

courage

FSM

MAGAZINE

Franciscan Sisters of Mary

vision



courageous VISION

Fall 2011



Founded in 1872, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary is a religious congregation of women within the Roman Catholic Church. Committed to standing with the poor and marginalized, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary sponsor the ministries Almost Home, SSM Health Care, and Woman’s Place, and collaborate with four other religious congregations of women in The Sarah Community.

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Councilors:

Irma Kennebeck, FSM

Susan Scholl, FSM

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Message from Rose Dowling, FSM, President Franciscan Sisters of Mary



Welcome to the fall issue of *FSM Magazine*. We are happy to be with you again.

Courageous Vision . . . Don't we all need that these days? All of us have a vision for ourselves, our family, our country. We might not take the time to recognize it, but it is always at work in us. But how courageous is it? Where does a courageous vision come from? Listening to that deep idea, urging, calling inside of us is a good place to start.

As you read these articles, I think you will see how people engaged in various roles in life listen and move on what God is calling them to be or do. We don't often call what we believe to be ordinary choices or ordinary actions a vision, but it probably is—at least part of our vision. It is courageous because if your experience is anything like mine, when God calls, it takes courage to respond!!

Are we listening to our courageous vision for ourselves or our family? Are we listening to the courageous vision we need for our country? Are we willing to listen to the courageous vision we need to have together for the survival of our planet?

Any courageous vision calls for a letting go of things or ego or individualism, etc. That is often what makes it courageous. Can I—can we—do it for a greater good? God depends on us to be courageous and gives us all we need to do so. Step right up and into the courageous vision that is urging you . . . Don't forget, it is God who is doing the urging and God who is supporting you and me.

Rose Mary Dowling, F.S.M.

courageous vision

On September 6, 2011, without fanfare, the 2011–2015 FSM Leadership Team took up its responsibilities for the next four years. Formal installation of the team would take place October 2 at the Fall Gathering of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary.

Of course, solid leadership has little to do with celebration and much more to do with dedication—particularly when you’re working from the stance that leadership is a challenge shared by all members.

Back in June, the 2011 FSM Chapter members chose from among themselves four women to lead the congregation for the coming four years. Three members of



The 2011-2015 Leadership Team: Srs. Irma Kennebeck, Susan Scholl, Rose Dowling, and Sandy Schwartz

the 2007–2011 FSM Leadership Team—

Srs. Rose Dowling, Susan Scholl, and Sandy Schwartz—were called to FSM leadership for a second term.

Sr. Irma Kennebeck, who from 1998 until just recently served as director of Woman’s Place (a ministry of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary), steps up as the fourth member of FSM leadership for the next four years.

A Retrospective Glance

Who knew, back in the summer of 2007 when Srs. Rose, Susan, Marita Anne, and Sandy stepped up to the plate, they would be called to make the tough decisions that would change life so cataclysmically for the Franciscan Sisters of Mary?



The 2007-2011 Leadership Team (clockwise from top left): Srs. Susan Scholl, Rose Dowling, Marita Anne Marrah, and Sandy Schwartz



By the summer of 2008, the handwriting was on the wall: St. Mary of the Angels Convent, the FSM motherhouse since 1929, was no longer viable as a home for the sisters. Dozens of entrances made it hard to ensure the sisters' safety. Aging pipes, equipment, electrical connections, roofs, and plaster demanded repeated costly repairs that often ended up being makeshift at best. Even the swimming pool no longer met new safety codes. Form no longer suited function.

The decision to move wasn't new. In 1998, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary joined with four other St. Louis religious congregations of women to establish a retirement community that would offer a safe, positive place for their sisters and for many others as well—The Sarah Community. The Franciscan Sisters of Mary have always intended that their sisters would ultimately find a home there.

They just hadn't expected it would be sooner rather than later.

In the spirit of shared leadership, Srs. Rose, Susan, Sandy, and Marita Anne headed up teams comprised of FSM and skilled laypeople to manage the move. The Declutter Team organized all FSM to simplify and eliminate unneeded "things" from their lives, making the move much easier. Teams structured a generous plan for necessary severance and sought ways to keep employee morale high during the transition. Teams planned the move of sisters to The Sarah Community, both from the convent and from homes outside the convent, and provided care and counsel to the sisters. Another team explored possibilities for future use of the campus and its buildings. Teams handled communications and the transfer of the FSM Archives.

And the Remembering and Celebrations Team planned events to commemorate endings and celebrate beginnings on this FSM journey.

Following a three-day farewell to the convent in mid-May 2010, the first sisters moved to The Sarah Community.

On July 11, 2011—less than fourteen months later—the last sister moved from the convent.

And soon the FSM administrative offices will move as well. Although phone numbers and the Web site will remain the same, on Decem-

ber 1, 2011, the FSM Leadership Team and the supporting offices will move from



the administration building on the Bellevue campus to their new home:

3221 McKelvey Road, Suite 107
Bridgeton, MO 63044

The new offices are just a stone's throw from the sisters at The Sarah Community.

But the convent is far from empty. Because Kenrick-Glennon Seminary was in need of a temporary home during its extensive renovations, Archbishop Carlson asked the FSM if the seminary might relocate to St. Mary of the Angels during the eighteen months of the seminary's reconstruction. The FSM agreed.



Leaders of Extraordinary Faith and Wisdom

The four women who accepted the torch of leadership in 2007 proved to be women of incredible vision, courage, and dedication. Together, they moved mountains.

“It has been such a privilege to spend four years with Susan, Marita Anne, and Sandy,” Sr. Rose observed. “Each one has her own unique gifts and never a hesitancy to use those gifts in leading the congregation. We always knew we were here for something beyond ourselves. The generosity of these women could never, ever be measured in human terms. And we had fun together—lots of laughs!!”



“Having the opportunity to work with three incredibly talented and gifted women who have the love of the congregation at heart

has truly made these four years fly by and be so enjoyable,” Sr. Sandy agreed. “We were honest and open with one another, challenging each other to grow. I truly value the others' experience and expertise. I also value the honesty, vulnerability, vision and practicality my sisters have brought to this team.”



They found themselves growing in ways they'd never dreamed. “Words cannot express the impact these past four years have had on my personal life,” Sr. Marita Anne said. “This journey deepened my spiritual life,



challenged me to recognize my gifts and find a niche to use them; to reflect on my true self by recognizing the ongoing need to continue my inner growth. Most of all, these four years taught me to be a companion, a presence to my sisters.”

Sr. Rose agreed: “These past four years have brought me to a much deeper relationship with God. I have felt both the presence and the absence of God during these times—both are necessary, I believe, for us to grow. It has not been an

easy four years—we needed to make many hard decisions that affected many people’s lives in our congregation and sponsored ministries. Some days I would wake up wondering, *Have we done the right thing? Have we listened and really heard what God is asking us as a leadership team to do?* I’d bring my doubts to the team and get perspective. Often you just knew it was God saying, ‘Here is what I want you to do, so get on with it.’”



A Pioneer Spirit

The last four years haven’t been easy. But the challenge of each day brought out an incredible FSM spirit among the sisters.

“What happened to us as a congregation amazes me,” Sr. Marita Anne observed. “The preparation we made for the journey, the awareness that we were guided by the Spirit, that we were in a sense pioneers leaving our convent home and many other things of the past and venturing to a new place to be a compassionate presence in a new way. I am so proud of the resilience of my sisters in letting go of the things of the past and moving into the unknown knowing that we were in this together.”

Sr. Rose also found herself inspired by how the sisters “worked through their fears, anger, and resentment about letting go of St. Mary of the Angels—and what they envisioned their life to be



in their elder years. They have found new ways of ministering to each other and to those they now live with and in new volunteer ministries. It has been a privilege to witness to such faith and such love. They know why they gave their lives and to Whom they have given it.”



The past four years, with all their accomplishments and challenges, also nurtured wisdom that the new leadership team will carry forward into the coming term. As Sr. Susan summed it up, “Trust one another, trust the sisters, and trust in God and the Spirit! Over these four years I’ve grown in trusting others, letting go and letting others do their part. Now, I’m looking forward to working around the mission focus on compassionate care of creation.”

Srs. Rose, Susan, Marita Anne, and Sandy—The Franciscan Sisters of Mary thank you for four years of immense courage, deep wisdom, hard work, and incredible grace under pressure. You have led the community surely through unimagined challenges and heartbreaking decisions—always with kindness, concern, even laughter. We are grateful.

A New Presence on the Team

Sr. Irma Kennebeck brings to the 2011–2015 Leadership Team the wisdom of her rich and varied experiences. Her ministry “has exposed me to diverse people who have taught me life lessons that stretched my mind, opened my heart to compassion, and moved me with a passion for justice. . . . I am passionate about finding, recognizing, and celebrating the goodness amidst the brokenness and pain in creation—and compassionately using my power to engage the creative healing process.”



Sr. Irma has a deep respect for her teammates. “The way they navigated the transition process for the FSM has earned them my profound respect, gratitude, and trust. They’ve gained much wisdom in the process—and that will help with what still needs to be done. My teammates have a profound grasp of the Franciscan

Sisters of Mary—who we are and what we can be about. They want the best for us all, and I know they will be working to empower each sister, to ensure a secure future for all, and to assess our ministries and hand over those we can no longer sponsor.”

Onward to the Future!

A new Leadership Team ushers in a new era in the FSM journey.

In early April of this year, FSM Chapter members set a new FSM mission and focus that will direct the next four years.

The mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary is to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, healing Jesus.

Flowing from our mission, we focus the power of our intention on compassionate care of creation in collaboration with others.

Certainly the Leadership Team will be deeply involved in moving forward this mission and focus. But mission and focus are signposts directing the way. The challenges they will face still remain to be seen. As Sr. Rose put it, “Over the past four years, 85 percent of what we did was totally unknown to us when we took office!”

The time is fast approaching when the FSM presence at the lovely convent and grounds on Bellevue will be only a sweet memory. And no doubt the coming four years—and the years beyond as well—will have their share of hard work and difficult decisions. But they will also have great joy. The FSM know that their presence—not in a building but on the journey—is their call. And in listening to and opening themselves to God’s call, wherever it leads them, they carry on the legacy of their brave foundress, Mother Odilia: “Continue courageously for the love of God!”



"it's in your hands"

On August 1, 2011, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary and SSM Health Care celebrated a historic milestone when Sr. Mary Jean Ryan missioned Bill Thompson as president and chief executive officer of SSM Health Care, a role she had fulfilled with exceptional grace and vision for 25 years as SSM HC's first president and CEO. Sr. Mary Jean will continue to serve the health care system as Chair of the Board. Carrying forward the FSM legacy of courageous vision, Bill Thompson, who for the past two years has served as president and chief operating officer of SSM Health Care, becomes the first layperson ever to serve in the key leadership role of the health care group begun by Mother Odilia Berger in 1872.



Bill Thompson, Mary Jean Ryan, FSM, and Susan Scholl, FSM

The ceremony took place in the May Center on the SSM DePaul Health Center campus in Bridgeton.

Sr. Rose Dowling, president of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, said, "To all the FSM, this is an incredibly significant day—and I say to all the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, thanks to all of us, and well done!" She assured Mr. Thompson that "The Franciscan Sisters of Mary have every confidence in you, that you will continue our mission as well as giving life and depth to the mission and value of SSM Health Care."



Rose Dowling, FSM

Sr. Mary Jean Ryan said that she has worked with Bill Thompson for three decades and knows his unwavering commitment to quality improvement. As a result of their conversations, they helped build a health care system "that is passionate about quality, passionate about the legacy."

"I have every confidence that he will call forth the wisdom, talent, creativity, and good will of the people within this organization to take SSM Health Care to new

levels of patient care,” she said. “So today, while I am sad to be leaving this rich and amazing job because it has enriched my life in ways I could never have imagined, I am so pleased to be missioning Bill Thompson as only the second CEO in SSM Health Care’s history.”

Sr. Mary Jean conferred on Mr. Thompson the responsibilities of carrying on the mission and legacy of Mother Odilia Berger and all the sisters who laid the foundations for SSM Health Care and lived out that vision of courage.



Bill Thompson

Bill Thompson addressed the assembled FSM and the staff and executives of SSM Health Care. He promised “to nurture the FSM treasure, to make sure that we care as the sisters always have.

“At SSM Health Care, our legacy of caring for patients, often at the most vulnerable times in their lives, is not only profound, but I would venture to call it sacred. Today I ask to join you in this very special healing ministry.”

In her new role Sr. Mary Jean will serve as chair of the following SSM Boards of Directors:

- Corporate Board, SSM Health Care Corporation
- SSM Health Care—St. Louis
- SSM Health Care of Wisconsin, Inc.
- SSM Health Care of Oklahoma, Inc.
- SSM Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center
- St. Mary’s Good Samaritan
- St. Francis Hospital and Health Services, Maryville, Mo.
- St. Mary’s Health Center, Jefferson City, Mo.

Congratulations to Sr. Mary Jean for 25 years of exceptional leadership, courage, and vision, and God’s blessings on Bill Thompson and all those who are part of the SSM Health Care System as they strive to carry forward the FSM legacy of excellent and compassionate care for those in need!



Rose Dowling, FSM, Mary Jean Ryan, FSM, and Susan Scholl, FSM

a journey of remembrance



In late August 2011, nine Franciscan Sisters of Mary traveled to Maryville, Missouri, visiting once again the former motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville at Mount Alverno, as well as other sites and places of the heart in the town in northwestern Missouri.

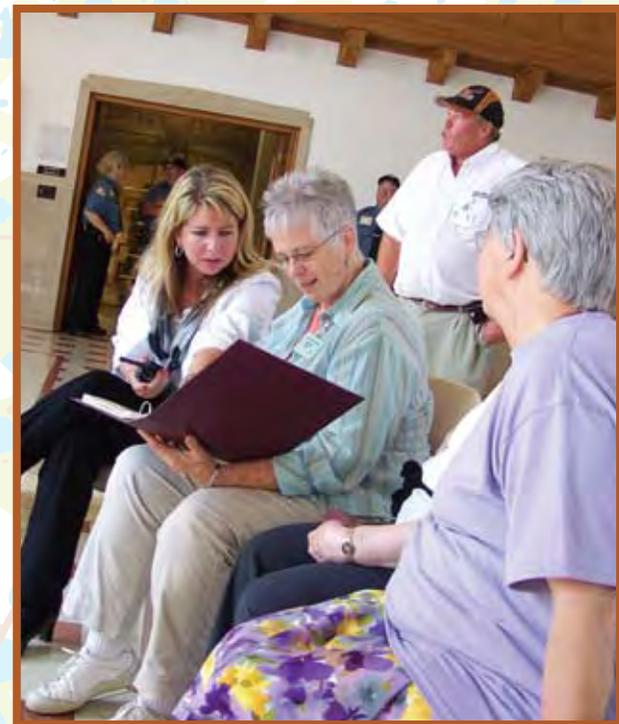
A Little Background . . .

In May 2011, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary received a letter from Warden Joe Ledbetter of the Maryville Treatment Center (MTC) inviting them to come for the rededication of the Seventh Station of the Cross in the chapel.



When the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville reunited with the Sisters of St. Mary nearly 25 years ago, with truly courageous vision they left their motherhouse, Mount Alverno Convent, which overlooks Maryville. In 1995 Missouri purchased the convent and its grounds to provide a minimum security prison for men.

Besides statues and some of the stained glass from the convent, the sisters hoped to take with them the fourteen Stations of the Cross mosaics in the chapel. When they tried to remove a mosaic—the seventh station, Jesus Falls the Second Time—they ended up with a huge heap of tiny gold and colored tesserae and chunks of plaster. Sr. Sandy Schwartz brought the remains with her and attempted for months to reconstruct the mosaic, finally conclud-



ing that it needed professional help. The FSM sent the remains of the mosaic back to MTC, where it lay in the attic for fifteen years.

In fall 2010, an MTC offender who is also an artist asked to examine the ruined mosaic. From November 2010 to mid-February 2011, he worked to re-create the station. He began by studying the other thirteen stations, then sketching what the seventh station might look like, as no photographs of the missing station were available. He cut and placed tiles, carefully reproducing the drawing he had done. When he was finished, the mosaic was reset in its original place in the chapel, and the other thirteen stations were repaired and the frames polished.



The artist was released from Maryville Treatment Center earlier this year and so was not present at the rededication. But his work on the mosaic remains a great testimony to his skill, patience, and vision.

Return to Mount Alverno

The tall bell tower and the convent and its buildings on the hillside in the distance are the images of memory.

When the sisters arrived at Maryville Treatment Center, each was processed through the security gates, exchanging a picture ID for a green visitor badge. They were welcomed by Warden Joe Ledbetter, then all gathered in the center's visiting room.



Leading the FSM on the tour were: Warden Joe Ledbetter, Deputy Warden of Operations Sonny Collins, Deputy Warden of Offender Management Alana Boyles, Senior Office Support Assistant Kelly Parshall, Clinical Director Gawaine Banks, and P&P District Administrator Tom Seipel. Lieutenant Jeremy Zeigel and Correction Officers Kevin Welch,

Don O'Riley, and Marilyn Miller accompanied the group. Vicki Stevens took photos. A special grace—volunteer Joanne Seipel Townsend, who had attended Mount

Alverno Academy and had enjoyed having Srs. Mary Jo Schieber and Marge O’Gorman as teachers, also took the tour.



So much remains the same. In the academy, the library is still the library—though with different selections; and the classrooms are still used for learning. The warden’s office was once the principal’s office. In the convent building up on “Challenge Hill,” the lovely terrazzo floors and the rich wood still shine; even the original intercom system near the main office remains. Outside, the administrators have tried to keep the trees and the beautiful garden areas just the same.



The chapel was stunning. While the stained glass, the crucifix on the main altar, and the chairs are all gone, the soaring lightness and airiness of the space and the beauty of the marble remain. The fourteen mosaics sparkled in the sunlight of that August day. The Seventh Station stood in its place once more.

Warden Ledbetter introduced Troy Ragan, Physical Plant supervisor, who had helped the artist with

the reconstruction, procuring additional resources and tools as needed and offering encouragement. And the hosts presented the FSM with a binder filled with pictures of the stations and the story of the process in rebuilding the station.



The polished brass chapel doors leading outside have a special story; they’re opened only to release an offender at the end of treatment. Above them a plaque reads: “Through these doors made of brass / A better class of men shall pass.”



The stories and the memories flowed all morning. Warden Ledbetter had hoped to gain more background about the convent before it became Maryville Treatment Center, and

after three hours all came away with a better understanding of the past and present of this lovely place.



For the administrators and staff of Maryville Treatment Center, their work with the offenders is a ministry. The men are part of either a 6- or a 12-month program designed to help them transition back into society. Some are finishing much longer sentences here. At Maryville they deal with their addictions, learn responsibility and accountability, and gain the skills they'll need to find a job once they're out. In this facility they are held accountable—some of them for the first time—for fol-

lowing the many rules and living within a hierarchy of authority. They learn the discipline—and the self-discipline—that will help them succeed on the outside.

A healing ministry. Just as the sisters who once lived there worked to heal both the body and the spirit of those for whom they cared, those who serve at MTC devote their lives to healing these men and offering them a new life. And so the spirit of the brave women who founded Mount Alverno lives on in these men and women whose courageous vision is helping these men rebuild their lives. 🌱

a sobering note

The Maryville Treatment Center—as well as Conception Abbey, the Benedictine Monastery at Clyde, and numerous farms and homes in the area—suffered heavy damage from the storm that struck Thursday evening, August 18. For miles around crops were utterly destroyed by the hail and 50- to 80-mph winds that struck the area—corn left brown and battered, the leaves on bean plants so tattered as to be unrecognizable as crops. The windows in the MTC library were shattered and the computers ruined by the rains,

and the roof of the third floor dormitory was so damaged that 64 offenders had to be moved to the gym. Roofs and walls of homes throughout the area were severely damaged. Conception Abbey lost windows and was without power from Thursday evening through Sunday. The sisters at Clyde had to be moved. The devastation throughout Nodaway County was numbing.

Please keep these people—as well as the offenders at MTC working on a second chance at life—in your prayers.

The Franciscan Sisters of Mary are on the move!

Effective December 1, 2011,
the FSM administrative offices, including

The Leadership Team

Finance

Public Relations and Development

Justice Ministry

Health Coordinator

will be in our new home at:

**3221 McKelvey Road, Suite 107
Bridgeton, MO 63044**

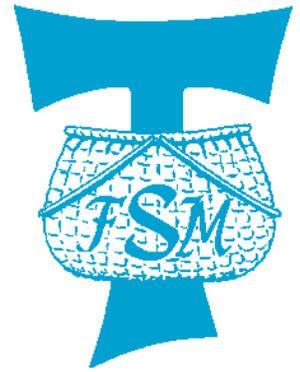
Our phone numbers and Web site will
remain the same.

We look forward to staying in touch with you!

congratulations
to Our 2011 FSM *jubilarians!*

50 years
in religious life
GOLDEN

Mary Joan Schieber



60 years
in religious life
DIAMOND

Marie Michel Crooks



Mary Ann Linhoff



Judith Ann Moyers



Donna Marie Steinman



Rebecca Wright



70 years
in religious life
CARNELIAN

Nora Therese Buckley



Agnes Stottmann



sisters in the spotlight

Sisters in the Spotlight

Doris Ashcraft, FSM, received the Franciscan Federation Award Friday, July 29, in Milwaukee, Wis. The theme was “Becoming a Sacred Flame: Francis, Clare and John’s Gospel”; Sr. Doris was honored for faithfully living the FSM charism to be “the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, and healing Jesus.”



Marie Michel Crooks, FSM, was named Mission Alive Resident for September at The Sarah Community. She was honored for her efforts in recycling and caring for others.



Antona Ebo, FSM, was featured in an August *Catholic News Service* article on the opening of the national monument to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Washington, D.C. She visited the monument July 27, a month before it opened, at a special preview for National Black Sisters’ Conference members. She also traveled this spring to Portland, Ore., to speak at De La Salle High School. In October she visited the University of Portland, Ore.; the Catholic university showed the film *Sisters of Selma*, and Sr. Antona spoke afterward.



Mary Joan Meyer, FSM, had six short poems published in the 2011 issue of *Cantos: A Literary and Arts Journal* of Missouri Baptist University. Sr. Mary Joan is also publishing her fourth calendar (2012) featuring her nature photography and insightful haiku.

Lenita Moore, FSM, professed final vows as a Franciscan Sister of Mary June 1.



Angela Murdaugh, FSM, made opening remarks at the 56th Association of Certified Nurse Midwives Convention in San Antonio in May. A story by Sr. Angela was also featured in the book *These Hands: Wisdom from Midwives*, edited by Geraldine Simkins, an anthology of memoirs from 25 experienced midwives.



Evelyn Marie Peterman, FSM, made a pilgrimage to Medjugorje in May.



Mary Jean Ryan, FSM, on May 25 received SSM Health Care’s highest honor, the lifetime achievement SSEmmy. The SSEmmy recognizes people for everyday actions that reveal the healing presence of God. Senior Vice President for Human Resources Steve Barney, who presented the award,



said Sr. Mary Jean constantly pushed the entire SSM HC system “to deliver care breathtakingly better than it has ever been done before.” Also at the SSM Leadership Conference, Sr. Mary Jean received a proclamation from Missouri Governor Jay Nixon honoring her exceptional service.

Sr. Mary Jean was featured in the August 21 *New York Times* article “Nun Exemplifies Shift in Catholic Health Care.”



For 25 years Sr. Mary Jean headed SSM Health Care. As she retires, many SSM entities have chosen to honor her, ensuring her name and legacy will remain at their facilities.

- SSM St. Mary’s Health Center, Richmond Heights, Mo., is dedicating the front garden of the new entrance/streetscape to Sr. Mary Jean.
- SSM DePaul Health Center, Bridgeton, Mo., has named the outpatient waiting room “The Sister Mary Jean Ryan Outpatient Waiting Room.”

- St. Mary’s Hospital, Madison, Wis., has named the hospital’s conference center in Sr. Mary Jean’s honor.
- SSM St. Clare Health Center, Fenton, Mo., has dedicated the arbor area of its Waterfall Courtyard to Sr. Mary Jean.
- SSM St. Joseph Hospital—West, Lake Saint Louis, Mo., is renaming its chapel in her honor.
- Good Samaritan Regional Health Center, Mount Vernon, Ill., has named a walking trail the Sister Mary Jean Ryan Health and Fitness Trail.
- St. Mary’s Hospital, Centralia, Ill., has dedicated a stone bench in the St. Francis Garden to Sr. Mary Jean.
- St. Anthony Hospital, Oklahoma City, Okla., has dedicated the Grand Room in the Rapp Foundation Conference Center to her.



In October, Sr. Mary Jean received the 2011 Walter L. Hurd Executive Award, given by the Asia Pacific Quality Organization.

Mary Paul Schmidt, FSM, received a



distinguished service award June 29 at the SSM DePaul Health Center’s Volunteer Luncheon for her 7,257 hours of volunteer service with SSM HC facilities.

Sr. Mary Cecilia Pribil

November 6, 1909 – April 22, 2011

A true Franciscan who delighted in creation's wonders, Sr. Cecilia ("Celie") lived a life of simplicity and grace, caring for others. A respected leader, in the mid-1980s she worked toward reunification of the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville and the Sisters of St. Mary.

Christina Lee Pribil was born November 6, 1909, near Hennessey, Okla., to Joseph J. and Antonie M. (Vaverka) Pribil. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville September 10, 1929, welcomed by Mother Augustine Giesen herself. She professed final vows May 8, 1935.

She was OR supervisor at St. Anthony's, Oklahoma City, Okla. (1938–1964), then assistant administrator and administrator. She was assistant administrator also at Alverno Heights Hospital, Guthrie, Okla; St. Elizabeth Hospital, Hannibal, Mo.; and the new St. Francis Hospital, Maryville.

In 1975 she was elected to leadership, then in 1976 became superior general for three years.

During reunification of the OSF and SSM, Sr. Cecilia handled the sale of Mount Alverno's furnishings. She moved to St. Louis in 1999.

A rare "pearl" jubilarian (80 years), after retiring Sr. Cecilia continued to enjoy life, providing pastoral care, volunteering for Birthright and for St. Francis Hospital, visiting people in nursing homes, walking, gardening, crocheting and reading. In

later years she collected donations for the Franciscan Connection in south St. Louis.

On April 22, 2011, God welcomed this gracious leader, sister, and friend into the eternal joy of heaven.

"In All Things, Give Thanks!"



Sr. Gertrude Fruchtl

October 27, 1904 – May 16, 2011

Sr. Gertrude knew the value of lifelong learning. As director of Saint Louis University's Medical Technology program she earned the respect of colleagues, revising curriculum and initiating a continuing education program.

Gertrude Frances was born October 27, 1904, in St. Elmo, Ill., to Martin L. and Mary G. (Lange) Fruchtl. She entered the Sisters of St. Mary April 6, 1929 (Sr. Martin Mary) and professed final vows September 30, 1934.

She earned her B.S. (1943) and M.S. (1953) in Medical Technology from Saint Louis University. She supervised the laboratory and taught medical technology at St. Mary's, St. Louis; St. Mary's, Kansas City; St. Mary's, Madison, Wis.; St. Mary's, Jefferson City; Arcadia Valley, Ironton; and Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center.

From 1962 to 1972 she chaired Saint Louis University's Medical Technology program. She was selected as delegate to the 1968 International Society of Medical Technologists conference in Helsinki. She received many professional awards and honors, but especially cherished SLU's Alumni Award (1976).

After retiring she served as a community director, co-directed the prayer program, and helped with liturgy. She loved to play the accordion, paint, crochet, read mysteries, and travel. She learned to play the organ. A great storyteller, she was also a perceptive and caring listener.

On May 16, 2011, after more than 80 years in religious life, Sr. Gertrude left this world to join her beloved God.

"I Have Called You by Name" (Isaiah 43:2)



Sr. Veronica Boss

June 28, 1920 – May 27, 2011

Sr. Veronica Boss was a master cook and baker. Her beautiful cakes were legendary. She loved to entertain. In Kansas City she entered—and often won—many food competitions.

Born Veronica Bertha Boss June 28, 1920, on a farm in Morrison, Mo., she was ninth of ten children of Charles and Hedwig (Thuli) Boss. She entered the Sisters of St. Mary on March 19, 1938, receiving the name Sr. Mary Cletus; she professed final vows September 30, 1943. She earned bachelor's (1949) and master's (1951) degrees in Dietetics from Saint Louis University.

Sr. Veronica was a dietitian, cook, and baker at St. Mary's and Firmin Desloge, St. Louis. She served as director of Dietetics at St. Mary's, Madison, Wis.; at Firmin Desloge; at St. Mary's, Kansas City; at the motherhouse; and at Mount St. Rose, where she helped establish Lemay Meals on Wheels.

In June 1974 she moved to Texas, serving at a retreat house in San Juan and providing dietary consultation for healthcare facilities until 1980. She was dietitian for Su Clinica Familiar, Raymondville, until 1983. From 1984 until she retired in 1995, she served at Su Clinica Familiar in Brownsville and Holy Family Services in Weslaco.

She loved her years in Texas. She was a parish lector and brought communion to the sick. She enthusiastically promoted the Cursillo movement.

After retiring, she provided a compassionate presence for the elder sisters, working crafts, writing letters, reading to sisters, and helping feed those who needed help. She moved to The Sarah Community in May 2011.



On Friday, May 27, 2011, Sr. Veronica answered God's call to join the eternal banquet in heaven.

"How Can I Keep from Singing?"

Sr. Annella Marie Orf

September 3, 1933 – July 4, 2011

Elvira Mary Ann Orf was born September 3, 1933, in Josephville, Mo., the oldest of eight children born to Paul Joseph and Hilda Josephine (Meyer) Orf.

In October 1950 Elvira began working with Sr. Mary Agneta Nathe, a friend of her grandmother, at St. Mary's Hospital, St. Louis. On August 2, 1951, she entered the Sisters of St. Mary, receiving the name Sr. Annella Marie and making final vows February 11, 1957. She earned associate's degrees in Applied Science from Forest Park Community College (1978) and Dietetic Technology from Florissant Valley Community College (1982).

She worked at St. Mary's as a nurses' assistant. For nine months (1958–1959) she cared for tuberculosis patients at Mount St. Rose; she then served at the motherhouse for five years. From 1964 to 1975 she cared for patients and helped in dietary at St. Mary's Ringling Manor, Baraboo, Wis.

Back at the motherhouse, she served in dietary from 1975 to 1981. From 1983 to 1998 she served breakfast to Radiology patients at St. Mary's Hospital. She also greeted patients and offered hospitality, helping guests and patients find their destinations. For many years she served as chauffeur and postmistress for the sisters.

Her favorite devotion was the rosary. She loved crossword puzzles, solitaire, and word games; she was a devoted St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan. She was Franciscan Sister of Mary for nearly sixty years.

On Monday evening, July 4, 2011, after a long bout with illness, she left this world to join her beloved Creator.

"Safely Home"



Sr. Mary Bernetta Armstrong

June 12, 1929 – July 31, 2011

Bernadine Armstrong was born in Kansas City, Kan., on June 12, 1929, one of four daughters born to Thomas and Nellie (Snow) Armstrong. Her mother died in a tragic fire when Bernadine was 4; her father died in an accident when she was 9. Her father's cousin raised the girls in Kansas City, Mo.

She entered the Sisters of St. Mary July 14, 1947, taking her twin's name, Bernetta, as her religious name. On September 8, 1953, Sr. Mary Bernetta professed final vows.

For many years she made a comfortable home for sisters living in her community, first at St. Mary's Hospital (1947–1956) and Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center (1956) in St. Louis, then at St. Mary's in Kansas City, Mo. (1956–1963) and St. Francis Hospital in Blue Island, Ill. (1963–1969).

In 1969 she returned to Kansas City, serving in St. Mary's Hospital's linen service and Central Service, then as an aide in Radiology until 1986. She worked at the motherhouse and at the day care center at St. Mary's Hospital; she also volunteered in Respiratory Therapy at Cardinal Glennon and in Obstetrics at St. Mary's.

Even after retiring in 1994, she kept busy, volunteering for Nurses for Newborns, at Cardinal Ritter Adult Day Care Center, and at St. Mary's, compiling information for new mothers. She accompanied sisters to doctors' appointments. She loved knitting, making afghans, taking walks, reading, and working puzzles.

On July 31, 2011, after serving her Lord faithfully

as a sister for more than 64 years, Sr. Mary Bernetta slipped away to her eternal reward.

"My Soul Magnifies My God"



Sr. Mary Ellen Sloan

March 19, 1927 – September 7, 2011

For more than sixteen years (1969–1985) Sr. Mary Ellen Sloan led the Sisters of St. Mary with grace and vision, first as Vicar General, then as Superior General.

She was born March 19, 1927, on a farm near Hoopeston, Ill., to John H. and Ellen (Colgan) Sloan. In 1949 she earned a bachelor's in food and nutrition from St. Mary's College in South Bend, Ind., then completed a year's internship at Saint Louis University.

She entered the SSM August 2, 1951 (Sr. Mary John Ellen) and professed final vows February 11, 1957. She completed a master's in Dietetics from Saint Louis University (1955). Until 1969 she served in Dietetics at St. Mary's Hospital, St. Louis, ultimately as department head.

Throughout her leadership years, she helped implement changes encouraged by Vatican II. In 1982, as part of the International Conference of Superiors General of the Third Order of St. Francis, she helped revise the Third Order Rule and submit it to Pope John Paul II. While in Rome, she and Sr. Cornelia Immegart, General Superior of the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville, began the discussion of reunification, which became reality August 2, 1987.

She helped develop a plan allowing laypeople to serve in leadership of the health care system, leading to the establishment in 1986 of SSM Health Care. She served as regional vice president and senior system executive of SSM Health Care.

Sr. Mary Ellen was a lifelong Cardinals baseball and Notre Dame football fan. She was a gracious

hostess who loved to cook, bake, and entertain.

On September 7, 2011, she joined her Beloved in heaven.

"Rejoice and Be Glad!"



Sr. Mary Leo Rita Volk

May 6, 1914 – September 11, 2011

Her groundbreaking work in cytogenetics—the study of genetic variations at the chromosomal level—earned her the name “Sr. Mary Chromosome”—and colleagues’ deep respect. She developed techniques for growing and analyzing chromosomes that set the standard for researchers in the Human Genome Project and other cytogenetic research.

Virginia Clare Volk was born May 6, 1914, in Ethan, S. Dak., to Leo and Minnie (Meise) Volk. She entered the Sisters of St. Mary September 20, 1931; she professed final vows June 29, 1937. She was a sister for 80 years—a pearl jubilarian.

She earned her bachelor’s (1944) and master’s (1950) in Medical Technology from Saint Louis University. She served at St. Mary’s Hospital, St. Louis, as medical technologist, then as lab supervisor there and at St. Mary’s Hospital, Madison, Wis. She was assistant professor and clinical professor of Medical Technology at Saint Louis University.

In the early 1970s she was given a research laboratory at St. Mary’s Hospital for her cytogenetic research. Her brilliant intellect, precise techniques, and humble commitment won her the respect of colleagues worldwide.

Her impressive list of publications and presentations goes on for pages. She belonged to the American Society of Human Genetics, the Association of Cytogenetic Technologists, and other prestigious groups. But she remained always a humble person whose pioneering research was intimately bound to her deep faith and spirituality.

After retiring in 1991, she began a new ministry of painting; her favorite subjects were St. Francis of Assisi, the St. Louis Arch, and flowers. She moved to The Sarah Community in July 2011.

On Sunday, September 11, 2011, Sr. Leo Rita was called to her heavenly reward.

“God Is Faithful”



Sr. Marie Weiss

September 18, 1920 – October 9, 2011

Though she was tiny in stature, Sr. Marie Weiss’s kindness and courage embraced all around her. Sensitive and astute, she could assess a situation instantaneously and come up with a solution that went straight to the heart of the matter.

Adele Rita Weiss was born September 18, 1920, in St. Louis to George J. and Louise M. (Ehrhold) Weiss. She entered the Sisters of St. Mary July 22, 1947 (Sr. Perpetua Marie) and professed final vows February 11, 1953. While at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital, she shortened her name to Sr. Marie because children couldn’t say “Perpetua.”

She studied commerce and finance at Saint Louis University. She worked two years in the business office at St. Mary’s Hospital, then served as postulant mistress in the motherhouse novitiate from 1955 to 1966.

From 1966 to 1980 she was clinic supervisor at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center. She loved the children—she saw the effects of drugs and lead poisoning, and how both poor and rich were devastated by the threats to their beloved children.

In 1980 she moved to Arcadia Valley Hospital, Pilot Knob, Mo., to set up the personnel department, serving there eight years. She loved the beautiful hills of Arcadia Valley.

She served as executive director of the motherhouse from 1988 until she retired in 1994. After retiring, she continued to volunteer. In August 2010 she moved to The Sarah Community.

Deeply devoted to Mary, our Mother of Perpetual Help, Sr. Marie loved to walk the convent grounds praying the rosary with her dear friend Sr. Dorothy Rufkahr.

On Sunday, October 9, 2011, Sr. Marie answered God’s call to everlasting life.

“Rejoice!”



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— Marianne Williamson, *A Return to Love*

* Marianne Williamson, *A Return to Love* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 165.



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serving, compassionate, healing Jesus.*

*Flowing from our Mission,
we focus the power of our intention
on compassionate care of Creation
in collaboration with others.*