

Fall/Winter 2009 

FSM MAGAZINE

Franciscan Sisters of Mary

Looking to the Future:

Reflections of Wisdom and Hope



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.

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Nature photos courtesy of Mary Joan Meyer, FSM. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

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



The “NEW” Old Call

That is what came to mind as I sat down to write. The “Old Call” is the one the Spirit has been giving for centuries. The world needs us to do our part as it continues its birth into higher consciousness, as it continues to come home to its true potential.

Wherever we are along the “age” line, the call of the Spirit invites us to meet the needs of our times. And as we respond along that line, we eventually get to those autumn years where responding has a different look and feel about it.

We, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, are continuing to respond to the call of the Spirit in our autumn years. We are growing deeper and deeper in our prayer life, and as a result we are able to hear more deeply the call of the Spirit. “The New Old Call” has us putting even more effort into living more simply by de-cluttering our lives, by working harder at our Corporate Stance against the death penalty, and by committing ourselves to actions that lessen the destructive effects of global climate change. In addition you will read about other ways we are reframing our commitment to the “Old Call” in “New Ways” in ministries like Holy Family Services, SSM Health Care, and Almost Home.

In the autumn of our lives we are even more committed to our beautiful world and its needs. As our external hearing diminishes, our internal hearing of the Spirit grows. We know God’s work in this world is not done and so we listen and we contribute in ways that are appropriate for us now.

Wherever you are along that age line, “the NEW Old Call” is coming to you. The Spirit is asking you to respond in ways that are appropriate for where you are in life. Co-creating with God is the most joyful thing we can experience. The Spirit calls . . . are you listening?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rose M. Dowling, FSM". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Autumn the Season of Harvest

A time to rejoice in fullness. To observe that the seeds we planted in hope during the springtime have come to fruition. To celebrate the richness of all that has been and look forward in hope to what is yet to come.

Autumn invites us to take stock, to evaluate how far we have come, where we are, and in what new directions we will be heading as we continue courageously in the footsteps of our foundresses, Mother Mary Odilia Berger and Mother Mary Augustine Giesen.

We have changed over these 137 years, just as Mother Odilia and her four companions adapted to the world they entered when they stepped off the boat onto the St. Louis riverfront—a very different world from the one they'd known in Europe. A world that would demand a creative response to its challenges—squalor, smallpox, yellow fever, poverty—and its blessings.



A Call to Re-Vision

Almost 50 years ago Vatican II called upon religious orders to re-examine how they were living out their charism (charism is a gift, given by the Holy Spirit to a particular group, who will live out that gift for the service and benefit of all), to determine with fresh vision and open hearts how they could best respond to God's call to serve in the 20th century and beyond.

We listened and we answered—just as Mother Odilia and Mother Augustine themselves would have answered.

The clothing we wear now is different—simple, modest, better suited to the ministries we now offer than the heavy habits our early sisters wore. Community living is different; as Franciscan Sisters of Mary we remain close in heart to one another, but we may live closer to our work than to St. Mary of the Angels Convent (the FSM mother-house) and with sisters of other orders who serve with us. Almost none of us serve as nurses in hospitals anymore, although some of us offer spiritual care to the sick and dying and their families or provide other kinds of healing.

Today, like so many other religious since Vatican II, we find ourselves called to yet a new role, a new service.

Our charism has always been “to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate and healing Jesus.” Our hospitals and those who staff them continue our commitment to all who suffer, including “Our dear Lord’s” who cannot afford the care they need.

Others can competently take on the tasks we once fulfilled on the hospital floors or in the boardrooms. Over the next two years even Sr. Mary Jean Ryan, who has served brilliantly as president and CEO of the SSM Health Care system for close to a quarter century, will gradually transition those responsibilities to others. We have shown the way, and now it is time for us to turn our vision in new directions.

A Call to Share

In her book *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully*, Joan Chittister describes this fresh call: “In every generation there is an accumulated amount of experience which says something about life that is, at the same time, both unique and universal. It comes from the simple act of living a recollected, a reflective life.”¹

As sisters, we live both immersed in our world and apart from it. Because we have nothing to gain—we are outside the struggle for wealth, for power, for advancement—we see issues with a detachment and an understanding that comes of our unique experience of life. And we find ourselves called to share that vision with the world.

As Joan Chittister describes it, “Like autumn flowers, rich in color, deep in tone, sturdy in the wind, our lives not only have new color, they bring with them the kind of interior depth a fast-moving world so dearly needs.”²

As prophetic women of the Gospel, we hear the call to engage in the world by sharing what we have heard in our hearts and in our lives. Our foundresses’ concern with the poor and helpless remains our concern as well. But in our time we are called to share our experience in new ways—on issues like global climate change, domestic violence, the

death penalty, war, injustice, poverty.

Our Franciscan heritage cherishes the responsibility we have to sustain the Earth and its creatures, all fashioned in God’s image. We support—through our donations and our advocacy—organizations and companies that live out a strong commitment to wise stewardship of the Earth and its resources. We live out our Franciscan heritage, trying to tread lightly on the Earth and to live greener by recycling, simplifying our lives, and sharing our excess with those in need. We educate ourselves in better ways to nurture our world, then live that commitment by using more Earth-friendly products and making wiser decisions about our energy use.

This year the FSM have resolved to focus our efforts for the future on global climate change—finding ways to help undo and limit global warming and to prevent further damage to our world and its climate.

As sisters who have served in hospitals and in other ministries, we have seen the devastation—physical and spiritual—that violence wreaks on both its victims and on its perpetrators. We are finding ways to live out our commitment to nonviolence—sponsoring a safe place for women in danger, providing spiritual nurture to prisoners to try to break the cycle of violence, clearly voicing our opposition to the death penalty and to war.

The Time Is Now

Why are we—and other religious—called to new responsibility, at this time, in this place? It would be so easy, even inviting, to retreat into our convents and shut out the world. We have little to gain—except the knowledge that we can make a difference.

As Joan Chittister puts it, “Why must the elders in a society immerse themselves in the issues of the time? If for no other reason than that they are really the only ones who are free to tell the truth. They have nothing to lose now: not status, not striving, not money, not power. They are meant to be the prophets of a society, its compass, its truth-tellers. . . .

“[They] must turn the spotlight back on our best ideals when the lights of the soul go dim. Before it is too late.”³

What Is Our New Call?

What if the work of women religious is to create deeper insight; reframe what is; see reality differently; generate greater consciousness; go to people’s blind spots and uncover values, beliefs, the Christ within?⁴

The FSM have heard a new call—maybe less tangible than the call Mother Odilia and Mother Augustine heard, but equally clear and compelling.

In all that we are and all that we do, we strive to be a beacon, shining the light of such wisdom as we have gained in our lives into the hearts of others. Our call is—as it has always been!—to listen and to live the truth that God has revealed in our hearts.



And so we answer this new call, moving forward courageously into the future, reaping the harvest of our past and sowing the harvest of the future, relying as always on the God of all graciousness to guide us faithfully in the path set out for us. 🍁

1 Joan Chittister, *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully* (New York City: BlueBridge Books, 2008), p. 36.

2 Chittister, p. 47.

3 Chittister, p. 126.

4 Donna M. Fyffe, “Unearthing the Potential of Uncertain Times,” an interview with Donna M. Fyffe by Annmarie Sanders, IHM, in *The Occasional Papers* 38:2 (Summer 2009), p. 4.

Holy Family Services: Celebrating the Future

From the beginning it was the story of a dream fulfilled.

In 1983, Sr. Angela Murdaugh and sisters from three other religious orders began Holy Family Services Birthing Center in Weslaco, Texas. They envisioned a place where women, especially poor women, could have their babies in a safe, comfortable setting. A place where bringing a child into the world could be celebrated as a beautiful, natural event, the blossoming of new life. A place where families would welcome their newest members with joy.

Sr. Angela, director of the center from its beginnings until 2007, built a place where “what we did fed how we lived and how we lived fed what we did.” Holy Family attracted certified nurse midwives, nurses, students, and others who wanted to be part of this wonderful ministry to women and babies. For one brief shining moment, as Sr. Angela would say, there *was* Camelot.

At a Crossroads

Nothing, however, can remain the same forever.

In Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s *La Morte D’Arthur*, the dying King Arthur says of Camelot:

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

And those words ring true not only for the knights of the Round Table but for all of us.

For more than 25 years the Franciscan Sisters of Mary have been a strong presence and support for Holy Family Birthing Center in Weslaco, Texas. For more than two decades Sr. Angela provided vision, passion, and leadership. Some, like Srs. Kathy Buchheit, Jeanice Speidel, and Mary Chaudet, have served as nurses and midwives. The yellow buildings are enriched by memories of Sr. Veronica Boss creating her lovely cakes and Sr. Damien Francois tending her goats. Some sisters served on its Board of Directors. The Franciscan Sisters of Mary are part of the heart and soul of this ministry in the Rio Grande Valley.

But by the end of 2008 no Franciscan Sisters of Mary remained on staff at Holy Family Services. Sr. Angela had



*Sr. Angela Murdaugh
and Dr. Elizabeth
Krishnan*



retired in 2007, moving into a new ministry to prisoners. The other FSM had also been summoned in new directions.

It was time to accept the changes that had been taking place—and to leave Holy Family Services in the capable hands of those who will carry on.

A Celebration of Gratitude and Hope



On Saturday, September 19, 2009, about fifty people gathered at Casa Montaña on the grounds of Holy Family Services in Weslaco to celebrate this joyous ministry and the close involvement of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary in that service for so many years. Fourteen Franciscan Sisters of Mary—many of whom had been directly involved in this ministry—were able to attend.

The assembly also included current members of the Holy Family Services Board of Directors, doctors and other professionals who serve as consultants for Holy Family, staff members and volunteers.

Sr. Rose Mary Dowling, president of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, extended a warm welcome. She thanked current Board President Nivia Fisch, who has been a steadying hand during the transition and whose skill as a certified nurse midwife has been called into play on many occasions over the years at Holy Family. Sr. Rose also acknowledged Dr. Stan Fisch, pediatric consultant and a wonderful support for the center.

Also present was Dr. Elizabeth Krishnan, who has served as obstetrical consultant for Holy Family and has been an excellent mentor for the midwives there.

But releasing a ministry so dear to the hearts of so many is never easy.



Nivia Fisch and Sr. Rose Dowling

“The Franciscan Sisters of Mary have been delighted to be part of Holy Family Services from its very beginnings,” Sr. Rose said. “As much as Holy Family Services will always be deeply rooted in our hearts and in our history, and as grateful as we will always be to those who brought this magnificent dream to birth, we recognize that both we and Holy Family Services have reached a crossroads.

“The Board of Directors of Holy Family Services has guided this ministry for many years and will continue to do so in the future, and our ministry as co-sponsor of this good work is now completed.”

A Gift of the Heart

Holy Family Services Birthing Center will always have a special place in the hearts and prayers of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary. As a token of that deep connection, the FSM presented the board and staff of Holy Family Services a lovely picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe titled *Our Lady of Compassion* by Jan Oliver.

Sr. Jeanne Derer, who found the artwork, summed up the gift and its appropriateness for Holy Family with these words:

This image, a painting by Arizona artist Jan Oliver, gently and playfully portrays Our Lady of Guadalupe under the title *Our Lady of Compassion*. Jan has great devotion to La Guadalupana and has interpreted her in many ways. In this image, she shows Mary as a young, loving woman enjoying her role as young mother, cuddling her energetic son. She looks out at you, the viewer, and smiles, gently assuring you of her attention and affection. She is so fitting an icon for the women coming to Holy Family Services: she understands. She's been where each prospective mom is now. She knows both the joy of anticipation and the worry of new motherhood. Love, a hope, a dream, a desire, took flesh in her just as it has in each woman anticipating the birth of God's miracle. May all who gaze on this Mary feel her presence, her understanding, and her love as they journey to their own Bethlehems!



The lovely picture was unveiled and presented by Srs. Sandy Schwartz and Susan Scholl of the FSM leadership team.

Sr. Susan also presented to the director and board of Holy Family Services a monetary gift on behalf of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, acknowledging their deep gratitude and continuing oneness with the purpose and goals of Holy Family.

The FSM present, in the name of all the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, then extended a special blessing to all those who would be involved in carrying this valuable and much needed ministry into the future.

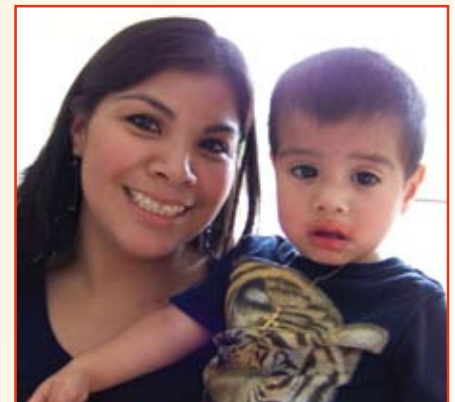
Fiesta!

And then it was time to celebrate—with food and drink, laughter and visiting!

Srs. Rose and Jeanne served up the cake decorated with the image of *Our Lady of Compassion*. Cold soda and ice water took the edge off the heat of the summer's day.

There was time to visit and share the wonderful memories and stories of Holy Family Services.

Sr. Anne Darlene Wojtowicz, one of the original founders of Holy Family Services, was on hand to celebrate. Molly, one of the new nurse midwives, revealed that she had been born at Holy Family. Maria Peña, who has been with Holy Family for many years, introduced several of her children who had been born there. It was a wonderful time of rejoicing, of sharing, of renewing old friendships and making new ones.



And while the celebration of gratitude was taking place in Casa Montaña, just across the way in one of the birthing suites at Holy Family, a mother rested for a little while with her new baby before they would get ready to leave for home. 🌸

A New Vision for Sr. Mary Jean Ryan

For the seventh consecutive year, Sr. Mary Jean Ryan, FSM, has been named one of *Modern Healthcare Magazine's* 100 Most Powerful People in Healthcare.

This year she was also honored as one of the "Top St. Louis Caregivers" by the *St. Louis Business Journal*, and she received the C. Jackson Grayson Distinguished Quality Pioneer Medal from the American Productivity and Quality Center.

Since she became SSM Health Care's first president and CEO in 1986, the system has thrived, focusing on the continuous improvement in quality that resulted in SSM Health Care's receiving in 2002 the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award presented by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the highest honor given to U.S. companies for quality management and

achievement.

Known worldwide

as an inspiring speaker and a leader in health care, Sr. Mary Jean has published books and articles on the pursuit of quality in health care, served on health care boards and commissions, and received numerous honors and awards for her leadership, insight, and commitment to excellence.

The news, then, that as of August 1, 2009, Sr. Mary Jean would begin transitioning some of her responsibilities to Mr. William P. Thompson, senior vice president for strategic development, with the ultimate goal of his assuming the role of president and CEO of SSM Health



The three 2002 Malcolm Baldrige winners: (from left) David Branch, President, Branch-Smith Printing; Sr. Mary Jean Ryan, President and CEO, SSM Health Care; and Robert L. Barnett, Executive Vice President, Motorola Inc.



Sr. Mary Jean Ryan and William P. Thompson

Care over the course of two years, struck many with the force of a lightning bolt. *Why?*

Maybe a better question would be, *Why not?*

Casting a vision for excellence. For caring. For diversity. For wise stewardship of the Earth's resources. For providing a wonderful place for people to work.

About a decade ago, SSM Health Care agreed on a mission: "Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God." Clearly, SSM Health Care remains committed to the presence, hospitality,

and compassion that have been the core values of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary from the days when Mother Odilia Berger and her companions brought the

healing presence of Christ to the poor of St. Louis back in the 1870s.

Sr. Mary Jean has done an outstanding job in casting a vision for excellence. For caring for others regardless of their ability to pay. For diversity. For wise stewardship of the Earth's resources. For providing a wonderful place for people to work. While SSM Health Care would no doubt continue to flourish under her leadership, she too has heard the call to move on to new endeavors.

For the next year or more she will continue to serve full time as CEO and chair of the SSM Board of Directors and other regional and divisional boards. The five senior vice presidents will continue to report to her. The transition should be gradual and smooth.

We offer our congratulations and best wishes to Sr. Mary Jean as she moves forward in faith, completing her leadership at SSM Health Care and stepping forward into the new future to which God is calling her. 🍁



ISM-Sponsored Ministries: Continuity and Vision of St. Francis

Almost Home — A Hand Up for Homeless Teen Moms

Imagine being a teenage girl, homeless, broke, pregnant, and alone—except for the toddler you already have. Sleeping in cars, nowhere else to go.



Back in 1993 Srs. Irene Radtke and Jacinta Elmendorf began a new ministry to reach out to young girls and their babies who fall between the cracks of many government programs. They called it Almost Home.

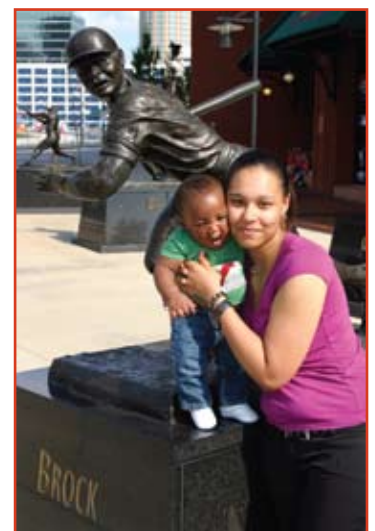
Today this organization provides a safe transitional home for 15 teenage mothers and up to 25 of their children. Over the years Almost Home has served more than 1,200 young mothers and their children. The girls learn life skills within a caring, structured environment. They learn to care for themselves and for their babies—physically and emotionally. They

learn parenting skills. They are encouraged to complete their GED studies—and to attend college—so they'll be able to find a good career and live independently, providing a solid and loving home for their little ones.



Executive Director Sheroo Mukhtiar and the staff of Almost Home carry on the vision and mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, who founded this ministry and who have sponsored it

for more than fifteen years. Together they give young women the chance to break the cycle of poverty and achieve a bright future, both for themselves and for their children. 🌻



Continuing Courageously the Mission of St. Clare into the 21st Century

Woman's Place— Safe Haven from Domestic Violence

On May 8, 2009, a gala dinner and auction held in the Xavier Ballroom on the campus of Saint Louis University marked the final celebration of the tenth anniversary year of Woman's Place—a decade of making a difference in the lives of women who have nowhere else to turn.



In April 1998, two Franciscan Sisters of Mary, Srs. Irma Kennebeck and Jeanne Meurer, opened Woman's Place in a former bakery in Maplewood. Their dream was to provide women suffering from domestic violence a safe, hospitable place where they could “come to see the goodness in themselves, the beauty of creation, the compassion of others and the goodness of God.”

Offering compassion, sensitive listening, crisis intervention, support groups, educational workshops, and a woman's spirituality circle, Woman's Place has made a huge difference in the lives of the more than three thousand women who have visited the center during the past decade.



At the vigil for domestic violence held on October 8, one young woman who did a reading said that Woman's Place—and her domestic violence support group—had changed her life. Woman's Place touched four generations of women in her family: Her grandmother is currently in a support group, and her mother will begin in January. All three—plus the woman's 6-year-old daughter—attended the vigil. The woman said, “My daughter won't need to come—she will be a strong woman who can make her own decisions.”

Congratulations to Executive Director Irma Kennebeck, FSM, and to the board, staff and volunteers of Woman's Place, who, through their ministry to women suffering abuse, live each day the FSM commitment to nonviolence and to the poor and marginalized. 🌸



Caring for God's Creatures

What is the most compelling issue facing you today?

At the June 2009 FSM Gathering, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary asked themselves that question.

Every era faces unique urgencies, and the vision of those who listen, who answer the call they hear in their hearts—often at significant personal cost—has made a real difference in the world in which they live.

Mother Odilia Berger and Mother Augustine Giesen answered the call to come to a rough new world and care for the sick and dying among the poorest of the poor both on the St. Louis riverfront and in the heart of the rural Midwest. The dedication and hard work of those sisters and their followers made a true—and lasting—difference for millions.

The call we hear today is different but no less urgent than the one our foundresses answered.

In June the team for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Harmony recommended a specific focus for FSM efforts: to lessen the effects of global climate change. As a congregation we agreed:

The Franciscan Sisters of Mary, aware of the critical condition of our Sister Earth, continue our commitment to act in loving, respectful and harmonious relationship with all of God's creation and vigorously endorse actions to lessen the destructive effects of global climate change.

Both as a congregation and as individual members, the FSM have pledged to support that focus—to collaborate with groups who combat climate change, to commit personal and congregational resources to this effort, to protect creation, and to advocate for those in poverty who face the harshest impact of global climate change.

This course fits both with our concern to stand always by the poor and marginalized and with our Franciscan vision of creation—that all creatures are our sisters and brothers.



And the urgency is growing.

“‘We are speaking to ensure that the voice of the poorest and most marginalized people are heard,’ Cardinal Keith O’Brien, archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, Scotland, said at a Mass held in New York . . . ‘There is no longer a debate that global warming is hurting people. Even the U.N. estimates that 262 million people between 2000 and 2002 were affected by disasters caused by global warming.’”¹

We have heard the cry of the Earth and the poorest creatures in it, and we are responding.

We are doing our best, personally and as a congregation, to practice good stewardship of Earth’s resources, to try to walk simply in the steps of St. Francis and St. Clare. We are reducing, reusing, recycling. We are educating ourselves about renewable energy sources and striving to decrease our use of fossil fuels.



Each year the FSM leadership team sets aside funds to donate to organizations that best reflect and further the congregation’s goals. In August, the team contributed to five groups involved in caring for the Earth and its resources and striving to counter global climate change.

- **Jubilee Farm**

Its mission is to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the Earth community.

- **La Vista Ecological Learning Center**

Its mission is to educate for deeper ecological awareness, contemplating the ongoing sacred story of the universe and celebrating Earth’s seasonal cycles.

- **Michaela Farm**

Its mission is to care for God’s land and to nurture sustainable relationships among the land, plants, animals, and humans, using farm resources to fulfill this goal.

- **Rockhaven Ecozoic Center**

We support its work in ecology.

- **White Violet Center**

We support its efforts in fostering a way of living that recognizes the interdependence of all creation.

As prophetic women of the Gospel, we are striving to live in ever closer harmony with the Earth, to answer faithfully the challenge we have received. 🌻

¹ As quoted in Michael Humphrey, “Hope for Concrete Steps from Obama,” *National Catholic Reporter*, October 2, 2009, p. 5.

Sisters in the Spotlight

Srs. Cecilia Lackman and Cecilia

Pribil, as well as the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, received Franciscan Spirit Awards sponsored by the Franciscan Connection, which helps the poor in the south St. Louis area near St. Anthony's Friary. Srs. Cecilia Lackman and Sandy Schwartz attended the Mass and celebration at the friary on Sunday, June 14. Sr. Cecilia Lackman raises funds for the Connection through the sale of origami boxes she creates from greeting cards, and for years



Sr. Cecilia Pribil has collected change for the Franciscans in a piggy bank she keeps in the dining room at St. Mary of the Angels Convent.



Sr. Noreen McGowan was featured as one of the "Neighbors of the Week" in the West County issue of the September 2, 2009, *St. Louis Suburban Journals*. The article focused on her compassion and her many years of faithful service at SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center, where at 95 she volunteers each weekday



morning, greeting families and keeping them updated on their child's progress during surgery. Sr. Mary Joan Meyer nominated Sr. Noreen for recognition.

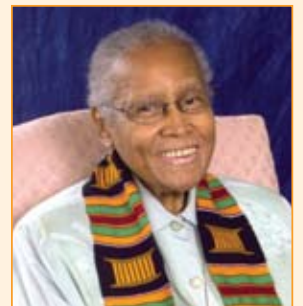
Sr. Mary Jean Ryan, Chair and CEO of SSM Health Care, is one of five recipients of the C. Jackson Grayson Distinguished Quality Pioneer Medal. The award "honors individuals who have demonstrated pioneering leadership in the application of quality philosophy, methods and tools in education, healthcare, public service and not-for-profit organizations to foster the progress of society."



Sr. Mary Jean also received recognition as one of the Top St. Louis Caregivers in the February 20, 2009, issue of the *St. Louis Business Journal*.

And for the seventh consecutive year, Sr. Mary Jean has been named one of the 100 Most Powerful People in Healthcare by *Modern Healthcare Magazine*.

Sr. Antona Ebo has often had the opportunity to share her life and experience with young people. In April, she was invited to speak on civil rights to students at De La Salle High School in



Portland, Oregon. She also spoke on the opening day of school at Hales High School in Chicago, a school made up entirely of African-American males; she urged them to use their gifts and to stay in school. She also spoke at showings of *Sisters of Selma* in the St. Louis area, including St. Ann's Elementary School in Normandy and Grace Lutheran School in north St. Louis County.

Sr. Angelita Terrio was honored August 27 for her twenty years of faithful and loving care for the residents and families



of Villa Marie Senior Care in Jefferson City. Sr. Angie is stepping down from full-time director of pastoral care but will continue to serve on a volunteer basis. Sr. Mary

Helen Stokes, SSND, will assume full-time responsibility for Villa Marie's Pastoral Care Department.

Sr. Kathleen Buchheit was named Director of Mission Integration for SSM Health Care St. Louis in June. She works with mission leaders and Mission Awareness Teams to help integrate mission into the workplace. Sr. Kathy previously served as Director of Mission Integration for SSM



St. Joseph Health Center in St. Charles as well as the SSM St. Louis regional mission resource.

Continue Courageously, a 45-minute documentary created by Tom Barry and Suzy Farren of SSM Health Care and featuring



thirty-one Franciscan Sisters of Mary, was chosen as "Most Inspiring Documentary" by the St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase. The video

premiered at the Tivoli Theatre in St. Louis on Tuesday, July 21. *Continue Courageously* tells the story of the history and mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary as shared by the sisters who served in the SSM Health Care system.



The Franciscan Sisters of Mary are also featured in the *Women & Spirit* exhibit created by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, which focuses on the extraordinary contributions of Catholic sisters to the history of the United States. The exhibit is currently scheduled to travel throughout the country (Cincinnati, Dallas, Washington, D.C., New York City, and Dubuque).

Congratulations

**Our 2009
Franciscan Sisters
of Mary Jubilarians**

80 years
in religious life
PEARL

70 years
in religious life
CARNELIAN

Mary Theodora Hoff



60 years
in religious life
DIAMOND

Kathleen Mary Maloney



50 years
in religious life
GOLD

Patricia Haarmann



Margaret Ann Jackson



Marita Anne Marrah



Priscilla Weber



Mary Jeanice Speidel



Mariella Stenger



Mary Cornelia Immegart



Mary Jacqueline Nelson



Gertrude Fruchtl



Mary Cecilia Pribil



Transitions

Sr. Claire Marie Borst

December 15, 1928 – June 21, 2009

Claire Marie Borst was born December 15, 1928, in Delphos, Kansas, one of six children born to Louis W. and Helen (Holly) Borst. When she was 12, the family moved to California. They first visited St. Louis to see Claire's sister, Sr. Aloysius Marie, who had joined the Sisters of St. Mary when Claire Marie was 3.

On June 28, 1946, Claire Marie entered the Sisters of St. Mary, who in 1987 became the Franciscan Sisters of Mary. She received the name Sr. Mary Cordelle; she professed her final vows on February 11, 1952. She earned a B.S. in Medical Record Science from Saint Louis University in 1955.

From 1948 to 1980 she served as supervisor of Medical Records at St. Mary's Health Center and St. Mary's Infirmary, St. Louis; St. Eugene's Hospital, Dillon, South Carolina; and St. Clare's Hospital, Baraboo, Wisconsin.

In 1979 Sr. Claire Marie discerned a call to pastoral care. She studied Clinical Pastoral Education at Williamsport Hospital in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and St. Francis Hospital in La Crosse, Wisconsin. She provided pastoral care at St. Clare's Hospital and Jefferson Meadows Care Center in Baraboo until 2004. She never regretted her decision.

Sr. Claire Marie said, "I hope that it can be said of me when I die: She chose life and risked in order to be able to live her life to the fullest. She died knowing that she tried and, with God's help, persevered and grew in His love."



On Sunday, June 21, 2009, after faithfully serving God as a sister for nearly sixty-three years, she joined her beloved Spouse in eternity.

"God indeed is my Savior; I am confident and unafraid."
(Isaiah 12:2)

Sr. Mary Christina Wiederholt

December 1, 1913 – July 5, 2009

Mary Elizabeth Wiederholt was born on a farm in Nodaway County about two miles east of Conception, Missouri, on December 1, 1913, the oldest of four children born to George Frank and Dorothy Theresa (Miller) Wiederholt. Her father died in 1918 when she was 5; her mother eventually married John Wirth.

When her best friend, Christina Kimmet, entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville, Missouri, Mary Elizabeth persuaded her mother to let her enter also. She joined the order on March 4, 1930. She received the name Sr. Mary Christina, and she pronounced final vows on October 4, 1935. She attended St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing in Maryville and became an RN in 1935. (In 1987 the Sisters of St. Francis reunited with the Sisters of St. Mary to become the Franciscan Sisters of Mary.)

She served as supervisor for medical/surgical and obstetrics departments at St. Francis Hospital in Maryville; St. Elizabeth Hospital in Hannibal, Missouri; and St. Mary Hospital in Nebraska City, Nebraska. From 1977 to 1979 she served as assistant administrator for St. Francis Hospital and superior of Mount Alverno Convent.

After retiring in 1986, she lived seven years at St. Mary's Ringling Convent in Baraboo, Wisconsin, then moved to St. Mary of the Angels, St. Louis.

She is known—and beloved—for the beautiful boxes she crocheted using greeting cards. For decades she created boxes for the congregation's jubilarians using their jubilee cards—a unique and lovely remembrance.

Early Sunday morning, July 5, 2009, she joined her Lord and Creator for all eternity.

**"God is faithful . . .
Blessed be the name of
our God."**



Peace Prayer of St. Francis

*Lord, make me an instrument
of your peace.*

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

*Divine Master, grant that I may not so
much seek to be consoled as to console;*

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying

that we are born to eternal life.

Sr. Marie Charles Weber

March 11, 1915 – August 29, 2009

Emma Mary Weber was born March 11, 1915, in St. Charles, Missouri, to Edward Leo and Regina (Borgmeyer) Weber, one of fourteen children, seven girls and seven boys.

Offered a position by Sr. Mary Benedicta Kuyven, Emma worked at St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Charles for two years, then in 1934 chose to join the Sisters of St. Mary, now known as the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, receiving the name Sr. Marie Charles. She made her final vows January 29, 1940.

She served in housekeeping and laundry at St. Francis Hospital in Blue Island, Illinois, and in the laundry back in St. Louis. For many years she cared for elder sisters in St. Mary's Infirmary and in Our Lady of Victories at St. Mary of the Angels Convent in St. Louis. She lived by the words of Mother Teresa of Calcutta: "God doesn't look at what or how much we do, but with how much love we do it."

After a broken ankle limited her mobility, Sr. Marie Charles beautifully painted ceramic trees and other items for convent craft fairs. She generously gave of herself and her talents, which included cross-stitch, quilting, and embroidery. Fun-loving and kind-hearted, she made a wonderful Santa Claus at convent Christmas parties.

A Franciscan and a farm girl at heart, she loved nature and fishing. Through the years she stayed close to family. As a resident of Our Lady of Victories, she prayed for the needs of the congregation, her family, the church, and the world.

After a long, faithful life of 94 years, Sr. Marie Charles was called home on August 29, 2009.



**"God doesn't look at
what or how much we
do, but with how much
love we do it."
(Mother Teresa of
Calcutta)**

Sr. Dorothy Rufkahr

November 20, 1919 – September 6, 2009

Dorothy Catherine Slattery was born November 20, 1919, in Dardenne, Missouri, the fifth of 10 children (8 girls, 2 boys) born to John and Mary Agnes (Dorais) Slattery. In 1929, her parents sold their farm and moved to St. Charles.

In 1944 Dorothy married a soldier, Omar Rufkahr; on March 24, 1945, he was killed in action and buried in the U.S. Military Cemetery in the village of Margraten, Maastricht, in the Netherlands.

She learned of the Sisters of St. Mary from her sister Ann, who worked at St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Charles. She entered the order on July 1, 1946. She received the name Sr. Mary Sharon, reflecting Mary's title "Rose of Sharon, Mystical Rose." She professed final vows on February 11, 1952. Her sister Melba (Slattery) entered just weeks after she did.

Her accounting and business experience made her a great asset in the admitting and business offices at SSM hospitals in St. Louis, Kansas City, Baraboo, Madison, and Blue Island.

After earning her bachelor's in philosophy and psychology in 1963 from Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin, she began work in personnel. She served as Director of Personnel at St. Mary's Hospital in St. Louis, in the SSM Central Office, and at the Motherhouse. For many years her kind heart and ready smile eased the way for new and veteran employees. She retired in 1994, staying busy with the prayer program and volunteer work.

On her trip to Europe and the Holy Land with her sister Melba in 1979 she visited her husband's grave for the first time. She later visited Medjugorje, Italy, and Lourdes.



Her trust in the Lord, her "Yes" to God, remained constant throughout her life. On Sunday, September 6, 2009, this "little country girl at heart" answered in faith the call to join her Beloved for eternity.

"Rejoice and be glad."
(Matthew 5:12)

Sr. Mary Wilbur McKenzie

May 26, 1920 – October 2, 2009

Katherine McKenzie was born in Leopoldis, Missouri, on May 26, 1920, one of seven children (five boys, two girls) born to William and Elizabeth (Hogan) McKenzie.

When she was 14, a back problem brought her to St. Mary's Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin, where her aunt, Sr. Mary Bernadette Hogan, SSM, was administrator. Another aunt and a cousin, Srs. Mary Irene Hogan and Edward Marie Franklin, were also members of the congregation.

Katherine decided to join the Sisters of St. Mary (which in 1987 reunited with the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville, Missouri, to become the Franciscan Sisters of Mary). She entered on August 11, 1944. She received the name Sr. Mary Wilbur; she requested the name in memory of her brother Wilbur, who died in the armed forces in 1944. She professed final vows February 11, 1950.

She worked in the dining room and dormitories at St. Mary of the Angels Convent, at St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Charles, and at the convent for Firmin Desloge Hospital (now Saint Louis University Hospital) until 1973, when she left to serve in the convent at St. Mary's Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. In 1984 she also took on the role of sacristan until she returned to St. Louis in 1998.

While her eyesight was a continuing problem, her internal vision was clear. She continued to walk with her walker, and she took part faithfully in the intercessory prayer ministry.

Early Friday morning, October 2, 2009, after a massive stroke had earlier left her immobilized, her Lord called Sr. Mary Wilbur home for all eternity.



"For all things I give thanks and praise."

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Gifts Received January 1, 2009–June 30, 2009

Thank you to all our generous donors!

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*With thanks for the care she received in her illness
and the beautiful memorial services*

Mr. Henry E. Borst, Jo, and Sr. Jude

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through a tax-deductible
contribution.**

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Franciscan Sisters of Mary

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In memory of Mary Louise Mayer, FSM

*We all appreciate the excellent care that
was given to our aunt. God bless!*

Ms. Margaret L. Smith and Family (Sisters)

Presence

Hospitality

Compassion

*We're the Franciscan Sisters of Mary,
Standing with those who need us most.*

In memory of Mary Felicia McGalloway, FSM

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In memory of my sweet aunt,

Mary Melania Myers, FSM

Remembering her lifetime of faith and service

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In honor of my sister Ruth on her 93rd birthday
Ms. Phyllis L. Clinton

*In honor of Stephen Eckstein and
Alanna Dawn Runge, on their marriage*
Mr. and Mrs. Walter R. Widmer

In honor of my daughter, Joanne Ericksen
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In honor of Mary Theodora Hoff, FSM
On her Carnelian Jubilee
Ms. Irene A. Havermann

In honor of Evelyn Marie Peterman, FSM
Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Light, Jr.

*In honor of my dearest friend, Mary Jane,
An inspiration and guide all my life*
Ed

In honor of the sisters in Our Lady of Victories
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In honor of Rose Ann Poetz, FSM
On her birthday
Mr. Richard J. Krull

In honor of Mary Cecilia Pribil, FSM
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has a special need,
please let us know.

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In thanksgiving for support and prayer for 46 years

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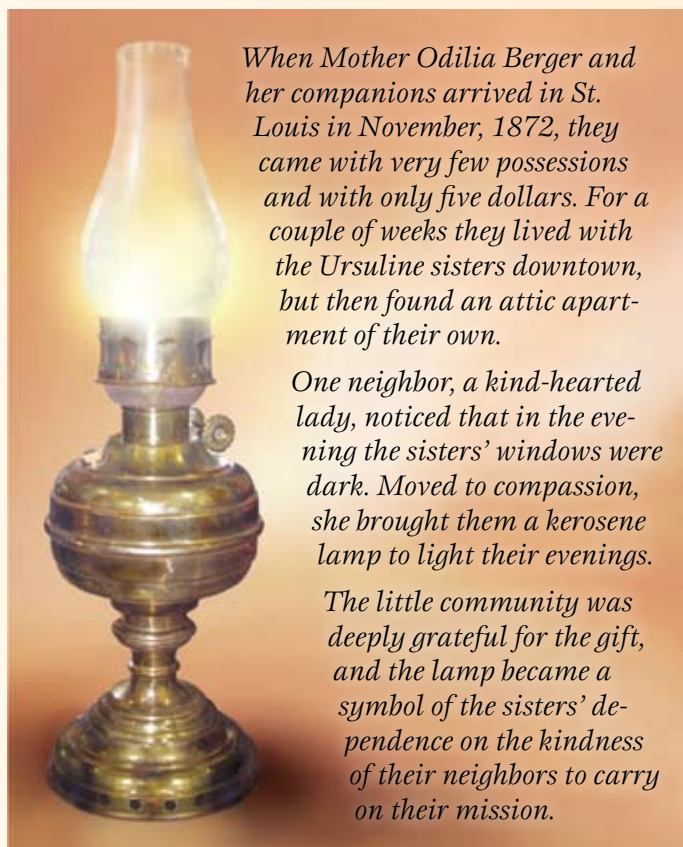
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When Mother Odilia Berger and her companions arrived in St. Louis in November, 1872, they came with very few possessions and with only five dollars. For a couple of weeks they lived with the Ursuline sisters downtown, but then found an attic apartment of their own.

One neighbor, a kind-hearted lady, noticed that in the evening the sisters' windows were dark. Moved to compassion, she brought them a kerosene lamp to light their evenings.

The little community was deeply grateful for the gift, and the lamp became a symbol of the sisters' dependence on the kindness of their neighbors to carry on their mission.

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*As Franciscan Sisters of Mary,
we live the Gospel as sister to all.
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.*