

Franciscan Voices

Living and Promoting Active Nonviolence and Peacemaking | June 2022

2022 Jubilarians

Four sisters celebrate their Jubilee, the anniversary of entrance into religious life, in 2022. Sisters Phyllis Morris, Marjorie Wisor, Theresa Judge, and Anne Martin Phelan have a combined 260 years of service to God's people. A celebration honoring Jubilarians from 2020 to 2022 will be held in July.

Celebrating 70 years...



**Sister Phyllis
Morris**

Sister Phyllis Morris, a native of Clinton, IA, entered in 1952, made her first profession of vows in 1955, and her final profession in 1958.

Sister Phyllis attended Mount St. Clare College, received a B.S. in Physical Science from the University of Notre Dame, and

received an M.A. in Science Education from George Peabody College. She did further study at the University of Iowa and Franciscan School of Theology as well as in three locations in Lima, Peru, for her Peruvian teaching degree and religious education certification.

She was one of four sisters who originally went to Peru in 1965 to open a school. Many years were spent in Chulucanas, Peru — first serving as principal of Santa Cruz School and later as Parish Pastoral Assistant, Director of Catechetics, Pastoral Coordinator, and Finance Coordinator.

She has also served as a teacher at St. Gerald School in Oak Lawn, IL; Garces Memorial High School in Bakersfield, CA; Danbury Catholic High School in Danbury, IA; and Mount St. Clare Academy and College.

She served two years in Portland, OR, at the Franciscan Renewal Center. During her time there, she had the opportunity to work with a ceramic artist who taught her the craft. She began a ministry of designing peace-themed ceramic art.

Sister Phyllis retired from full-time ministry in Peru in 2018. She continues her work as a ceramic artist, inspiring many through her unique designs to promote nonviolence and peacemaking.



**Sister Marjorie
Wisor**

Sister Marjorie Wisor, a native of Goose Lake, IA, entered in 1952, made her first profession of vows in 1955, and final profession in 1958.

She attended Mount St. Clare College, earned a B.A. in French from San Diego College for Women, and an M.A. in French from the Sorbonne in Paris, France. Sister Marjorie did further study at Case Western Reserve University and St. Louis University, where she received an M.A. in Religious Studies.

Sister Marjorie was a teacher at St. John's School in Victor, IA; Our Lady of Good Council School in Fonda, IA; and Sacred Heart School in Clinton.

Jubilarians continued on page 5

Emerging Future of Religious Life

What does the future hold? That is a question being discerned by congregations of women religious all over the world. As current members age, and the number of women entering religious life declines, congregations are exploring how to collaborate to find new ways of supporting religious life as demographics rapidly shift.

The *National Discernment on the Future of Religious Life* initiative was launched at the 2020 Assembly of the [Leadership Conference of Women Religious](#) (LCWR). The initiative was energized by passion for religious life and hope for its future, and focused on mission as the core purpose for sustainability.

With guidance from LCWR and focus on our [2021 Chapter Commitment Statement](#), our congregation has authorized the Leadership Team — Sisters Jan Cebula, Marilyn Huegerich, and Ruth E. Westmoreland — to explore and recommend possible governance and leadership options, in consultation with community members, to enable making decisions together for our future.

“The future is in collaboration. I have been gathering a group of leaders from small communities for the past 18-months. We have learned so much from one another!” exclaimed Sister Jan.

Since July 2021, the Leadership Team has engaged Mark Clarke of [CommunityWorks, Inc.](#), of Indianapolis, IN, to help plan next steps and the processes to move forward on the implementation of the Chapter Commitment Statement.

“Mark’s years of experience in strategic planning with other religious communities is a blessing for us,” said Sister Marilyn. “He engages us in a trustful way that moves us forward. At each



Leadership Team members with Mark Clarke

meeting we review and update a 90-day timeline.” Mark and the Leadership Team have been focusing on two parts of the Chapter Commitment Statement: 1) reorganizing the Franciscan Peace Center for its future, and 2) identifying and working on tasks that need to be done to prepare for the time when a different type of governance is needed.

Workshops related to the emerging future of religious life have been helpful in this process, too. In March, the Leadership Team attended a LCWR Region 10 meeting that focused on leadership in a time of transition. Speakers shared about their journey in forming and carrying out the planning as a collaborative, and what is required of leadership to get ready for the future. Additional presentations focused on helping sisters to downsize their possessions and identifying the work needed to inform various constituencies of key decisions.

Most recently, the Leadership Team attended LWCR’s Collaborative Leadership Hub in Chicago May 10-12. The Hub offered a prayerful context for rich sharing of experiences and collaborative creation of practical ways to support mission and promote the vitality of religious life both now and for the future.

“One of the most practical things we heard was that we need to be planning now - if we don't do it now, we will not have the wisdom of most of our members to help us,” said Sister Ruth E.

— Laudato Si' Action Plan Announced

We are pleased to announce the launch of an [action plan](#) to fulfill our commitment to the Laudato Si' Action Platform. The plan includes an ambitious schedule of events, programs, and advocacy efforts to care for one another and the Earth, as inspired by the landmark 2015 [encyclical](#) from Pope Francis.



"Our mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking is essential to bringing about the future envisioned in Laudato Si'. Understanding that all life is interdependent — what affects one, affects us all — is what guides us in working toward the protection and healing of the earth and all of creation," explained Sister Jan Cebula, President. Our initial action plan, approved by Sisters, Sojourners, and Associates, covers three focus areas: a response to the cry of the Earth, a response to the cry of the poor, and ecological spirituality.

The release of the plan coincided with Laudato Si' Week, May 22-29. A series of [daily reflections](#) from Sisters and Associates on Laudato Si' action plan objectives were shared, too. "The reflections are intended to illuminate the journey as we continue to grow in our personal and communal conversion to an integral ecology that values each aspect of God's created world," described Jennifer Kryszak, Director of Strategic Planning for the Franciscan Peace Center.

— Caring for Creation

Maintenance of the Woodlands and Prairie



The 2020 derecho paired with the continued blustery lowa winds took a toll on a section of our woodlands along Springdale Drive in Clinton. Two local tree companies — Hansen Tree Service and Foley Tree Care — were hired to remove the trees that were severely damaged, or horizontal, and their many branches covering the upright trees. The work was completed in six days and the mulch was saved to use around The Canticle grounds.

At left: Foley Tree Care uses a skid steer and forest disc mulcher attachment to clear branches and trees.

The 30-acres of prairie surrounding The Canticle in Clinton is burned every four years as part of the maintenance plan to help control invasive plants. Most prairies require periodic prescribed burns to encourage species diversity and ecological health.

On May 10, [Impact7G, Inc.](#), of North Liberty, IA, burned the prairie. Additional photos can be viewed on the Sisters of St. Francis [Facebook](#) page.



Fire spreads throughout the prairie near The Canticle.

Great Give Day

The [Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa Endowment](#) was established in 2016 to provide a lasting source of support for the mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking.

We are excited to announce \$13,463 was raised for the Endowment on this year's Great Give Day, which was held May 18.

The Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque hosts Great Give Day each year as part of its mission to strengthen local nonprofits and inspire giving. The May 18 event gave a major boost to area nonprofits by bringing in 2,453 gifts and \$347,658 for organizations across the Community Foundation's seven-county service region.

Funds from the Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa Endowment are currently being used to help alleviate homelessness in Clinton and

financially assist organizations that work with persons living in poverty or at the risk of being homeless.

"Strong nonprofits help build strong communities, and that's why supporting their work is a priority for the Community Foundation," said Peter Supple, Director of Nonprofits at the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. "Our community really shines on Great Give Day thanks to the generous donors. We appreciate everyone who contributed. Every gift makes a difference."

A record 190 organizations participated this year and the Sisters of St. Francis came in fourth place in terms of dollars raised.

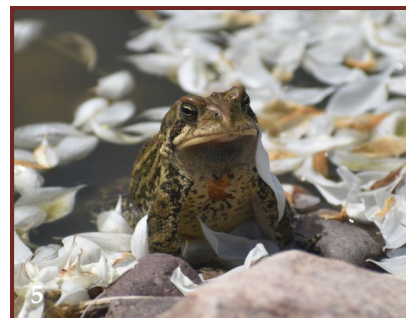


Welcome Spring!



1. Sister William McCue and kitchen employees Kathy McDermott and Stephanie Miller help plant the garden.
2. A fawn and turkey outside the administrative office.
3. A flowering tree on The Canticle grounds.
4. Tulips in bloom in a flower bed at The Canticle.
5. Bullfrog in the pond at The Canticle.

Photos by Amy Jo Peters, Amanda Eberhart, and Sister Jan Cebula



Jubilarians continued...

She taught French at Mount St. Clare College; Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg, NH; and St. Louis University. She served in the area of pastoral ministry at St. Bernard's Parish in Madison, WI; St. Paul's Parish in Mosinee, WI; and St. Thomas More Parish in Paducah, KY.

While studying in France in the late 1960s, she met the founder of L'Arche, an international federation of homes for people with developmental disabilities. After volunteering with L'Arche in Trosly, France, she worked to establish a L'Arche community in Clinton in 1974, where she served as Director until 1986.

Sister Marjorie has also served as a member of the formation team for the Sisters of St. Francis and as Director of the Carondelet Family Literacy Program in St. Louis.

She retired from full-time ministry in 2017. Currently, she oversees the library at The Canticle, plays the keyboard, and enjoys networking with the L'Arche Clinton community.

Celebrating 60 years...



Sister Theresa Judge, a native of rural Elvira, IA, entered in 1962, professed first vows in 1965, and made her final vows in 1968.

She earned her A.A. degree from Mount St. Clare College, B.A. in Education from Marycrest College, and M.A.

in English Literature from Western Illinois University.

She has primarily ministered in education, teaching at Sacred Heart School in Clinton, IA; St. Ann School in Toluca, IL; St. Gerald School in

"As women of faith, in union with Christ, we embrace this responsibility to be revealers of God's presence by our lives, and to be co-creators of a world of love, justice, and peace."

- from Rule, Constitutions, and Directives, Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa

Oak Lawn, IL; and Mount St. Clare College and its successors, The Franciscan University (of the Prairies) and Ashford University.

While serving at the collegiate level from 1976 to 2015, Sister Theresa held many roles: Resident Director, Tennis Coach, Athletic Director, Dean of Students, English Instructor, and Department Chair. She accompanied students and community members on university sponsored trips to England for many years.

She retired from full-time ministry in 2015, but continued her service on several boards in the local area. Sister Theresa currently volunteers for the Clinton Area Showboat Theatre, L'Arche Clinton, Clinton Human Rights Commission, and Clinton YWCA Racial Justice Committee.

She was appointed to the position of General Secretary for the Sisters of St. Francis in 2021, where she assists the congregation's president with official correspondence and is responsible for preserving all deeds, documents, and the seal of the congregation.

In her spare time, Sister Theresa loves to read and be a caregiver for pets in their owners' absence. She has a special bond with many furry friends in Clinton!

Sister Anne Martin Phelan, a native of Mingo, IA, entered in 1962, made her first profession in 1965, and professed final vows in 1968.

She earned her A.A. in Education from Mount St. Clare College, a B.S. in Education from Marycrest College, and an M.A. in Education from DePaul University.

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— Summer Gathering

Plans are underway for our very first in-person summer gathering with the Clinton Franciscan Family since 2019! As long as there isn't a surge of COVID-19 cases, we will celebrate life together July 13 through 16 in Clinton.

We are pleased to welcome Sister Rebecca Ann Gemma, OP, prioress of the Springfield Dominicans and President-Elect of LCWR. She will speak on, "Creating sacred spaces for reconciliation and repair of harm," a topic from our 2021 Chapter Commitment Statement.

Other presenters include Mark Clarke sharing an update of his work with us, and the Franciscan Peace Center staff sharing the work they are

undertaking in implementing the Laudato Si' action plan.

Sisters, Sojourners, and Associates

will be commissioned to their local communities and particular ministries during the annual Commissioning service on July 15.

The celebration of Jubilee for 2020, 2021, and 2022 Jubilarians will conclude the summer gathering.



2019 Summer Gathering

— Jubilee continued...



Sister Anne
Martin Phelan

Sister Anne Martin served as a teacher at St. Francis de Paula School in Chicago, IL; St. Columbkille School in Varina, IA; and Mary, Star of the Sea School in Freeport, Grand Bahama. She was also principal at St. Gerald School in Oak Lawn, IL.

While at St. Francis de Paula, she organized a summer volunteer program through the Job Corps in which sisters and Mount St. Clare College students worked with students at St. Francis de Paula. While at St. Gerald's, she began a gifted student program as well as an extended day program for students, both of which remain in existence at St. Gerald's today.

In 1996, she began working in the Development

Office for the Sisters of St. Francis where she ministered for sixteen years. Answering the calls to congregational leadership, Sister Anne Martin has served terms as Councilor, Vice President, and President.

She moved to Illinois in 2016 and volunteered at Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. School for Exceptional Children in Tinley Park. In the spring of 2018, she became the Religious Education Coordinator at St. Cajetan Parish in Chicago, where she still ministers today.

Additionally, Sister Anne Martin serves as the Coordinator of the Sojourner Relationship and Associate Partnership Programs for the Sisters of St. Francis.

*Congratulations to all our Jubilarians
and thank you for your many years of
dedicated service!*



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