

The Whitehall FRANCISCAN

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The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God



Celebrating
65 Years!



COLÉGIO FRANCISCANO
PIO XII



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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Sowers of HOPE

A message from General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, OSF

Every three years, women religious from around the world gather for the International Union of General Superiors (UISG) conference, where we engage in prayer, reflection, and conversation about consecrated life in the Church and in the world. The experience is very enriching, challenging and broadening. “Sowers of Hope” is the theme of this year’s UISG conference in May. Reflecting on the theme, I am struck by the fact that we are all called to be planting and sowing HOPE.

It seems that each day we awake to the revelation of more turmoil and chaos in our country. We witness situations of violence, tension and a lack of peace in our world. Those in government do not seem to be concerned about what is good for all, nor are they persons who are creating a future full of hope. They seem to be more concerned about their own agendas, their own egos; trying to prove their untruth is the truth. It seems they choose to see with myopic vision.

What is our response to this scenario? The current updates in the life of the Church can also contribute to a sense of discouragement. Yet, it is in the midst of the reality of our world, our country, our Church, that we are called to be persons of hope.

In pondering the meaning of hope, I came across the following quotes challenging us to light a candle of hope rather than curse the darkness that sometimes envelopes us.

“Always be ready to give an account of the hope that is within you with gentleness and respect.” ~Peter 3:15

“Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously heading for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good. Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. Hope is the deep orientation of the human soul that can be held in the darkest times.” ~Vaclav Havel

There is no doubt that we are all called to be Sowers of Hope in the reality in which we find ourselves. It is, after all, what our world needs today. In this issue of the Whitehall Franciscan, we share a few glimpses of what we believe it means to be Sowers of Hope.

- Education, faith formation and empowering future generations of peacemakers are important ministries in our congregation. This year, our Franciscan Pius XII School is celebrating its 65th anniversary. Blessings to all involved in this education ministry. May you continue to be Instruments of Peace and Messengers of Hope as you proclaim this truth with your lives.
- Our Franciscan Child Day Care Center continues to care for young minds and hearts eager to learn. Without Sowers of Hope among these children – what is their future?
- The Diocese of Pittsburgh has begun a Lay Ecclesial Ministries Program – two of our Sisters are involved in this endeavor, planting seeds of hope as they guide the faithful who are called to be beacons of Christ’s love.
- After thirteen years of ministry in Bolivia, we have concluded our mission there knowing that we have touched many lives and helped to foster hope in many adults and young people. We are grateful to God for the opportunity of ministry in this country and culture. Diversity always helps us to see differently. It broadens our vision and stretches us to be more inclusive than we ever believed we could be.
- We continue to be aware of the Human Trafficking reality in our world, and yes, in and around the city of Pittsburgh. How are we trying to be more attentive to what it means to be Sowers of Hope as we face this reality?

What helps keep your hope alive in the midst of chaos and turmoil? Are you committed to be Sowers of Hope today, so that many will be able to celebrate a hopeful tomorrow?

Blossoming Blessings

Sister Maria Adelma Renews Vows



After completing her third year of temporary vows, Sister Maria Adelma De Sá renewed her vows for two years on January 26, 2019 in São Paulo, Brazil. She presently serves with our Sisters in Barbacena as maintenance coordinator at our St. Francis of Assisi School, as well as in pastoral ministry to families and vocation outreach. During the next two years, Sister Maria Adelma will discern if she is being called to make her perpetual vows in our Congregation.

Please join us as we continue to pray for Sister Adelma, women in our formation program, and all persons discerning religious life.

During her vow renewal, Sister Maria Adelma (right) received a special blessing from our General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski and Sisters in attendance.

A Joyful and Safe Place for Children to Learn, Play & Grow

While the children were on Christmas break, our Franciscan Child Day Care Center caregivers and staff were working to organize classrooms, update lesson plans, and make needed improvements. This year, each classroom's wooden cut-out animal mascot decoration received a colorful makeover that made them more cheery and kid-friendly. We are grateful to our caregivers for all their hard work to keep our Center a safe and nurturing space for children to learn, play, and grow.



The Center's kitchen also received a much-needed update with new cabinets, sink and stove. The older tile flooring was also removed. Thank you to our Maintenance Director, Dave Domostoy and Housekeeping Director, Bill Clark for their efforts making these much needed improvements, as well as their ongoing dedication to keeping our Center safe, healthy and functional.

At the beginning of the new year, the Center also received a safety upgrade with a new and improved secure key system.

We are grateful for our families, staff and friends who have supported these and other efforts through participating in fundraisers, as well as gifts of time and donations.



Maintenance Director Dave Domostoy inspecting the newly installed cabinets and counters in the Franciscan Child Day Care Center's kitchen.

For more information about the Franciscan Child Day Care Center, please visit: FranciscanChildDayCare.org.

Educating for Peace and Good

Colégio Franciscano Pio XII Celebrates 65 Years

By Sister Yolanda Marcelino

As we celebrate the 65th anniversary of Pius XII Franciscan School in São Paulo, Brazil, we lovingly remember the past, and look to the future with confidence.

In the beginning there was strength, courage and love. Far away from home, family, and comfort there was hope and faith. In the beginning, there was a dream which our Sisters nurtured in a new land.

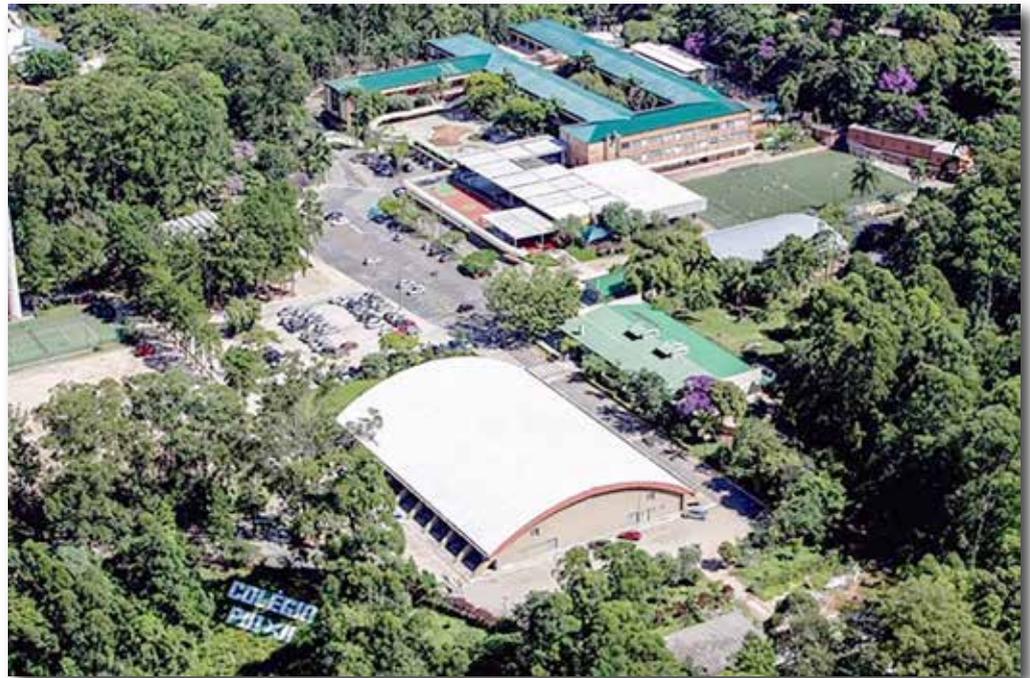
On August 27, 1938, five brave young Sisters from Pittsburgh arrived at the Port of Santos, in São Paulo, Brazil after a long and difficult voyage. Originally called to serve Lithuanian immigrants, our Sisters ministered to all they encountered. Soon after they arrived in Brazil, our Sisters established a school in Vila Zelina, a small borough of São Paulo, because they knew the vital importance of education for children and young people.

Through their heartfelt efforts and hard work, our Sisters' mission flourished. Soon we were operating Our Lady of Carmel School and St. Michael the Archangel schools. They were known as "the Sisters who wore heels" and "the Sisters who drive cars." Simple facts, but impressive at the time. Co-educational schools where boys and girls shared classrooms were also quite innovative.

Then, in 1954, the year São Paulo



Our Sisters gathered in the wooded area that would become Pius XII school.



St. Pius XII Franciscan School Campus in São Paulo , Brazil.

celebrated its fourth Centenary, Cardinal Carlos Carmelo de Vasconcelos Motta invited our Sisters to open a third co-educational school that would follow national academic standards. Our Sisters accepted and Pius XII School was born. Named in honor of the reigning Pope Pius XII, the school was first located in São Paulo's Paraiso District. Pius XII School was the first school that offered English classes beginning in kindergarten.

Starting with just seven students, the school steadily grew until a new unit opened in the same neighborhood. With a growing number of students, the school moved to the Morumbi neighborhood. The school's name was changed to Pius XII Franciscan School in 2006 to honor the patron saint and core philosophy of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God.

Today, Pius XII Franciscan School has an enrollment of 1,272 students with 245 teachers and staff. Among the best

schools in the region, Pius XII accepts children from two years of age through completion of high school. The academic curriculum follows government standards common to all educational institutions in Brazil.

What sets Pius XII apart? Religion classes are offered through the third year of high school. First Communion and Confirmation catechism classes are also offered for children and adults. Every Sunday, there is a Eucharistic Celebration in the school's chapel, which also hosts marriages and the initial Sacraments.

Pius XII Franciscan School also has a vibrant Pastoral Group composed of parents and student volunteers who meet weekly to plan ways to implement the values learned at school. What do they do? They comfort children with cancer. They visit impoverished child day care centers. They give remedial support to students in local social centers. They visit asylums and keep company with the elderly: play guitar, take care of nails and hair, play cards, etc.

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The Future is Franciscan!



Sister Gloria de Souza (left) and Sister Yolanda Marcelino (right) with a student athlete during Pius XII's Field Day Celebration.



Members of Pius XII Pastoral Group build houses for poor families in the favelas.

Though an upper middle class school, Pius XII does not look away from impoverished families. The school helps support St. Francis of Assisi School in the small town of Barbacena, Minas Gerais, which serves nearly 400 students and their families who live in extreme poverty.

Last year, Pius XII started an International School to offer elementary children a bilingual education: Portuguese and English. This complements the well-established American high school program. As students grow older, the middle school continues their bilingual education and prepares them for high school.

Pius XII's high school program has had a curriculum equivalent to that of the United States for several

years. Collaborating with the University of Missouri, students are able to earn a US high school diploma and college credits.

The newer Lab Maker 3D printer classes give students a fun space to blend learning, technology and creativity.

There is also room for extracurricular activities. Sports in its many forms is highly valued, as it builds character and helps students develop fundamental values such as friendship, collaboration, and tolerance. Various intermural team sports are offered in the school's beautiful gymnasium, as well as ballet, acrobatics, judo, tennis, and rhythmic gymnastics.

Pius XII Franciscan School's slo-

gan is "65 years fostering future talents and dreams, and educating for Peace and Good." The school continues its mission of evangelization and forming leaders and protagonists of their own history. Inspired by Christian and Franciscan values, Pius XII strives for the formation of a just, kind and sustainable society.

Today, we have many reasons to praise and thank God. We give thanks to the Lord for He is Good!

Sister Yolanda Marcelino recently retired as the Director of Pius XII Franciscan School but remains actively involved in its pastoral services. For more information about the school and its mission, please visit:

www.pioxicolgio.com.br

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

"Nationwide Sex Ring Linked to Pittsburgh."

"Eight Arrested in Frazer, Human Trafficking Investigation."

"Wexford Man Sentenced to 10 Years for Conspiring to Traffic a Minor."

These news "headlines," unfortunately, have become too commonplace as human trafficking has gained traction in the Pittsburgh region. Human trafficking, often called "modern day slavery," is the recruitment, harboring or transporting of a person for the purpose of forced labor or commercial sex through the use of force, fraud or coercion. Human trafficking is illegal in every country. Yet it thrives everywhere.

The International Labor Organization estimates that as many as 20.9 million people are in trafficking situations today. The majority, 14.5 million, are in situations of forced labor, while 4.5 million are sexually exploited. In fact, according to Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, sex trafficking is the second fastest growing crime enterprise worldwide, second only to drug trafficking and it has taken root in the Pittsburgh region. Unlike drug trafficking in which drugs are sold, humans are recycled. That's why it continues.

So, just how does human trafficking work? Many victims of sex trafficking, for example, are lured through fraudulent modeling opportunities as young teens. Some traffickers strike up romantic relationships. Others recruit through gangs. Some traffickers even hire popular students at high schools to bring less popular students to parties. Others are trapped through business opportunities, such as magazine sales that serve as a front for trafficking organizations.

The majority of trafficking victims are targeted through social media. Dr. Mary Burke, a professor at Carlow University and a leader in the fight against trafficking, said the Internet has allowed traffickers to make more money, so they use it to recruit, control and sell victims online.

Not just an urban problem

One might think that trafficking would be more prevalent in an urban area rather than in less populated parts of the Pittsburgh region. True, the city has its fair share of trafficking. However, Fayette County District Attorney Rich Bower asks, "Where is

the best place to bring someone to commit this crime? In a rural area where people don't expect it to happen. I wouldn't have expected it to happen here before I came to office."

Fayette County has a high youth poverty rate, third in Pennsylvania only to Philadelphia and Forest counties (2016 data), making local children and teens highly susceptible to human trafficking. Many runaway teens are lured into trafficking as they try to escape negative situations at home.

"We are in this lovely, rural hamlet setting, but it's ideal for traffickers," said Pat Mowen of the Crime Victims Center of Fayette County.

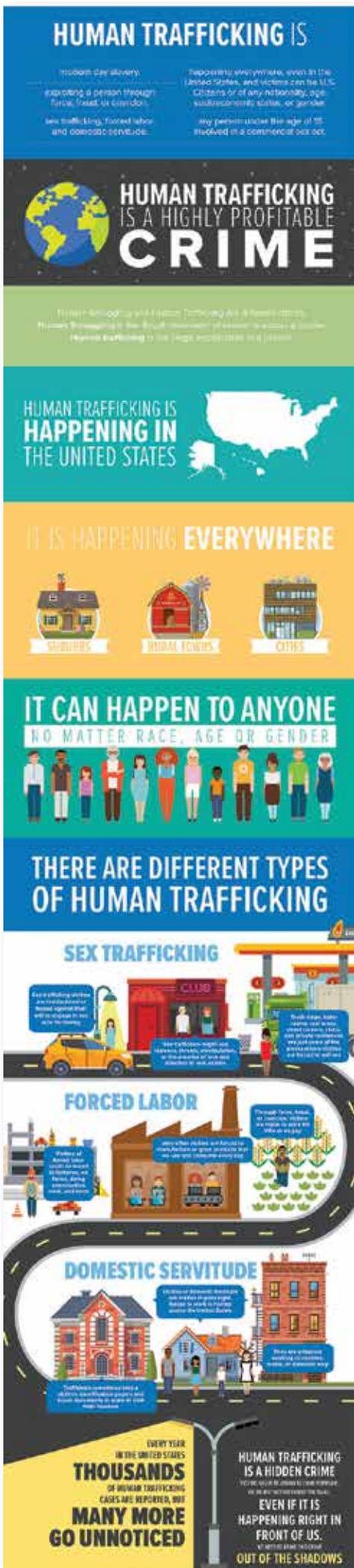
What about the fight against human trafficking?

One problem in the fight against trafficking is that the legal requirements for trafficking convictions are high, so victims who report abuse find there is not enough evidence to bring a case. Without evidence such as published ads, letters, photos or videos, prosecutors sometimes can't move forward on cases.

Fortunately, one factor that has been addressed is that up until this year, victims themselves could have ended up facing prosecution for prostitution. That's because Governor Tom Wolfe created new protections and supports for children of human trafficking and sexual exploitation by signing Act 130 of 2018. The new law shields children from prosecution for crimes their abusers forced them to commit, enhances law enforcement training and establishes a new fund for victim services. The bill also mandates that police officers statewide are trained to identify and assist exploited children – an important aspect that will go a long way in helping victims.

The Pittsburgh region also has organizations that are devoted to raising public awareness for human trafficking and providing services for victims. The Project to End Human Trafficking, led by Carlow University's Dr. Mary Burke, pulls slavery into the public eye through educational lectures that focus on topics

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relating to trafficking. Dr. Burke is also at the helm of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition. Today the Coalition is co-facilitated by PEHT and Special Agents from the local FBI Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force. In addition, local, state and federal organizations, law enforcement officials and citizens come together for monthly meetings and educational and prevention initiatives. Living in Liberty is a local safe house for trafficking victims. Clients have access to educators, lawyers, health care providers and counselors to restore their physical and mental well-being as well as help them toward self-sufficiency.

Join Us in Prayer and Action

As long as this injustice continues, Providence calls us to prayer and action toward change. Our congregation is a member of the US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, which includes being a co-sponsor of their monthly *Stop Trafficking* newsletter. In addition to prayer, other ways you can join our mission include:

- Becoming informed and inform others. Talk about human trafficking to your family, neighbors, and friends. Use social media to share information and resources. A good place to begin is the websites for the National Human Trafficking Hotline, Polaris Project or the Blue Campaign.
- Urging your state and federal representatives to support legislation that criminalizes human trafficking, as well as legislation that supports efforts to help and protect victims. Find your elected officials.
- Advocating for the training of law enforcement personnel, medical professionals, and other first responders, to recognize victims of trafficking.
- Support local agencies that provide shelter and other services to survivors of trafficking.
- Becoming a conscientious consumer. Purchase fair trade goods, certified as produced without child or slave labor. Learn Your Slavery Footprint (slaveryfootprint.org), Review the US Government's List of Goods Produced by Child and Forced Labor, contact companies, brands, and retailers encouraging them to investigate and prevent human trafficking in their supply chains.
- Knowing the National Human Trafficking Resource Center's hotline: **1-888-373-7888**. Call to report a suspected cases of human trafficking, as well as connect with anti-trafficking services in your area.

Helpful Resources

National Human Trafficking Hotline: humantraffickinghotline.org

The Polaris Project: polarisproject.org

Blue Campaign: dhs.gov/blue-campaign

US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking: sistersagainstrafficking.org

Stop Trafficking Newsletter: www.stopenslavement.org

Pictured infographic is courtesy of the US Dept. of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign: www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign

Lay Ecclesial Ministry

Sisters in Pittsburgh Guide the Faithful

Since the Second Vatican Council, the role of the laity has been given a renewed emphasis in the Church. In parishes, schools, diocesan agencies and Church institutions everywhere, there are numerous persons at work in service of the liturgy, the proclamation of the Word and the advancement of justice and charity. Some of these include Music, Liturgical, TV, Social, Volunteer and Young Adult Ministries.

In 2005, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) developed its “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord,” a resource for diocesan bishops and all others who are responsible for guiding the development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry in the United States. The bishops recognized that many of these roles presume a significant degree of preparation, formation and professional competence and that in many cases draw lay persons into a close mutual collaboration with the ministry of bishops, priests and deacons. They recognized that the many roles of Lay Ecclesial Ministers includes pastoral associates and parish business managers, as well as those who serve in religious education, worship services, youth and campus ministries, spiritual formation and marriage and family ministries.

“Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord” doesn’t propose norms or establish particular law. Rather, it suggests concepts, goals, strategies, resources and ideas to consider. It calls on Church leaders, ordained and lay, to become more intentional and effective in ordering and integrating lay ecclesial ministers within the life and structure of each diocese.

Several years ago, on the tenth anniversary of “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord,” the bishops met to discuss and explore the status of ecclesial ministry in the Church today and to re-affirm the “Co-Workers” document.

In the Pittsburgh diocese, the Institute for Pastoral Leadership serves the formation of leaders for the diocese’s The Church Alive! As part of this initiative, they organized a group of 18 Sisters and 6 others to serve as Spiritual Formation Advisors to over 100 Lay Ecclesial Ministers who work in parishes and schools in the Diocese. This group of Ad-



For over a decade, Sister Althea Anne Spencer has offered guidance and counsel to students as part of the Busy Person Retreats at Robert Morris University organized through the Pittsburgh Religious Vocation Council. As part of a new Diocesan initiative, Sister Althea, Sister Peg Markey and other religious presently serve as Spiritual Formation Advisors to over 100 Lay Ecclesial Ministers in the Pittsburgh Diocese.

visors includes our Sisters Althea Anne Spencer and Margaret (Peg) Markey, who began their ministry in early 2019. Through their efforts, our Sisters are helping assure that the development of Lay Ecclesial Ministers remains faithful to the Church’s theological traditions, as well as responds to contemporary pastoral needs and situations.

Thank you Sisters Althea and Peg for offering guidance, counsel and support to the faithful Lay Ecclesial Ministers of the Pittsburgh Diocese.

LOOKING FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTION?

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

Our Sisters trained in spiritual direction ministry are prepared to help guide you on your spiritual journey. Experienced in group facilitation ministry, our Sisters are available to facilitate group meetings, workshops or retreats.

For more information about spiritual direction or group facilitation, please contact Sister J. Lora Dambroski, OSF at sjldambroski@osfprov.org or Sister Althea Anne Spencer, OSF at saaspencer@osfprov.org



Thirteen Years of Blessings

Sisters Conclude Mission to Bolivia

At the end of 2018, after much prayer and discernment, our Congregation decided to bring to conclusion our mission to Riberalta, Bolivia. Presently, there is a greater need for our Sisters at other missions in Brazil serving the poor, sick, children and families. This decision was also made with the reassurance that the persons of Riberalta will continue to receive services and support through Diocesan programs that have grown and had much success during our time in the region.

Leaving an indelible mark on our souls, the Bolivian people remain in our hearts and prayers. The lessons we have learned truly enrich our present and future ministries. We are grateful for the blessing of serving Bolivia for 13 years. Thank you, people of Bolivia for your hospitality and friendship. Thank you, Sisters who answered the call to serve in a new country where you embraced the language, culture and people. Thank you, friends and benefactors who supported our efforts through your prayers and generosity.



Sisters who have served in Bolivia include Sisters Amélia Corsina de Oliveira, Elenice Maciel da Costa, Vandete Barbosa de Oliveira, Luzia Ferreira, Maria José da Conceição and Adriana Aparecida Duarte.



Catholic Sisters Behind the Iron Curtain

After World War II, the Soviet Union erected what came to be known as “The Iron Curtain” to separate itself and the Eastern and Central European countries under its influence from contact with Western and other noncommunist countries. This separation was maintained by both political and military force. Physical barriers, such as the Berlin Wall, guard towers and armed border patrols made leaving nearly impossible.

Many Catholic sisters living in these countries were subjected to harassment, exile, imprisonment and torture. Their schools, hospitals and motherhouses were seized by the governments and they were forbidden from wearing their habits and veils. Many were forced to work on collective farms or in factories and they were sometimes kept segregated in “concentration convents” where living conditions were quite primitive.

But instead of eradicating religion, as those in power expected to accomplish, it was pushed underground. Sisters still practiced their faith even though they could not outwardly show signs of doing so. They lived by ones and twos, meeting in small groups, never knowing if the woman and her niece living in the same apartment building were members



Sister M. Felicia Pieza (left) and Sister M. Virginia Pask (right) with friends from our first mission to Lithuania. During World War II, the U.S. Consul ordered our Sisters to leave Nazi-occupied Lithuania. We were not permitted to return until the country achieved independence from the Soviet Union.

of their congregation that were trying to stay under the radar. Young women still joined religious orders in secret, though they did so at great risk. These “secret sisters” often spent years in formation before they were deemed ready to profess their vows because meetings with their superiors were so sporadic. Vow ceremonies had to be conducted in the middle of the night so as not to attract police attention and all papers were often burned to leave no evidence behind.

When the Iron Curtain finally fell, it was difficult for the sisters to return to larger community life after so many years of living on their own or with one other person. Also, new facilities needed to be built since many of the motherhouses had been either destroyed or put to another use.

It was during this period that our Sisters were asked to share in the task of rebuilding the infrastructures of the Church in Lithuania. Our congregation had not ministered in Lithuania since 1941, when the U.S. Consul had ordered several of our sisters in Kaunas, Lithuania, to leave the country immediately.

In October, 1992, at the invitation of the Lithuanian Caritas Federation, Sisters Michele Garas and Dolorita Butkus journeyed to Utena, Lithuania, to begin their ministry by teaching in the Saule School. Sister Marianne Walters joined them in 1993. Later, Sister Michele remained in Utena, while Sisters Dolorita and Marianne moved to Kretinga where they assisted the Franciscan friars. Sisters Miriam Racas and Ruth Maria Ratkievicius also served in this mission.

Sister Dolorita was also co-founder of St. Clare Hospice in Utena, where staff members continue to provide terminally ill patients with professional and loving care in their final days.

While Sister Marianne eventually returned to the motherhouse, Sister Dolorita remained in Lithuania until late 2011. Sister Michele stayed until mid-2012, when the congregation turned over their ministries to the Sisters of Divine Providence, a Lithuanian congregation with their motherhouse in the city of Panevežys.



Above: Sister Michele helps to distribute food to Lithuanians in need.

Right: Sister Dolorita with a patient at St. Clare Hospice in Utena.



In Prayerful Memory

Sister M. Michele Garas, OSF

Sister M. Michele Garas, OSF, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God for 55 years, heard the words of her God: "Well done, good and faithful servant" on December 11, 2018, at the age of 76.

Sister Michele was born in Utena, Lithuania, one of six children. She and her family escaped from Soviet-occupied Lithuania at the end of World War II and lived in a Soviet displaced persons camp in Germany for five years. After her family migrated to the United States, they lived in Baltimore before moving to Detroit where she was taught by our sisters. After graduating from high school, Sister worked as a dental and medical assistant prior to entering the congregation in 1963. It was only after her 21st birthday that she decided: "my destination – convent." Sister's first ministry was teaching at Holy Trinity School in Moon Run, PA. Over the next 22 years, Sister Michele taught mostly first and second graders at elementary schools in Bethel Park, New Kensington, West Mifflin and Pittsburgh. Other assignments included parish schools in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Kenosha, WI, and Mahanoy City, PA.

Her first grade stories are delightful: The children were falling asleep one hot afternoon so Sister Michele said, "Do I have to get up on my desk and dance for you?" They all shouted, "Yes!" So she did! There were countless other such stories that always kept everyone in the congregation laughing.

In 1992, on October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Sister was missioned to Lithuania, joining Sister Dolorita Butkus as the first of our sisters to return to Lithuania since the late 1930s. Here, she served as a pastoral minister for two years and as a teacher at Saules School, both in her hometown of Utena, before health-related problems prompted her return to the motherhouse in Pittsburgh in 2011. Here, she ministered as a sacristan and receptionist prior to beginning a Ministry of Prayer and Presence at Presbyterian SeniorCare in 2014.

Sister Michele graduated from Carlow University with a B.S. in Education, with additional courses at Duquesne University.



Sowing Hope Through Planned Charitable Giving

The most meaningful gifts come from the heart. "I wish I could do more" often accompanies donations to our Community. Our Sisters are grateful for every gift that has blessed our mission. Every cent, every kind word, every prayer is vital to our ministries and outreach, as well as the care of our senior Sisters who have dedicated their lives to living the Gospel in service of others. However, if you're looking to do more, no matter what your financial situation, planned giving can maximize benefits to you, your loved ones and the charities and causes near and dear to your heart.

What are the most common planned gifts?

Most people give by leaving a charitable gift in a will or trust, or by naming the Sisters as a beneficiary of an insurance policy or retirement plan, such as an IRA. Some donors also set up living charitable trusts that help maximize the impact of their giving and may have a tax benefit, especially under revised charitable giving rules. A trusted financial advisor can guide you regarding which is best for you and your beneficiaries.

Who can help me in making a gift to the Sisters?

A professional advisor, such as a financial planner, an attorney, or an accountant, will get you off on the right foot by advising you on the various ways you can make a gift. It is recommended that persons seek a financial advisor who is a "fiduciary," and must place a client's interest above his or her own, as well as disclose all fees, how they are compensated and any other conflicts.

Do I tell the Sisters?

That's up to you. Like most charitable organizations, we prefer that you let us know about gifts in advance. This way, we can best express our gratitude for your generosity and thoughtfulness.

For more information and other ways you can support the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, please contact our Development Director, Robyn Moeller at 412-885-7232 or rmoeller@osfprov.org.



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

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