Choosing to Live with Compassion, Love and Generosity

A message from General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, OSF

These weeks and months, the rapid pace of the Coronavirus pandemic has brought to mind the meaning of living the Word of God. Two passages remained before my eyes and my heart. As the virus began moving in many different countries, we heard about the courage, persistence and stamina of the first responders. I was moved to tears just hearing the stories of the doctors, nurses, and hospital personnel who were literally giving their lives for others. Knowing the possibility of contracting the virus, they were there every day, caring for those infected. Seeing their faces and hearing the names of those who died being of service, caused much reflection about these gospel passages:

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters, you did it for me."  
(Matthew 25:40)

"There is no greater love than to give one’s life for another."  
(John 15:13)

As we daily contemplate the gospel, knowing it is to be lived, we ask: What is the challenge? What is the attitude and the action needed? As we confront the Coronavirus, see the numbers of those who are unemployed, and continue to witness the protests against violence and racism, the questions about living the gospel are many: Where do we begin to build the bridges of broken relationships, or tear down the walls of prejudice, judgement and hatred? Do we believe that we are all brothers and sisters of the same Father? Are we even aware of the interconnectedness of all peoples?

Some of us are still on the front lines taking care of the afflicted, others may be joining in the manifestations in our cities, others may be helping at food banks or reaching out to those financially strained at this time. Wherever we are and whatever we are doing, let us not only keep asking the questions about what it means to live the gospel, let us act in whatever way we can. Let us create networks of solidarity with those in our communities, in our cities and even with those in the global community.

Darkness is dispelled by one lit candle. Imagine the light available if we put all the candles together. One of the things we are learning from the Coronavirus is that we need one another more than we ever imagined. We are all part of one single human family sharing our Common Home. Our priorities and needs are shifting. We are learning that what really matters in life are not things, but rather the precious intangibles – love, generosity, hope, faith, courage, compassion, persistence and wholeness.

In a recent editorial of the New York Times, David Brooks quoted from Viktor Frankl’s experience of writing from the madness of the Holocaust. I continue to ponder the reference.

"Viktor Frankl reminded us that we don’t get to choose our difficulties, but we do have the freedom to select our responses. Meaning, he argued, comes from three things: the work we offer in times of crisis, the love we give and our ability to display courage in the face of suffering. The menace may be subhuman or superhuman, but we all have the option of asserting our own dignity, even to the end."

As we live these days of chaos, challenge, opportunity and transformation, may we remember that although we may not have chosen the present difficulties, we do have the freedom to respond with compassion, love and generosity. God’s peace and grace be with us!
Our Franciscan Spirit Will Never be Cancelled
Sisters in USA and Brazil Find New Ways to Live Our Franciscan Mission

The Japanese cherry trees right out my window are spectacular! What a gift from God,” said Sister Peg Markey, as she reflected on her first month of sheltering in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Pittsburgh. “I consider this month a graced time and wish others had the luxury of my quiet time.”

The immense beauty of the spring of 2020 was bittersweet for us all as we struggled with the physical, emotional and economic toll of a global pandemic that took the lives of over 100,000 Americans in the first three months. “I grieve with their families and the heroic health care workers who care for them,” said Sister Peg.

With faith and trust in our Provident God, our Sisters go forward into an unpredictable future. While it has been difficult to be physically separated from each other during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are grateful that our Sisters in the USA and Brazil are well and safe. Like you, we remain cautious and continue social distancing precautions to protect the most vulnerable among us. We are also finding new ways to live our Franciscan mission and remain present for each other, our loved ones, and those we serve.

Cake, Masked Visitors and Flamingoes for Sister Francine's 90th Birthday

We will never again complain that we “have to go” to an event or social gathering. Like so many things during a pandemic, birthday celebrations are different. In April, we had to cancel a much-anticipated gathering celebrating Sister Francine McDonald's 90th birthday, which would have included Sisters, Associates, staff, close friends and family. However, this special milestone did not go by unrecognized.

Known for her good sense of humor, Sister was surprised on the morning of her birthday with a yard full of pink flamingos and birthday banners set up by anonymous friends. Raised on a farm in Michigan, Sister Francine is the youngest of 10 siblings and the only girl. Unable to gather, her many out-of-state nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews blessed Sister with gifts, cards, flowers, phone calls and video chats.

Our Sisters with whom she lives at Nativity convent made sure that Sister Francine had a special day complete with a birthday cake and decor reflecting her love of horses. Other Sisters and friends also stopped by to give their quick masked birthday wishes as close as social distancing would allow.

Read more about our Sisters on pages 9-11
What if the real story of modern pandemics is not just about how animals and their germs invaded our human realm but also about how we’re invading theirs? Did you know that there is a group of well-respected environmental health experts who believe that the COVID-19 pandemic is, in part, a crisis of our own making?

Among them is Sonia Shah, author of the book, *Pandemic*. After studying outbreaks ranging from cholera to West Nile virus to Ebola, she’s found that human activities play a large, and largely under-recognized, role. She and other environmental health experts are certain that the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate and biodiversity (all the variety of life that can be found on Earth i.e., plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms, as well as the communities that they form and the habitats in which they live) are deeply interconnected, with each a result of our apparent reluctance to respect the interdependence among ourselves, other animal species and the natural world.

To put this in perspective, we need to recognize that the vast majority (three out of every four) of new infectious diseases in people come from animals, with most of the pandemics of the past 100 years caused by germs having come from other animals.

Their point is that to understand and take action against COVID-19 and other novel diseases we’re likely to encounter in the future, policymakers must respond by taking an all-inclusive view of public health that includes the health of both humans and our environment.

**Risking animal-borne diseases**

According to Dave O’Connor, a virologist at the University of Wisconsin, human incursions into places animals live -- our chopping down forests, venturing into parks to poach -- bring us into increasing contact with these animals and make us more likely to pick up their diseases. We’re using up a lot of land – for our cities, our mines, our farms -- and while doing so, we’re destroying wildlife habitat.

“We disrupt these animal’s ecosystems, hunt them, build houses next to them, grow livestock right next to their populations,” says Dr. Peter Daszak, a professor at Columbia University and president of the EcoHealth Alliance. “We allow the viruses they carry, that we’ve never been exposed to in our history, to emerge into our own populations.”

**Climate change makes us more vulnerable.**

For infectious diseases like COVID-19, human-caused climate change is another threat. Climate change pushes animal populations to move to different areas and compromises their health by reducing the range of their living spaces and placing them in less-than-ideal climate conditions in these new habitats.

**Air pollution and the COVID-19 connection**

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness and early analysis indicates that the disease’s severity and fatalities are dramatically higher among those with heart disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory illnesses.

Long term exposure to air pollution helps trigger many of these illnesses and makes them even more dangerous. Globally, air pollution is estimated to be responsible for nearly 40 percent of...
lower respiratory tract infections and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and about 20 percent of coronary heart disease and diabetes.

**Extreme weather could make crisis even worse**

There’s also the threat of pollution from wildfires, adding to the COVID-19 crisis. Scientists have found that changes in weather conditions due to climate change are responsible for much of the increase in wildfires in the U.S. Emissions are now rising in fire-prone areas like the Pacific Northwest due to their increasing frequency and severity.

Increased particulate matter from wildfires is associated with higher hospital admissions for respiratory problems among the elderly, the same population being disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

As Franciscans, our deep concern and commitment to caring for the Earth is rooted in the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi.

Pope John Paul II proclaimed St. Francis of Assisi to be the patron saint “of those who promote ecology” on November 29, 1979. *(Ecology in Europe includes what we in the US consider environmentalism.)* The Catholic, non-Catholic and the scientific community unanimously hailed this proclamation. Three years later, on World Environment Day 1982, the Pope said that St. Francis’ love and care for creation were a challenge for contemporary Catholics. On the occasion of the World Day of Peace 1990, the Pope also wrote that the poor man of Assisi “offers Christians an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation.” He concluded with these words: “It is my hope that the inspiration of St. Francis will help us to keep ever alive a sense of ‘fraternity’ with all those good and beautiful things which Almighty God has created.”

No other saint has befriended creation in such a way that revealed God's presence. St. Francis perceived that the entire world was brimming with power, wisdom, beauty and goodness of God, the Creator. Every creature, however insignificant, was a vestige, an image, a footprint, a signature of the Creator whose glory it proclaimed. For him, everything was a sacrament of God’s presence. The entire Earth was a sanctuary, a tabernacle where God abides and where the Holy Spirit dwells. This realization that everything comes from the same source filled St. Francis with greater affection than ever and he called the most insignificant creatures his brothers and sisters because he knew that they had the same origin as him.

In 2015, Pope Francis’ “Laudato Si’: On the Care for Our Common Home” was the first encyclical to focus on the environment and its destruction. The first line is "Laudato si’, mi Signore," or "Praise be to you, my Lord" that is from St. Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of Creatures" which beautifully expresses his reverence of all God's creation.

As expressed in his writings and teachings, St. Francis saw the world in terms of relationships of cooperation rather than competition. His example of Christ-like compassion and reverence for all life inspires us in our commitment to care for the Earth, as well as efforts to serve those in need and work for peace and justice.

**Further Reading From Source Material**

"Human activities are responsible for viruses " *(The Conversation)*  
thecorrection.com/human-activities-are-responsible-for-viruses-crossing-over-from-bats-and-causing-pandemics-like-coronavirus-134226

"Humans to blame for spread of coronavirus and other 'zoonoses" *(Medical XPress)*  

**St. Francis of Assisi's Connection to the Environment**

**The need for an effective policy**

Hopefully, it’s becoming clear that human health is influenced by healthy ecosystems, but this is seldom considered in policy decisions that affect our ecosystems, such as land clearing, major energy or transport infrastructure projects and large-scale farming. The current COVID-19 pandemic is just another warning shot of the consequences of ignoring these connections.

The health, social and economic consequences of COVID-19 should serve as a wake-up call for all governments to take stock, carefully consider the evidence and ensure post COVID-19 responses reverse our war on nature.

As pioneering 20th century conservationist Rachel Carson, a Pittsburgh area native and Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham University) graduate, argued in a CBS documentary reflecting on her ground-breaking book *Silent Spring*, a war on nature is ultimately a war against ourselves.
The Coronavirus pandemic has helped create a world where more and more persons are susceptible to exploitation by traffickers, and exposed the world’s unpreparedness to protect them. The cruel world of human trafficking has not shrunk during the COVID-19 crisis; rather, the severe economic downturn has put millions out of work, making them easy prey for fork-tongued traffickers looking to reap new victims.

As we are all aware, the extraordinary measures employed to “flatten the curve” include quarantine, lockdowns, travel restrictions and limits on economic activities and public life. While at first sight, these measures might seem a deterrent to crime, they have made it more apparent than ever that economic disparity among people are one of the principal causes of human trafficking.

Put simply, human traffickers prey on the poor.

How this will work in labor trafficking is quite clear. People will take jobs that may be a scam or off-the-books, below minimum wage, with no legal or health protections. For persons in dire economic straits, or without legal documentation to work in a country, traffickers will find ways to keep them trapped in these conditions.

“I’ve already heard that victims are being forced to participate in even riskier activities to earn money for traffickers, that they’re facing higher levels of violence and also that they’re in more debt to their traffickers every day,” says an official with Europe’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Meanwhile, funding cuts may be worsening the very thing that anti-trafficking advocates are working to confront. Earlier this year, the World Food Program was forced to slash its food distribution programs by up to 50 percent in trafficking hot spots such as Yemen and Uganda, putting already economically vulnerable communities on even shakier ground.

Sex trafficking is no different. Gruesomely, the Coronavirus pandemic is acting as a catalyst reversing the trend of reduced poverty and erasing nearly all the valuable progress of the last five years. The World Bank approximates that, as a result of the Coronavirus, nearly half a billion more people could be pushed below the poverty line. With little or no hope, poverty can force those involved to turn to the last resort, in a last-ditch attempt to fight off hunger. The fear of starvation is spreading even faster than the virus itself.

Let’s say you’re working a job that scarcely keeps you above the poverty line. You likely have no savings. Maybe you’re a single parent. Then, COVID-19 strikes. The quarantine costs you your job and you soon find yourself struggling to pay the rent, to buy food and diapers. Friends and family are powerless to help – they’re in the same boat. After the quarantine is lifted, you try to get a job, but no one is hiring.

Then, you get a break, or you assume so. Someone you hardly know tells you they have a way to make some money. Perhaps it’s something out of your comfort zone, but you tell yourself it will only be once or twice, or until you get back on your feet. You have lines you would not normally cross, but the person “helping” you pushes a bit. After all, he or she takes their cut of the money and will press you to do whatever it takes to make more. Maybe there are threats to you or your child. Maybe there are promises that hold out some hope. Maybe there is even violence.

This is the world of sex trafficking and the coronavirus has just made you its newest victim.

Children are also at an enhanced risk of mistreatment, too, especially since school closures have not only prevented many from access to education but also from a main source of their food and shelter. In some countries, because of the pandemic, more children are forced on to the streets in search of food and income, increasing their risk of being exploited according to the Polaris Project and other anti-trafficking organizations.

Catholic Sisters Envision a World Without Slavery

Traffickers are not shut down. They haven’t gone on a holiday. Victims still need to be rescued. Survivors still need assistance. That’s the declaration of the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) during this pandemic.

A combined, faith-based national network, the USCSAHT offers education, supports access to survivor services and engages in advocacy to wipe modern slavery from the world. They work to keep the public up to date, thwart the assault on human dignity and assist survivors to live fulfilling lives. Membership comprises 100+ congregations of Catholic Sisters (including the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God), coalitions against trafficking and individuals who share their mission.

Educational and advocacy efforts are aimed to prevent further victims of trafficking by addressing its root causes. In their work with survivors, they support and encourage a holistic wellness and healing of body, mind and soul. Please visit sistersagainsttrafficking.org for more information and to find how you can get involved.

Other Helpful Resources

National Human Trafficking Hotline: humantraffickinghotline.org
The Polaris Project: polarisproject.org
Blue Campaign: dhs.gov/blue-campaign
Caring for Children in a Topsy-Turvy Time

Franciscan Child Day Care Center Adjusts to a New Normal

“...children will feel the world has turned topsy-turvy. It’s not the ever-present smile that will help them feel secure. It’s knowing that love can hold many feelings, including sadness, and that they can count on the people they love to be with them until the world turns right side up again.” ~ Mr. Fred Rogers, You Are Special

Our world is topsy-turvy right now, but the children at our Franciscan Child Day Care Center can count on their caregivers to be with them until everything turns right-side up again. During a two-months closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, caregivers and children were physically separated, but still connected through messages, activities and learning ideas via the HiMama app. The Center was able to reopen on May 18, 2020 with children gradually returning to classrooms throughout the summer.

“We’re all excited to be back,” said the Center Director, Sandra Merlo. “The staff is doing a great job and the kids are adjusting.”

Prioritizing the health of children, families and caregivers, the Center is embracing a “new normal” during the pandemic. They are following strict CDC guidelines, which include new drop off and pick up procedures, cloth masks for caregivers and children over 2-years-old and continuing the practices of frequent hand washing and cleaning of toys, surfaces and equipment. The Center hours have also been shortened to allow for additional disinfection of toys, equipment and classrooms in the evenings after children and caregivers have gone home.

“Masks have been our biggest challenge. A big part of a baby’s development is seeing faces,” said Mrs. Merlo adding that caregivers are adapting to be more expressive with their eyes and voices.

Amidst the pandemic precautions, the Center’s building also underwent major renovations which included a new roof, new front doors and parking lot repaving. The Center also got new neighbors. The Allegheny Intermediate Unit moved into the other half of the former Academy building, which was also renovated to accommodate the needs of their program serving children and youth.

When the new school year begins in August, the Center will be caring for at least 93 babies, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children in the Before and After School program. Facing the unpredictability of a pandemic with the possibility of changing guidelines or future temporary closures, Mrs. Merlo is confident that her staff and families can handle whatever challenges the future holds.

“We are strong. We are Franciscan.”

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God are grateful for the dedication and hard work of the Franciscan Child Day Care Center caregivers and staff, as well as the support from our Center’s families, Board and benefactors. Because of you, the Franciscan Child Day Care Center will continue to serve families in Pittsburgh’s South Hills for our 39th year and beyond.

For more information about the Franciscan Child Day Care Center, please visit FranciscanChildDaycare.org or contact us at fcdcc@osfprov.org or 412-882-5085.

For more information, contact fcdcc@osfprov.org or visit FranciscanChildDaycare.org

Do you have the heart of a Franciscan Caregiver? Join us!
A Safe Place to Call Home

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Sisters Place remains an essential and life-sustaining organization in western Pennsylvania. For over 27 years, Sisters Place has provided single parents and children experiencing homelessness a safe place to call home, as well as a comprehensive support system and access to multi-faceted resources focusing on empowerment, wellness, education, and personal and professional growth.

Continuing to provide vital services and support during a pandemic, Sisters Place has had to adapt to evolving precautions and social distancing procedures that prioritize the health of their families and community. In-person services and programs have been modified. Food, care packages, educational kits and grocery store gift cards are delivered to families. During stay-at-home orders, staff works remotely to continue to assist families.

This summer, Sisters Place plans to go forward with their pre-pandemic planned move of offices and residences from Clairton, PA to Pittsburgh’s Hilltop Community. According to Sister Althea Anne Spencer, Sisters Place Board President, this move is necessary to give parents and children better access to public transportation, grocery stores, medical services and schools.

In addition to the tireless efforts of staff and volunteers, the generosity of donors and benefactors enables Sisters Place to continue supporting families as they overcome homelessness and poverty. If you wish to donate or offer other assistance, please visit SistersPlace.org or call 412-233-390.

Sisters Place 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 collaborative extension of our ministries serving the poor. Our Community remains one of 12 congregations active as sponsors of this ministry.

The Holy Spirit Among Us

Celebrating Very Rev. Fred Cain's 50th Jubilee

The Holy Spirit was truly felt during this year’s observance of Pentecost. After 3 months of sheltering-at-home, a small group of our Sisters in Pittsburgh were able to gather for Liturgy with our chaplain Very Rev. Fred Cain at Nativity Convent. Coincidentally, Father’s first Mass was celebrated on Pentecost 50 years ago. Our Sisters took the opportunity to recognize Father Cain for his 50th Jubilee with a special blessing at the end of the Liturgy, as well as a festive meal and gift.

A true friend and spiritual counselor, Farther Cain has been our Pittsburgh Community’s chaplain for over for over 10 years. During this time, he also served as Regional Episcopal Vicar of Region 2 in Pittsburgh. Though he retired on July 1, he will continue to serve as chaplain for our Sisters.

Thank you, Father Cain, for your friendship, service and faithful guidance. May God bless you and bring you peace.
The blessings of growing older come with a humbling vulnerability, especially during a time when we must remain physically distanced from each other. Our Community has been blessed with a core team of caregivers whose efforts help us continue to meet the every-day needs of our aging Sisters.

As the only member of our leadership team physically present in the USA, Sister Janet Gardner balances many responsibilities, including the care of all our Sisters in the USA, management of lay staff and serving as our Franciscan Child Day Care Center Board president. Her compassionate leadership and tireless efforts always prioritize the health and well-being of our Sisters.

Sister Janet works closely with our dedicated nurse of 20 years, Pat Enscoe to ensure our Sisters receive the best care available and all their health needs are met. Patently and compassionately, Pat listens to our Sisters concerns and accompanies them to doctors visits and other appointments offering support and assistance.

Sister Eliana da Silva is another important member of our care team. Prior to COVID-19 she visited our Presbyterian SeniorCare in Oakmont several times a week, as well as assisted with laundry, errands and other needs. She continues to make weekly trips to deliver care packages of needed supplies and assist however she can. Sister Eliana is also a skilled seamstress and made masks for our Sisters and Franciscan Child Day Care Center staff.

Our Sisters at Presbyterian SeniorCare continue to take strict safety precautions, but we are able to stay connected with each other through phone calls, letters, e-mail and video chats.

Sister Eliana regularly video chats with our Sister in the Willows skilled care unit via an iPad held by a nurse. They can see each other and Sister Eliana tells her that she is loved and missed.

Even with the best intentions of keeping residents healthy, such restrictive measures can take a mental and emotional toll. This has led to inventive ways to connect while staying safe. In June, outdoor "chatterboxes" were set up in the garden at Presbyterian SeniorCare to allow safe in-person visits with residents.

Our Community is additionally blessed by our prayer partners and Sarah Fund donors who are vital to our efforts to meet the needs of our senior Sisters. For information about ways you can help us care for our senior Sisters, please visit osfprov.org, or contact us at info@osfprov.org or 412-885-7232.

Sister Theresa Codispoti feels grateful for the “gift of time” for reading, prayer and reflection. The book “Praying Our Goodbyes” by Sister Joyce Rupp, O.S.M has been especially helpful to Sister during this challenging time. “Time has a wonderful way of showing us what is really matters,” said Sister Theresa. “Our relationships to each other, and God.”

Sister Theresa often takes respite in the garden, where she prays everyday with a former caregiver for our Community, who now works at Baptist Homes. Their prayers include the many requests our Community receives, which are collected by our administrative secretary, Mimi DiGregory, and shared with our Sisters and Associates each week. “God’s plan is like a puzzle for which you have to wait for the pieces,” said Sister Theresa. “Things are going to happen that you have no control over. You just have to be patient and let God’s plan take place.”
Respite from Puzzling Times

Though "retired" from education ministry, Sister Mary Ann rarely gets time to relax. She serves as the liaison to our Auxiliary, runs two major fundraising raffles, visits our senior Sisters at Presbyterian Senior Care, serves on our Franciscan Child Day Care and Autumn Gala Boards and assists our finance and administrative offices and wherever else she is needed. When many of her responsibilities were paused due to COVID-19, she soon found more time for prayer, reflection and some recreational activities, like puzzle building with Sisters at Nativity convent. When friends found out about the Sisters' pastime, new puzzles began appearing on their doorstep. In May, Sister eagerly resumed organizing our October Cash Raffle (see right) and some other responsibilities following precautions.

Franciscans in Brazil Faithfully Face Challenging Times

The poor and indigenous communities served by our Sisters in Brazil have been hit especially hard by the COVID-19 pandemic both from the virus itself as well as economic struggles and personal traumas. Our Sisters in Brazil continue to serve those in need through their ministries, outreach efforts and new technologies while taking necessary pandemic precautions.

In our Recanto Paz e Bem community, 16 of our senior Sisters are cared for by dedicated nurses, housekeeping and kitchen staff. They keep busy with various sheltering-in-place activities, including handcrafts, making cards and working on puzzles. As always, our senior Sisters remain our powerhouse of vital prayer and support.

For more information about our ministries in Brazil, please visit: providenciadedeus.org.br or osfprov.org

Ours Sisters from the Generale and Recanto Paz e Bem came together to pray over St. Anthony Bread for the families of Pio XII School. Pictured are (seated) Sisters Suzana Kirkila and Sofia Pereira de Souza, (standing) Sisters Maria do Carmo Pereira, Elisa Tanaka, Gloria de Souza, Joanne Brazinski, Yolanda Marcelino, Maristela Carlos Rodrigues, and Neide C. Teixeira

October Ca$h Raffle

Drawing Based on the 3 Digit Evening PA Lottery

$10 per Chance

$70 Winners Every Day in October EXCEPT:
$500 Grand Prize on Sunday, October 4
$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

Children from Pio XII School made pictures for patients in local hospitals suffering from COVID-19.

Sister Maria Goretti Avanzi and Lay Franciscan (Associate) deliver masks to a local priest for parishioners in one of the largest favelas in São Paulo. This summer, Sisters and Lay Franciscans made and distributed over 400 masks for those in need.
Jesus, I trust in You!” is a simple prayer Sister Mary Edward Urban uses during difficult and challenging situations. In 1963, Sister left her loved ones and the comfort of her life in the USA to obediently accept a mission assignment in Brazil. She faithfully and joyfully served those in need in Brazil through education, parish and pastoral ministry for over 47 years before she returned to the United States in 2012.

Faithfully staying safe at home during the pandemic, Sister Edward has taken up coloring mandalas that help her focus during spiritual and prayerful reflection, as well as nourish her artistic spirit and talents. Sister Edward's present days are filled with prayer for victims of the coronavirus and the many intentions we receive, as well as the Rosary and the Chaplet of Mercy. She also regularly calls our Sisters at Presbyterian Senior Care and Baptist Home, as well as friends and neighbors. Sister Edward is greatly missed by our Franciscan Child Day Care Center children to whom she faithfully reads books and sings songs with every week, as well as our administrative staff who she always assisted when needed for various mailings and projects.

Dave Domostoy: Answering our Calls for 35 Years

“Call Dave!” This is our Sisters proven solution to fix almost anything from a leaky pipe to a flat tire to a computer that won’t connect to the internet. For our Sisters, staff and ministries, there are few problems Dave Domostoy cannot solve.

In a time when the longest most people stay in a job is 5 years, Dave has served our Sisters and ministries for over 35. In 1984, Sister Mary Louis Kvederis hired Dave to be part of her maintenance crew, and he worked his way up to supervisor, then Department Director. Profoundly blessing our Sisters with his Franciscan heart, positive attitude and strong work ethic, Dave has been with us though many changes, including the sale of the motherhouse property and massive undertaking of moving Sisters and staff to new homes and offices.

“Respectful. Even tempered. Pleasant under stress. And, engaging and always attentive.” In her speech honoring Dave for his 30th anniversary, Sister J. Lora Dambroski named these qualities of Dave that she witnessed while working with him when she served in leadership, including several major building and property renovations in the 1990s.

In addition to the needs of our Sisters, Dave also takes care of our Franciscan Child Day Care Center located in the former St. Francis Academy Building. Known as “Mr. Dave” to staff and children, his responsibilities include building repairs, fixing broken equipment and renovations to classrooms and other spaces.

Dave is our go-to person for technical issues with computers and other electronic devices. Self-taught, he has built computers, set-up networks and kept our security and software up to date. And, he also serves as a trusted mediator when we need to work with tech consultants, helping us better understand the issues and what we need to do.

Dave is always on call, answering phone calls and texts day or night. Often with “I’ll be right there.” When our day care needed new changing tables, he built them at a higher quality and at a fraction of the cost of what we could buy. When a Sister was having trouble judging how far to drive into her garage, he hung a tennis ball from the ceiling that would tap her windshield when she was in far enough. When our food drive organizer couldn’t fit all the donations in her car, he showed up with our van and helped deliver items to the food pantry. On many occasions, when a computer stopped working, he rescued the information and rebuilt the hard drive. If we continued listing all the problems Dave has solved, it would fill at least 100 newsletters.

Thank you, Dave, for always answering our calls, taking care of our Sisters and Franciscan Child Day Care Center and never giving up until a problem is solved. We are also grateful for your loving wife, Michelle, children and grandchildren who have shared you with us for all these years.
If you donate to our Sisters, ministries or other charitable organizations, you may benefit from recent changes to the CARES Act which now allows for an additional deduction for charitable gifts of up to $300 that you can claim on your 2020 taxes. Or, if you are itemizing, you can now elect to deduct up to 100 percent of your adjusted gross income (AGI) for your 2020 taxes.

As always, please consult a trusted financial advisor for more information about what is best for you.