

The Whitehall
FRANCISCAN

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The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God



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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Do What You Can, With What You Have, Where You Are

A message from General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, OSF

The above words attributed to President Theodore Roosevelt certainly are worth repeating today. There are moments we really do not want to hear about the tragedies happening around us, nor about the present political situations in our world. We want to hear even less about the reality of climate change that is destroying our planet. It seems that the structures that have given us hope and security are all in crisis. What is our response? We could just pretend the crises do not exist or follow the example of the ostrich and put our head in the sand. We can even try to convince ourselves that it is not as bad as it seems and go on with our daily routine. Whatever our desired response, the question before us is – What are you doing with what you have, where you are?

A friend recently gave me Margaret Wheatley's book: *Who Do We Choose To Be?* I share with you a few of her powerful quotes about what our world needs today.

We need leaders who put service over self, who can be steadfast through crises and failures, who want to stay present and make a difference to the people, situations, and causes they care about.

We need leaders who are committed to serving people, who recognize what is being lost in the haste to dominate, ignore and abuse the human spirit.

We can lead people to create positive changes locally that make life easier and more sustainable, that create possibility in the midst of global decline.

Let us use whatever power and influence we have, working with whatever resources are already available, mobilizing the people who are with us to work for what they care about.

Margaret Wheatley's words, the experiences of these past months and the articles in this issue of the Whitehall Franciscan invite us to pursue personal and communal responses about actions that are possible, that are within our reach, that make a difference wherever we are. At the International Union of General Superiors (UISG) meeting in Rome, women religious leaders celebrated what is being done by women committed to consecrated life around the world and yet continue to ask – "What more can we do for our planet, our Church, our world?" At our own congregational Assemblies of Corporate Reflection in the USA and in Brazil, we continue to be grateful for the ministries we are involved in and the people's lives we are touching, yet we continue to ask – "What more can we do with what we have, where we are?"

In this issue of the Whitehall Franciscan, we share about the work being done at the St. Clare and St. Francis Social Center in São Paulo, Brazil, as we commemorate 25 years of this ministerial outreach. You will read about what our Jubilarians have done over the past 65 and 75 years of service to God's people. There is information about what you can do for creation by making the Saint Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor, as well as ideas about how you might participate in the movements to put an end to Human Trafficking in our world. So, as you read this issue, keep in mind that the challenge before us is to do what we can, with what we have, where we are. What is your response?

Sisters Gather in USA

Our Sisters in the USA gathered on May 22-24, 2019 for our annual Assembly of Corporate Reflection (ACR) which included prayer, reflection, discussion of topics important to our Sisters and mission, and updates on our ministries and outreach efforts in the United States and Brazil. Leadership present for our 2019 meeting included General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, Assistant General Minister Sister Maria José da Conceição, and General Councilor Sister Janet Gardner.

After our ACR concluded, everyone gathered with our Sisters at Presbyterian SeniorCare to celebrate our 2019 USA Jubilarians, Sister Marita Dargis and Sister Lillian Yurksaitis (more on pages 4-5). Sisters also gathered for a Memorial Day picnic at our Nativity Convent and some of our Sisters enjoyed a Pittsburgh Pirates baseball game thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor.

We are grateful for all who contributed to our 2019 ACR gathering, Jubilee Celebration and Memorial Day picnic. We are also grateful for our administrative assistants Louanne Davis and Mimi DiGregory for their assistance organizing spaces, meals, and materials.



Pictured Top: Back Row (left to right) - Sisters Joanne Brazinski, J. Lora Dambroski, Mary Ann Lostoski, M. Edward Urban, Peg Markey, Maria José da Conceição, Janice Campbell, Barbara Zilch, Ann Marie Lostoski, Hilaria de Oliveira, and Eliana da Silva. Front Row (left to right) - Sisters Theresa Codispoli, Elise Mora, Janet Gardner, Francine McDonald and Althea Anne Spencer.

UISG Plenary Meeting in Rome



Sister Joanne Brazinski with Sister Theresa Maya, congregational leader of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and past-president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious who gave a presentation on the future of religious life.

A meeting of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) took place in Rome from May 6-1, 2019. Sister Joanne Brazinski was among the 850 superiors from over 40 countries who gathered for prayer, presentations and sharing on the themes of Vision for the Future of Religious Life, Care for Our Planet, Interculturality and Inter-Religious Dialogue.

The participants felt blessed with the atmosphere of trust and collaboration that permeated the entire assembly. They also appreciated the content and thought that the topics chosen responded to the challenges facing various nations.

On the final day at the Vatican, Cardinal João Braz de Aviz celebrated the Liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica, followed by an hour-long audience with Pope Francis in Paul VI Hall.

Pope Francis' audience was especially engaging. He walked into the hall accompanied by Sister Carmen Sammut, leader of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, and Sister Pat Murray, UISG's executive director. Sister Carmen spoke first to the theme: "Sowers of Prophetic Hope." The Pope took notes as she spoke.

Afterwards, Pope Francis spoke off the cuff, responding to some of the points Sister Carmen had made. Then he unexpectedly offered the women religious 40 minutes of question-and-answer time, inviting people to come forward and ask what they wanted. The range of topics was vast and included clergy sexual abuse, how doctrine develops in the church and a possible papal visit to South Sudan.

Before the audience, the Pope also launched the "Nuns Healing Hearts" Campaign in honor of the 10th anniversary of Talitha Kum, the international network of consecrated life against human trafficking. (See article on page 10.)

2019 Jubilee Celebrations

Each year, we celebrate the jubilees of our Sisters who have been shaped by God's hand into women full of grace with a clear vision and deep faith. In a Franciscan community, jubilee is important. It is a celebration that commemorates the passage of years in which a sister has lived the vowed life with faithfulness and fidelity. We hope you will be touched by their faith as many of you have been touched by their presence in your lives.

75th Jubilee

Sister Marita Dargis, OSF



Sister Marita Dargis is a native of Shenandoah, PA, a small community located in the anthracite coal region of eastern Pennsylvania. Sister Marita entered our congregation in 1944. Like a handful of our sisters, she entered several years after her older sister, Sister Delphine Dargis. Sister began her teaching ministry in Elizabeth, NJ, followed by 43 years in a number of different parish schools, including 22 years at Sts. Peter & Paul in Elizabeth. Subsequent assignments included St. Valentine, St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin, James Lavelle and Holy Trinity in the Pittsburgh area. Sister also served as principal at St. Joseph in Dubois, PA, St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin in Pittsburgh and Sts. Peter & Paul in Grand Rapids, MI. She returned to Sts. Peter & Paul in Elizabeth, NJ, serving as a pastoral assistant until 2013. Sister then worked in the convent's craft shop before re-locating to Presbyterian SeniorCare where she continues in her ministry of prayer and presence.

Prior to entering religious life, Sister Marita worked as a riveter in a factory during World War II. This experience caused hearing damage that affects her to this day.

Sister Marita is a graduate of Mt. Mercy College (now Carlow University) with a B.S. degree in Education. She also earned her Master's degree at Duquesne University.

Sister Marita said, "I see that the Providence of God was my guide from the very decision of entrance to the religious life . . . I am aware of countless workings of the Providence of God, especially when I 'let go' and surrender my will. I thank God for life and for all goodness."

Remember When

Highlights from the years our Jubilarians Entered

1944

- D-Day invasion of Normandy is launched on June 6th
- Federal debt is \$204 billion. (Today the annual interest alone is \$364 billion)
- A gallon of gas: 15 cents
- FDR is elected to a fourth term as President, defeating Thomas Dewey

1954

- Hattie Caraway elected the 1st woman U.S. senator for a full term
- Supreme Court rules that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional
- Average cost of a new home: \$10,250
- Senator Joe McCarthy is censured by the U.S. Senate

65th Jubilee

Sister Lillian Yurksaitis, OSF



Sister Lillian Yurksaitis was born in Bridgeport, CT, an historic seaport city and the largest city in Connecticut. Sister Lillian entered the congregation in 1954 before beginning a life of ministry in education, followed by a variety of congregational support work.

Sister began teaching at Holy Trinity in Moon Run, with subsequent assignments in Grand Rapids, MI, Cleveland, OH, Kenosha, WI and Kearney and Elizabeth, NJ. Other assignments included parish schools in West Mifflin, Bethel Park and Pittsburgh. Sister Lillian also taught elementary school children in São Paulo, Brazil, for several years. Sister holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education from Duquesne University.

Following a pastoral internship, she worked at Hartford Hospital in Connecticut and Hope House in Wilmington, DE. Sister Lillian's subsequent ministries at our Motherhouse in Pittsburgh included seven years as assistant director of Assisi Hall serving our retired and infirm Sisters. She also worked in congregational support services in a variety of positions for over 20 years, including transportation coordinator, postal clerk, assistant in community life and library aide.

In 2015, she re-located to Presbyterian SeniorCare where she continues in her ministry of prayer and presence.

Sister Lillian said that she is most grateful to God for each and every person she was privileged to encounter and serve throughout her 65 years in ministry.

Blessings to Our 65th Jubilarian in Brazil

Sister M. Acácia de Paula Ribeiro, OSF



Sister Maria Acácia de Paula Ribeiro was born on August 26, 1935 in the city of Paraisópolis in southern Minas Gerais, a Brazilian state considered one of the most Catholic in the country. She is the oldest of 12 children.

Sister Acácia joined our congregation on June 29, 1954 and began her education ministry at Our Lady of Carmel School in Vila Alpina. During this time, she also earned a Bachelors degree in History and Education. While in Vila Alpina, she also served in formation and vocation ministry. Other education ministry assignments included St. Michael the Archangel and Pius XII schools.

Imbued with the Franciscan spirit, she devoted years of her life to the study of Franciscan spirituality and assisted in retreats with Fr. Inácio Larrañaga. In 1985 and 1986, she was the director of the CEFEPAL Franciscan study program in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro.

From 1989 to 1992, she served as Regional Councilor and assumed the direction of the then Our Lady of Carmel Day School in Vila Alpina. After a decade, she changed the focus of her mission to healthcare ministry offering comfort and support to patients and families in the most difficult moments of their lives.

Sister presently resides in our Paz e Bem Community, where she engages in the ministry of prayer and presence.

A Safe Place to Grow

St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi Social Center Celebrates 25th Anniversary

By God's Providence, the St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi Social Center has served as a safe space for vulnerable and at-risk children and adolescents in São Paulo, Brazil for over 25 years. As we celebrate this blessed milestone, join us as we reflect on the past and look to the future with hope.

In the early 1990s, Brazil's economic situation contributed to an influx of poor and vulnerable children and adolescents in São Paulo, where our Sisters operate three schools. With no alternative, these youth hung out in the streets engaging in risky activities and becoming easy targets for those who abuse and exploit children. Lacking support and basic needs, they also struggled academically and socially.

Responding to the needs of these young persons, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God took on an ambitious project to transform a neglected and abandoned psychiatric hospital into a safe place for children and adolescents to play, learn and grow.

"The building was totally in disrepair. A real horror!," said Sister Yolanda Marcelino. "Nobody knew what to do. It was at this point that Sister Elenice and I entered."



Sister Odete Pereira da Silva (back, 5th from left) and the dedicated staff of the St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi Social Center in São Paulo, Brazil.

Under the leadership of Sisters Yolanda and Elenice Maciel da Costa, this new initiative brought together Sisters, lay educators and pastoral groups of the our sponsored schools in São Paulo – St. Michael the Archangel, Our Lady of Mt.

Carmel, and Pius XII.

"We were the group that thought about what to do and how to do it," said Sister Yolanda.

Monthly meetings evolved into working Community Action Meetings that would oversee ongoing building renovations and development of programs and services that would operate out of the Center. A field survey was also conducted to assess the needs of local children and adolescents and a coordinator followed up with a home visit to youth who had expressed interest.

"When the building was in good condition, we started having children's meetings with our pastoral students," said Sister Yolanda. These monthly meetings were held for over a year before the Center officially opened.

In 1993, final preparations were being made for the Center to officially open and serve 80 children. However, more funding was needed to support



At the Social Center, educational computer games are offered to help children improve language and mathematical abilities, as well as valuable technology skills.

Continued on page 9

San Damiano Award

Doctors Honored at 15th Annual Autumn Gala

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God are delighted to announce that our 2019 San Damiano Award honorees are Dr. Paul Lorincy, DPM, and Dr. Theresa Strong, MD. The San Damiano Award is given to an individual or organization that has demonstrated a long term commitment to our Sisters and Franciscan mission. Both Dr. Lorincy and Dr. Strong are long-time supporters of our congregation. Each has also served as a healing presence for our Community often going above and beyond to meet the unique needs of each Sister entrusted to their care. They will be presented with the award at our 15th annual Autumn Gala on Thursday, October 3, 2019.

A board certified ophthalmologist in Pittsburgh, who has been practicing for over 30 years, Dr. Strong is a graduate of Marquette University, with a B.S. in Chemistry and German. She

then attended the University of Pittsburgh's Medical School, obtaining her M.D. with a specialty in ophthalmology in 1983. She is currently affiliated with South Hills Eye Associates. She has served as the Chief of Ophthalmology at St. Clair Hospital and the Chairman of Education for the Allied Health Personnel of the Pittsburgh Ophthalmology Society. Dr. Strong is also an active volunteer member of Eye Care America, the public service program of the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, providing eye care at no out-of-pocket cost for those who qualify.

Pittsburgh native Dr. Paul Lorincy is a practicing podiatrist in South Park. A graduate of St. Vincent's College with a Bachelor of Science degree, he graduated with honors from Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine in 1978. With over 40 years' experience, he is affiliated with St. Clair Hospital but also cooperates with numerous other doctors and specialists in the Pittsburgh region.

For more information about the Autumn Gala, or ways you can participate in this major fundraiser for our Sisters and ministries, please contact us at 412-885-7232 or info@osfprov.org.



OCTOBER CA\$H RAFFLE

Drawing Based on the 3 Digit Evening PA Lottery

\$10 per Chance

\$70 Winners Every Day in October EXCEPT:

\$500 AUTUMN GALA GRAND PRIZE on Thursday, October 3

\$200 Every Sunday in October
and

\$100 Every Saturday in October

DAILY BONUS: \$20 paid to Number Before, Number After and Reverse

*Example: If 243 was drawn on a weekday, 243 would win \$70
and 242, 244 and 342 would each win \$20.

More Information: 412-477-4321

Affordable, Sustainable & Delicious

Connecting to Creation by Returning to Local Farms

The statistics are staggering. Over 15 million American households are classified as “food insecure” by the USDA. This includes over 12 million children.

Over 5.8 million U.S. households suffer from severe food insecurity, which means that people who live in them often go hungry. More than 40 million Americans currently rely on SNAP, formerly food stamps, to meet their food needs.

In addition, those who can afford to buy enough food, are not always getting safe, wholesome, nutritious food. Massive recalls of food contaminated with E coli and salmonella bacteria and other contaminants have become almost commonplace. We also have an epidemic of obesity and associated diet-related diseases, including diabetes, heart disease and numerous types of cancer.

Thankfully, change is beginning to happen.

Americans have long known that farmers’ markets offer shoppers products unrivaled in taste and freshness. Lately, a powerful local food movement is growing in the United States; a movement that directly connects consumers with how, where and by whom their food is grown. It establishes new pathways for rural families to stay on the farm and attracts new producers to farming and farm-related businesses. It connects schools



and our nation’s children with fresher, healthier food.

There are about two million farms in the U.S. (down from nearly 7 million in the 1930s). About 90 percent of those are considered small farms and a large percentage are family-owned. More and more of these farmers are now selling their products directly to the public. Farmers’ markets, food co-ops, u-picks, farm stands and other direct selling channels have become familiar to many neighborhoods. Overall, about 8 percent of U.S. farms now market produce locally.

Farmers’ markets are not just places to buy and sell fresh produce. They are also a proven asset in maintaining the economic health of communities, as well as local agriculture.

Sister Francine McDonald and Sister Mary Ann Lostoski visit Trax Farms in Pittsburgh for some locally grown produce.



The markets are a local venue to sell products at better prices and for direct profit. For consumers, they provide a variety of local farm fresh products at competitive prices. For communities, they attract people to the area and once there, they may be drawn to other businesses, events or attractions, multiplying the economic impact from their visit.

When food is grown in the community, it will reach you within a day or two of being picked, meaning peak flavor and nutritional value. Peaches will be sweeter, lettuce crunchier and meats, cheeses, breads and eggs fresher and more flavorful.

The risk of food-borne illness decreases dramatically when buying local foods. Large-scale contamination occurs most often within a large industrial farming system with many moving parts. Small-scale operations like family farms have more control over a smaller amount of product which better ensures maximum safety.

Further, the livelihood of small farms relies on maintaining customers who trust their methods, making the smaller farms more accountable and transparent about their operations.

When people buy local, they re-establish a time-honored connection between the provider and the consumer.

Shopping local brings folks together who care about nourishing people in the community. Vendors and their customers enjoy relationships built on trust and understanding. Local farmers and producers want you to ask questions and visit. They're passionate about providing the highest-quality product, wanting you to love it as much as they do.

Pittsburgh has always been rooted in a tradition of fresh from the farm foods. As a result, farmers' markets are a well-established part of the city's and surrounding region's culture.

In season, you can find more than one farmers' market every day of the week, in different neighborhoods. Whether a church parking lot, a sidewalk stand or a tent off the side of the road, these markets sell local farm fresh produce, eggs, cheese, homemade baked goods, jams and much more.

Today, a number of Pittsburghers enter a more formal agreement with local farmers to ensure a seasonal supply of farm fresh products, including beef and other meats. This is a growing trend called Community Supplied Agriculture (CSA). These agreements and the products offered vary by farm. CSA's help local families enjoy a variety of farm fresh products while providing local farmers a profitable outlet for their harvest. If interested, you can log on to www.localharvest.org for a comprehensive list of CSA outlets.

The St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor

Over the past several years, Catholics have been taking the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor and joining the Catholic Climate Covenant. The St. Francis Pledge is a promise and a commitment by Catholic individuals, families, parishes, organizations and institutions to live our faith by protecting God's Creation and advocating on behalf of people in poverty who face the harshest impacts of global climate change. By joining the Covenant, you commit to the following:

I/We Pledge to:

- Pray and reflect on the duty to care for God's creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.
- Learn about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.
- Assess how I contribute to climate change by my own energy use, consumption and waste.
- Act to change my choices and behaviors contributing to climate change.
- Advocate for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact the poor and vulnerable.

Take the St. Francis Pledge at www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org.

Planning Helps Us Care for Loved Ones After Our Death

We sometimes shy away from taking care of things relative to the time of our death, even though we know it's an inevitable part of God's plan for us all. We often do not want to think about where we will be buried or what arrangements we would like for our wake and funeral. The same holds true for our physical possessions - our estate. What will happen to what we can't take with us? We may verbally tell our family or friends. However, if it's not written down, our wishes may not be carried out or cause unneeded stress for loved ones in mourning.

In 97 years as a Community, we've had hundreds of Sisters go to their eternal home with Christ. We cannot control when we are called home, but know that through planning we can continue to care for our loved ones and serve others. Each Sister has a plan that they regularly update, and we are blessed that we can honor each Sister's wishes after death.

No matter what the size of your estate, consulting an attorney or financial advisor can help you make a painful time for your loved ones less stressful, and ensure you leave a legacy of your choosing. Planning can also help you take care of charities or organizations that are close to your heart, like the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God. There are also charitable trusts and other ways of planning that can ensure your loved ones and chosen charities receive the most benefit.

If you're thinking about leaving a gift to Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, please contact our Development Director, Robyn Moeller at 412-885-7232 or rmoeller@osfprov.org.

Nuns Healing Hearts

Network of Sisters Fights Human Trafficking

In May 2019, the Nuns Healing Hearts photography exhibition was launched by Pope Francis at the Vatican to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Talitha Kum - a network of over 2000 religious Sisters spanning 76 countries who tirelessly work to end human trafficking and modern day slavery. This photography exhibition by internationally renowned photographer Lisa Kristine shows Sisters living and working alongside victims and survivors of human trafficking in Guatemala, Mexico, Philippines, Thailand, Italy and the United States.



A photo featured in the Nuns Healing Hearts exhibit shows a Sister from the Talitha Kum network comforting a survivor in the Philippines. (Picture by Lisa Kristine used with permission from Talitha Kum.)

What is Talitha Kum?

Talitha Kum is a project of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), in collaboration with the Union of Superiors General (USG). Taken from the Gospel of Mark, the Arabic “Talitha Kum” translates to “young girl, I say to you, arise” and refers to the miracle of Jesus raising the young daughter of Jairus from the dead. According to the Talitha Kum website, the phrase represents “the transformative power of compassion and mercy, which awakens the deep desire for dignity and life which may be asleep and injured by the many forms of exploitation.”

At the launch of Nuns Healing Hearts exhibit, Pope Francis signs a photo with (from the left) photographer Lisa Kristine, John McCaffrey (Galileo Foundation) and Sister Gabriella Bottani, SMC.

(Picture used with permission from Talitha Kum's website: talithakum.info)



Talitha Kum – UISG’s role includes:

- Promoting the formation of new regional networks
- Fostering communication and interchange of information between member networks
- Supporting actions of political impact internationally
- Promoting February 8 as the World Day of Prayer and Reflection Against Trafficking in Persons

Activities within Talitha Kum Networks include:

- Training at local and regional levels
- Prevention, awareness and consciousness-raising activities which give visibility to trafficking and to its underlying causes and support mechanisms
- Accompaniment, assistance and protection of people redeemed from trafficking
- Reporting of trafficking and its causes
- Exchange/Interchange of information about cases and causes of trafficking in persons
- Actions of political impact

For more about Talitha Kum and how to support their work, please visit:

www.talithakum.info

Experience Nuns Healing Hearts online at youtu.be/1kVCM-FN1NE

St. Clare and St. Francis Social Center (continued from page 6)

ongoing building renovations, as well as programs, pastoral services, lay staff, food, sports equipment, utilities and other needs.

At the request of our Sisters, our congregation's schools graciously agreed to help fund the Center, which officially opened on April 11, 1994. The Center continued to grow and develop more programs and services for children and adolescents. In 2002, the Social Center's official name became St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi Social Center.

Today, the Center continues to serve as a safe and supportive space for children to play, learn and grow. Under the direction of Sister Odete Pereira da Silva, the St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi Social Center serves 125 children and adolescents ages 6 to 15 years who engage in daily activities and enrichment programs such as recreational and team sports, health education, informational technology and tutoring. The Center offers a reading room, study areas and recreational spaces, as well as various social and pastoral programs, such as the Polo Project to Prevent Domestic Violence and School Reinforcement.



A local dentist regularly visits the social center to give free exams and teach children about dental health.

In Prayerful Memory

Sister M. Berenice Petrauskas, OSF



Sister Berenice Petrauskas, OSF, a Sister of St. Francis of the Providence of God for 68 years, died on April 10, 2019, at the age of 89. Sister Berenice was born in a small village in Lithuania. During World War II, her family faced many hardships under Nazi and Soviet occupation. After the death of her mother, Sister Berenice and her sisters fled Soviet-occupied Lithuania with their uncle, Father Joseph Dakinevicius. Traveling through war-ravaged Germany, the family found some peace in a small village near the Swiss Alps. Sister's father, Norbertus, remained in Lithuania and died as a freedom fighter against the Soviets.

In 1947, Sister Berenice and her sisters were granted refuge status in the United States. Upon settling in Pittsburgh, they attended St. Francis Academy, with Sister Berenice entering the community upon her graduation in 1951. Sister Berenice began her ministry in education and was assigned as an elementary teacher at St. George in Rochester, NY. This was followed by assignments in other schools including Amsterdam, NY, Kenosha, WI, Elizabeth, NJ and Moon Run, PA. In Pittsburgh, she served at St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin School. Sister earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education at Duquesne University, and continued her education with computer classes at Point Park College.

After 32 years in the classroom, Sister Berenice took her ministry in different direction. With her customary grit and determination, she

performed clerical work at the Motherhouse for the next 25 years. After some health concerns, she joined our Sisters at Presbyterian SeniorCare in 2014 where she engaged in the Ministry of Prayer and Presence.

In reflecting upon her life, Sister told us that her most joyous moment came in 1980, when she returned to Lithuania and visited her two uncles. A true Franciscan who delighted in creation's wonders, Sister Berenice lived a life of simplicity and grace. In her own words, she also told us, "Bless the Lord for all the good He has done for me. I loved being a Sister."



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

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15th Annual
Autumn Gala

Benefiting the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God

Thursday, October 3, 2019

at the South Hills Country Club

Reception at 6:00 PM ♦ Dinner at 7:00 PM

Gourmet meal includes entrée choice of Asiago Chicken, French Cut Pork Chops, or English Style Alaskan Cod with sides, wine and dessert, as well as a hospitality reception with light appetizers, basket raffle and 50/50 drawing.

\$75 a person ♦ \$275 for a 1/2 table (4 persons) ♦ \$525 for a table of 8

Please RSVP by Friday, September 13 to (412) 885-7232 or info@osfprov.org

