

Franciscan Voices

Living and Promoting Active Nonviolence and Peacemaking | June 2021

In Memoriam - Sister Kathleen Cleary

Sister Kathleen Cleary, who was so fondly loved by her family, friends, and students, passed away on April 24, 2021, at The Alverno in Clinton, Iowa. Private services were held at The Canticle.

Kathleen Irene Cleary was born October 23, 1940, in Columbus, Ohio, the eldest of twelve children of Patrick Joseph and Ruth Mae (Ware) Cleary. She was baptized at Holy Name Church, Columbus, Ohio, on November 24, 1940. She had three brothers, Patrick, Philip John, and Anthony Edward; and eight sisters, Mary Nell, Marjorie, Charla, Teresa, Sheila, Ruth Ann, Molly, and Emma Lucretia.

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent, Clinton, Iowa, on September 8, 1958, and received the name Mary Philip at her reception on June 15, 1959. She later resumed her baptismal name. She made her first profession on August 12, 1961, and her final profession on August 12, 1964.



**Sister Kathleen
Cleary**

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Unfolding the Future - 2021 Chapter



Chapter Theme

Our 2021 Chapter was held May 10 through 14 to set direction for the next four years. Chapter is a time when we come together, along with our Sojourners and Associates, to have deep conversations about our life, mission, and future. Catherine Bertrand, SSND, a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, facilitated.

We reaffirmed our mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking and our charism of ongoing conversion. We committed to unfolding the future by:

- Developing our understanding of and strengthening our witness to our corporate stands which address the death penalty, nuclear disarmament, immigration reform, human trafficking, care of creation, and basic human rights and income inequality;

- Growing in our awareness that “I” is within the “We”
 - recognizing each individual’s uniqueness
 - affirming diversity and connectedness, inclusive of all God’s Creation
 - willingness to use our gifts for the common good;
- Strengthening relationships and collaboration with Sisters, Sojourners, Associates, employees, and others aligned with our mission;
- Creating sacred spaces for reconciliation and repair of harm on multiple levels;
- Ensuring the future of the Franciscan Peace Center; providing resources, guidance, and expanding networks;
- Authorizing the next Leadership Team to explore and recommend possible governance and leadership options, in consultation with community members, to enable making decisions together for our future.

Additionally, we affirmed a statement in response to racial injustice, issued in June 2020, that pledged

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In Memoriam continued...

Kathleen completed elementary, middle, and the first two years of high school at Catholic schools in Colorado prior to graduating from Mount St. Clare Academy in 1958. After completing course work at Mount St. Clare College, and taking summer courses at Creighton University, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education at Marycrest College, Davenport, Iowa. She later completed a Master of Arts degree in Religious Education at The University of Seattle, Seattle, Washington, and a Master of Science degree in Counseling & Psychology from California Baptist University, Riverside, California. She held an Iowa Professional Teaching Certificate.

Sister Kathleen began her ministry as a first- and second-grade teacher at St. Mary's School in Carrollton, Missouri, where she served from 1961-1969, and was director of the Mount St. Clare Preschool for the next eight years. For the remainder of her active ministry, she was missioned in California. She taught primary grade students at St. Margaret Mary School in Chino, California, from 1978-1986, and then ministered at St. Catherine of Alexandria School in Riverside from



Sister Kathleen surrounded by students of St. Margaret Mary School in Chino, California, showing love and support before her departure to Iowa in 2019.

1988-1993. She returned to Chino in 1993 and served as librarian at St. Margaret Mary School for the next twenty-six years. For several of those years, she also held the positions of school counselor and assistant principal.

Sister Kathleen retired to The Canticle in Clinton, Iowa, in November 2019 and moved to The Alverno in July 2020. She continued to minister to everyone around her through her cheerful spirit, her positive attitude,

and her openness to all she met.

Sister Kathleen was preceded in death by her parents; her sister, Charla; her brother-in-law, Robert Holmes; as well as her great-aunts, Clinton Franciscan Sisters Brendan, Winefride, and Mother Regis Cleary.

She is survived by her brothers, Patrick (Chris), Philip John (Jill), and Anthony Edward (Joyce) Cleary; and her sisters, Mary Nell Cleary, Marjorie Holmes, Teresa Margiotti, Sheila (Gary) Saxton, Ruth Ann (Thomas) Marsh, Molly Cleary, and Emma Lucretia Foster; nieces and nephews; and the Sisters of St. Francis with whom she shared life for over 62 years.

Newly-Designed Website Launched

Our website — www.clintonfranciscans.com — has been completely redesigned. Launched on April 23, the site brings a fresh new look with improved functionality and enhanced content. It also clearly defines the congregation's charism and mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking.

"Getting a new website has been a highly-anticipated project for us," said Amanda Eberhart, Director of Communications and Development. "The site is easier to navigate and more user-friendly. It is now mobile-responsive, a feature our previous site did not offer visitors. The website will detect the type of device being used and adjust the layout accordingly."

The website also features an ADA-compliant accessibility widget that facilitates ongoing functionality for users with additional needs. The accessibility menu offers options for color contrast, highlight links, text size and spacer, line height, legible fonts, larger cursor,

and the ability to stop animations. "This tool is important to inclusivity on the web and reinforces our commitment to providing an accessible user experience," added Eberhart.

Visitors are encouraged to explore the website and sign up for publications available from the congregation and Franciscan Peace Center, which offer various ways to keep abreast of the community and its ministries.



Stay up-to-date on our virtual and in-person events by viewing the event calendar!

Sister Mary Lou Carlson Retires

The start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 brought with it a lot of unknowns. With the “stay home” order issued in California, Sister Mary Lou Carlson found herself retired from full-time ministry.



Sister Mary Lou Carlson

Sister Mary Lou ministered in the Diocese of San Diego for 35 years. Since 2006, she served as the Director of Outreach Ministries for the Church of the Resurrection in Escondido.

“What I enjoyed most was helping people discover how much God loves them unconditionally,” she said. Some of her duties included setting up

communion delivery to the homebound, visiting the sick, reaching out to persons on the prayer list, coordinating the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and adult confirmation groups, facilitating weekly *Exploring Scripture* Bible study groups, and working with the Interfaith organization that provided many services for persons in need.

She was one of six sisters to serve on the Sisters’ Council in the San Diego Diocese. “Even during the pandemic, I was able to join Zoom meetings to connect with Bishop McElroy. Our Council offered online workshops on racism for the sisters, and had a great celebration in

April 2021 for all the Jubilarians in the Diocese.”

Over the last year, Sister Mary Lou has continued to stay focused on active nonviolence and peacemaking by participating in online sessions, including offerings from the Franciscan Peace Center and Catholic Theological Union, as well as classes on Franciscanism from Sister Ramona Miller, a Rochester Franciscan. “I have done a lot of reading in spirituality and scripture. My favorites are the daily articles of Fr. Richard Rohr and Sr. Joan Chittister.”

Sister Mary Lou entered the Sisters of St. Francis in 1964 and began her ministry as an elementary teacher in Cameron and St. Louis, MO; Oak Lawn, IL; and Maysville, KY. During the 1980s and 90s, she served as a pastoral minister in parishes in Kentucky and California. She also served as a staff member at San Luis Rey Retreat Center in California, providing retreats and spiritual guidance.

“As a recovering work-a-holic, I am now listening to uncover whatever God wants me to use my energy for,” she said. Sister Mary Lou moved back to The Canticle in Clinton, Iowa, on May 5, 2021. “I enjoy being with my sisters again. I love being with people in person! We pray together, watch movies together, and share meals that I don’t have to cook,” she added with a laugh.

Franciscan Peace Center Highlights

Trafficking Free Zones

The Mayors of Clinton, Iowa, and Fulton, Illinois, recently signed proclamations designating their cities *Trafficking Free Zones*, a program created by the [United States Institute Against Human Trafficking](#) and promoted by the Franciscan Peace Center. Both cities were the first in their states to publicly and officially declare that human trafficking will not be tolerated in their communities.

The Fulton Police Department was the first law enforcement agency in Illinois to train all of its officers in effectively identifying and responding to crimes of human trafficking.

Fulton Mayor Mike Ottens and Police Chief Nick Neblung with the signed *Trafficking Free Zone* proclamation.



Additionally, the Sisters of St. Francis designated all its property as *Trafficking Free Zones*.

Trafficking Free Zones help communities come together to arrest and prosecute sex buyers instead of the victims who are being sold, educate officials and citizens about the crime of sex trafficking, and use technology to reduce demand. Lori Freudenberg, of the Franciscan Peace Center, explains more in this [radio interview](#).

Eliminating Nuclear Weapons

The Sisters of St. Francis and the Franciscan Peace Center have signed on to Pax Christi Metro DC’s campaign to urge President Biden and members of Congress to take prompt action to eliminate nuclear weapons. This campaign supports our corporate stand of opposing the continued maintenance, research, development, and threatened use of the United States arsenal of nuclear weapons. Pax Christi Metro DC will publish a full-page ad in the National Catholic Reporter on June 11. View the full text of the sign-on [HERE](#).

Exploring Intersections Webinar Series

A livestreamed conversation series, titled "[Exploring Intersections: Catholic Sisters on Racism, Migration and Climate](#)," continues each month focusing on a different social issue and exploring how it intersects with racism, migration, and climate in a thought-provoking and engaging conversation.

Join us on **Wednesday, June 9, at 3:00 p.m. (CT)** as panelists address: How do we deal with our country's racist history and the long-term consequences? How do we support racial justice today and work to become an anti-racist society? How does racial justice intersect with the critical issues of migration and climate we also face?

Additional upcoming monthly episodes will include:

July 14 - Ending Human Trafficking

August 11 - Eliminating Gun Violence

September 8 - Economic Justice



Registration is free and open to the public. For a complete list of episodes, visit www.exploringintersections.org.

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listening to the experience and wisdom of people of color, learning about racism in all its dimensions (systemic, institutional, and cultural), working in solidarity with people of color for radical reforms to racialized systems, and recommitting to nonviolence as the way to effect systemic, societal, and personal change.

A public, livestreamed concert by singer/songwriter Sara Thomsen was held on May 12. The concert was in celebration of, and in gratitude for, the outgoing 2016-2021 leadership team members Sisters Janice Cebula, Marilyn Huegerich, and Kathleen Holland, as well as the entire community's commitment to the mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking.

The 2021-2025 leadership team was announced on May 14, and includes Sister Janice Cebula, president; Sister Marilyn Huegerich, vice president; and Sister Ruth E. Westmoreland, councilor.

Sister Janice has served as president since 2016. She also served in this capacity from 2004 to 2012. From 2013 to 2016, she was the U.S. Liaison for Global Sisters Report. Prior to entering congregational leadership, she was a staff attorney with Legal Aid of Western Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri, and was associated with Holy

Family Catholic Worker House in Kansas City.

Sister Marilyn has served as vice president since 2016. She also served eight years as president and twelve years as councilor. When not in leadership, she ministered in education, both as principal and teacher of junior high and high school students.

Sister Ruth E. served as canonical councilor from 2012 to 2016. Previously, she served as director of Café on Vine in Davenport, Iowa. Other ministries include serving as a teacher, childcare worker, parish worker, Academic Dean and Vice President of Mount St. Clare College, and Special Assistant for Development for Boysville and the Ennis Center for Children in Michigan.

The 2021-2025 leadership team will officially be installed during a ceremony on Monday, June 14, at 6:30 p.m.



2021-2025 Leadership Team: Sisters Janice Cebula, Marilyn Huegerich, and Ruth E. Westmoreland



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