

Franciscan Voices

Living and Promoting Active Nonviolence and Peacemaking | March 2022

— In Memoriam - Sister Yvonne Gehant —

Sister Yvonne Gehant, who ministered as teacher and principal, served in various roles at Mount St. Clare College, and as General Secretary for the Sisters of St. Francis, passed away on December 24, 2021, at The Alverno in Clinton, IA. Sister Yvonne was a Clinton Franciscan for 74 years.

She was born October 16, 1928, in West Brooklyn, IL, the fourth of seven children of Albert Laurent and Hazel Marie (Lally) Gehant. She had six brothers: Robert, Eugene, Sylvan, John, Edward, and Roy.

She was baptized Joan Marie on October 28, 1928, at St. Mary Church in West Brooklyn. She attended St. Mary Grade School and West Brooklyn High School. She transferred to Mount St. Clare Academy for her senior year, graduating in 1946.

Sister Yvonne attended Mount St. Clare College for one year prior to entering the congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent, Clinton, IA, on

September 8, 1947. She received the name Mary Yvonne at her reception on June 19, 1948. She made her first profession on August 12, 1950, and her final profession on August 12, 1953.

Sister Yvonne received an A. A. degree from Mount St. Clare College and a B. A. in Education from San Diego College for Women. She held an M. A. in Education from Loyola University, Los Angeles, CA. She did postgraduate study at De Paul University and the School of the Art Institute, Chicago, IL; Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.; Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS; and the College of St. Joseph, Cincinnati, OH. She held



Sr. Yvonne Gehant
1928 - 2021

In Memoriam continued on page 2

— In Memoriam - Sister Paschal Hocum —



Sr. Paschal Hocum
1930 - 2022

Sister Paschal Hocum, who ministered as a math instructor and in various roles at the Franciscan School of Theology, passed away on February 10, 2022, at The Alverno in Clinton, IA. Sister Paschal was a Clinton Franciscan for 63 years.

She was born on February 5, 1930, in Minneapolis, MN, the third of four children of George Allen and Helen Catherine (Daggett) Hocum.

She had one brother, George, and two sisters, Sarah "Sally" and Patricia.

She was baptized Mary Louise on March 2, 1930, at St. Thomas Church in Minneapolis, MN. She attended five elementary schools in California and graduated from Ramona Convent High School in Alhambra, CA. She obtained a B.A. in mathematics and English from the College of Holy Names, Oakland, CA, in 1952. Before coming to Clinton, she was employed as a mathematician in the space program at Aerojet-General Corporation in California.

Mary Louise joined the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent, Clinton, IA, on October 4, 1958, and received the name Mary Paschal at her reception on June 15, 1959. She made first profession of vows on August 12, 1961, and final profession on August 12, 1964.

In Memoriam continued on page 2

— In Memoriam continued...

Sister Yvonne Gehant continued...

Professional Teaching Certificates for Iowa, Illinois, and California.

Sister Yvonne spent many of her 58 years of active ministry teaching students at the junior high level. She began teaching sixth graders at St. Francis de Paula School, Chicago, IL. She later taught in Riverside, CA; Rochelle and Macomb, IL; and Sacred Heart School in Clinton, serving also as principal for twelve of those years. For an additional 28 years, she served in various capacities at Mount St. Clare College. She was an English instructor, Business Office Manager and assistant in the office of the Academic Dean, the Bookstore, and the Flavian Academic Support Center.

In 1990, Sister Yvonne was appointed to the position of General Secretary of the Sisters of St. Francis. She served

in that capacity until 2008 when she retired from full-time ministry.

Blessed with an active mind and a keen sense of humor, she continued a ministry of prayer and presence with the sisters who shared her life, and she especially enjoyed keeping in touch with her family.

Sister Yvonne lived at The Canticle from the time it opened in 1997 until she moved to The Alverno on December 10, 2021, and remained at The Alverno until her death on December 24, 2021.

Sister Yvonne was preceded in death by her parents and five brothers. She is survived by one brother, two sisters-in-law, numerous cousins, nieces and nephews, and the Sisters of St. Francis.



Sister Paschal Hocum continued...

Sister Paschal began her ministry as a math instructor at Mount St. Clare College and Academy. During the next seventeen years, besides spending one year teaching math and science at St. Justin the Martyr School in St. Louis, MO, she alternately served as head of the Mount St. Clare College math department and pursued further education.

She earned two master's degrees - a Master of Arts in Teaching Mathematics from the University of Detroit, Detroit, MI, in 1964, and a Master of Theological Studies from Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, CA, in 1982. She received National Science Foundation grants at universities in Milwaukee, WI; Denver and Colorado Springs, CO; and at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. She was a recipient of the Shell Merit Fellowship at Stanford University as well as the Carnegie-Mellon grant for mathematical studies at the University of Iowa. She also completed a Spiritual Direction Certificate program at Mercy Center, Burlingame, CA.

After graduation from the Franciscan School of Theology, she spent one year teaching math at St. Anthony Seminary in Santa Barbara, CA, followed by two years as Pastoral Associate at St. Paul's Parish in Macomb, IL, and as a part-time mathematics faculty member at Western Illinois University.

In 1985, she was invited to return to the Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, CA, where she served for nineteen years, primarily as Registrar. She initiated the first spiritual formation program for lay students in 2000 and became Director of Spiritual Formation. After retiring from her full-time position in 2002, she remained another two years as Director of Alumni Affairs, spiritual director, and assistant to the Registrar.

She returned to Clinton and served as Vice President of the Sisters of St. Francis from 2004 to 2008 and as administrator of The Canticle for three years. During the years she was retired at The Canticle, she led book discussions for the sisters and assisted with retreats and days of recollection on Franciscan spirituality. She moved to The Alverno on April 6, 2021, and remained there until her death on February 10, 2022.

Sister Paschal's life and ministry were marked by her welcoming manner and joyful presence. Her infectious laughter and spirit of concern for others and all creatures will be greatly missed.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother, George; and sister, Patricia. She is survived by her sister, Sarah "Sally" Lindenskov, of Pico Rivera, CA; many nieces and nephews; and the Sisters of St. Francis.

— Kryszak Joins Franciscan Peace Center Team —

We are pleased to announce Jennifer Kryszak as our new Director of Strategic Planning for the Franciscan Peace Center, a ministry of the Clinton Franciscans.

Jennifer will facilitate the evolution of, and create a long-term direction for, the Center. She joins a three-person team with Laura Anderson, Director of Digital Outreach and Advocacy, and the Director of Programming to be hired.

Jennifer attended Augustana College in Rock Island, IL, for her undergraduate degree and has a M.A. in Theology from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA, and a Ph.D. in Religion from Duke University in Durham, NC. She has an extensive experience teaching a wide variety of ages and cultural backgrounds, a thorough knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching, and a demonstrated commitment to social justice and systemic change.

Most recently she served as a tutor at the Huntington Learning Center in Barrington, IL. She is finishing a term as an Instructor of Religion at Augustana College and previously was an Assistant Professor of Theological and Ministerial Studies at St. Thomas University in Miami Gardens, FL. Her upcoming article, "Sustainable Charisms: Religious Communities and the Commitment

to Sustainability," focuses on the Sinsinawa Dominicans and the Congregation of St. Joseph. As Jennifer states, "The commitment of Catholic Sisters has greatly impacted movements for justice and peace, including the environment and sustainability. It is a privilege to join the Clinton Franciscans in their commitment to active nonviolence. I look forward to expanding people's knowledge of the Sisters' mission so that we, as a society, can create movements for systemic change rooted in peace and justice."

Jennifer's appointment to the Center will support the organization's work on social justice issues, including the corporate stands on the death penalty, nuclear disarmament, immigration reform, human trafficking, care of creation, and basic human rights and income inequality. She came highly recommended for her ability to work with a variety of people and her keen eye for the future.

Welcome, Jennifer!



Jennifer Kryszak

Employment Opportunity — Director of Programming

We are seeking a full-time Director of Programming for the Franciscan Peace Center. Join a three-person team to help advance a world based on social justice, equity, a healthy environment, and peacebuilding. The primary responsibility of the Director of Programming is to develop creative and innovative on-site and online programs. Learn more by visiting our website at www.clintonfranciscans.com. Application deadline: April 15, 2022

— Laudato Si' Action Platform Update —

Last fall, Sisters, Sojourners, and Associates committed to being a part of the global Laudato Si' Action Platform movement toward a more just and sustainable world, working collaboratively to reduce our impact on the planet and in solidarity with those on the periphery of society.

After much careful consideration, the Laudato Si' Action Plan committee has created a comprehensive plan based on the input that was collected at our Fall Gathering last October. The proposed plan outlines specific actions for the community to undertake during the coming year to help achieve key sustainability and

advocacy goals. The plan has been sent to the Clinton Franciscan Family for affirmation. Once the plan has been affirmed by the community, we will release the plan to the public and move forward with implementation.

In furtherance of our mission and commitment to active nonviolence, we will continually be guided by, and advocate for, nonviolence in all efforts to protect and heal the earth and all of creation in our journey to a Laudato Si' future.



LAUDATO SI'
Action Platform

—Franciscan Peace Connection to Celebrate 10 Years —

The [Franciscan Peace Connection](#) (FPC), a ministry of the Sisters of St. Francis located in La Mesa, CA, will be celebrating its 10th year of outreach. Co-founded by Sister LaVern Olberding and Sojourner Julie Fawley in 2012, the FPC initiatives focus on spreading what is known about nonviolence and peacemaking by connecting and collaborating with others.

"It has been an affirming and humbling experience to hear and read the comments offered by participants and volunteers who were, or are, involved in our programming," exclaimed Sister LaVern. "They share their gratitude for lessons learned, relationships kindled, and the new awakenings that emerged after they started attending one or more activities," she added.

***"They share their gratitude for lessons learned, relationships kindled, and the new awakenings that emerged after they started attending one or more activities."** - Sister LaVern Olberding*

The single most favorite event each year was the **Sister-to-Sister Accessories Party** held before Mother's Day. A gym was filled with countless tables and racks of clothing, hats, jewelry, purses, scarves, shoes, and memorabilia. The donations came from all over the country. "The fifty or more shoppers were women living in recovery homes, halfway houses, and street tents. It was an opportunity for them to shop, free of charge, for themselves or other women in their lives," explained Sister LaVern. The volunteers who worked for days to pull these events together also numbered in the fifties with new faces each year.

Moving in a new direction about four years ago, FPC volunteers helped out at two churches providing **outreach on Saturdays** to individuals living on the margins. "We became part of the team that provided our outdoor sisters and brothers with the opportunity to enjoy a hot brunch and socializing, a shower, shopping, a haircut, and networking," said Sister LaVern. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the amount of contact and extent of services were drastically curtailed for more than 18 months. Sister LaVern said, "It felt like a family that had been forced to



separate without the option of visiting rights."

The most frequently mentioned sequential program the FPC has sponsored is the bi-monthly **Interfaith Dialogue and Dessert**. FPC co-sponsored these gatherings at various worship centers. Participants were Baha'i, Buddhist, Catholic, Christian, Jewish,

Latter-day Saints, Muslim, and None. Regrettably, the gatherings have not been held since COVID became such a health threat.

The longest running FPC program — at least eight years — began as a bi-weekly **Energy Tool Chest** class which focused on using personal energy more effectively. The class originally met at the Franciscan Peace Connection. "When we outgrew that space, we moved to a church library for several years and then to a private outdoor space. Thanks to the pandemic, we have become a Zoom group that now has participants from Iowa and Tennessee, and soon to be Missouri," said Sister LaVern.

The FPC has two programming options via Zoom at the present: studying the text *A Course of Love* every Wednesday evening and gathering mindfully to 'practice the presence of God' twice a month. The core group of FPC members are also involved with Pax Christi - San Diego, which meets monthly on Zoom.

Through the FPC's sponsorship with the [Peace Resource Center - San Diego](#), of which Sister LaVern is President of the Board of Directors, the FPC is involved with Kingian Nonviolence, peace and justice group actions, and the newest outreach, **community dialogues**. This will be a bi-monthly evolving group of participants of varying ages and diverse beliefs, cultures, and economic and educational backgrounds. Since it will be held via Zoom for the indefinite future, you are welcome to join for one or more sessions. If you are interested, contact Sister LaVern using a method below.

"As I look back on the past ten years of ministry with the Franciscan Peace Connection, I thank all of you for your prayerful support, emails, and solidarity in Franciscan values. Peace and all good, always!," shared Sister LaVern.

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— Catholic Sisters Week: March 8-14 —

Exploring Intersections Concludes

"Navigating the Road Ahead," the final episode of [Exploring Intersections: Catholic Sisters on Racism, Migration and Climate](#), will air at 3:00 p.m. CT on **Wednesday, March 9** during Catholic Sisters Week. Host Charish Badzinski will lead a conversation with Sisters Sherri Coleman, FSM; LaDonna Manternach, BVM; and Anna Marie Reha, SSND on how the intersectionality of racism, migration, and climate affects a myriad of issues facing us today. The hour-long program will focus on what has been gleaned from our series of conversations over the past twelve months and suggestions for continuing the conversation in 2022 and beyond.

Registration is free and open to the public. Register online at www.exploringintersections.org.

The Sisters of St. Francis were one of 24 congregations in four states - representing Leadership Conference for Women Religious (LCWR) Region X, Communicators for St. Louis Sisters, and Sisters United News - collaborating on this webinar series in response to the [2019-2022 Assembly Resolution of LCWR](#).

Caring for Earth, Caring for You

The members of LCWR Region 4 invited us to join in celebrating Catholic Sisters Week with prayers, calls to action, social media campaigns, and more around the theme of "Caring for Earth, Caring for You."

In support of our corporate stand on [Care of Creation](#), we have accepted their invitation and will be focusing our Catholic Sisters Week activities on being faithful stewards of Creation and working to reduce our impact on the environment.



Follow us on our [Facebook](#) page for a social media takeover **March 8-14!** Each day will feature a different member of the Clinton Franciscan Family sharing how they live out caring for Earth, our common home.

— Resources for the Lenten Journey —



Lenten Cross in the Chapel Gathering Space at The Canticle

Lent is a season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday (March 2) and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday (April 14). It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.

The [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) has put together an excellent 2022 Lenten calendar that can be used for daily inspiration for your Lenten journey. You can download the calendar [HERE](#).

Another great resource to take advantage of during the season of Lent is from [Dynamic Catholic](#). Their "Best Lent Ever 2.0" series offers a daily email with two short, practical, and inspiring videos, each representing a pathway leading toward a better version of you and a closer relationship with God.

The Clinton Franciscan Family — Sisters, Sojourners, and Associates — are invited to participate in Sunday Evening Prayer during Lent, beginning March 6 for six Sundays. This year's theme will focus on the Franciscan call to conversion as seen in our corporate stands.

Members of the Clinton Franciscan Family will also be able to participate in a Lenten Day of Reflection, "Abiding with the Gift of Darkness: A Lenten Meditation," on Saturday, April 2. Sister Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM, of Dubuque, IA, will facilitate.

— Remembering Clinton Franciscan Associate —



Lydia Halbach
1938 - 2022

Lydia Halbach, a founding and long-time Associate of the Sisters of St. Francis, passed away on February 1, 2022, at The Alverno in Clinton, IA.

She was born September 13, 1938, the daughter of George LaMonte and Helen Weissenburger. She graduated from Keokuk High School in Keokuk, IA. She attended the University of Arizona and

earned her teaching degree from the University of Iowa. In Clinton, she served as a teacher at Jefferson and Longfellow Elementary Schools, retiring in 2000 after 27 years.

Lydia was one of the founding members of our Associate Partnership Program, committing just over 35 years ago on October 5, 1986. "I am striving to live in harmony with myself (spiritually and temporally), with other people, and with nature. I will endeavor to keep myself informed, and to work actively and through

prayer to maintain Franciscan values," wrote Lydia on her mutual covenant certificate.

Some of Lydia's favorite hobbies were reading and lap swimming. She also loved baseball! She served for 62 years in various roles on the Board of Directors for the Clinton Baseball Club, becoming its first woman and longest-serving director. She was also an active member of Prince of Peace Parish and served on the funeral luncheon team. She was dedicated to her community and served on countless boards for area non-profits.

She is survived by two daughters, Anne (William) Gorden and Kate (Darcy Brazen) Halbach; one granddaughter, Katie Gorden; three sisters-in-law; and several nieces and nephews.

At her request, Lydia's body has been donated to the University of Iowa for scientific purposes, her final gift of self for the benefit of others.

A memorial Mass will be held June 10 at 3:00 p.m. at Prince of Peace Church, followed by a Celebration of Life at 5:00 p.m. at the Clinton LumberKings' stadium.

— White Supremacy and American Christianity —

The past several years have brought back to the surface a deep cancer of white supremacy and white Christian nationalism in our nation. It's time we dig deeply into the Christian roots of this reality so that we can root it out of our own traditions and communities.

That's why we are excited to partner with NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice to invite you to participate in [White Supremacy and American Christianity: A Conversation with Robert P. Jones and Fr. Bryan Massingale](#), a half-day virtual conference on Saturday, April 9, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Central. You can register at the link above.

Fr. Bryan Massingale, the premiere voice on racial justice and the Catholic Church, will join Robert P. Jones, whose recent book *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*, offers

critical historical and present context for the rise of public white supremacy in the United States.

Following a conversation between these two scholars, Pulitzer Prize winning historian Marcia Chatelain will offer a response and participants will have the opportunity to engage in small group conversations.

We hope you can join us and faith-based justice advocates across the nation for this important conversation as we explore together what we can — and must — do to address white supremacy in our nation.

White Supremacy and American Christianity

Marcia Chatelain, Ph.D.
Author, Professor
Georgetown University

Fr. Bryan Massingale
Author, Professor, Senior Fellow
Fordham's Center for Ethics Education

Robert P. Jones, Ph.D.
Author, Founder & CEO
Public Religion Research Institute

Saturday, April 9, 2022
12:30 PM Eastern / 9:30 AM Pacific

Register: www.networklobby.org/uschristianityconvo



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