

Spring 2011



# F S M

MAGAZINE

Franciscan Sisters of Mary

## Here I Am, Lord!

*answering a new call*



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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*FSM Magazine* is published twice yearly by the Public Relations and Development Department. To obtain more information or make a correction to our mailing list, please contact us at (314) 768-1824 or e-mail us at [info@fsmonline.org](mailto:info@fsmonline.org).

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## Table of Contents

<b>Message from the President.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A New Call.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Sisters in the Spotlight .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Angela Murdaugh, FSM: Texan Head to Foot ....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Transitions.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Gifts Received .....</b>	<b>18</b>



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



**Welcome to the Spring issue of *FSM Magazine!*** It is wonderful to see new life coming forth, inviting us to stop and look at what is new in us that is trying to come to life. In this issue of *FSM Magazine* you will be peeking into the new call some of our sisters have received as we continue the shift in our FSM life.

All of us—I mean *ALL OF US*—are being asked to expand, not contract. When we look at what is happening in our society and in our world today, for sure the Spirit is asking us to **EXPAND . . .** expand our thinking, our way of talking with and about others, our way of seeing our responsibility to all creation, our willingness to include those who are different in political or religious beliefs, sexual orientation, etc.

Just as we know from science that the universe is expanding, we too are being called in this time to expand as we have never done before. It's scary for us to move away from what is known, familiar—from my beliefs, my ideas, my opinions. But there is no room for contracting. The Spirit calls us anew constantly. We only need to look at how the One who taught us how to expand did it. Jesus was totally inclusive; all were welcomed by Him so they could experience how expansive God is. Not everyone accepted, but all were invited and welcomed.

Today we are called to expand not our “things” or our “toys” but our thinking, our way of seeing the world, creation, and those who are different from us. This expansion, the new call of our time, is on the inside of each one of us, encouraging us to become more welcoming, present, hospitable to all of God's creation. This has always been the message of those who understood the Expansive Creator who brought creation into being and continues to expand it today.

The seeds for the new call are in you as they are in me. What is your call in this time of change and transition? This springtime, what new seeds in you are being invited by the Sun of the Spirit to transform into new buds and flowers of inclusivity, openness to different views, opinions, etc.?

Celebrate and embrace this ability in you to **EXPAND** in the presence of the Spirit!

*Rose Dowling, F.S.M.*

# a new call

# A New Call

Who knew?

When our sisters entered the congregation, they *knew* the life they were called to lead—a life of service, spiritual and physical discipline, hard work, long hours.



*Sr. Mary Ellen Lewis*



*Sr. Mary Leo Rita Volk*

They would don a habit and live within the enclave of a convent. They were nurses, dietitians, medical technologists, physical therapists, administrators, accountants, cooks, housekeepers. The rules were clear, the path straight.

And then—the world changed. And so did vowed life. Vatican II invited religious communities to open themselves anew, to move forward in faith into uncharted paths at the Spirit’s beckoning. Each sister was challenged to attend to the still, small voice calling her to use her unique gifts to make a difference in the world.

The Franciscan Sisters of Mary have remained ever faithful to their charism “to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate and healing Jesus.” But *how* they live out that charism—the unique gift that the FSM offer to the world—has changed to reflect the needs of the time.

“We live in a time that calls us . . . to expand—to fling ourselves out into life with creativity and zest. We are invited to be sparked by the primordial fire from which we came. We ourselves are to become flames of love that burn away fear and bring the warmth of compassion to all creation. Our expansion will require that we embrace our gifts and capaci-

The Franciscan Sisters of Mary have remained ever faithful to their charism “to be the pres-



ties for co-creativity as well as reject anything that works against what calls us to life.”<sup>1</sup>

And so, at a time of life when many people plan to kick back and relax, to let life contract a bit, many of our sisters are hearing—and embracing—a new call, a call to participate even more fully, creatively, and vibrantly in life.

Let’s explore how a few of our sisters have chosen to answer a new call to live out the FSM vision.

## Companion on the Journey

In Sr. Mary Joan Meyer’s place at The Sarah Community is a lovely throw with the FSM logo and words of the charism: *To be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate and healing Jesus*. “It’s a call I see every morning and every night,” she said.

As Spiritual Care Facilitator on the FSM Life Care Team at The Sarah Community and Spiritual Life Coordinator for the sisters at the convent, Sr. Mary Joan said, “My main call is to be a companion on the journey.”



Sr. Mary Joan Meyer



Srs. Mary Joan Meyer and Josephine Huhmann

Her life today—a far cry from her younger years as a physical therapist—is a great fit.

“I’ve always felt this attraction to ministry with elders. I find the face of God in them—a special wisdom and grace in that population. When I minister to them, I find that I gain as much as I’m giving.”

A few years ago, when the leadership team saw a need for a pastoral spiritual life coordinator for the elder sisters, Sr. Mary Joan responded. And as sisters have moved to The Sarah Community,

she expanded her role to care for the FSM living there too.

Sr. Mary Joan crafts events to nurture the total life of the sisters—body, mind, emotions, and spirit. She has given sessions on guided imagery in prayer and on discernment, choosing topics of interest to the sisters. She also encourages the sisters

<sup>1</sup> Judy Cannato, *Radical Amazement: Contemplative Lessons from Black Holes, Supernovas, and Other Wonders of the Universe* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books, 2006), p. 136.



Srs. Mary Joan Meyer and Eleanor Krieg

to attend events and programs sponsored by The Sarah Community.

But her ministry goes much deeper. “I do one-to-one pastoral visits with the sisters,” Sr. Mary Joan said. “I give priority to the sisters in skilled nursing, getting over often to see them. So often they are sitting alone in their rooms, keeping their concerns in their hearts. I try to be a companion for them. I listen to them, listening especially for their particular concerns and needs. Then we pray together. And then I give them a hug. Human touch is so important.”

Her ministry is one of presence and compassion. “Pastoral ministry is listening with the heart,” she said. “It’s important to be a presence. So often you’ll get little requests. Things that are simple for you to do—making a call, fixing a little problem. Small needs—but they’re big to them. And your presence and help mean that someone is concerned about their needs.”

And so she takes care of the small needs. “When you can take care of their small needs, their spirits are lifted—you can see their bodies relax.”

Sr. Mary Joan also has the grace to receive. “Mutuality is important too,” she observed. “They need to experience *their* role.” And she’s grateful for their prayers.

Caregivers need renewal, and for Sr. Mary Joan, her photography and haiku are a kind of centering prayer. “As a Francis-

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Each sister was challenged to attend to the still, small voice calling her to use her unique gifts to make a difference in the world.

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can, I’m aware of God’s presence in all creation, and through my photos and my poems I try to bring that presence to others, to make others aware of God’s presence in creation.

“I always try to take some time to go out with my camera. In capturing the moment, I become attuned

to God; I perceive the connections among all things. When I take that time for quiet contemplation, I find myself centered for the week. When I don’t, sometimes I feel fragmented.”



Sr. Mary Joan heard the Spirit's call to be a compassionate presence on the journey, especially for our elder sisters, and has responded, "Here I am, Lord!"

### Doing Small Things with Great Love

Mother Teresa once said she could do no great things, only small things with great love.

Moving to The Sarah Community has encouraged many of our sisters to open themselves anew to the Spirit's voice. Sr. Mary Joan said, "The sisters find themselves called in little ways, in the present moment, to bring God's presence to others."

Sr. Josephine Huhmann and Sr. Ann Miriam Stenger are praying morning and evening prayer with the Daughters of Charity in the Anna House chapel.

Sr. Regina Pingel is spending hours in the chapel praying for the needs of the world.

Sr. Eleanor Krieg plays the organ for the Eucharistic liturgy twice weekly at Anna House and twice weekly at Veronica House.



*Sr. Georgene Gaffney (with the green hair!) with Sr. Cecilia Pribil at The Sarah Community. Since 2008 Sr. Georgene has been volunteering in the skilled nursing area of The Sarah Community. Her familiar face, cheerful words, sense of humor and beguiling grin are a welcome gift for the FSM—and the other residents—on the Bridgeton campus.*



*Sr. Helen Marie Norko*

Sr. Rose Ann Ewers is mending the sisters' clothing.

Srs. Mary Anne Murphy and Bridgid McNamara, who were both nurses, take turns putting eyedrops, morning and evening, in the eyes of a lady who lives near them.

Sr. Betty Brucker is a compassionate presence to a neighbor who recently lost his wife, listening to him and helping him sort through some of her belongings.

Sr. Mary Joan said, "Sr. Helen Norko told me, 'I have a newfound ministry. Every evening I walk the halls

in Anna House and visit with the residents. I listen to them, then I pray with them and give them a hug.'"



Sr. Doris Ashcraft

Sr. Doris Ashcraft, who moved to The Sarah Community in May after 35 years in Blue Island, Illinois, lovingly lives out the FSM values of presence, hospitality, and compassion. She bakes cookies for her neighbors. She seeks out the lonely, those who are having a rough time, and listens to them. “The greater part is listening,” she says. “They don’t need you to solve their problems—they have to do that themselves. But they need to talk it out with someone who will listen—and they usually come up with the answer themselves.

“God puts us in new places and challenges us to change, to find a new ministry.”

### Midwife of Souls

“I love surprises,” said Sr. Angela Murdaugh. “And the surprises of the Spirit are no different. Who would have guessed that when I left Holy Family Birth Center after so many years, I would find myself serving as a midwife—of souls!”

Sr. Angela’s new ministry as midwife of souls aligns poetically with the ministry that occupied her for close to forty years as an obstetrical nurse and midwife, coaxing new life to birth. A founding mother in the American midwifery movement, she celebrates birth as a beautiful, creative, spiritual, and normal family event.



Sr. Angela Murdaugh

Her twenty-three years at Holy Family Birth Center in Weslaco, Texas, mentoring, encouraging, and empowering midwives and new mothers alike, provided a sound bedrock of faith and spiritual growth, “opening my trust in God and the workings of the Spirit in everyday life in ways that have been simply unmatched,” Sr. Angela said.

*You’ll hear it again and again . . . “God’s not finished with me yet.”*

### *The Beginning of the Call: A Still, Small Voice*

Back in 1999, her sister invited Sr. Angela to join the spiritual team of a weekend retreat called *Journey to Damascus*. “After much arm-twisting, I agreed to go to Corpus Christi [Texas] as a Pilgrim to see what this ‘Journey to Damascus’ was,” Sr. Angela said.



These retreats promote a rekindling of core religious values, inspiring, challenging, and equipping laypeople for Christian study, growth in holiness, and action at home, in the church, at work, and in the community.

The seed was planted.



*Sr. Eleanor Krieg with Sr. Angela*

“I began working into the role of team spiritual director,” Sr. Angela said. “From 2000 to 2003, I worked on nine retreats for women. In February 2004 I was invited for the first time to be on the team for a men’s weekend.

“I began to feel the need for more formalized training,” she said. “As a busy administrator and clinically practicing nurse midwife at Holy Family Birth Center, I sought—and found—a CNM [*certified nurse midwife*] who agreed to cover for me while I attended a summer course at Mercy Center in Colo-

rado Springs that gave me valuable ‘how to’ tools.

“But it was my religious formation—basic and ongoing—that equipped me for this awesome responsibility.

“I realized I was hearing a new call, a call to be a midwife to souls. And I came to understand that listening is an art every spiritual director must cultivate—and that the Holy Spirit, who is ever present in our spiritual growth, will guide the director either to speak or to listen, a decision of spiritual finesse that demands practice.”

Sr. Angela’s involvement with the retreats grew in the following years to the point that when she began her sabbatical in January 2007, she moved to Corpus Christi to concentrate more fully on her ongoing education as a midwife for souls.



*At the end of a Kairos retreat Sr. Angela chats with a group of Stewards she trained.*

### *A New Direction*

Before long she heard the call to offer her gifts as a spiritual director in retreats for new audiences.

First, she became involved in Kairos Outside retreats. Centered on women and conducted entirely by women, these retreats focus on the theme “Love, Love, Listen, Listen” and offer rituals to help women find a way to express their emotions over losing a loved one to prison.

“What an amazing grace these annual fall retreats proved to be, expanding my heart and my skills as a spiritual director!” Sr. Angela said.

Soon she found herself part of the Kairos retreats held twice a year for men at the Texas Department of Justice McConnell Unit in Beeville. “By early 2008 I was

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*“God puts us in new places and challenges us to change, to find a new ministry.”*

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visiting the prison weekly to offer one-on-one spiritual direction to inmates who had made a Kairos retreat,” Sr. Angela said. “That fall, the director for the upcoming Kairos retreat invited me to help conduct spiritual formation for inmates who would serve as Stewards on the retreat.

“This year I finished preparing my fourth class of Stewards. Each time I am deeply touched by the longing of the human heart to meet the Divine—and the incredible privilege it is for me to facilitate that journey.”

### *Nurturing the Vision*

Sr. Angela pursues her new call as a midwife to souls with the same passion she brought to her earlier vocation as midwife to new mothers.



*Sr. Angela and Norm Thomas, chaplain at the prison and Sr. Angela's mentor for the Kairos retreats*

“I continue to devour books on spiritual direction, reading them with the same ferocity with which I once read my midwifery texts in graduate school. I long to be God's instrument in this new calling to midwife souls. I need to nourish my spiritual life daily—the saying ‘You cannot give what you do not have’ is absolutely true.

“In my midwifery practice, I read current articles, followed manuals, and sought experts for guidance. In giving myself for God's use through spiritual direction, I find value in that same discipline. I am grateful for all I have experienced and learned from the ‘spiritual greats’ in my life. My job is to be aware, I mean really aware, of God working in every person.”

### **Hands That Bring Healing**

In 1996 the Franciscan Sisters of Mary awarded the FSM Dream Catcher award to Srs. André Evanicsko and Sherri Coleman, “whose dream of a ministry of peaceful, non-exploitive, healing, and compassionate touch led to the birth of PRISM, a massage ministry. At your hands and in your hearts God is birthing a new expres-

sion of FSM compassionate presence, broadening our sense of ministry in response to the signs of our times.”

For years Srs. André and Sherri have offered clients the healing touch of therapeutic massage. How did Franciscan Sisters of Mary become involved in this ministry?

“My new ministry is a call to compassion,” Sr. André said.

“I was originally a nurse, and before I got involved in healing massage I was working in chemical dependency. My patients had turned to drugs because of stress—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual stress. But getting off drugs is extremely stressful.

“One day I was taking a class on hand and foot massage, and I found myself so relaxed I almost fell asleep! And then it came to me—This is what my patients need! A way to relax without drugs. It was compassion for my patients that brought me to massage—and it worked.

“Stress is a major factor contributing to illness and injury,” Sr. André went on. “Many of our patients are extremely stressed. In reaching out to them, helping them relax and teaching them healthy living habits like breathing correctly, moving away from the computer or desk regularly, etc., we teach them to care for themselves. Finding effective ways to deal with stress helps not only them but their families, their productivity, their relationships.”

Their ministry goes way beyond merely relieving physical stress through massage.



## **PRISM**

**P**ositive and purposeful approach to health

**R**e-creation to who we are meant to be—  
body, mind and spirit

**I**n tune with nature and our very selves

**S**erenity and balance

**M**iracle of growth and self-healing

Srs. André and Sherri find themselves countering other challenges in our culture. “Our society has so much violence—disrespect for the body, sexual abuse,” Sr. André said. “We may see the other person as an object, without respect or reverence for the total person.

“Massage is time for you alone—you dismiss all obligations for an hour just for you, time to honor

your own body. And to praise God for your uniqueness—the One who created each of us to be just ourselves. It is a time to be aware of God’s presence.

“We regularly incorporate the spiritual aspect,” Sr. André said. “We pray with clients when they’re on the table, holding their head. We pray during the massage. And we continue to pray for them after they are gone.”

“It’s a ministry of presence,” Sr. Sherri agreed. “We aren’t there to diagnose them, nor to counsel them. We simply do the massage. But the massage often unearths things in them. We listen as they talk it out. They feel free to share. Partly because we are nuns, we provide a trusting environment—they feel peace and serenity.

“Intention is very powerful in this kind of energy work,” said Sr. Sherri. “We want what is best for this patient, and so we let go so that God can work in that person, however God wants to work in that person.

“Our role is not to diagnose or to speculate. We open ourselves to God’s grace. I am never disappointed when I am able to be open—it is God’s work through me.”

Srs. Sherri and André see their ministry as meeting a real need in our society.



Sr. Sherri Coleman

“People need touch—maybe especially the sick and infirm,” Sr. André said. To give back in gratitude for the blessings they’ve experienced, they’ve reached out to show others—families, aides at nursing homes, etc.—basic hand, foot, and shoulder massage, especially important for elder patients. “Not only does it help them physically with pain and stiffness, it stimulates them socially. Touch is *extremely* important.”

Both Srs. André and Sherri find their ministry “profoundly humbling.” “I never realized it would be such a spiritual experience for our clients and for us,” Sr. André said. “It involves a deep integration of mind, body, and soul. I ask God to use me, to use my hands to heal whatever part of the person’s body needs healing.”

Their ministry of presence, hospitality, and compassion arises from the same vision that led Mother Odilia to care for the poor and sick of St. Louis back in 1872—the recognition of a deep need that they can help fulfill.



Sr. André Evanicsko

In her book *Field of Compassion* Judy Cannato points out the urgent need for such ministry:

Because of the critical condition of planetary life today, we need to recognize that the only possibility for the salvation of the whole planet will come from a groundswell of compassion that changes destructive systems into life-giving communities in which we all live life to the full. . . . Each of us has the capacity and the power to risk an encounter that brings peace and calm, healing and love.<sup>2</sup>

The upcoming months will bring changes for PRISM. The convent's closing means that Srs. Sherri and André will need to leave the lovely, peaceful space they have created on the third floor of St. Mary of the Angels. But they will continue providing their gentle, serene ministry of healing as they have done for more than fifteen years. They have found a place at Mercy Center in another area of St. Louis County. Clients will be able to visit the quiet, beautiful chapel or walk outside in the peaceful grounds at Mercy before or after their visit, just as they were able to do at St. Mary of the Angels.

### For What Has Been, Thanks . . . For What Will Be, Yes

The stories could go on and on.

You'll hear it again and again, from sisters in their 90s and even beyond: "God's not finished with me yet."

The daughters of Mother Odilia Berger and Mother Augustine Giesen continue to listen, to discover new ways God is calling them to serve. And they continue to say *yes*, leaving the familiar to explore the new and unexpected, trusting always in God's faithful love.



*Sr. Ramona Meurer at Ground Zero*



*Sr. Irma Kennebeck conducts a discussion at Woman's Place.*

<sup>2</sup> Judy Cannato, *Field of Compassion: How the New Cosmology Is Transforming Spiritual Life* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books, 2010), p. 9.

# *sisters in the spotlight* Sisters in the Spotlight



**Mary Doris Ashcraft, FSM**, has been selected as the FSM honoree for the 2011 Franciscan Federation Banquet July 29 in Milwaukee. The theme, “Becoming a Sacred Flame: Francis, Clare and John’s Gospel,” describes Sr.

Doris, who lives out the FSM charism “to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate and healing Jesus” through her listening ear and her simplicity, compassion, and grace. Sr. Doris moved to The Sarah Community in May after retiring from 35 years of ministry in Blue Island, Illinois.



**Judith Ann Bell, FSM**, appeared in the January 7, 2011, vocation supplement to the *St. Louis Review*. The story, “Franciscan Sister of Mary Enjoys Varied Ministries,” focused on Sr. Judith Ann’s long service on the boards of

Almost Home and The Sarah Community, but also highlighted her work as a parish nurse for Our Lady of Sorrows parish and her service with CSJ Care ministry to homebound seniors. The article drew attention to the blessing her service as a Franciscan Sister of Mary has been both to her and to those she serves.



**Sherri A. Coleman, FSM**, was featured in the story “Change for Life: Group Raises Funds to Provide Small Loans to Poor Africans,” which ran on the front page of the January 26, 2011, *Suburban Journal* (South Edition).

Sr. Sherri is on the staff of Microfinancing Partners in Africa, which has helped thousands of Africans establish businesses to raise themselves from poverty.



**Antona Ebo, FSM**, received the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, from the University of Missouri—St. Louis on Saturday, December

18, 2010. The honorary doctorate, Sr. Antona’s fifth and the first conferred on her by a secular institution, recognizes her contributions to civil rights and social justice. She has also received honorary doctorates from Loyola University—Chicago (1995), the College of New Rochelle, New York (2008), Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis (2009), and Saint Louis University (May 2010).





**Mary Ellen Lewis, FSM,** was honored for her leadership at the 2010 Catholic Charities 15th Annual Awards Dinner November 9 in Madison, Wisconsin: “for consistently living and incorporating the



Catholic values in your leadership and in the process affecting the lives of many; for working to fill a need in your community; and through your leadership, taking action for a better future and serving as an example to others.” Srs. Rose Mary Dowling, Sandy Schwartz, Priscilla Weber and Connie Fahey, as well as supporters from SSM Wisconsin, were on hand to celebrate Sr. Mary Ellen’s award.



**Ramona Meurer, FSM,** was featured in the article “A Giving Heart: Franciscan Nun Dedicates Life to Helping Those in Crisis,” which appeared in the Slice of Life section of the December 12, 2010, edition of the *Valley*

*Morning Star* in Harlingen, Texas. The article by Danielle Altenburg highlights the many ways Sr. Ramona has improved the lives of the poor, particularly in both Kenya and south Texas, where she has

served since 1970. Besides her work as a dietitian, she is a Red Cross volunteer who has helped in more than eighty disasters, including two stints at Ground Zero during the 9/11 tragedy.



**Mary Jean Ryan, FSM,** chair and CEO of SSM Health Care, is included on the latest list of “52 Women Hospital and Healthcare Leaders” published by *Becker’s Hospital Review*. Women leaders were chosen on the basis of their accomplishments

in leading healthcare and hospital organizations, especially in terms of improvement of patient care, development of relationships between healthcare providers, and facilitation of organizational growth.

In the February 18–24 issue of the *St. Louis Business Journal*, Sr. Mary Jean was once again named one of the Most Influential St. Louisans.



# angela murdaugh

## Angela Murdaugh, FSM: Texan Head to Foot

Sr. Angela's Adidas sandals have become famous.

Sr. Angela is featured in the Texans Head to Foot exhibit at the Institute of Texan Cultures on the campus of the University of Texas—San Antonio. The unique display includes hats, boots, shoes and other accessories of forty-three famous and inspiring Texans. Besides Sr. Angela's fetoscope and Adidas sandals, visitors can enjoy accessories such as columnist Heloise's boots and the hat of music legend Buddy Holly, as well as accessories from former governor Ann Richards, former first lady Lady Bird Johnson, and former CBS anchor Dan Rather.



The exhibit honors Sr. Angela for her work for poor women in southeastern Texas:

“Angela Murdaugh was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, and moved to Raymondville, Texas after completing a master's in nurse-midwifery from Columbia University in 1971. In Raymondville she discovered that women had little local access to basic prenatal and childbirth care. This led her to establish Texas' first freestanding birth center in 1972. In 1983, after serving as president of the American College of Nurse Midwives, she founded Holy Family Birth Center in Weslaco, Texas. Located in one of the poorest areas along the Texas-Mexico border, the facility cut the infant mortality rate in Hidalgo County in half.



“Murdaugh's compassion has touched thousands. Her commitment to providing quality medical care for the poor has been recognized with numerous awards. She was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in 2002. Though Sister Angela retired in 2007, she remains a vocal advocate of affordable maternity care and social justice.”

Congratulations, Sr. Angela!



# transitions Transitions

## Sr. Michael Marie Lischwe

December 7, 1920 – October 23, 2010

She loved telling stories, and life blessed her with many—of her large family, of their beloved farm, of convent life, of students, of new mothers and the babies she helped bring into the world.

Rose Frances Zita Lischwe was born December 7, 1920, on a farm near Brinktown, Missouri, fifth of nine children born to Joseph B. and Katherine (Wieggers) Lischwe.

She entered the Sisters of St. Mary August 18, 1941; her three sisters and one brother also joined religious life. She professed final vows February 11, 1947.

She became a registered nurse (1951), then earned her BSN (1956) and MS in Nursing Administration (1959) through Saint Louis University.

A skilled obstetrical/surgical nurse and educator, she served at Firmin Desloge and St. Mary's Infirmary, St. Louis; St. Mary's, Madison, Wisconsin; St. Mary's, Kansas City; St. Mary's and Villa Marie Senior Center, Jefferson City; and Arcadia Valley, Pilot Knob. She did parish work and home nursing. For eight years she nursed her ailing parents in Brinktown. In 2003 she returned to St. Louis, then in May 2010 moved to The Sarah Community, Bridgeton.

The lovely hills of Missouri and Wisconsin held a special place in her heart. She loved gardening, walking, cooking, and baking. Teaching nursing

students was her most enjoyable work. She loved Franciscan spirituality.

On Saturday, October 23, 2010, Sr. Michael Marie entered eternity's joy.

*"Here I am . . . Send me!"*



## Sr. Mary Rose Monzyk

August 22, 1907 – November 10, 2010

Ever gentle and unassuming, Sr. Mary Rose never sought the spotlight but remained open always to God's call.

Born August 22, 1907, in Washington, Missouri, Esther Elisabeth Monzyk was third of thirteen children born to Theodore and Frances (Hoelscher) Monzyk.

Following in the footsteps of her aunts Srs. Mary Hilaria and Mary Hedwig Mzyk, Esther entered the Sisters of St. Mary June 19, 1936; she professed final vows February 11, 1942.

As a nurse and nursing supervisor she served at St. Mary's Hospital, Jefferson City; St. Mary's Hospital, Kansas City; St. Mary's Infirmary and Mount St. Rose, St. Louis; and St. Clare's Hospital, Baraboo, Wisconsin.

For five years she served in poison control in the emergency room at Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center. When her health declined, she agreed to serve as ambulatory care nurse for the elder sisters at St. Mary of the Angels, which she did for a decade.

She sewed for the missions until her eye surgery. Happiest when busy, she found new ways to serve, ever a powerful member of the FSM intercessory prayer group.

She loved nursing, especially her years in Kansas City caring for patients after surgery.

On Wednesday, November 10, 2010, after a full life of 103 years, Sr. Mary Rose was called home to the God she loved so much.

*"Not my will but Yours."*



## **Sr. Mary Charlene Teson**

March 21, 1915 – December 16, 2010

Even at 95, Sr. Charlene—an astute nurse, educator, and financial manager—could light up the room with her smile.

Kathryn Irene Teson was born Palm Sunday—March 21, 1915—on a farm near Clyde, Missouri, third of eleven children born to Charles A. and Anna Teresa (Zirfas) Teson.

Her aunt, Sr. Mildred Teson, was a Sister of St. Francis of Maryville, Missouri (OSF), the order sponsoring St. Francis Hospital, Maryville, where Kathryn worked as an aide. Kathryn entered the congregation September 8, 1934, and on May 6, 1940, professed final vows. She became an RN in 1941 and earned her BSN in 1944.

She served as a nurse at St. Anthony's Hospital, Oklahoma City; at the inn in Southern Pines, North Carolina, that she helped transform into St. Joseph of the Pines Hospital; and at Alverno Heights Hospital, Guthrie, Oklahoma. She taught obstetrics at St. Anthony's School of Nursing. She also worked in St. Anthony's Hospital business office.

In 1980 she became OSF Treasurer General, serving until 1987 when her congregation and the Sisters of St. Mary reunited as the Franciscan Sisters of Mary. She moved to St. Louis, serving as coordinator of OSF finances and handling sisters' health insurance until retiring in 1991.

A take-charge sort of person with an amazing memory for dates and birthdays, she read enthusiastically and was a faithful member of the FSM prayer ministry. Her cousin, Sr. Mary Joan Schieber, is also a Franciscan Sister of Mary.



On Thursday, December 16, 2010, Sr. Charlene slipped away to join her beloved Lord.

*"My God and My All"*

## **Sr. Mary Damien Francois**

March 1, 1920 – December 23, 2010

A true Franciscan, Sr. Damien lovingly gave what she had and nurtured others through her presence and compassion.

Born Elaine Catherine Marie Francois March 1, 1920, on a farm near Nebraska City, Nebraska, she was first of four daughters born to Edward and Josephine (Kreifels) Francois.

She joined the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville, Missouri (OSF) September 6, 1937, and pronounced final vows May 6, 1943. Her sister, Helen Louise (Sr. Marianne), joined the congregation in March 1947; she died in 2001.

A registered nurse (1944), Sr. Damien earned a BS in Education (Benedictine Heights College, Tulsa, 1956) and an MS in Nursing (Catholic University, Washington, DC, 1963).

She served as night nurse, head obstetrical nurse, administrator, and instructor—at St. Francis, Maryville; St. Anthony's, Oklahoma City; St. Joseph of the Pines, Southern Pines, North Carolina; and St. Mary's, Nebraska City. She directed the nursing diploma program at St. Anthony's. For some years she was superior, leadership councilor, and infirmarian at Mount Alverno.

In 1983 she joined Sr. Angela Murdaugh in founding Holy Family Services, Weslaco, Texas—a safe, compassionate center for families to welcome their new babies. Sr. Damien helped deliver babies; later she cared lovingly for patients and coworkers—and the menagerie of goats, chickens, cats, and dogs that followed her around. She retired to St. Louis in 2006, where she was a faithful member of the FSM prayer ministry. On December 8, 2010, she moved to The Sarah Community.



On Thursday, December 23, 2010, Sr. Damien peacefully joined her beloved Spouse in heaven.

*"Till the end of my days, O God, I will bless your name, Sing your praise, Give you thanks, All my days!"*

## Sr. Robert Marie Manthey

June 15, 1923 – February 9, 2011

Her hands were always busy. During World War II she was a sheet metal worker at Curtis Wright, building airplanes—a true “Rosie the Riveter.” She sewed for the sisters and for the nursery and children’s ward in the hospitals. After retiring she distributed mail and shredded documents.

Mary Alice Elizabeth Manthey was born June 15, 1923, in a log cabin in Spirit Falls, Wisconsin, now a historic landmark. She was the third child and only daughter of homesteaders Mertie Martha (Schamma) and August Christian Manthey, Jr. Her father died of appendicitis only two weeks after her birth. Mary Alice Elizabeth left school after sixth grade to help support the family.

While working nights on a nursing unit at St. Joseph Hospital in St. Charles, she came to know the Sisters of St. Mary. Becoming a Catholic, she entered the Sisters of St. Mary August 2, 1951, and professed final vows February 11, 1957.

She worked as a seamstress, at the convent, at St. Mary’s Hospital, St. Louis (1956–1965), and at St. Joseph Hospital, St. Charles (1965–1982), where she also served as sisters’ chauffeur. In 1982 she moved to St. Mary’s Ringling Convent in Baraboo, Wisconsin, serving as chauffeur until 1998, when she retired to St. Louis.

She loved to read. Always hospitable, she enjoyed showing visitors the sights and making them welcome. A tragic fall in November 2010 left her paralyzed.

On February 9, 2011, after nearly sixty years in religious life, Sr. Robert Marie was called to her heavenly reward.



*“I am the way, the truth, and the life”  
(John 14:6)*

## Sr. Mary Regina Hoff

January 6, 1916 – March 20, 2011

Sr. Regina always said she had two ministries: physical therapy and praising the Lord. When she retired from the first in 1991, she devoted herself full-time to the second.

Born Catherine Henrietta Hoff on January 6, 1916, in Germantown, Illinois, she was one of five children born to Henry and Mary T. (Micheel) Hoff.

Following her aunt, Sr. Mary Benigna Micheel, and younger sister, Sr. Mary Theodora, Catherine entered the Sisters of St. Mary December 5, 1943.

After graduating in 1955 from Saint Louis University, she served as a physical therapist at Firmin Desloge until 1956, St. Mary’s Health Center (1956) and Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center (1957–1961). For ten years (1961–1971) she served at St. Mary’s Hospital in Kansas City, then cared for her mother during her final illness. From 1974 until she retired in July 1991, she provided physical therapy for sisters at the convent.

For years she was a member of the FSM intercessory prayer ministry and the FSM liturgy committee. She loved to knit and crochet. She was always willing to offer a helping hand. She and her sister, Sr. Mary Theodora Hoff, were constant companions and friends.

At her 50th jubilee she observed, “My journey of love has had its ups and downs but my Jesus was always there—both in joy and in sorrow, reminding me of God’s glory. My greatest desire is that God be glorified in all I do.”

On Sunday, March 20, 2011, Sr. Regina joined her beloved Jesus for all eternity.



*Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.  
(Psalm 89)*

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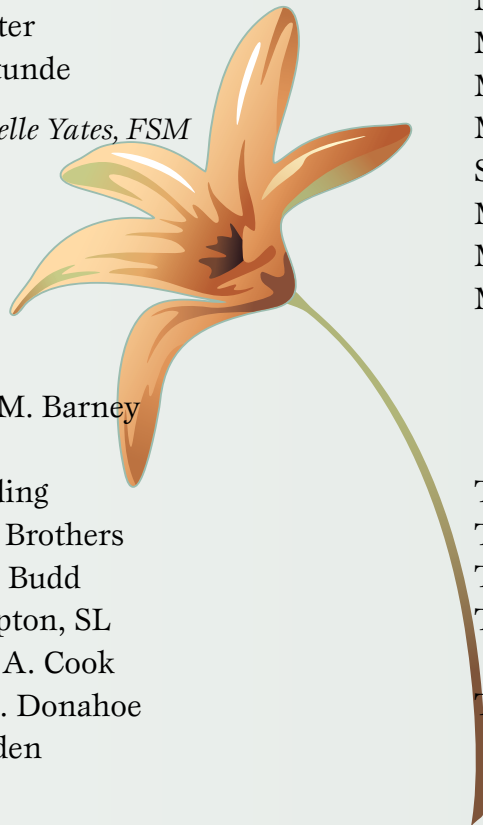
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*We give our life by being present, hospitable and  
compassionate, choosing to stand with  
our sisters and brothers  
who are poor and on the margins of society.*

