucharistic minister, which grew into more connections.

Even a routine medical appointment can turn into a ministry opportunity for our Sisters. After her first appointment with Sister Dolorita, a local chiropractor asked her to return and talk to her staff. Sister said she spoke for over an hour and choose the topic of “choose life,” because it related to their vocation as healers.

“Sisters never retire,” said Sister Dolorita. “God gives us talents, and we have to use them.”

*As our Sisters continue their ministry of prayer and presence, we are grateful for your continued prayers, presence, and support. For more information on how you can join us in our mission to care for our senior Sisters, please visit [www.osfprov.org/sarah-fund](http://www.osfprov.org/sarah-fund); or contact us at 412-885-7232 or [info@osfprov.org](mailto:info@osfprov.org).*



*Our faithful nurse aide Zikreta Kristo visits with Sister Miriam.*

## St. Francis Academy Alumnae Association Gifts New Curriculum to Franciscan Child Day Care Center



*Franciscan Child Day Care Center Director Sandy Merlo reads a story to the young toddlers in the squirrel room. The Center's new curriculum offers recommended story books for both the classroom and at home with family.*

Thanks to a generous gift from the St. Francis Academy Alumnae Association, our Franciscan Child Day Care Center in Pittsburgh, PA was able to purchase a new curriculum that will continue to grow with the Center.

*Funshine Express* is a customizable and teacher-friendly curriculum that can be easily adapted to the abilities and developmental needs of children ages 6-weeks through pre-school. Each class receives a monthly or bimonthly box that contains lesson plans, art projects, songs, books and other materials that can be adapted to each age group and individual child. An additional bonus is a newsletter prepared for parents informing them of the themes and lessons their children are learning – including songs, vocabulary words, sign-language words, gross-motor activities, recommended books and activity suggestions to continue learning at home.

We are grateful to the SFA Alumnae Association and other Franciscan Child Day Care benefactors, as well as caregivers, parents and all who participate in fundraisers for the Center. Your generosity helps us continue to provide a unique learning experience for each child entrusted to our care that adapts to each child's developmental and educational needs as they grow.

# 2018 Autumn Gala

## Celebrating Kindred Peacemakers on St. Francis Day



On October 4, 2018, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, Sisters, friends, and benefactors gathered for our 14th annual Autumn Gala at the South Hills Country Club in Pittsburgh, PA. This special Gala honored our “extended Franciscan family” – all our friends, benefactors, colleagues and supporters who radiate God’s extravagant love and serve as beacons of compassion, understanding, and hope in a world in desperate need of Peace. Instead of the San Damiano Award, this year’s program featured a special reflection of gratitude for the generosity, goodness and presence of our kindred Peacemakers who encourage and support our Franciscan mission. The goodness of our guests, wonderful service and delicious food, along with the basket raffles, and the grand prize for our October cash raffle all added to this year’s rousing success. In addition to celebrating the Franciscan spirit, the event raised support for our Sisters’ ministries and outreach efforts, as well the continued care of our senior Sisters.

As always, the Sisters are extremely grateful to all those persons who were responsible for making the Autumn Gala a success. We especially want to applaud the Autumn Gala committee for their efforts and guidance. Additionally, a special thanks goes to all those in attendance, our business sponsors, those who bought raffle tickets or donated prizes and the volunteers who helped make the evening such a success

## A Decade of Raffles Yield Jackpot for our Sisters and Ministries

For a decade, our Autumn Gala and February Cash Raffles have generated over \$100,000 for our ministries and care of our senior Sisters. None of this would be possible without the organization and faithful efforts of Sister Mary Ann Lostoski.

As a member of our Autumn Gala Planning Committee, Sister Mary Ann helped design a cash raffle based on the Pennsylvania Evening Lottery drawing. One thousand chances are available for October and February, with four ways to win each day. The person whose ticket number matches the 3-digit Pennsylvania Evening Lottery number receives a prize of \$70 on a weekday, \$100 on a Saturday, \$200 on a Sunday, or \$500 on the day chosen for the Grand Prize - usually the date of the Autumn Gala or St. Valentine’s Day. There are also three bonus prizes of \$20 given each day to persons whose ticket number is the number after, the number before or the reverse of the number drawn.

Through her infectious enthusiasm, Sister Mary Ann inspires sellers, winners and those whose numbers have yet to be drawn. She keeps the stubs secure and a backup record of each ticket sold. Every winner receives a personal call from Sister Mary Ann - often within minutes of the drawing.

We are grateful to Sister Mary Ann, and all who support our mission by participating in the raffles.



## February Cash Raffle

Tickets are now available for the 2019 February Cash Raffle. Each ticket is \$10 and is good for the entire month of February. **If interested, please call Sister Mary Ann at 412-477-4321.** Don’t delay! Tickets for our October raffle sold out in a little over a month.

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