

The Good News

Spring 2014

Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity
Holy Name Province, Inc.

A Multicultural Ministry

By Sister Marcella Kiesel, O.S.F.

After sixty years of ministry in nursing and education, I have discovered in retirement a very rewarding volunteer ministry. This ministry helps to improve the human condition of many men and women who have come to the United States from a variety of different countries. One of the most significant attributes of human beings is the ability to communicate. Without language one is de-humanized. For this reason the adult learners that I teach are highly motivated to learn to speak, read and write in English.

As a private tutor and classroom teacher of English with the Hillsborough County Literacy Council in Tampa, Florida, I have the privilege of sharing the joys of English with those who speak Spanish. E.S.O.L., or English for those who speak other languages, presents many challenges. All of my students at this time are Hispanic but from a variety of cultures, such as Argentina, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Columbia and Ecuador.

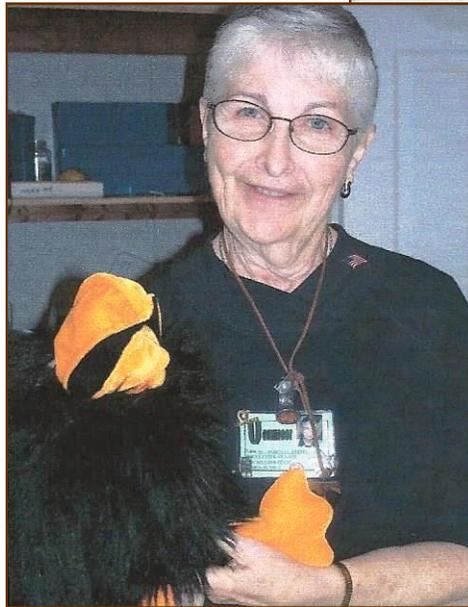
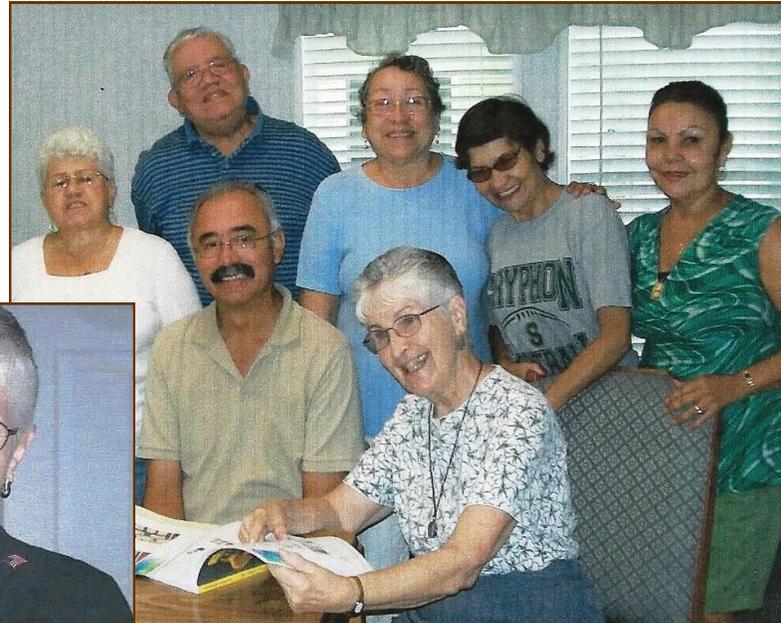
*Called by God's goodness,
we profess the Gospel life in
the spirit of Francis and
Mother Magdalen.*

*We follow the teaching and
footprints of Our Lord Jesus
Christ, vowing obedience,
poverty and chastity.*

*Our profession calls us to live
in community as pilgrims on
the way to the Father.*

*Through it, we commit our-
selves to constant conversion
in openness to the Spirit.*

*We live as sisters minor in the
midst of God's people for the
sake of the kingdom thus
becoming a sign of hope to a
struggling world.*



Sr. Marcella with class mascot, "Tony Tucan," and some of her E.S.O.L. students .

Most of my students are elderly. Younger students are often the spouses of those who are here for an organ transplant and use the time between visits to physicians and hospitals to learn the language. Some of the students are motivated because they want to pass the exam for citizenship. In addition to E.S.O.L. I also teach the course in preparation for the citizenship test which includes speaking and writing some English. It is always a treat for me to accompany the prospective citizen to the Department of Homeland Security, to witness their oath, to hear them sing the National Anthem and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Of course, a party with all of my students follows this event.



Over the years, some of the students have been singled out by the County Literacy Council for special recognition. The “Student of the Year” Award was given a few times and annually, student essays have been published in a special students’ publication entitled, “Visions.” Some students have been selected to speak at the microphone at the Annual Assembly and to recite their original essay.

We celebrate each student’s birthday as well as holidays. Ethnic foods, songs and pictures are shared. Students contribute information, drawings and photographs of their native country to our large class album. The Beginners’ Class and the Advanced Class overlap by half an hour during which they all share in a TBE (total body experience) learning which they enjoy very much. This is learning beyond reading or reciting. It involves doing something physical such as setting a table for a formal occasion. I am in the process of writing a pictorial manual of these

exercises to assist new tutors who want to use the TBE method.

It has also been a pleasure to act as a mentor for new tutors in the program and to encourage, call or visit to support them in their new role as tutors.



Although I have been awarded “Tutor of the Year” and have been recognized for the number of hours of volunteer tutoring and mentoring, this means nothing to me. The thing that energizes and motivates me to continue in this ministry is the sheer joy of hearing a student who struggled to hear the English pronunciation and then one day makes the connection and speaks understandably. I want to dance when, after many persistent attempts, they put their words together in a sentence that actually has a subject and a verb. Some of their essays bring tears to my eyes as I hear of their personal pain and triumphs as well as their faith in God and undying hope.

Sometimes God sends me benefactors who donate school supplies and/or money so that I can buy supplies to give to my students. All of my students suffer financially. Our Franciscan Associates have also made donations to support this ministry.

As long as God sends me motivated students who desire to embrace the English language despite their age, hearing and/or visual deficits, and as long as God gives me the energy and inspiration to do so, I will continue to use His gifts in this very rewarding ministry.

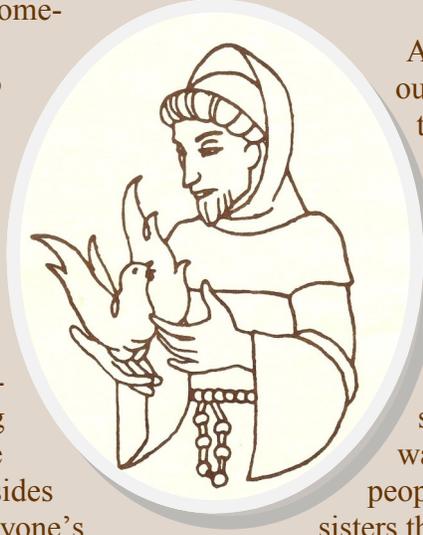


How does forgiveness lead our communities to a society transformed in peace?

From your Mayan sisters in Chiapas Mexico
S. Consuelo, S. Leticia, S. Micaela, S. Candida, S. Ilse

Our pastoral ministry to the 150 village communities in our local parish in Chiapas, Mexico, provides many opportunities to facilitate forgiveness. Sometimes there are divisions in our village communities. This is of great concern to us, because our indigenous culture is a very peaceful one. Our Mayan ways are based on strong communal relationships. We belong to each other as a people.

One day our sister, Leticia, went to a community to help resolve a situation where the people were experiencing conflict in the village. She began by visiting every family, to listen to what they were feeling in their hearts. She did not take sides nor make judgments, but listened to everyone's pain. After two days of listening she gathered the people in the village so that all could speak from their



hearts. This was a very helpful first step in the healing process, because she was sister to everyone.

A few days later, Ilse, who is a new member in our Franciscan community, had the opportunity to go home to visit her family. She learned of a very painful situation of misunderstanding between her family and another in her village. When she went with her family to the Sunday celebration at the local church, she saw one of the persons who was in conflict with her family. She hesitated, but then decided to go to him and greet him, to shake his hand and wish him well. Everyone was surprised with her action. She told the people that she was learning from her Franciscan sisters that this was the way we are called to live. *We give witness to forgiveness because we know that this is the way of peace.*

Sr. Candida Gonzales Jimenez makes Final Profession



With Franciscan images placed around the altar, Sister Candida (Candi) made her Final Profession on September 14, 2013 after 10 years in the community. Surrounded by her village and religious community, all enjoyed a wonderful celebration! The Church was full, the choir was great, her family was happy.

Sr. Candi is the “on call” nursing technician for our mission’s clinic. She does intake, injections, takes vital signs, etc. She works with the doctor and dispenses medications from the pharmacy. She also helps prepare for the bi-annual medical missions.

In addition to her medical duties, she prepares youth for the sacrament of confirmation and accompanies the catechists of 12 village communities in the “Reforma Center.” She, like all the sisters, accompanies another sister when they have pastoral work that requires more than one person or traveling at night.

It is strongly evident that Magdalen, our foundress, is at work, blessing and strengthening these women who are our presence in Chiapas. St. Francis is the ever faithful guide and St. Clare’s love of community blesses and sustains the communal spirit in this small community.

Working with HIV/AIDS in Tanzania

A ministry of counseling enables two of our Sisters in St. Clare Mission, Tanzania, to praise our good God.

Having just completed a course known as C.P.E. (Clinical Pastoral Educator) at Bugando Catholic Hospital in Mwanza, Sr. Angela's specific work is with those living with HIV/AIDS. She tells us, "I am happy working with these patients because nowadays many are willing to accept their situations as compared to before. Some patients were even killing themselves because of despair. It encourages me that there is more hope as they realize their disease is not the end of their life. They need more care, prayers and love and I am happy to be able to serve them in that way."

Sr. Edina lives in St. Elizabeth's Convent in Biharamulo. After attending the Clinical Pastoral Course in Mwanza, she now works at Biharamulo's District Hospital as a General Counselor. She works with HIV/AIDS patients as well as others with a variety of illnesses. She tells us she feels touched by this ministry. "I like helping people to face their problems. I feel I am participating in the work of the Good News of the Gospel. Thank you for your prayers for all those who suffer."

It was Sr. Edina who alerted Sr. Marguerite, a Stella Niagara Franciscan who has been at St. Clare Mission in Tanzania since 1987, of the plight of many of the AIDS patients. She is witness to their struggle for their basic food supply. They simply do not have enough food – especially vegetables. Sr. Edina was able to get the hospital to agree to provide a small plot of land so that the "in-house" patients could begin growing some food. A grant from the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Mary Virgin's Hunger Fund provided funding to purchase seeds, fertilizers and hand hoes. This is the second garden project funded by the Hunger Fund (the first supports the local community near St. Clare Mission), which has helped so many patients and families.



*Jesus fed
thousands
with only five
loaves of bread
and two fish.*

*He showed us
how God's love
can multiply
the effects of
our generosity.*

(see Matt. 14:13-21).

Become a Monthly Club Donor

Monthly club donors provide a dependable base of support to help the sisters respond to those in need, as well as care for the infirm and elderly sisters.

More and more donors are choosing monthly giving to ensure their gifts make a bigger impact by working faster and more efficiently.

Monthly club donors are remembered in special monthly masses, and receive the latest news, but not the regular appeal mailings. Your donations, which are tax-deductible, are itemized in an annual receipt.

It's quick and it's easy - sign up today!

Join us today!

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director14144@yahoo.com

and indicate you want to

join the Monthly Club!

Ministering to the Poor



Sr. Beth

On March 2nd, 2014, the headline of the Niagara Gazette featured the findings of a Community Report prepared by the John R. Oishei Foundation and the University of Buffalo's Regional Institute. Sr. Beth Brosmer found the report "sobering" as it described the effects of poverty on families and individuals in the City of Niagara Falls. Sr. Beth is the director of the Heart, Love and Soul food pantry in Niagara Falls and, along with many of our other sisters, gets a first-hand and personal look at the face of poverty in our communities. Her ministry provides food and meals to hundreds of poor and working-poor, as well as health clinics, social work and recreational programs.



Sr. Maureen

Sr. Maureen Harris also ministers to those in need through the Family Support Network of Buffalo, which was featured in our 2013 ministry appeal. At the time, Sister Maureen wrote, "As I sat down to write you this letter, I reviewed my 2012 statistics. I saw that we served 122 families fulfilling 226 different needs for food, shelter, counseling, employment help, transportation, furniture and legal needs. What I realized is that behind every statistic is a real person with his or her own story of struggle and hope for a brighter future.



Sr. Maria Elena

Serving those who are materially poor crosses state lines. In Florida, Sr. Maria Elena Larrea works with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to respond to the poor in their community – many of them immigrants. She helps organize monthly food drives to meet the needs of the nearly 250 families who come to them for assistance.



Sr. Christella

Sr. Christella Ritchey works at the Joint Organization for Inner-City Needs (JOIN), under the auspices of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio. Here they offer emergency basic needs, such as food, food certificates, clothing, prescription assistance, utility help, infant formula, eyeglasses, bus transportation, burial assistance, as well as referrals to other sources of help. JOIN maintains an average caseload of 3,500 clients monthly and serves 1,200 households per month.



Sr. Christina

Sr. Christina Kraus realized that basic human needs need to be addressed along with spiritual needs. She founded Providence Place Franciscan Ministries more than twenty-five years ago to answer the cry of the poor in Pike County, Ohio, where nearly a quarter of the population live in poverty.



Sr. Diane

Founded by Sr. Diane Gianadda, the Women's Respite Program addresses the needs of at-risk women. The program gathers together single mothers, grandmothers raising their grandchildren, or women with a cancer diagnosis, for a much-needed rest and support at Stella Niagara.

In all this, our sisters truly demonstrate their commitment to their core mission: Wherever we live and serve, we contemplate the Word of God and call one another to conversion of heart in order to transform unjust structures and to hear the cry of the poor.

When you make a donation to the greatest need of the Sisters of St. Francis, you help us help others in need.

Whatever you do to the least of your brothers and sisters, you do to me."

Matthew 25:40

NEWS BRIEFS



"Namaste" ~ "the God in me bows before the God in you." Among S. Christina's Pecoraro's refugee students are Hindus who use this greeting, made with clasped hands touching their foreheads and an actual bow. She used it as the theme of her "Retreat with Refugees," given to Sisters in the Health Center on Feb. 20.



Sr. Christina, above, leads the February retreat where sisters prayed for the refugees whose names were placed before them. Shown are (L-R), Srs. Henrietta, Therese, Celia, Mary Frances, Mary, Christine, William and Mary Kay.



Congratulations to **Sr. Beth Brosmer** who was selected to receive the 2014 Community Leader Award by the National Federation for Just Communities™ of WNY, Inc. for her work in community service at Heart, Love and Soul Food Pantry. In addition, **Barbara Malinowski, RN**, received an award for her work in Healthcare. Barbara, who assists in the medical outreach at Heart, Love and Soul Food Pantry, is the Parish Nurse Coordinator for Mount St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston, NY. Over the years, the hospital has generously supported the medical mission in Chiapas, Mexico where both Barbara and Sr. Beth have volunteered their time and expertise.



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Sisters of St. Francis of Penance & Christian Charity—Stella Niagara

Center of Renewal Retreat & Conference Center Celebrating 40 years of Interfaith Hospitality

May 25-30, 2014 / Franciscan Retreat Week

“SO WHAT?” by Fr. Thomas Hartle, OFM and Sr. Colette Rhoney, OSF

So WHAT? A question of indifference? A dismissive wave of the hand? **HARDLY!**

For St. Francis and St. Clare, this question burned at the heart of their efforts to follow Christ.

So What about the Gospel Life... So What about Poverty...So What about Conversion...So What about Minority?

Our retreat reflections will focus on the issues and concerns that are just as critical in our day as they were in the time of Francis and Clare. **SO WHAT** about the impact this can have on our times, our church, our Franciscan life?

We will gain insight to the famous quote attributed to Francis: “Preach the Gospel and if necessary, use words.”

Reservations due by 5/10/2014: Total fee of \$425 includes five nights’ sleeping room accommodations, all meals and snacks from day one dinner through day six lunch, and all related retreat fees and materials.

June 20-21, 2014 / Labyrinth/Summer Solstice Overnight Retreat

“Walking in Circles: Labyrinth as Spiritual Practice” by Rev. Bette Bond

Ever feel like life is spent walking in circles? Well, it IS! The circle is a symbol of wholeness and completeness—our path in life is not linear, but more of a circular, spiraling journey—ascending, descending, moving forward and back. The labyrinth offers us a way to connect the physical with the spiritual—as meditation, prayer, a pathway to creativity, self-knowledge—a winding and an unwinding. The tradition of walking the labyrinth is millennia old, and throughout the ages, souls have wound their way around and around, to center, and back.

Join us as we are drawn into the circle, explore its mystery, and come to the center of self.

Reservations due by 6/6/2014: Total fee of \$138 includes one night’s accommodations, all meals and refreshment breaks from Friday dinner through Saturday lunch, and all related retreat fees and materials.

Isn't it time for your retreat? Join us in 2014!
www.center-of-renewal.org 716-754-7376

The **Bishop McMahon Class of ‘58** celebrated their 55th reunion on September 28th, 2013. Forty-one classmates, including teacher, Mrs. Gagola, attended. The class has always made an effort to stay in touch. Since their 50th reunion, they’ve held 31 lunches with attendance ranging from 20 to 30 people. A couple of years ago, they met at Stella Niagara and hope to do so again this summer.

L-R at table: Anna Rose Canazzi Noto, Margaret Latona DesRosiers, Carol Cuppone Navarro, Noreen Ormond Beiring, Prudence Falsone Gyulovics, Margaret Strauch Depowski, Bette Gagola, Mary Ann Massaro Schmitt.

L-R second row: Geraldine Krapp Smith, Audrey Nuwer, Lorraine Hannan Forness, Janice Reming Panek, Lenore Benson Burns, Marie Bevilacqua Wolf, Kathryn Heigl Janson, Marlene Bohn Dahn, Joanne Kolb Williams, Mary Ann Kahabka Keck, Charlene Patti Gennuso, Theresa Farrell Klotzbir, Mary Lee Kadzik Zoratti, Ann Becker Schuh, Marilyn Walter Huefner, Theresa Marchese Gaglia, Mary Lou Cannarozzo Szafranski, Charlene San Filippo Tunney, Beverly Ferraro Dudek

L-R top row: Priscilla Mangold, Arlene Orszulak Ferrick, Barbara Rico Maynard, Mariann Eich Nyceel, Alvina Fronckowiak Zielinski, Joan DeRouche Taylor, Grace LoTempio Gallivan, Mary Buccellato Tredo, Nancy Seitz Sirface, Mary Jean Steck, Joyce Didio Gandy, Carolyn Indovina Ruhland, Barbara Zogaria Notaro, Elizabeth Wylubski Little Pyszczyński.



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Sisters of St. Francis of Holy Name Province, Inc.

As you may recall, purchasing a new wheelchair van was the goal of last autumn's **Tribute Dinner**. This new van can accommodate two wheelchairs at a time. It also has a specialized front passenger seat that moves out of the van and gently lowers to ground level so that a person with limited mobility could easily sit on the seat. It then raises the person up and into the van.

We are so grateful to you. **THANK YOU!** Your support of our Tribute Dinner – and more importantly, your support of our sisters – made this possible. May God bless you!

Braving the bitterly cold weather and snow, Sr. Diane Gianadda, left, stands with Sr. Edith Wyss beside the new van, while the sales representative demonstrates some of the van's features for our health center workers.

Save the date for

Tribute Dinner 2014

Wednesday, October 8

The Buffalo Club, Buffalo, NY

