Inside:
Some of our responses to Pope Francis's Preferential Option for the Young
A report on our Planting Hope for the Future
Celebrating our Jubilarians
Fall FFE Eco-Series events

"as a church...we need youthful enthusiasm in order to be witnesses of the God who is always young!"

— Pope Francis in his 2021 homily to 2,000 young people at St Peters Basilica on the Feast of Christ the King
Dear Friends,

It was a curiosity piece in my campus ministry office. A student would ask, “What is that?”

I’d explain it was a miniature Zen rock garden, a simple way to experience inner contemplation and calmness which can lead to a fresh view of life and the world. The student would smile, begin raking the sand and arranging the small stones and begin to breathe deeply. “It works,” the student would say.

I often reflect on how those young people taught me how to open my eyes and mind and experience a new way of seeing. Campus ministry was one of my most challenging and blest ministries. That little Zen rock garden is in my office to this day.

It is the young who teach us. It is the young who spark enthusiasm and hope. It is the young who dream. Saint Francis was only 18 when he joined him. Saint Clare was only 18 when she joined him. Yet, we need to have a preferential option for the young, for they reflect our God who is always young and new and option for the young, for they reflect our God who is always young and new.

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Please pray with and for us as we gather in June!

Like an extended family, we Sisters gather in St Louis each summer for “a reunion” to visit, discuss, dine, and celebrate Jubilee together. We also use this time to discern for the future, and what we can do now to prepare for it.

The Emmaus story is a favorite of our Sisters, especially in challenging and uncertain times. We believe the theme for this year’s Tau Assembly illustrates our goal to continue walking together with the Lord. God’s path may take us farther than we had anticipated, but we are ready and excited to follow it into the unknown future in faith.
A beautiful crystal globe was recently on display at the Center for the Study of Church in the World. Celebrating 50 Years of Jubilee for five of our dear sisters, marking the anniversaries of their first professions of vows. Please join us in congratulating Sister Dolores Marie Sanchez, OSF, Sister Stephanie Marie Kondik, OSF, Sister Lorraine Therese DeFebbo, OSF, Sister Julia Marie Bathon, OSF, and Sister Stephanie Marie Sanchez, OSF, in their respective jubilees.

Sister Dolores Marie Sanchez, OSF
Sister Dolores Marie was born and raised in El Paso, TX. Sister earned a BA in English from Notre Dame College and an MA in Religious Studies from Saint Louis University.

In the Archdiocese of St Louis schools, Dolores ministered as a teacher at St Bartholomew’s and at St Casimir. Outside St Louis she also taught in El Paso, TX, Monroe, LA, as a Chicago, IL. Beginning her career as Pastoral Associate in a multicultural parish in Chicago, she also served in that role at an African American Catholic Church in Monroe, LA. From there she moved to Shreveport, LA, as the first full-time Director of Hispanic Ministry. Upon Sister Dolores’ return to the St Louis area, she again assumed the role of Pastoral Associate, this time at Anthony of Padua Church. Currently, Sister works with Archdiocesan parishes and other congregations on an Environmental Justice & Immigrant Organizer with Metropolitan Congregations United.

So very blessed—by my family, and my Franciscan family, by your presence and love for me, so many people and in the beauty of creation. Peace and thanks to You, my Lord.”

Sister Lorraine Therese DeFebbo, OSF
Sister Lorraine was born in West St. Louis, IL. She earned a BA in Music Education from Fontbonne University in St Louis, MO, and an MA in Liturgical Studies from the University of Notre Dame. Sister ministered as a teacher in the Archdiocese of St Louis at many schools including Holy Ghost, St Casimir, Our Lady of the Pillar, St Francis of Assisi, Transfiguration, Seven Holy Founders, and Immaculata. She also taught in the states of Illinois, Louisiana, and Wisconsin. Additionally, Sister served as a member of her community’s Leadership Team and has ministered as choir director, pastoral associate, Campus Ministry Liturgist at Quincy University, and Director of Music and Liturgy at St Blaise (now Holy Spirit) and St Pius Parishes in Hubertus, WI.

More recently, Sister has ministered as a radiology nurse at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center in St Louis and as parish secretary at both Assumption Parish in Matteson, IL and Our Lady of the Pillar Parish. Currently, Sister Lorraine Therese enjoys an ecumenical role serving as parish secretary for Saint Thomas Holy Spirit Parish and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in St Louis.

Everything is Grace! I thank God for all those who graced me with love and support on this wonderful journey—my family, friends, and dedicated music makers! Because I know you, I have been changed for good.”

Sister Stephanie Marie Sanchez, OSF
Sister Stephanie was born and raised in the Ohio Valley town of Westover, WV. She earned a BA in American Studies from Notre Dame College and an MA in Religious Studies from Saint Louis University. Sister’s teaching ministry began in the Archdiocese of St Louis where she served at Our Lady of Guadalupe and St Pius X Schools, as well as being a Religious Education teacher at Immaculate Conception in Augusta, MO. Outside of St Louis, she taught in elementary schools in West Monroe, LA, Oak Creek, WI, and Clyde, OH, and at St Frederick High School in Monroe, LA. Her ministry as elementary principal began at Sacred Heart of Mary, Sister’s childhood parish school. She ministered as principal at Our Lady of the Ridge School in Chicago Ridge, IL for twenty-four years and was a teacher at St Patricia School and St Alexander School in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Sister Stephanie currently ministers as Secretary General of the Franciscan Sisters of her Perpetual Lady.

I stand in awe and humility as I ponder how my life has been gifted with the Lord’s richest blessings: my family, my Franciscan Sisters, my vocation, my friends, and the numerous people with whom I have ministered. I am grateful and carry each person in my heart and in my prayer.

As we grow older, our definition of “young” continues to change. We find that as we reach out to young people to share our knowledge, it is necessary to listen as well. The passion, vision, hope and enthusiasm they share, if we let them, can open our minds and hearts to new views, unrealized pains, and exciting ideas and opportunities.

Knowing this, we look for chances to work with, speak to, and learn from not only children and teens, but also 20- and 30-somethings. We have focused on and invited many young people to share their knowledge and insight through our Franciscan For Earth-Serie events and discussions.

This past March, policy director for Missouri’s Coalition for the Environment Melissa Yacht spoke on the planet’s current state and how “You Can Take Action To Care For Our Common Home.” In February, 2023, we shared the Waterbear’s film “Greta Thunberg: Rebel with a Cause.”

In March of 2022, Ashton Kuehnel, a grassroots organizer for the Missouri Chapter of Sierra Club, & Karisa Gilman Hernandez, community organizer for the Catholic South County Corporation, presented “What’s Next? The Report on Environmental Racism in St Louis.” Dallas Williams, great-niece of our Sister Carolyn, spoke after the film A Fisk the Ground in September of 2021. At that time, she was pursuing a master’s degree in the sphere of soil sciences. Dr. Joshua Holst shared the talk “The Violence of the Global Economy” in March of 2021. In February of the same year, Sarah Hayes Owens, immigrant attorney and advocate (and former student of Sister Cheryl at St Frederick High School) presented “Crossing Paths: Climate Change, Refugees & the American Immigration System.”

May we all continue to elevate the needs of young people, to share our wisdom with them, and to glean knowledge from them, as we work hopefully toward the future.

English Tutoring Project evolves

A beautiful crystal globe was recently on display at Tau Center, a 2022 gift from Help (Immigrant Home English Learning Project) to all the communities who worked to start and continue to support its predecessor, the English Tutoring Project (ETP). In August of 1998, we as part of the Leadership Council of Women Religious, worked in collaboration with the Office of the Mayor of St Louis and the St Louis Archdiocese to create ETP. For 24 years, women religious from various communities have helped children from migrant and immigrant families enrolled in Catholic schools learn the English language. More than 1,800 preschool–8th grade students in at least a dozen schools have benefited.

Until its end in 2022, our Sister Diane Schlueter (top bubble) was a part of the ETP program. She tutored at St Stephen Protomartyr, St Francis Cabrini Academy, and South City Catholic Academy. She worked to start and have continued to support its predecessor, The English Tutoring Project (ETP). In August of 1998, we as part of the Leadership Council of Women Religious, worked in collaboration with the Office of the Mayor of St Louis and the St Louis Archdiocese to create ETP. For 24 years, women religious from various communities have helped children from migrant and immigrant families enrolled in Catholic schools learn the English language. More than 1,800 preschool–8th grade students in at least a dozen schools have benefited.
Martha Zaleski
Sister Mary Ellen Liguz

As you can see, we love building lasting relationships with young people! In 2016, we got to know Emily & her mom Lynn, at our Franciscan Farm through then farm manager Maurice & the Pujols Family Foundation project. They are now valued members of our appeal-stuffing team at Tau Center! Sister Renita was head of the Newman Center at Missouri S&T in Rolla from 1996–2005. There she worked with many students including Rick and Kearney who are now married and live in Indiana. They visited Tau Center with their growing family on a recent trip to St Louis.

KIDS AT TAU CENTER: Kirkwood area students have often helped us with projects, and many joined us for the 2019 FFE Eco Film "Plastic Ocean." A little cutie visits the Annual Nativity Display. We plan to reopen our Hands-On Kids’ Room in 2023. Pre-covid, we held a well-attended t-shirt to tote bag upcycling event for tweens.

The majority of our Sisters were once teachers. Many inspired students to join our community. Sisters Stephanie (Mary Louise) Kowalski (left) and Clementine Strzozewski (right) taught these students at Bishop Creek prior to Sister Renita (our Minister General) and Sister Connie (our current Director of Mission Support) attending the Dieterich, IL, school.

Sister Ellen taught Pablo junior high religion and science at Our Lady of Unity (OLU) in Kansas City, KS. She was delighted to be invited to his Bishop Ward High School graduation ceremony, where he received a full scholarship to the University of Notre Dame. Sister Ellen left OLU in 2020 to serve our community as Assistant Minister.

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Please consider joining the Sisters and other Franciscans For Earth for one or all of our free upcoming educational Eco-Series via Zoom. This fall we will view three documentaries that illustrate how real people are affected by our policies in the U.S. As always, after each Eco-film attendees are invited to stay on line for a brief discussion to share insights, ideas, and opinions. Consider gathering a group at a location with wifi and a screen, or join us from home on your computer or smartphone! SIGN UP NOW using the ‘Events’ portal on our website, www.fscph.org/events and return a watch email containing the Zoom link. Mark it/save it in a safe place. Click that link around 6:15pm Central on the second Tuesday of September, October and November to join us! We will try to send email reminders before each film. We hope to see you!

**Eco-film via Zoom: Current Revolution Tuesday, September 12, 6:30pm Central**

Join us on Tuesday, September 12 at 6:30 in the evening, as we view and discuss the new feature documentary Seeking Asylum: A Mother’s Journey that bears witness to the endless deterrents migrants face when petitioning for asylum in the United States. According to the website https://www.seekingasylumfilm.com, this film documents one woman’s journey as she searches for protection for her kids. Many people view getting to the United States as the final hurdle of the migration journey, but we quickly learn that once in the U.S. the fight has just begun. During one of the most uncertain times in our country’s history, Seeking Asylum documents the challenges asylum seekers face and shows why asylum is an integral part of the American Dream that we cannot afford to lose. This film is by Honeytop Productions, a female owned and operated production company founded in 2020 and specializing in nonfiction storytelling to foster conversations of understanding, compassion, and growth in America through visually stunning and character driven narratives.

**Eco-film via Zoom: The Ants & the Grasshopper Tuesday, October 10, 6:30pm Central**

How do you change someone’s mind about the most important thing in the world? Anita Chitaya is trying to do just that. She has a gift; she can help bring abundant food from dead soil, she can make men fight for gender equality, and she can end child hunger in her village. Now, to save her home from extreme weather, she faces her greatest challenge: persuading Americans that climate change is real. Traveling from Malawi to California to the White House, she meets climate skeptics and despairing farmers. Her journey takes her across all the divisions shaping the US, from the rural-urban divide, to schisms of race, class and gender, to the thinking that allows Americans to believe we live on a different planet from everyone else. It will take all her skill and experience to persuade us that we’re all in this together.

Register to join us on Tuesday, October 10 at 6:30 in the evening, as we gather via Zoom to view and discuss The Ants & the Grasshopper. According to the website https://www.antsandgrasshopper.org, this documentary, ten years in the making, weaves together the most urgent themes of our times: climate change, gender and racial inequality, the gaps between the rich and the poor, and the ideas that groups around the world have generated in order to save the planet.

**Our Franciscan Call to Cherish Life**

Our Franciscan Rule of Life is to live the life of the Gospel. In this spirit we embrace and protect all life. As reflected in this issue we are especially concerned about the quality of life of the young. We have been and will always be educators and care givers in action and spirit. Each day we see the vulnerability of the young on many levels, especially in the fear, grief and loss of precious lives due to gun violence and shootings in our schools, streets, malls, and churches. We also know that across our globe, children are especially vulnerable to the devastation caused by climate change and environmental hazards.

Pope Francis has clearly addressed both areas which create anxiety, fear and mental health issues for the next generation. While urging U.S. Congressional lawmakers to enact gun control measures, Pope Francis said, “A just and lasting peace demands that we confront the problem of gun violence. While citizens of other countries experience mental health issues often blamed for gun violence, we are the only developed country which has allowed it to become an epidemic. We believe our young people deserve a better way.

Pope Francis has also very clearly called for “a profound cultural revolution” to address the environmental crisis destroying God’s creation and disproportionately affecting those who are children and are poor. Our lifestyles of convenience in the US and other developed countries often exploit natural resources and cause the destruction of our ecosystems.

As Franciscan Sisters we stand in solidarity with those affected by gun violence and environmental destruction. We support those who work to enact common sense gun laws and environmental regulations to protect the young and those who are poor. We advocate and act to embrace and protect all life. We invite you to join us.

**Canticle of the Sun**

"Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my Lord Brother Sun, who brings the day, and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water; she is useful, humble, precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; she is more beautiful than all your workmanship and shines with great splendor.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Earth, who brings the day and night, the sun and the moon, the stars, and the winds, through whom you show your wonderful goodness and kindness to us.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Sea, who is so powerful that she can生rise and subside as you order her. She is full of creatures and of everything you have made.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Mountain, through whom you give us water and air, and all sorts of huge animals and beautiful birds.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Flock, through whom you give us wool and skin that we may keep warm.

Be praised, my Lord, through the Ants, who do not till nor sow and bring not forth from the soil but leave the work and the harvest to those who belong to you, O Lord.

Be praised, my Lord, through the Bees, who make sweet honey for us.

Be praised, my Lord, through the Vultures and the Vipers, who are so terrible and yet give all flesh to be eaten.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Louse, through whom you have taught us to be visible for the evil of your people.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Sickness, through whom you have caused us to taste the good things of this life.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Death, through whom you gave to all people the means of testing our works.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister old age.

The Ants & the Grasshopper - a documentary film about a woman who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!

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**Currrent Revolution**

Can renewaBle energy provide more for all? Register to join us via Zoom on Sept 12 at 6:30pm Central

Join us on Tuesday, September 12 at 6:30 in the evening, as we view and discuss three new documentaries from the Current Revolution Series: The Transformation Cannot be Stopped, Nation in Transition, and Workforce Rising. Register today! According to the website https://www. amrrenew.org, American Resilience Project’s new film series tackles the challenge of how the utility, auto, tech, and defense industries can help modernize the aging power grid to make it more secure and responsive to the needs of its users while enhancing environmental performance. With a focus on national security, economic prosperity, and environmental justice, the films, and campaigns will show how the nation can embrace smart policies and investments that support grid modernization through distributed renewable energy generation and the development of an electric vehicle infrastructure. We will also explore the work of the Navajo Nation in the utility supplies of the American Southwest, often to their own peril. Could renewable energy provide opportunities to build an infrastructure that provides more for all?

**SEEKING ASYLUM**

Climate change shouldn’t be political. Register to join us via Zoom on Oct 10 at 6:30pm Central

Join us as we screen and discuss the new feature documentary Seeking Asylum: A Mother’s Journey that bears witness to the endless deterrents migrants face when petitioning for asylum in the United States. According to the website https://www.seekingasylumfilm.com, this film documents one woman’s journey as she searches for protection for her kids. Many people view getting to the United States as the final hurdle of the migration journey, but we quickly learn that once in the US the fight has just begun. During one of the most uncertain times in our country’s history, Seeking Asylum documents the challenges asylum seekers face and shows why asylum is an integral part of the American Dream that we cannot afford to lose. This film is by Honeytop Productions, a female owned and operated production company founded in 2020 and specializing in nonfiction storytelling to foster conversations of understanding, compassion, and growth in America through visually stunning and character driven narratives.

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Thank you for helping us “Plant Hope for the Future”.

The careful planning of Tree Campus Project of https://earthday.org. Global partners work to reforest areas in need of rehabilitation, including some of the world’s communities most at-risk from climate change and environmental degradation. They focus on planting productive species that provide food for local communities and ensure high survival rates.

- We donated to 1,500 trees to help restore wildlife in a priority threatened ecosystem with American Forests. The trees will be planted in places like the Northern Great Lakes, Northern Rockies & Cascades, and Lower Rio Grande Valley. See https://www.americanforests.org.

- Wildfires, insects, and disease have left our precious U.S. National Forests in urgent need of reforestation. You helped us donate 1,300 trees planted by the National Forest Foundation, https://www.nationalforest.org, at a forest in need.

We often share that our Sisters ministered all across the U.S. We committed some of the matching funds to local tree-planting organizations in a few of these special areas:

- Our Sisters Stephanie and Lorraine Therese, (and many deceased Sisters) grew up in Westport, West Virginia. Many others have served there. With that in mind, we sent a matching grant to Area Institute West Virginia. This group teaches young people the importance of trees in protecting rivers and watersheds. Their Community Project provides trees, planting materials, and training to volunteer groups planting at schools, parks, churches, and other public spaces. https://www.cacaponinstitute.org
- Our Sisters Ann Frances, Dolores, and Marie Angela left from El Paso, Texas, and several of our retired Sisters live there. They are helping women and children at the border. With the group Million Trees El Paso, https://milioneTREEs.org, we are helping them plant care for new native and drought tolerant trees across the city, starting in under-served areas.
- Our Sisters Anne Enne and Patricia Ann were both born in Clyde, Ohio, in the Toledo Diocese, and Sister Francine was a school principal there. Tree Toledo (https://treetoledo.org) of Holy Spirit Catholic Community is an all-volunteer social justice ministry dedicated to free them education with a commitment “to what we consider the most important moral issue of our time, mitigation of the effects of environmental degradation” according to their acknowledgment letter.
- Sister Georgette, featured in the Spring/Summer 2022 Franciscan Spirit, is still working in Washington DC, home to Casey Trees. Established in 2001, this nonprofit is committed to restoring and enhancing the tree canopy of the nation’s capitol through planting, education, and working with government and developers to monitor and protect existing trees. https://casetyrees.org/
- Our Sister Julia who manages Christ in the Wilderness, a hermitage retreat center in Abington, Illinois, will be planting. There, individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, are invited to spend time alone in a secluded, natural environment nourishing their minds, bodies and spirits, http://chiewetret.com
- Closer to our St Louis home, we donated to Forest ReLeaf of Missouri. This group is dedicated to planting and growing a resilient canopy across the state. According to https://foretreleaf.org, they operate the only nonprofit, community-assisted, tree nursery in the region as a catalyst for restoring and sustaining our urban forest.
- Locally, we used some of the matching funds to plant trees at Resurrection Cemetery where deceased Sisters are laid to rest, (see a few of our Sisters blessing one of the red bud trees below, center); we are working with Cardinal Ritter Senior Services to have new trees planted at the site of deceased Sisters Live, and we presented a check to Fr Jeff and students at Father McGivney Catholic High School for “Plant hopes for the future” on their new Glen Carbon, Illinois, campus (see below).

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
Let the sea roar and all that fills it;
Let the field exult, and everything in it.
Let the sea roar and all that fills it;
Let the field exult, and everything in it.
Psalm 96, 11-13a

For example, Tree Campus 2020 supports schools and teachers as they bring the benefits of trees to life for students in K-12 classrooms. Read about this program and others at https://www.arborday.org.

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May God bless the trees & all those planting!
Save our common home! To receive this via email, or to be removed from the list, please send your contact information with your specific request to info@fsolph.org

May we see Christ in the eyes of "others" and respond—no matter the color, age, or shape of those eyes.
Lord, we pray for the children of the world experiencing so much inequity, hatred, oppression, poverty & violence—those in U.S. classrooms fearing a mass shooter, those left hungry or fleeing homes made unlivable by climate change, those in areas controlled by gangs and corruption, those whose lives are forever impacted by war.
Holy Spirit, fill these children with hope so their hearts do not harden. May our compassion impel us to work together toward positive action. May leaders be courageous enough to enact lasting change.

Crossing the Rio Grande for asylum following a 2018 trek from Guatemala.

Since the August 2021 Taliban takeover, girls in Afghanistan are banned from public parks & secondary education.

109 empty strollers displayed in Lviv, Ukraine, March 18, 2022—one for each child killed in the Russian invasion.