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# The Whitehall FRANCISCAN

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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## Interconnectedness of Creation

A message from General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, OSF

Each day, it seems that our country and our world are experiencing less tolerance, less understanding and less appreciation of differences. Moreover, in turn there seems to be more cynicism, more violence and more division. Perhaps one of the greatest challenges of our day is to realize that all in the universe is interconnected. Everything, not only people, but all of creation as well.

*"Interconnectedness is the true nature of all beings. We are not only connected to other people, but to the air through our breathing, and to the universe through light. Thus severing these interconnections means death for all beings."* (*"We Are Interconnected Beings"*, V. Pomnyun, HuffPost.com) What powerful words as we ponder the proceedings of the Synod on the Amazon, the political and economic strife, the immigration reality, the climate crisis, etc.

Francis of Assisi had a great sense of the interconnectedness of all things. The world and creation brought him closer to God. He saw humans as the pinnacle of God's creation. Francis' *Canticle of Creatures* urges the elements of nature to praise God. This prayer/poem weaves all creatures, humans and even death into a marvelous whole.

Realizing the interconnectedness of all beings, makes us more human, more alive, more real in making choices and decisions. With this issue of the *Whitehall Franciscan*, we are invited to reflect on interconnectedness and to be grateful for the many persons and circumstances in our lives that provide a sacred connecting space, a place of compassion and a welcoming presence. What would our life be like without this interconnectedness to God, to others, to the universe, to nature?

As Sisters of Saint Francis of the Providence of God, we are celebrating interconnectedness. As Franciscans, we realize our responsibility for our *Common Home*, Earth. The Synod on the Amazon urges us to ecological conversion. Our Sisters serving in the Amazon region keep reminding us of the plight of the indigenous people, as well as the mass destruction that is happening in this region. We are choosing concrete ways to make a difference.

The interconnectedness of 12 congregations reaching out through Sisters Place attests to the fact that the strength and unity of many hands joined for a common purpose can work miracles. Over twenty-five years, these congregations have continued to dream, work, plan and offer a home and supportive environment for homeless parents and children in Allegheny County.

Through our connectedness with the Auxiliary, SFA Alumnae, Associates, collaborators of the Autumn Gala, and countless others, we can reach out to many with listening ears, compassionate hearts and a welcoming presence.

Celebrating the memory of our Sister Barbara Zilch in this issue also reminds us of the interconnectedness with those who have gone before us and continue to be remembered in our thoughts, lives and prayers.

As you read this issue, I invite you to ponder the beauty, mystery, reality and challenge of interconnectedness. What are your insights?



# Franciscan Happenings

## Aspirant Program Grows



On August 28, 2019, Samara Cibebe Messias Trinidad, 25 years old, officially entered into our Aspirant Program in Brazil. General Counselor and Formation Director Sister Rute Guimarães presented Samara with a copy of the Scriptures and a Tau Cross in front of Sisters in the local community, as well as the diocesan bishop and pastor (pictured left). Our Aspirant Director Sister Maria do Carmo Nogueira, Sister Maria José Torres and Sister Maria Lúcia do Nascimento will offer their wholehearted support and guide Samara as she goes forward on her spiritual journey into this initial phase of formation in our Congregation. Please join us as we welcome Samara and continue to pray for her and all young persons discerning their vocations.

## Auxiliary's Spaghetti Dinner Blesses Community

Though small in number, our Pittsburgh Auxiliary has a mighty impact on the lives of our Sisters. On September 14, 2019, they hosted a successful Spaghetti Dinner at Nativity Church in Pittsburgh's South Hills. Proceeds from this event support the Auxiliary's ongoing efforts that enrich the lives of our Sisters, including their recent generous commitment of full financial support for bathroom renovations at our Nativity Convent to ensure the safety of our Sisters.

We are grateful to our hard-working Auxiliary Board, as well as the Nativity Church Women's Guild, our Associates and Sisters who assisted with the event. Their efforts, and the support of patrons, is a blessing as our Sisters continue to be present in local parishes and serve the Pittsburgh region.



Associate volunteers Janet Maddock, MaryAnn Garfold and Kathy Antoniazzi join Sister Hilaria for their after-work meal.

### Join our Auxiliary

The Auxiliary is always ready to welcome new members who share their commitment to the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God. Membership is \$10 a year. Auxiliary members receive the Auxiliary newsletter and Advent and Lenten booklets, as well as information about events. The Auxiliary also prays for the special intentions of members and sponsors Masses for deceased members.

For more information about joining our Auxiliary or participating in any of their activities, please contact Sister Mary Ann Lostoski at (412) 477-4321. or [smalostoski@osfprov.org](mailto:smalostoski@osfprov.org).



Auxiliary Board members Annette Yousko and Rosalind Gorman sell raffle tickets for the basket raffle.



Sisters Francine McDonald and M. Edward Urban helped sell dinners.

# *A Place for Families*

## Sisters Place Celebrates 25th Anniversary

While the number of Catholic Sisters in most congregations is getting smaller, Sisters continue to band together across communities to support their neighbors in need. One such program is Sisters Place, which offers a home and supportive services to homeless parents and children throughout Allegheny County.

Since opening its doors, Sisters Place has listened with love to the cries of countless parents experiencing homelessness, their struggles and their hopes and dreams for a better way of life.

The agency was founded in 1993 by a group of 14 Catholic women religious communities, including the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, as an outgrowth of their interest in serving the poor in the Pittsburgh region. Because of their extensive experience with the disadvantaged population, the Sisters recognized the critical need that many impoverished families have for stable housing and supportive services as they work to make lasting, positive changes in their lives.

Due to the Mon Valley's acute need for such programming, the Board selected Clairton as the home for the new Sisters Place.

Initially, Sisters Place purchased and renovated 20 individual townhouses in Clairton in 1995 and families began moving into their new homes in 1997. In 2000, Sisters Place added a transitional housing component with services focused on young, single moms and their children. In 2011, a second permanent housing program was added to serve another five families. As the need has increased, the program now welcomes fathers, grandparents and intact families into the program.

In 2016, after Allegheny County's Advisory Board voted to eliminate its transitional housing from its HUD housing options, Sisters Place requested and was granted the opportunity to help ten more families in need of permanent housing. In 2017, the organization initiated the privately funded Empowerment Housing Program to assist up to five families not eligible for HUD federal housing.

Twelve congregations remain active on Sisters Place's Member Board today, including our congregation. Our Sister Althea Anne Spencer is the current Board president.

Sisters Place has helped over 350 families with 90 percent of their participants moving from homelessness into independent living. In 2017, of the 53 families served, 75 percent maintained or obtained permanent housing. Some of the transitions were from the Transitional Housing program to the Permanent Housing program and others included moving on to private residences with Section 8 vouchers.

In addition, 40 percent of parents became employed full or part-time and 30 percent increased their household income. Four parents continued their post-secondary education and two graduated.



Understanding that homelessness can be frightening and traumatic, at times exacerbated by physical vulnerability and mental health issues, Sisters Place realizes that these parents need more than just shelter. Parents experiencing homelessness need a comprehensive support system and access to multi-faceted resources.

Utilizing a holistic format based on principles of education and empowerment, Sisters Place is designed to uplift parents with support, tools and resources to truly break the cycle of homelessness some have known much of their lives. Counselors serve as advocates to ensure every parent receives benefits to which they are entitled. Life skills coaching, adult education, referrals for GED preparation and job readiness training programs assist parents in preparing for and entering the work world when they are ready. Residents must also adhere to recovery contract, CYF directives and probation/parole mandates, if applicable. There is also a child development specialist to help enhance parenting skills, assess the needs of the children, provide child care referrals and interact with the children through play and

*(Continued on page 8)*



*Our General Councilor Sister Janet Gardner at the grand re-opening of Sisters Place's Family Playground in August 2019. Playground renovations were made possible through grants and donations and included an expanded play area, new fence and cookout space for families. Sister Janet presently serves as co-chair of the Catholic Sisters Leadership Council (formerly the Tri-Diocesan Sisters Leadership Conference) of Western PA, which includes the founding communities of Sisters Place.*

# Seeking God's Presence

## Spiritual Direction Ministry Illuminates Spiritual Journey

**P**icture this: A person, young or old, is practicing their faith, yet naturally wants to grow in his or her relationship with Jesus and become closer to God. Can the faithful – or should they – turn somewhere for guidance?

They certainly can. Saints like Teresa of Avila have said something in our nature necessitates external support for our development. She taught that God designed us on purpose to be dependent on others for our spiritual growth.

Spiritual directors can help us along this path. Even young people in college are proving they grow quickly in faith and more easily discern where God is calling them through spiritual direction.

### What is spiritual direction?

Our Sister Althea Anne Spencer, herself a trained spiritual director, tells us that spiritual direction is “the companionship of the director with a directee to assist the individual with their relationship with God.”

Says Sister Althea, “Spiritual direction is not counseling or a ‘fix it’ session.”

### What is a spiritual director?

According to Sister Althea, a spiritual director is a person of faith and prayer, with training in the field. He or she is a person who listens with an open heart and is non-judgmental and one who respects the directee and keeps their confidence.

Spiritual directors would be the first to say that the spiritual guide is not actually a “director,” in the sense of giving answers or telling you what direction to take. In spiritual direction, both the directee and the spiritual guide listen together for the direction of the Spirit as one opens his or her life in God’s presence.

### Who needs spiritual direction and why?

People meet with a spiritual director for many reasons. For Sister Althea, it

might be “a person who is seeking a deeper relationship with God, who is facing a serious discernment in life, discerning faith experiences or who wants to continue their journey with accountability.”

No matter what draws a person to spiritual direction, the conversations always lead back to the one who drew the person to meet with a spiritual director in the first place – the Holy Spirit.

“As she has never failed to do, again today, the Church continues to recommend the practice of spiritual direction,” then Pope Benedict XVI said in 2011, “not only to all those who wish to follow the Lord up close, but to every Christian who wishes to live responsibly his baptism, that is, the new life in Christ.”

### What happens during spiritual direction?

For Sister Althea, the director “listens intently and asks questions that engages the directee to an awareness and understanding of God’s presence in their life and to identify, develop and use one’s gifts and feel more alive.”

Usually, spiritual direction involves a series of conversations where directors and directees meet for about an hour every month or so. Directees share stories about what is happening in their lives or where they might be struggling in their faith. Trust and getting to know one another might take time, so directees are encouraged to try several sessions.

Directors act as a sounding board, offering feedback in a caring manner, not judgment or advice. Many spiritual directors will incorporate prayer or other



*Sister J. Lora Dambroski offers guidance to a directee.*

practices into the meeting and might suggest “homework” assignments such as journaling, reading Scripture, reading books or poetry and worshipping with a faith community.

A spiritual director does not tell a person “what to do,” but rather helps them to discern what God may be calling them to be or to do. A spiritual director listens and helps a person clarify the hints and guesses, the invitations, and the “nudgings” of the Spirit in their life. A spiritual director helps directees to be aware, to notice, to “wake up” to the spiritual relationship they have with God.

### Interested in spiritual direction?

If you’re seeking spiritual direction or more information, please call 412-882-9911 or directly contact our Sisters presently offering spiritual direction:

Sister Althea Anne Spencer  
saaspenencer@osfprov.org

Sister J. Lora Dambroski  
sjldambroski@osfprov.org

# *Stewards of God's Creation*

## Startling Inaction on Climate Change Must End

If the world is to win the war against climate change, its leaders must stop profiting from fossil fuels that jeopardize the survival and welfare of the planet and its inhabitants. That's the message Pope Francis conveyed to finance ministers from around the world who gathered at the Vatican this past May to discuss climate change. "We live at a time when profits and losses seem to be more highly valued than lives and deaths, and when a company's net worth is given precedence over the infinite worth of our human family," the Pope warned.

The climate change conference featured reports from climatologists and experts on the dangerous effects of greenhouse gas emissions on the environment. The Pope lamented that, despite the commitment by world leaders to meet goals established by the U.N. regarding the environment, an increase in investment in fossil fuels and a decrease in clean energy investments indicate that "the signs today are not good."

Truth is, global warming is an increasingly urgent problem. So much so that some scientists warn if we want to keep the Earth's climate within the range humans have experienced, we must leave nearly all the remaining fossil fuels in the ground.

The suspicions about climate change have been around for decades, including a remarkably clear New York Times article in 1956 that conveyed how accumulating greenhouse gases from energy production would lead to long-lasting environmental changes.

But it was over 30 years ago that the potentially disturbing effect of heat-trapping emissions from burning fossil fuels and rain forests became front-page news. The crystallizing moment came on June 23, 1988, in alarming Senate testimony, when James Hansen, a climate scientist who'd turned his attention from studying the blistering conditions on Venus to Earth's human-changed atmosphere, concluded quite candidly that "the greenhouse effect has been detected and is changing the climate now."

Climate change is happening. It's supercharging hurricanes, wildfires, droughts, heat waves and rain. It's heating the oceans and melting the giant ice sheets that anchor our poles, increasing coastal flooding risk.

Why is it so difficult, then, to accept that our climate has been altered and humans are responsible?

Because if we don't accept it, then we don't have to disrupt our way of life to address it. If only polar bears, distant future generations and people who live far away will be harmed, why bother, for example, buying expensive electric cars – a solution we think will be unpleasant at best, painful at worst? It's easier to say "The problem isn't real" than to admit "the problem is real, but I don't want to sacrifice anything to fix it."

In our own country, the current administration has rolled back environmental regulations, pulled the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Accord, brushed aside these dire predictions about the effects of climate change and turned the term "global warming" into a punch line rather than a prognosis.

Another huge reason for non-acceptance of climate change in the U.S. is that many members of Congress still deny climate change is real and man-made. Why so? Look at the shocking amount of money that the oil and gas industry has been pouring into our elections – over \$30 million in 2016. The result is a Congress that continues to represent the interests of the fossil fuel industry.

As the Pope stated in his message on climate change to the world's finance ministers, "We continue along old paths because we are trapped by our faulty accounting and by the corruption of vested interests. We still reckon as profit that which threatens our very survival." He continued, "It is my prayerful hope that, as stewards of the world's finances, you will agree upon a common plan that accords with climate science, the latest in clean energy engineering and, above all, the ethics of human dignity."

### *A Prayer for our Earth*

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live  
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned  
and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts  
of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the earth.  
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognize that we are profoundly united  
with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.  
We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  
for justice, love and peace

From Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'* © Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

# Synod to Address the Amazon Region

It's no secret that the Amazon rainforest is burning at a frightening rate due to dry weather and, more accurately, the current Brazilian government promoting the practice of deforestation by agribusiness and ranchers.

Add to this the violation of fundamental rights of the region's indigenous peoples plus the need for greater access to the Eucharist in a region with few priests and you have all the ingredients for a call by Pope Francis for a synod of bishops to focus on the region's problems.

Titled "New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology," the October 6-27 synod attracted some 300 Catholic leaders from the Pan-Amazonian region to discuss this forgotten part of the world. As Catholics, we should be especially attentive to this synod because it addressed vital issues of the times: ecological disasters triggered by unregulated and unauthorized development, exploitation, egregious violations of human rights and the dignity of defenseless indigenous communities. The synod was also scheduled to discuss, among other things, whether to ordain married elders as priests given the scarcity of the clergy in the region, along with liturgies that account for local customs and rituals.

Unlike prior synods under the Pope that brought together bishops from across the globe, this gathering was more limited in participation, consisting of bishops from the large Amazon region, Vatican officials, special papal appointees and selected experts who work on the ground in the region, as well as indigenous representatives, laity and religious.

## The Pope's Primary Concerns

It's been well publicized that the region's rich resources have long been exploited by extractive industries – oil, gas, lumber, gold – and by cattle ranching and agribusiness. Large-scale

infrastructure developments have displaced or eradicated indigenous communities, damaging their economies and the cultures. They are seldom consulted and have little power in discussions. Moreover, those that protest these projects are often prosecuted as criminals and/or have violence committed against them.

What's more ominous for all of us, almost 20 percent of the Amazon rainforest has been cut down in the last 50 years. This is the same Amazon rainforest that produces one-third of all rainfall on our planet and a fifth of our oxygen. We drink and breathe the Amazon.

Pope Francis once referred to the region as the "lungs of our planet," and labels it a moral imperative to protect this great defense system.

Finally, Catholics in the region are facing a dire challenge to the sacramental life as the priest-to-Catholic persons ratio, in some areas, is as high as 1:16,000. It's this situation that led to the discussion of the possibility of the ordination of mature married males to the priesthood. At the same time, delegates were to look at new ministries better suited to the needs of local churches.

It probably should come as no surprise that some of these synod discussions sparked fury among the Church's more conservative leaders. For example, critics didn't like the text of the synod's *working document* which called on the Church to listen to those from the Amazon region. The document called for official roles for women and the possibility of ordaining older married



*Sister Juliana da Silva Aires occasionally travels to Tirio with other Franciscans to serve indigenous persons in the Amazon region of Óbidos, Brazil. (Members of the tribe drew the temporary markings on her arms.)*

men as priests which brought about the ire of U.S. Cardinal Raymond Burke, one of the more outspoken critics of the Pope.

In addition, some political leaders in the Amazon region viewed the synod as an attack on their sovereignty.

Despite this opposition, there was still much support for the synod for both inside and outside the Church. The Brazilian bishops expressed significant support as have Peruvian bishops.

One participating cardinal may have summed it up best when he described the synod as a continuation of the Church's mission of "following the Gospel command" to go out to the world and accompany the poor, especially in "an increasingly devastated and threatened territory."



# *In Prayerful Memory*

## Sister Barbara Zilch, OSF



Sister Barbara Zilch, OSF, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, passed away on September 23, 2019, at the age of 81. Born in Amherst, OH, she attended St. Francis Academy for one year when her father's work brought the family to Pittsburgh. It was here, however, according to Sister Barbara, that the example of the joy of the Sisters inspired her to return to enter our community in 1955.

Sister Barbara was a very detailed person and a great organizer who valued the importance of living each day to the fullest. In her 64 years as a Franciscan, she reveled in two distinct ministries, one in education and the other in congregational leadership.

Sister Barbara earned her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Duquesne University. Her early ministries included teaching assignments in various schools where our congregation served, including St. George in Philadelphia, Holy Trinity in Moon Run, Saints Peter and Paul in Grand Rapids, MI, and St. Mary in Mt. Vernon, IL. She also taught at St. Valentine and St. Gabriel in Pittsburgh's South Hills. After her time as a primary teacher and then principal at Mt. St. Peter in New Kensington for 10 years, Sister was asked to join a collaborative effort to develop the House of Prayer in Uniontown, PA, where she skillfully carried out her assignment for four years.

As adept as she was as an educator, Sister Barbara's skillset was just as valuable as she ministered as the congregation's Vocation Director, Director of Franciscan Education Services, Formation Director and Director of the Franciscan Spirit and Life Center through the 1980's and 1990's.

In 2000, she was elected to community leadership, serving on the USA Provincial Council and then General Council until 2017. She also served as president of the Franciscan Child Day Care Center's board of directors.

Always highly organized, incredibly energetic and wholly dedicated, Sister Barbara helped supervise numerous events and outreach efforts, including our popular Autumn Gala and Spring Fling. She also took on the added role of moderator of the St. Francis Academy Alumnae Association as well as director of our Associate program.

She will be remembered for her steadfast service and her engaging spirit. She was a committed religious, a loving sister, a proud aunt and a friend to many.

Pope Francis tells us, "Every consecrated person is a gift for the People of God on a journey." Sister Barbara was certainly a gift on our journey.

## Sisters Place Celebrates 25th Anniversary *(continued from page 4)*



*Sister Althea Anne Spencer, pictured at the grand re-opening of the Sisters Place Family Playground, serves as President on the Sisters Place Board.*

learning activities.

Sisters Place recognizes that the chaos of homelessness disrupts a child's developmental and academic progress. It's been proven that affordable program-enriched housing is linked to better academic performance because of the stability it provides. With that in mind, Sisters Place provides comprehensive educational programs to youth in the after-school hours and complements these programs with family-centered support services. Kid-focused activities include both the aforementioned after-school programs as well as summer camps available to all school-aged children, ages 6-12. They're just another example of how the agency is able to establish safer, healthier home environments that spark the transition to self-sufficiency.

*For more information about Sisters Place and ways you can help, please visit [www.sistersplace.org](http://www.sistersplace.org).*

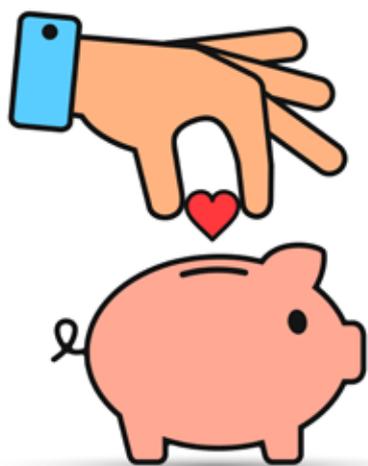
# Get More Good for Your Buck

Give When You Can. Grant When It's Needed.

Most people think of charitable donations as happening in one of two ways. In one scenario, a person decides how much he or she wants to give, then selects a charity to be the recipient of the funds. In another scenario – once only available to the wealthy – a donor can take their money and set up their own foundation, transfer money over to it, let it grow, then give away money over time, perhaps in perpetuity.

There's also a third way that combines the first two approaches: It's called a donor-advised fund (or DAF) and lets even small-scale givers put money into an account, let it mature, and then disburse it gradually. These funds are so popular that in 2015, the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund, the donor-advised fund set up by Fidelity Investments, overtook the United Way as the largest recipient of charitable funds in the United States.

## How Do Donor-Advised Funds Work?



**Donors  
Contribute**



**Assets  
Grow**



**Charities  
Benefit**

Donors contribute to a fund held by a charitable sponsor (such as Fidelity Investments) and receive an immediate tax benefit. Over time, donors recommend grants from the fund to their favorite charities (e.g., the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God). The charitable sponsor awards grants to nonprofits recommended by the donors. Note that in addition to cash, donors can also contribute appreciated assets such as stocks, real estate, etc., which can provide substantial tax savings for the donor.

The charitable sponsor typically invests these donor-advised funds in mutual funds or other investment vehicles that allow the value of the funds to grow over time, increasing the donor's ultimate philanthropic impact.

*Editors Note: This article is for information purposes only. Please consult your financial advisor for more information on donor-advised funds and other forms of planned giving.*

## Donor Appreciation List

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God are humbled and grateful for everyone who supported our mission through a donation in 2019. Such generosity is vital to our ministries, outreach, and the continued care of our senior Sisters. For the past two years our annual donor appreciation list has been published online to lessen our carbon footprint and be better stewards of your generosity. This year, in consideration of the privacy of our donors, we decided to discontinue publishing the list and focus on expressing our appreciation to each donor individually through private communications. Please be assured that, as always, all donor information is confidential, secure, and never shared with outside parties.

If you have any concerns or ideas about how we can do a better job expressing our gratitude, please contact our Development Director Robyn Moeller at [rmoeller@osfprov.org](mailto:rmoeller@osfprov.org) or 412-885-7232.

# 2019 Autumn Gala

## Celebrating the Healing Presence of St. Francis of Assisi

Friends and benefactors of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God once again gathered at the South Hills Country Club on October 3, 2019, to celebrate our congregation's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Autumn Gala. As reported in the previous *Whitehall Franciscan*, our Sisters were pleased to take the occasion to honor this year's San Damiano Award recipients, Dr. Theresa Strong and Dr. Paul Lorincy for their enduring friendship and steadfast support of our Sisters and Franciscan mission.

The evening began with friendly socializing amongst light refreshments and over 50 basket raffle prizes. Guests were then treated to a delicious meal and program reflecting upon our Franciscan mission and acknowledging all who serve as a healing presence in the lives of our Sisters and those we serve.

Proceeds for this special event go toward our various ministries and outreach efforts, as well as the continued care of our senior Sisters.

Our Sisters are extremely grateful to all those who were responsible for making the Autumn Gala a truly special event. We especially want to applaud the Autumn Gala Committee for their organization, efforts and guidance. Additionally, we are grateful to all those in attendance, our business sponsors, those who bought raffle tickets or donated prizes and the many volunteers who helped make the evening such a success.



*Sister Janet Gardner, Dr. Theresa Strong, Dr. Paul Lorincy and Sister Joanne Brazinski.*



# Thank You, Gala Sponsors!

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Mr. Magic Car Wash  
Mt. Lebanon Golf Course  
Doreen Nelson  
Nothing Bundt Cakes  
The Old Bridge Restaurant  
Option Supply Co., Inc.  
Original Oyster House  
Page's Dairy Mart  
Panera Bread (Pan American Group)  
Pete Donati and Sons Florist  
Pittsburgh Opera  
Pittsburgh Pirates  
Pittsburgh Steelers  
Pittsburgh Symphony  
Pittsburgh Zoo  
& PPG Aquarium  
Katherine A. Rufer  
Saint Francis Academy

Alumnae Association  
Mr. & Mrs. William Schray  
Senator John Heinz  
History Center  
Dr. & Mrs. James K. Smith, Sr.  
Silk Road Gourmet Chinese  
South Hills Country Club  
South Hills Jewelers  
South Park Club House  
Sister Althea Anne Spencer  
Spoonwood Brewing Co.  
Sports Clips at Cool Springs  
Joan C. Stein  
Mary Stojak  
Eleanor J. Stolar  
Cathi Storey  
SubZERO Nitrogen  
Ice Cream  
Rev. John Edward Suhoza  
Sunset Golf  
Maureen Swanson  
TGI Friday's in Bethel Park  
Mr. & Mrs. Wilbert G. Wagner  
Wallace Flowers  
Washington Wild Things  
WB Mason  
Willi's Ski & Snowboard Shop  
Janet Zamecnik



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

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## *Stay Connected with our Sisters*



*We share many photos on Facebook like this one of our USA Sisters gathered to celebrate St. Francis Day. (Standing) Sisters Janet Gardner, Janice Campbell, Hilária de Oliveira, J. Lora Dambroski, Ann Marie Lostoski, Eliana da Silva, Edward Urban, Joanne Brazinski, Elise Mora, Althea Anne Spencer, Mary Ann Lostoski, Marita Dargis, and Peg Markey. (Seated) Sisters Francine McDonald, Miriam Racas, Theresa Codispoli and Lillian Yurksaitis.*

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