

# Franciscan Spirit

## The Incredible Faithful Journey to 104



This, our remarkable, Sister Mary Evelyn Kaminski, celebrated her 104th birthday on August 12.

How does one make such a journey? With great joy, great commitment, great trust, deep prayer and being a blessing to everyone you meet.

A letter to Mother Salomea, the Superior General of the Order, from Dr. Monaco in Gallup, New Mexico in 1944, contains an insight into the indomitable spirit of Sister Evelyn. "She has pulmonary TB and a pulmonary hemorrhage. She wants to be on her feet and continue her work." That work was among

the Navajo and Apache Native American people of Arizona and New Mexico where she served over 20 years.

Her life journey, which began in the little town of Lubin, Poland on August 12, 1912 took her to Weirton, West Virginia where she met the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The rest is all mission, faith, love and sacrifice.

At the mere age of 76 when celebrating 60 years as a Sister, she said, "As you get older, I think you get closer to the knowledge that God is here. He's got the whole world in His hands and you're in it."

Sister Evelyn has been in God's hands for 104 years. In Psalm 90 we read, "Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty is we are strong..." Well, how about 104 years. Today, Sister Evelyn is not strong of body but she is still strong of spirit. Her presence at Mother of Perpetual Help Residence is a blessing and testimony to all the residents, staff, caregivers and family members that indeed God has each of them in His hands. Sister Evelyn's hugs and prayers prove it.

***"He's got the whole world  
in his hands and you're in it."***





Dear Friends,

Peace and all good be yours!

Recently when I was out walking and the sun was shining through the early Fall turning leaves I was reminded of the poem "When I am Among the Trees" by Mary Oliver.

*"...Around me the trees stir in their leaves and call out, 'Stay awhile'.  
The light flows from their branches. And they call again, 'It's simple', they say,  
'and you too have come into the world to do this, to go easy,  
to be filled with light and to shine'".*

During this season of Fall we can learn so much from creation. Fidelity. Letting go. Trusting a process. Beauty. In this issue of **Franciscan Spirit** we are pleased to share many ways we believe we Franciscan Sisters "go easy, are filled with light and shine". Not that it really is easy of course. And not that it is about us. It is about being God's mercy in the world, about being spotlights of hope and joy.

In his encyclical letter, "Care for our Common Home", Pope Francis prayed "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 toward your infinite light". It takes a lot of quiet, a lot of slowing down to be filled with awe and contemplation so that we can be God's mercy.

So, would you join us in slowing down, in being filled with light and in being God's mercy?

*Sister Renita Brummer, OSF  
Minister General*

## The Franciscan Kolkota Connection

In 1979 when Cardinal Carberry of the Archdiocese of St. Louis opened the General Chapter Meeting of the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady Perpetual Help he told Sister Consilia Buka that he had invited Mother Teresa to minister in North St. Louis and he was picking her up at the airport the next day. This was wonderful news for Sister Consilia who had met Mother Teresa in 1978 when the Congress of the Institute of Religious Life was held in St. Louis.

When the Missionaries of Charity arrived in St. Louis we, Franciscan Sisters, were among many who assisted them. For many years Sister Consilia and other Sisters would take the Sisters nonperishable food items on Sunday afternoon. Sister Modesta gathered clothing for them. On occasion the Missionaries of Charity even came to the Motherhouse in Ferguson to pick apples in our apple orchard. When Mother Teresa was visiting her Sisters in St. Louis on the occasion of her 50th Jubilee, many of our Sisters attended her special Mass of celebration at St. Bridget's Parish in North St. Louis City.



Sister Consilia is pictured here with Mother Teresa at the Congress.

We believe St. Francis of Assisi and St. Teresa of Kolkota shared a kinder spirit and love for God's poor ones and are now calling us to fidelity to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

## We are Birthing, Growing, Mentoring, Supporting Gospel Initiatives

In 1999 eight communities of Catholic Sisters in St. Louis brought to birth, **Marian Middle School**, an all-girls Catholic school in the St. Louis metropolitan area to serve at-risk youth. The Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help were one of the eight and continue to support Marian Middle School to this day. We hold a seat on the Members Board and each year we provide a monetary grant of \$10,000 to assist in building a top-notch educational program. From 2002 - 2007 we served as principal. Several of our sisters volunteered their services in the after school enrichment program and math tutoring.

The ultimate goal of Marian Middle School is to break the cycle of poverty. Since its founding MMS has shepherded 197 young women through middle school and 95% of the girls have graduated from high school. MMS has seen 12 girls graduate from college and begin their careers. Marian alumnae college graduates are accomplished leaders equipped to make informed decisions and create enduring positive change for a better world. In the words of one of the students, "Marian has given its life to us."



The **English Tutoring Project** (ETP) is another initiative we helped birth in 1998. We have been on the Board, assisted in incorporating students into the ETP program and provide financial support to this day.



The English Tutoring Project provides on-site assistance to children from refugee and immigrant families to acquire English language skills in an environment where all children experience respect for themselves and their culture.

The Project began work out of a mobile RV driven to three schools. Today ETP serves students in seven schools. There are seven tutors providing on-site tutoring to more than 150 students from at least 12 different countries of origin. ETP's caring, experienced teachers have helped more than 1,300 children from immigrant and refugee families from 30 different countries learn standard English. There is an on-going need to provide essential services that are helping students grow and thrive.

Our Franciscans for Earth focus has brought us into engagement and relationship with many organizations in the St. Louis and Jefferson County area. The **Master Naturalists** of St. Louis, St. Charles and Franklin Counties have worked with us on several projects clearing invasive cedar trees and creating a pollinator garden.



We have been an integral part of **Intercommunity Ecological Council** of St. Louis, an organization of Catholic Sisters committed to sharing resources and supporting care of Earth with others.

Debby Campbell, Director of **Get Healthy De Soto**, sees the Franciscan Sisters as a treasured partner in cultivating food and community as well as supporters of the local herb garden, the community garden, and farmer's market.

We partner with Debi Kelly at the **University of Missouri Extension** to host seed savers workshops and a seed catalog exchange. We collaborate with **Jefferson College** in Earth Day events and earth films and speakers.



We are sharing examples of how you are empowering the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual to extend mercying\* beyond the Year of Mercy. \*word coined by Pope Francis

# Help us continue corporal

## Assist Hispanic Catholics



Incredible! According to CARA, a national Catholic Research organization out of Georgetown University, there are 30 million self identified Hispanics or Latinos who are Catholic and 4,544 parishes (26%) who serve Hispanics.

One of those parishes is St. Anthony Parish in South St. Louis City. That is where you will find **Sister Dolores Sanchez**, native of El Paso, Texas. As Pastoral Associate she might be leading a faith formation class in Spanish, organizing the youth for a service day, helping to find care for an elderly parent, leading a discussion group in the St. Louis Archdiocese, or referring someone to St. Anthony Food Pantry which is directed by our Sr. Connie Probst.

Sister Dolores meets more and more young people, immigrants and refugees who have left behind their families and cultural support systems. She is continually providing counsel, support and connecting them with community resources.

Above all she reassures them, Dios te ama. God loves you.

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## Teach Nurses to Heal



**Sister Ann Wiesen** directs the Practical Nursing Program at Hillsborough County in Tampa, Florida. Through her work she lives St. Francis of Assisi's call to repair, to heal, to bind up wounds.

No journey today eludes illness, death, injury. Healthcare professionals are the ones who journey with us through illness and injury. It is their touch, concern, and compassion that communicate God's compassion.

Through Sister Ann's spirit, instruction, presence, and leadership soon to be nurses are learning how not only to cure, but more importantly how to be Jesus' healing. Being Jesus' healing happens through compassionate care.

Every 15 months Sister Ann meets a new group of "students" who are looking to become a licensed practical nurse and provide for their own families through gainful employment.

Henri Nouwen said often we are not able to cure, but we are always able to care. Each year, hundreds of licensed practical nurses go forth into hospitals, clinics, and home health programs a little more caring because of Sister Ann.

## Empower Stewardship



*"As a form of ministry, development is as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick, or feeding the hungry."*

- Henri Nouwen

**Sister Georgette Lehmuth** who serves as President and CEO of the National Catholic Development Conference in Washington, DC believes and lives the spirituality of fundraising. Her middle name is "MISSION".

In her role she has worked with the national US Postal system to keep postage down for not-for-profits, has planned and led hundreds of webinars across the country, and assures the national NCDC convention is an excellent resource/experience.

*The NonProfit Times* (NPT), the leading business publication for nonprofit management, named Sr. Georgette Lehmuth, to The NPT Power and Influence Top 50 list for the 11th consecutive year. *The NonProfit Times* praised Sr. Georgette by saying "...She collaborates with everyone while keeping everyone's eyes fixed on the prize - service to others."

We thank you for making these ministries happen and we look forward to being the Gospel mission with you.

# and spiritual "mercying"

## Companion with the Least

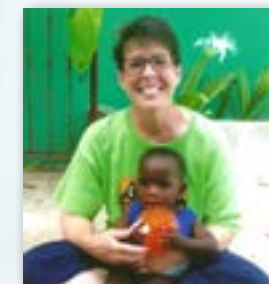


**Sister Anthony Marie Valdez** is convinced she has access to a tremendous powerhouse of prayer. And she does! For over 22 years she has served as Director of Spiritual Care for the residents of an extended acute care facility in rural northeast Ohio. Those with whom she journeys have severe spinal cord, traumatic brain injuries or are in their elder years of diminishment.

Sister SAM, as she is lovingly called, has organized a tremendous ministry of prayer among the residents. Prayer requests come from across the United States. God hears the groans and cries of the residents as they gather in the little chapel and "sing" God's praise for all those who have requested their prayers.

While the ownership of the facility in Green Springs, Ohio has changed from St. Francis Health Care Center to Elmwood Health Care Center to Eden Springs Health Care Center, Sister Sam has been a consistent presence of compassion and security.

## Serve Children in Haiti



Teacher, nurse, mother, grandmother, baker... **Sister Mary Jo Kremer** serves all these roles with HIV positive children at the Cap Haitien Mission of the Missionaries of the Poor in Haiti.

When Sister Mary Jo's missionary heart led her to Haiti she had no idea her heart would be broken open by the children as they sat on her lap, cried in her arms, struggles to learn the alphabet and hoped for a small piece of candy.

Some have said it seems to be the destiny of the people of Haiti to suffer. If this is true, and it seems it is, the children are the ones who bear the brunt of the poverty, the natural disasters, the economic political power plays, and the diseases which ravage the small, beautiful island.

Sister Mary Jo creates birthday surprises, plans little trips, sews clothing for them. Above all, she is God's mercy, peace and all good for His precious children of Haiti.

## Educate Future Catholics



Sister, Sister, Sister.

As a Principal at Our Lady of the Ridge Catholic School in Chicago Ridge, Illinois **Sister Stephanie Marie Kondik** hears her name called often every day. And she loves it!

She believes Catholic school educators lay the foundation for all other professions. Catholic school teachers nurture dreams, heal wounds (inside and out), give hope, unveil God given gifts, plant seeds of compassion. Catholic schools also provide a place of welcome and security where children have a sense of belonging.

Sister Stephanie has been at the heart of Catholic education since she began her teaching career in 1974 at St. Paschal's School in West Monroe, Louisiana.

Oh, the lives she has influenced. She insists that her life is fuller, happier, and richer because of all the students, parents, and staff.

How can you be part of these ministries?  
God Bless You!

It's easy.  
Use the enclosed envelope or  
visit our website [www.fsolph.org](http://www.fsolph.org)

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# Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Office of Mission Advancement

It is with a grateful spirit that we share with you our 2015-2016 fiscal year donation report. During this year 3,277 generous donations gifted the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help with financial support. Of these, 122 were first time donors. Many of you share a special connection to us through our years of presence in parishes or are family members or have partnered with us in our care for Earth. You are a true blessing to us, enabling us to continue our mission of being Jesus' transforming presence in our world.

Through your support you affirm that our work of teaching, healing, accompanying, caring for Earth, and especially praying for God's people, are at the heart of our Franciscan call. You also help assure that our retired Sisters, who have given so much so faithfully for so many years, can live out their retirement years with the care they need in safety and quality of life.

We look to the future with hope and we commit to our mission of being transforming signs of Gospel hope and joy in our world. We are careful stewards of God's gifts to us. Thank you for your support, your friendship and being with us in our Franciscan mission of being peace and all good in the world.

Our community logo depicts the long and winding journey of life. Life winds through the heart of God's love ever present, ever calling to us to love as He loves. The Franciscan Tau cross calls us to conversion and to openness, to oneness with all people and creation throughout the world.

You are with us on the journey and we invite you to invite others to the journey.



## Oh, the Intensity, the Desire to Learn Social Media

When we sisters gathered for our annual meeting in June, we had a special session on the role of social media in evangelization, in welcoming others to share our mission, in furthering past ministry relationships. We knew that if Pope Francis can tweet, we can surely do Facebook.

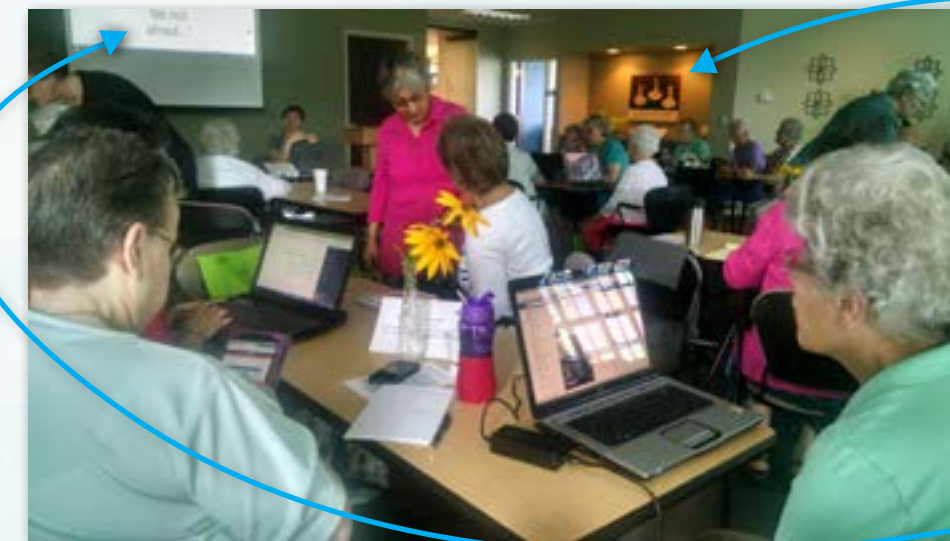
**Our revised website [www.fsolph.org](http://www.fsolph.org) was also unveiled. Have you seen it? Why not check it out.**

We heeded Pope Francis' 2016 Lenten Message, "The digital world is a public square, a meeting place where we can either encourage or demean one another, engage in meaningful discussion or unfair attacks". He encouraged Catholics to lead the way in making good use of God's gifts in cooperation with the best of human ingenuity. He said, "In a broken, fragmented and polarized world, to communicate with mercy means to help create a healthy, free and fraternal closeness between the children of God and all our brothers and sisters in the one human family". We plunged into the digital world.

If you are on **Facebook**, search for **Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help**. You just might find their smiling faces and learn what "in the world" they are doing. You can also visit our website and submit any prayer requests.

We have a helpful, inspirational bi-monthly short **e-newsletter called E-Franciscan Spirit** which we would love to share with you. Just sign up on our website or give us a call.

## Allocation of Donations Fiscal Year (September 2015 - August 2016)



In the far background is a picture of our three Foundresses, Mother Solana Leczna, Hilaria Matz, and Mother Ernestine Matz, who began our community in 1901. We are sure they were cheering us on.

Also in the background is the subtle message on the overhead screen -- Be Not Afraid. That's a truly encouraging Gospel message when plunging into the ever changing, evolving, increasingly faster world of social media.



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Francis was a mystic and pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature, and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.

*Laudato Si' Pope Francis*



## We've been Franciscans for Earth for a long time.



We join Pope Francis in proposing a complement to the two traditional sets of **seven corporal and spiritual works of mercy**: may the works of mercy also include *care for our common home*. As a **spiritual work of mercy**, care for our common home calls for grateful contemplation of God's world which allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us. As a **corporal work of mercy**, care for our common home requires simply daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness and makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.

Excerpt from Pope Francis Address for World Day of Prayer for Creation