

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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The Whitehall Franciscan is a quarterly publication of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
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Confidently, Joyfully, We Go Forward Because God is with Us

A message from General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, OSF

This is the theme for the Sisters of Saint Francis of the Providence of God's 100th Anniversary Celebration. We began this year of preparation in March, with our Sisters from the USA and Brazil sharing a moment of prayer together via ZOOM; giving thanks for the many blessings and graces we have received over these almost 100 years and thanking God for the many individuals and groups that have been part of our history to the present.

In May, the congregation held our General Chapter. The celebration of General Chapter is an ecclesial event. It is a special time of prayer, reflection and planning that happens every four years with representatives of the congregation from the USA and Brazil. One of the major functions of the General Chapter is to preserve and strengthen the Charism and Mission of the congregation in light of the gospel and Franciscan values. This special gathering compels us to reflect on the past years and assess our life and ministries. It is also a time for us to be attentive to what the Lord is calling us to be and to do as consecrated Franciscan women in today's Church and world. During General Chapter, we also elect the women who will lead us forward for the next four years.

Originally, this event was scheduled to happen in October of last year but with the pandemic, the General Chapter was moved to May, therefore happening in the midst of this year of preparing to celebrate our centenary. It was also the first time in our 99-year history that we had a General Chapter between Easter and Pentecost; the theme: Attentive to the Spirit, we dare to go beyond.

The Chapter was indeed an experience of the Spirit's presence with us and an invitation to go beyond where we are at present. Using a Communal Discernment Process, we were called to recognize the needs of our world and our Church, to listen to one another deeply, to share the bread of Eucharist and the bread of our lives, to recommit ourselves to being a mystical prophetic presence wherever we are and to embrace new possibilities of continuous conversion. During the days of our General Chapter, we heard the daily gospel messages: ***Love one another, Live in my love, As the Father has loved me, I love you, Remain in my love.*** We keep these words before us, challenging us to allow the powerful presence of the Risen Christ to transform us and empower us to share that presence with others.

Our Chapter Direction calls us to care for our Common Home and to care for our Common Heart. We have a congregational direction; we have elected the leadership team for the next four years. We are ready to go forth confidently and joyfully, for God is with us.

Since this is my last message in the Whitehall Franciscan as General Minister, I want to take the opportunity to thank all of our readers for their support, their prayer and their solidarity with us as a congregation. ***We give thanks to God when we remember you, praying always in joy for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel until now. We pray that you may be filled with compassion, kindness, gentleness, humility and patience. Let the peace of Christ dwell in you richly, and whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*** (*Cf Phil 1:3 and Col 3: 12- 17*)



The final meeting of the planning committee for our 23rd General Chapter (left to right) included Sisters Janet Gardner, Antônia Maria A. Silva, Rute Almeida Guimarães, Joana Mendes, CSJ (translator, back corner), Sister Neide Teixeira, Adriana Duarte, Nancy Schreck, OSF (facilitator) and Joanne Brazinski.

Prayer, Reflection and Gratitude

23rd General Chapter Brings New Leadership and Direction for our Mission

Every four years, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God convene for a General Chapter to discuss issues, plan for future challenges facing the community, and elect a new leadership team. Our 23rd General Chapter was delayed nearly a year due to the pandemic, but we were blessed to be able to finally gather from May 6 – 15, 2021 in São Paulo, Brazil with extra precautions to care for the health and safety of our Sister delegates, facilitator and translators.

Our General Chapter gave delegates time to get to know more about each of the congregation's ministries and the challenges each face. The delegates also provided input and discerned where and how God might be calling the Sisters to respond. After a two-year consultation process involving all members of the congregation, the delegates focused on two broad directions that will involve strategic planning and implementation by local communities and the congregations's institutions. This was done through small and large group discussions as well as in reflection/prayer groups. Through this process, delegates



Our new leadership team elected at the 23rd General Chapter (left to right): Sister Neide Teixeira, Assistant General Minister Adriana Duarte, General Minister Rute Almeida Guimarães, Janet Gardner, and Joanice dos Santos.

also chose a leadership team who can best animate and move the Sisters forward for the next four years.

The delegates elected our first General Minister from Brazil, Sister Rute Almeida Guimarães, who previously served as a General Councilor. Sister Adriana Duarte was chosen to serve as Assistant General Minister and Sisters Janet Gardner, Joanice dos Santos and Neide Teixeira were elected to serve on the General Council. Our newly elected leadership team began their term on July 1, 2021.

Our Congregation's focus over the next four years will include "Care for Our Common Home," through outreach and pastoral/social ministries, care for the environment and work for justice and peace. "Care for Our Common Heart" will focus on nurturing the Sisters' spiritual lives and their mission of building community and being attentive to their needs and care.



Elder delegates Sisters Yolanda Marcelino, M. Gloria de Souza and Eliana da Silva share their faithful wisdom at our General Chapter.

Peace & Every Good!



As we confidently, joyfully, go forward, our hearts are filled with gratitude for our outgoing leadership team. Thank you, General Minister Sister Joanne Brazinski, Assistant General Minister Sister Maria José da Conceição and Councilors Sister Maria Goretti Avanzi, Sister Janet Gardner (re-elected) and Sister Rute Guimarães (re-elected as our new General Minister) for your faithful leadership and service during one of the most challenging times of our 99 years as Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God. May God bless you and keep you!

Our outgoing leadership team (left to right) Sisters Maria Goretti Avanzi, Maria José da Conceição, Joanne Brazinski, Rute Almeida Guimarães and Janet Gardner.

Legacy of Compassion and Care

Healthcare Ministry of Our Sisters

Founded in 1922 as a teaching community, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God mission grew as fast as our congregation. During a rapid time of growth from 1935-1941, Mother M. Aloysia Yurgutis guided our young Community to expand and diversify our ministries. Thus, began the long and varied journey of our healthcare ministry in the United States, Brazil, and other areas of the world.

Hospitals of our Congregation

In 1939, Dr. S.A. Thompson wanted to transfer his small hospital in Mt. Vernon, IL to other hands. Accompanied by the local pastor, the doctor approached the Bishop of Belleville, IL, who recommended they get in touch with the Sisters of St. Francis in Whitehall, PA, who had been active in the area. At the time, however, the asking price was \$60,000, an amount our congregation could not afford.

Four years later, Dr. Thompson revealed he would accept \$50,000; otherwise, he would close the hospital, due to his health, mounting costs and a scarcity of nurses. A local businessman agreed to purchase a part of the property for \$17,000, if our congregation would shoulder the remaining \$33,000.

The next year, Mother M. Aloysia and several other Sisters travelled to Mt. Vernon to undertake management of the facility which they renamed Good Samaritan Hospital. A description of the hospital depicts healthcare in the early 1940s: "There were no elevators; patients were

carried up the stairs; food trays reached the patients by manual dumb waiters; dresser drawers served as bassinets in the nursery."

Our Sisters labored seven days a week without pay, cleaning rooms, mopping corridors and washing linens by hand. They lived in the hospital's dank basement until accommodations were made nearby.

Recognizing the need for a new hospital building, the Mt. Vernon community launched a


Patients had to be carried up stairs at Good Samaritan Hospital in 1946.

campaign to obtain the necessary funds. Mother Aloysia also applied for government funding, and Good Samaritan became the first hospital in the nation to receive funds from the Hill-Burton Act. The cornerstone for the new four-story, 80-bed facility was laid in 1950, with Sister M. Clare Patalkis as the new administrator.

Eager to deliver another pathway to providing healthcare, then general superior Sister M. Virginia Pask learned that the Daughters of Charity intended to hand over St.



Hospital Administrator Sister M. Joanne Dumchus (center, desk) with Sisters serving at Good Samaritan in 1969.

Joseph Hospital in Alton, IL, a 200-bed facility about an hour and fifteen minutes from Good Samaritan. On April 18, 1974, the congregation assumed management of St. Joseph Hospital without any preliminary financial expenditures, with Sister M. Virginia assuring hospital personnel there would be no change in the 525 full and part-time employees and the 90-member physician staff.

The hospital expanded quickly and eventually a five-



Sister Anna Marie Jaskunas assists surgeons Dr. A. W. Modert and Dr. M. Hall at Good Samaritan Hospital in 1946.

Continued on page 5

Healthcare Ministry (continued from page 4)



Sisters Marian Blodis (left) and M. Virginia Pask (right) in front of St. Joseph Hospital in Alton, IL with the administrator from the Daughters of Charity during the transition of management in 1974.

story professional building was built to serve both the physicians and healthcare consumers of Alton. In 1984, Good Samaritan Hospital administrator Sister M. Joanne Dumchus died suddenly, leaving a void that could not be filled. Under her leadership, the hospital had grown from 110 beds to 188 beds with a medical staff of 45 physicians. After her death, a lay administrator served for 18 months but was unable to sustain the first-rate patient care standards without the necessary financial backing that was missing.

St. Joseph Hospital in Alton, was facing similar problems. The inpatient census was dropping as more procedures were being performed on an outpatient basis. This forced a down-sizing of staff. Moreover, unemployment in both communities was on the rise and, while hospital costs were soaring, Medicare and Medicaid allocations were decreasing.

Correspondence in 1986 and 1987 suggested that the congregation was contemplating withdrawal from both institutions. Such letters from general minister Sister Mar-

ian Blodis to various bishops revealed that the distance from the motherhouse to Alton and Mt. Vernon, a drop in the number of congregational members, particularly in healthcare, and the growing number of retired sisters all contributed to the state of affairs.

Ultimately, in 1988, St. Joseph Hospital was transferred to the Sisters of the Martyr St. George while Good Samaritan was handed over to the SSM Health Care Corporation sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, who assumed management in 1991 and renamed it Good Samaritan Health Center.

Throughout the years, our Community has maintained a special relationship with those whom we served with and cared for at Good Samaritan. In November 2012, prior to the dedication of a new 360,000 square foot facility, Good Samaritan Regional Health Center invited a group of our Sisters to visit the new hospital, where they were given a tour of their chapel which houses many religious artifacts significant to our congregation and ministry at Good Samaritan.



Sister M. Assumpta Vosilius with a patient at St. Joseph Hospital in Alton, IL.

Continued on page 6

A Mission of Care to Ethiopia



When Sister Maryjane Klein arrived in Ethiopia for her assignment as an overseas missionary in 1988, she had little idea of what she would come across. She understood she'd be working as a nurse, but never had any inkling she'd be managing a cramped, three-room clinic serving up to 150 people daily in a large, extremely impoverished mountainous region. There, Sister did everything from stitching wounds to setting broken legs, from giving injections for typhoid to setting up intravenous solutions for those stricken with malaria. She also treated burns, delivered babies and performed physical therapy.

"These people have nothing. The poverty is so strong and yet their faith in God is strong," she said at the time. "I am so grateful to be a part of their lives, especially in the orphanage. I feel like a sister, mother and friend to them all."

Note: Although no longer a member of the congregation, Maryjane continues to be called to serve in healthcare in the Pittsburgh area.

Healthcare Ministry (continued from page 5)

Brazil Expansion

In the 1950s, Sisters in Brazil diversified into healthcare ministry as they extended their mission beyond São Paulo to the state of Minas Gerais. At the request of Fr. Sinfrônio Torres de Freitas, our Sisters assumed responsibility for a 12-bed maternity clinic in Pedro Leopoldo. In addition to staffing the clinic, our Sisters arranged for mothers to receive free milk when they took their babies home. By 1978, the clinic had grown into a 70-bed hospital. After an evaluation in 1988, the Beneficent Society of St. Camillus assumed administration of the hospital, while our Sisters continued to offer pastoral care to patients.

Members of the congregation in Brazil also served in Good Shepard Hospital in the western Amazon region on the border of Bolivia ministering to this frontier community. Sisters in our Bolivia mission also offered medical care and pastoral services to the impoverished and isolated communities they served.

Sister Marlene Aparecida Avanzi's decades of ministry as a medical doctor and experienced surgeon has brought healthcare to some of the most remote regions in Brazil – and beyond. While serving as the medical director of Good Shepherd Hospital, she would make monthly visits to a colony of men, women and children suffering from Hansen's disease (leprosy) with other sisters who would provide pastoral and nursing services.

In a subsequent ministry, Sister Marlene joined a group of five other sisters as part of the International Community of Our Lady of Nazareth who were missioned to Haiti in the aftermath of the island's devastating earthquake. Here, Sister made use of her medical skills treating those who had no adequate nourishment, no basic sanitary conditions or clean drinking water. Said Sister Marlene, "I tried to envision them with the eyes of Francis of Assisi, seeing Christ in each of them, trying to give them hope for the future."

In recent years, Sister Marlene has served at a hospital in Óbidos, a town in northern Brazil's Amazon region, only accessible via a plane ride, followed by a small boat

ride or an 8-hour prolonged voyage on a larger ferry. Before Sister Marlene's arrival, those in need of surgery had to be transported to another facility two hours away. By her presence, many patients requiring surgery were able to have it performed on site. In addition, she served at a small emergency hospital in town, as well as on a traveling hospital boat.

Today in Brazil, healthcare ministry continues through the work of Sister Marlene and other Sisters engaged in nursing, physical therapy and other health care related ministries.

Several Sisters provide medical services to rural and impoverished areas in the Amazon region of Brazil.

Sister Vandete Barbosa de Oliveira recently began ministering as a nurse on the Pope Francis Hospital Boat in the Amazon. She joins our Sister Lucia who has been providing triage services and other assistance.

Sister Juliana Aires provides physical therapy to patients at a hospital run by the Franciscan Brothers in Óbidos. Recently her efforts have focused on helping COVID-19 patients recover and manage lingering effects of the disease and hospitalization.



Regional Superior Sister M. Urban Kolash (left, top row) administered the maternity hospital in Pedro Leopoldo. She is pictured with medical personnel and other Sisters who served at the clinic in 1959.



Sister Juliana Aires helps one of her pediatric physical therapy patients in Óbidos, Brazil.



Sister Marlene with local children on her mission to serve Haitians devastated by the 2010 earthquake.

Healthcare Ministry (continued from page 6)

Hospice Ministry Offers Comfort and Care for the Soul

St. Clare Hospice in Lithuania

Sister Dolorita Butkus served more than 50 years in healthcare as a nurse, nurse anesthetist, respiratory therapist, and director of pastoral care. After the fall of Communism in 1992, she volunteered, at the age of 70, to pioneer our newly established mission in Lithuania with Sister Michele Garas.



Sister Dolorita would often visit patients at St. Clare Hospice in Utena, Lithuania offering comfort and prayer.

For 18 years Sister Dolorita ministered to the people of her beloved Lithuania in numerous ways, but she derived a distinct spiritual fulfillment from helping Father Adamonis found St. Clare Hospice in Utena. The hospice began in a building that had been empty for three years. Five truckloads of debris later, there was room for the new ministry.

Sister Dolorita began the hospice with nothing, acquiring donations of beds, mattresses, sheets and linens. Aid to Lithuania, plus a number of other organizations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and elsewhere were also helpful in securing the needed supplies. Care was provided for hundreds of patients, plus offering respite to the families of those suffering from terminal illnesses. Sister Dolorita continued to serve as a consultant, pastoral care minister and fund-raiser until her return to the motherhouse in 2010. She remained a friend and faithful supporter of the Hospice until her death in December 2019.

Hospice and Bereavement Ministry

Sister Janice Campbell has had a distinct ministry in healthcare in the Pittsburgh area. Beginning in May 2016, she started as a spiritual care counselor with Good Samaritan Hospice from which she serves patients at a number of Concordia facilities in Pittsburgh's North Hills, as well as home hospice visits in Allegheny, Armstrong and Butler counties. Later, she switched territories to encompass parts of Beaver and Lawrence counties.

"With the grace of God, I am able to comfort both the living and the dying by offering supportive presence, empathetic listening and prayer to console and comfort," said Sister Janice.

Confidently, Joyfully, We Go Forward

Reflecting on our Community's healthcare ministry, we are grateful to be able to witness to the love of Christ through our service to others. We are also grateful for our extended Franciscan family whose prayers, gifts and support have been vital to our mission.

Sister Janice Campbell (right) is pictured sharing the Eucharist with a patient.



Editorial Note: In addition to our archives and past issues of the "Whitehall Franciscan," "A Celebration of Franciscan Spirit: Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God 1922-2000," by Eileen Leindecker Gimper, PhD was a source of historic information for the Healthcare Ministry and Auxiliary articles.

**For more photos of Sisters in healthcare ministry and info about our cover photos,
please visit our photo album at facebook.com/osfprov**

Sisters Celebrate Jubilees

In a day and age when longevity in commitment is in short supply, these sisters exemplify what it means to remain steadfast in the Lord's love. As a result, their lives have born much good fruit as they see Christ in those they have served and loved as they would Christ Himself. They've touched countless persons and, in the process, earned themselves treasure in heaven.

80th Jubilee

Sister Miriam Racas, OSF



Eighty years as a member of our community have provided Sister Miriam Racas with numerous opportunities to use her gifts in service to God's people. A native of Detroit, MI, Sister Miriam joined the community in 1941 from the city's St. George Parish. She embarked on her ministerial life as a 3rd and 4th grade teacher at Pittsburgh's St. Casimir School, followed by assignments in parishes from Rochester, NY, to Philadelphia and numerous parish schools in between. She also served as principal in several of these same communities. Her final assignment was principal at St. Francis of Assisi School in Gallup, NM, where the student body was comprised chiefly of Native American and Latino students. Sister Miriam also ministered at Covenant House in New York City and served two years in Utica, Lithuania. Later, she worked as a dietary manager at the Franciscan Spirit & Life Center, as well as a receptionist at the motherhouse. Sister earned her B.A. and M.A. in Education at Duquesne University. Today, we depend on Sister Miriam's prayers as she continues her mission at Presbyterian SeniorCare in Oakmont, PA.

70th Jubilee

Sister M. Francine McDonald, OSF



A native of Grand Rapids, MI, Sister M. Francine McDonald was the youngest and only girl of 11 children in the McDonald household. She describes how her brothers displayed immense patience in letting their kid sister tag along with them. Initially, Sister Francine attended the city's Sts. Peter and Paul Parish School before graduating from Catholic Central High School. Soon after, she entered our congregation. Her first assignment was as a third-grade teacher at St. George School in Cleveland, which was the beginning of a 44-year ministry as an elementary teacher in Moon Run, Homestead, Pittsburgh, Coopersville, MI, Elizabeth, NJ and West Mifflin. Sister Francine is a graduate of Duquesne University with a B.A. and M.A. in Education. She currently resides at the former Nativity parish rectory in South Park, PA where she ministers through prayer and presence in the parish.

Jubilees Continued on page 9

Sister M. Edward Urban, OSF



Sister M. Edward Urban was born in Lithuania in 1932. Her American-born father, Anthony, had actually returned to Lithuania in 1931, where he met and married Anne. Seven years later, her parents decided to return to the United States, settling in Cleveland, OH, where Sister Edward enrolled in St. George Parish. After graduating from Notre Dame Academy, she entered our congregation. Sister's initial assignment was Grand Rapids, MI, followed by Elizabeth, NJ, New Kensington and Bethel Park. Sister's life was punctuated with another opportunity when in 1963, she was missioned to Brazil where she ministered as a teacher, principal and pastoral minister for 47 years, returning to the motherhouse in 2010 and assisting in the archives department until 2017. Sister Edward earned a Bachelor's degree in Education at Duquesne University, where she also earned credits toward her Master's degree before her departure to Brazil. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sister Edward volunteered at the Franciscan Child Day Care Center in Pittsburgh. Presently, she assists with administrative projects as needed and is engaged in the ministry of prayer.

Sister Maristela Carlos Rodrigues, OSF



Sister Maristela Rodrigues was born in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil on April 11, 1931. She is the sixth of a family of ten. Sister entered the congregation in 1951 as a postulant in Vila Alpina, Brazil then began her novitiate in 1952. Shortly after making profession in 1953, she began 60 years of ministry serving as teacher, principal, pastoral minister, Director of Formation and Coordinator of the Chapel at Pio XII School, where there is one regular Sunday Mass.

In 2012, Sister Maristela began residing at Recanto Paz e Bem and is using her creativity in the area of arts and crafts, as well as greeting visitors and helping out where needed.

65th Jubilee

Sister Madalena da Silva, OSF



Sister Madalena da Silva entered our congregation in Brazil in 1956. During her early ministry, Sister Madalena served as a pediatric nurse at our maternity hospital in Pedro Leopoldo, Minas Gerais. She then served many years in pastoral ministries throughout Brazil, including in the Children's Pastoral, a national effort to eradicate infant mortality through efforts to better the health of both mother and child. Currently residing in our Paz e Bem house, Sister Madalena is engaged in the ministry of prayer and creates beautiful embroidery.

Jubilees Continued on page 10

60th Jubilee

**Sister Odete
Pereira da Silva, OSF**



Sister Odete Pereira da Silva entered our congregation in Brazil in 1961. She served many years in educational and pastoral ministries. She also served as formation director and local minister at Paz e Bem house, where we care for elderly and infirm Sisters in Brazil. Sister Odete currently serves as the Director of the St. Clare and St. Francis Social Center in Vila Alpina, São Paulo.

25th Jubilee

**Sister Antônia Maria
Alves da Silva, OSF**



Sister Antônia Maria Alves da Silva entered our congregation in Brazil in 1996. She has served in a number of rural missions and in our schools, as well as in Vocation Animation ministry helping young women discern a religious vocation. Sister Antônia currently serves as our Novice Director, guiding young Sisters in learning more deeply our charism and mission, as well as our Franciscan life, prayer and discernment.

USA Administrative Office Moves to Nativity Convent

After assessing the current space needs of our office in Pittsburgh, our Sisters decided to consolidate into one building that is more easily accessible for Sisters and staff. By August 2021, our USA Administrative Offices will have completed the move to the office space at Nativity Convent in Pittsburgh's South Park neighborhood, which is also home to several Sisters. While our address is different (see below), our Franciscan mission continues and all other contact information remains the same.

Thank you to all who have helped with the move, especially our Sisters and staff at Nativity for rearranging to make space so that we may all work and collaborate together.



Please Remember Our New Address:
Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
5802 Curry Road
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A History of Heaven-Sent Support

Over the past century, the fruits of our Franciscan mission were nurtured by some of the most dedicated, generous and faithful of our friends, family and benefactors who formed auxiliaries to support our Sisters and ministries.

The first and longest serving Auxiliary began in 1926 when the St. Francis Convent Auxiliary was organized by the parents, relatives and friends of our founding Sisters in Chicago, IL. This group's mission was to support our fledgling congregation through a variety of projects that included furnishing the Motherhouse convent and chapel, establishing scholarships for our prep school (and later St. Francis Academy) and raising funds to support our Sisters in their ministries.

In the mid-1930s, a similar group was organized in Pittsburgh to support the congregation financially by

Chicago Auxiliary President Sabina Henson (back row, center) receives an award for her many years of dedicated service in 1985. She would continue to lead the Auxiliary into the early 2000s.



Auxiliary members gather on the steps of Mary Immaculate Chapel during a meeting of all the Auxiliaries in 1945.

sponsoring fundraisers such as bake sales, bingos, and card parties. Convent Auxiliaries also formed where our Sisters served in Philadelphia, PA, Hartford, CT, Cleveland, OH, Grand Rapids, MI & Kenosha, WI.

The auxiliaries met annually at the Pittsburgh Motherhouse to nurture their relationship with the Sisters and each other. One of the earliest collaborations among the auxiliaries was when they joined with the St. Francis Mothers Guild to raise funds to build the St. Francis Academy Building that was completed in 1941.

After the original group became inactive for a time, the Pittsburgh Auxiliary was reestablished in 1985 with eight members, most of whom were St. Francis Academy Alumnae. Founding member Nancy Lippert's collaboration with then General Minister Sister Marian Blodis was vital to structuring a new Pittsburgh Auxiliary that built upon the efforts of previous groups. Beyond fundraisers, they also hosted various gatherings for our retired and infirm Sisters, including holiday parties and ice cream socials.

Convent auxiliaries served as long as they were needed by Sisters serving in their parishes, though individual members continue to generously support our Sisters through gifts, friendship and prayer. St.

George Auxiliary in Philadelphia continued to give to our community until they dissolved in 2019 due to the consolidation of parishes in the diocese.

Our Pittsburgh and Chicago Auxiliaries supported numerous projects benefiting our Sisters and ministries, including an elevator in our Franciscan Child Day Care Center, renovations to Mary Immaculate Chapel, installation of an emergency alert system and environmentally efficient lighting, and handicap accessible vans.

Under the faithful leadership of long-time president Sabina Henson, the Chicago Auxiliary's annual benefit dinners were celebrations of the Franciscan spirit that inspired generous support for our Sisters and ministries. They remained active into the early 2000s when they disbanded due to aging membership and other factors.

In the last decade, the dedicated board of the Pittsburgh Auxiliary spearheaded numerous bus trips, brunches, spaghetti dinners and retreats to raise support and build bonds between Sisters and members. Recent projects funded by the Auxiliary include handicap-friendly vehicles, as well as stair lifts, new carpet and other home renovations benefiting the health, safety and quality of life of our Sisters. The Board also continues to maintain friendships with our senior and infirm Sisters.



The original steering committee of the Pittsburgh Auxiliary included Sisters Felice Jucius, Marlene Wehar, Nancy Lippert, Yvonne Noiegott, Loretta Zak, and LaVerne Palko. (Not pictured were Alanna Lawrence, Marie Magner and Frances Fisher.)



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You're Cordially Invited to a Virtual Harvest of Gratitude

17th Annual

Autumn Gala

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

Sunday, October 3, 2021

7:00 PM - Program & Live Raffle Drawing at facebook.com/osfprov

Special Message and Blessing at osfprov.org/news-events/autumn-gala

More information on the Gala and Raffle:

osfprov.org/news-events/autumn-gala

info@osfprov.org, or 412-885-7232