

Franciscan Voices

Living and Promoting Active Nonviolence and Peacemaking | March 2026

- In Memoriam: Srs. Jane McCarthy & LaVern Olberding -



Sr. Jane McCarthy
1936 - 2026

Sister Jane McCarthy passed away January 20, 2026, at The Alverno in Clinton. She had served as a teacher, pastoral associate, and Hispanic minister.

Jane Ann was born March 17, 1936, in Clinton, the eldest child of Daniel Noel and Colette (Hohenhorst) McCarthy. She was baptized at St. Mary's Church on March 29, 1936. She had one brother, Thomas, and one sister, Kathleen.

She attended St. Mary's School and Mount St. Clare Academy, graduating in 1953. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent on September 8, 1953, and received the name Sister M. Noel at her reception on June 21, 1954. She later resumed her baptismal name. She made her first profession on August 12, 1956, and her final profession on August 12, 1959.

She received a B.A. in mathematics from the University of Iowa and an M.S. in mathematics from the University of Notre Dame. She held Permanent Professional Teaching Certificates in Iowa and Missouri, teaching certificates in Illinois and Nebraska, and certification as a Pastoral Associate. She enjoyed learning and did further studies through multiple courses, workshops, and trainings.

Sister Jane ministered as a teacher and administrator — mostly at the junior high and high school levels — at schools in Iowa, Illinois, California, Nebraska, and Missouri. In Clinton, she taught at St. Patrick, Mater Dei, and Mount St. Clare Academy & College. At the college, she also served as an Academic Dean and Financial Aid Officer.

She served as a Pastoral Associate in Chicago and Maywood, IL. To be of service to the Hispanic community, she began studying Spanish in the Archdiocese of Chicago. To increase her fluency in the language, she completed several sessions at San

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Sr. LaVern Olberding
1944 - 2026

Sister LaVern Olberding, a Clinton Franciscan for 64 years, passed away on January 11, 2026, at The Alverno in Clinton.

Sharon Rose was born on January 15, 1944, in Fort Dodge, IA, the eldest child of Vernice and Margaret (Lynch) Olberding. She was baptized on January 30, 1944, at Sacred Heart Church in Pocahontas, IA. She had four sisters, Rita, Joan, Verna, and Mary Anne, and two brothers, Ronald and Merlin.

She attended St. Columbkille School in Varina, IA, for both elementary and high school, graduating in 1961. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent in Clinton on September 8, 1961. She received the name Sister Mary LaVern at her reception on June 13, 1962. She pronounced first vows on August 12, 1964, and made her final vows on August 12, 1967.

She earned an A.A. from Mount St. Clare College, Clinton; a B.A. in chemistry from Marycrest College, Davenport, IA; and an M.R.E. in religious education from Seattle University, Seattle, WA.

She taught science, math, and religion courses at schools in Clinton and Danbury, IA; Lexington, NE; El Cajon, CA; and Maysville, KY. She was the Director of Religious Education at parishes in El Cajon and Manteca, CA. Sister LaVern served as a campus minister at the University of Louisville, Louisville, KY. Later, she served as a pastoral minister at a parish in Louisville and as the pastoral care coordinator for Dismas Charities in Louisville, where she worked with felons at numerous halfway houses. She returned to Clinton and served as a campus minister at Mount St. Clare College/The Franciscan University.

In 2004, she moved to the San Diego, CA, area where she continued to promote active nonviolence and peacemaking while working as an Operations Coordinator for Atwood and Thompson, Inc., in Spring

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Miguel de Allende in Guanajuato, Mexico. She ministered to the Hispanic communities at St. James Parish, Maywood, IL; St. James Parish, Washington, IA; and Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace Parish, Clinton.

She served on the General Council of the Sisters of St. Francis for eight years and was General Secretary and Canonical Treasurer for four years. She retired from full-time ministry in 2014, but she continued to be active as an advocate for immigrants and worked tirelessly in support of immigration reform.

Sister Jane was an avid reader and enjoyed birdwatching, sewing, listening to Native American flute music, and researching her family history. She volunteered at the Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Thomson, IL.

She moved to The Alverno in 2022 and remained there until her death on January 20, 2026.

She is survived by her brother-in-law, Digby Willard; several nieces, nephews, and cousins; and the Sisters of St. Francis with whom she shared life for 72 years. She was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Thomas (Patricia) McCarthy; and sister Kathleen Willard.

- Olberding continued...

Valley, and as a catechesis coordinator for a parish in El Cajon.

In 2012, Sister LaVern co-founded the Franciscan Peace Connection in La Mesa, CA, and ministered as its director until its closure and her retirement in 2024. This outreach ministry offered opportunities for workshops, study groups, and trainings in promotion of active nonviolence and life skills to a variety of people and groups.

She was the Clinton Franciscans' recipient of the Franciscan Federation's Peacemaker Award in 2018. During her time in California, she served on the board of directors for the Peace Resource Center of San Diego, acting as vice president and president.

She moved to The Alverno in Clinton on September 16, 2025, and remained there until her death on January 11, 2026.

Sister LaVern was affectionately known as the "Fun Nun." Her laughter and smile always brightened the room. She extended her kindness and compassion to everyone, especially those living on the margins. She left a lasting impact on all the lives she touched, and she remained in contact with many of the individuals that she ministered to or with.

Sister LaVern is survived by her sisters, Joan Godbersen, Verna Halligan, and Mary Anne "Annie" Hawthorne; brothers, Ronald (Carol) and Merlin (Robin); several nieces and nephews; great-nieces and great-nephews; and the Sisters of St. Francis with whom she shared life for 64 years. She was preceded in death by her parents and sister, Rita Olberding.

- Remembering Sojourner Connie Beck



Connie Beck
1955 - 2026

Constance "Connie" Beck, a Sojourner of the Sisters of St. Francis for twelve years, passed away on January 10, 2026, at her home in Camanche, IA.

She committed to a Sojourner Relationship with our congregation on July 19, 2013. At that time, she expressed, "I have been looking for both a place to further my theological development with

fellow journeyers as well as find a place to enhance my spiritual development."

Connie grew up in Cleveland Heights, OH, in a predominantly Jewish community. She was active in

her church and its youth programs, including mission trips. Those experiences influenced her views of the world and affected the choices she made, especially toward ecumenical efforts.

Connie held a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from Purdue University. She held support roles that focused on manufacturing waste so chemical plants could become zero discharge on solid waste as well as waste water.

After a call to ministry, she earned her MDiv from the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. In the Clinton area, she served as a Hospice Chaplain/Spiritual Care Coordinator with Mercy Home Care and Hospice, adding acute responsibilities at Mercy Medical Center.

Connie is survived by a brother and a nephew. She was preceded in death by her parents, Arlington and Marjorie Beck.

Also remembering our Associates on page 8

- Season for Nonviolence

by Laura Anderson, Director of Digital Outreach and Advocacy, Franciscan Peace Center

The Season for Nonviolence is now underway!

The Season for Nonviolence is a 64-day observance that began on January 30, the anniversary of the assassination of Mohandas K. Gandhi, and concludes on April 4, marking the anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Co-founded in 1998 by Arun and Sunanda Gandhi in partnership with the Association for Global New Thought, the Season highlights the power of everyday nonviolent choices to foster peace and advance justice in our communities and world.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist minister, became the most visible leader of the Civil Rights Movement through his unwavering commitment to nonviolent resistance. His advocacy for racial equality was rooted in the belief that love and justice, practiced nonviolently, have the power to transform society.

Mohandas K. Gandhi, an Indian lawyer, anti-colonial nationalist, and political ethicist, led the movement for India's independence through nonviolent resistance. His leadership inspired civil rights and freedom movements around the world, including Dr. King's work in the United States.

Active nonviolence is more than a tactic; it is a spirituality, a way of life, and a strategy for social change. Gandhi called it satyagraha - "Truth Force" or "Soul Force." Dr. King understood it as the power of unconditional love and the path toward building the Beloved Community.

To honor this sacred Season for Nonviolence, the

Franciscan Peace Center is offering a series of daily one-minute video reflections. These reflections draw on previously recorded messages from members of the Clinton Franciscan Family, along with newly recorded offerings, and are being released each day throughout the Season for Nonviolence.



Community members are invited to pause, listen, reflect, and share in these daily messages. The videos are posted on [our website](#) and shared periodically on [Facebook](#). To ensure you don't miss a reflection, we encourage you to sign up to receive them directly by email by clicking [HERE](#). Once subscribed, you will receive each reflection on the day it is released.

We also invite you to share these reflections with your networks, helping to spread the enduring message of nonviolence.

At a time when rising authoritarianism and deep divisions threaten our shared life, the teachings and witness of Gandhi and Dr. King remain urgently relevant. Their words and example call us to recommit ourselves to peace, justice, and nonviolence as essential practices for coexisting with dignity and hope.

- Legal Protections for Immigrant Children

by Marsha Thrall, Director of Programming, Franciscan Peace Center

On January 20, Liam Ramos and his father, Adrian Alexander Conejo Arias, were detained by ICE agents in the driveway of their home in Columbia Heights, MN. Adrian had just picked Liam up from Valley View Elementary School, where Liam attends a Pre-K program. According to the family's attorney, Mark Prokosch, the family registered for asylum in the United States through the U.S. Customs & Border Protection Mobile App (CBP1) upon their entry into the United States. According to Prokosch, when they were detained by ICE agents, Liam and his family were in the United States legally, were not on the list of the "worst of the worst" immigrants being pursued by DHS operations in the United States, and not subject to detention or deportation orders.

According to an MPR interview with Columbia Heights School Superintendent Zena Stenvik, in the

"But Jesus called for them and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.'" – Luke 18:16

first few weeks of 2026, a total of twenty-three migrant parents and six children in the district were detained by ICE. In some cases, the detention action by ICE agents is so swift that children end up detained with their parents in facilities like the Dilley Detention Center in San Antonio, TX.

Parents who may be at risk of detention by ICE can prepare to protect their children during this time of uncertainty. This includes having a Durable Power of Attorney for a Minor Child in place. This document can be used by the child's parent or legal guardian to assign a caregiver who is able to make decisions regarding childcare, education, and medical needs of

Protections continued on page 4

■ Reflecting on Nonviolence Resistance

by Jennifer Kryszak, Director of Strategic Planning, Franciscan Peace Center

"They know that nonviolent resistance is something they can't handle."

- Dr. Maria J. Stephan

On January 22, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* featured scholar Maria J. Stephan, co-author of *Why Civil Resistance Works*. Colbert and Dr. Stephan discussed nonviolence and how people are using it to stand up to authoritarianism in the United States. Reflecting on this interview can offer us a moment to assess how we are living out the Clinton Franciscans' mission of promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking. Where are we being called to conversion in our daily lives?

"A powerful form of collective action"

Dr. Stephan described nonviolence as "a powerful form of collective action," highlighting simple tools, such as a whistle, and an economic shutdown day. As Dr. Stephan noted, it is in joining together that nonviolent resistance will succeed in protecting vulnerable community members as well as challenging authoritarianism.

- *How are you joining with others to take collective action?*

"Prepare, train, and make the political violence backfire"

Dr. Stephan noted that autocrats seek to discount nonviolence and label peaceful protesters as terrorists to make people fearful. She cited the Civil Rights Movement, especially the example of Selma, to encourage people to "prepare, train, and make the political violence backfire." A trained, nonviolent response reveals the violence of the state.

- *Are you trained in nonviolent resistance? Could you encourage others to be trained?*

"They have agency in this moment."

Another element of their conversation focused on the role of faith communities and the ways that ICE agents

might use their faith as justification for their actions. Dr. Stephan asserted the moral voice of faith communities in challenging authoritarianism. She similarly said that tenants of the Christian faith, such as the Greatest Commandment and Matthew 25, challenge the "false idolatry of Christian nationalism." ICE agents have agency; they can leave their positions.

- *How can you encourage your faith community to take a stronger role in speaking and acting for Gospel values?*
- *How can we invite others to recognize and protect the dignity of each person?*

"Joy is resistance."

In their conversation, Colbert joked about Thomas the Train joining the resistance, and Dr. Stephan commented on people wearing inflatable frog costumes. As Dr. Stephan noted, humor has power to disrupt violence.

- *How can you hold on to and share joy as resistance in your daily life?*

At the conclusion of the interview, Dr. Stephan encouraged people to visit <https://nonviolence.info/> to learn more about nonviolent resistance and join with communities and organizations working to challenge authoritarianism. Join us as we discern how we can more fully live out and promote active nonviolence and peacemaking.

Watch the [first](#) and [second](#) part of the interview.



■ Protections continued...

minor children, should a parent be detained. Such a directive can provide safety and security for a minor child, providing stability and trusted care during what can be a time of unrest and disruption.

The [corporate stands](#) of the Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa, include commitments to immigration reform. In an effort to stand in solidarity with our migrant neighbors, the Franciscan Peace Center has provided access to various [advocacy resources](#) that can help families be prepared should they be targeted by ICE detention initiatives. These resources include the [Durable Power of Attorney for a Minor Child](#) document, which is provided by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Please share these resources with anyone who can use them.

- Ministry in Action: PIT Count

Homelessness is a complex and pressing issue that affects millions of people around the world. It is often misunderstood and stigmatized, seen as a personal failure rather than a systemic problem. Yes, there is homelessness everywhere, even in Clinton, Iowa.

The [Clinton YWCA Empowerment Center](#) works hard to serve the local community by providing housing support, financial assistance, and case management services to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. The Clinton YWCA Empowerment Center, law enforcement officials, and other local agencies come together bi-annually for the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, a mandated assessment of sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness during a designated 24-hour period. The PIT count is crucial for federal funding, resource planning, and tracking progress on homelessness initiatives. This event is normally held on the last Wednesday of January and July.

The volunteers go out in teams to assigned areas into streets and alleys, shelters, known encampment locations, and other places where people might be living not meant for habitation. The goal is to make verbal contact with the person and get answers to a short HUD-required survey, which includes basic demographic information and questions such as: Where did you sleep last night? How long have you been homeless? This helps to get a better understanding of homelessness by identifying trends, assessing needs, and allocating resources where they are most needed. If a person is sleeping or doesn't want to talk, volunteers record an observation tally noting that a person was present and where, which ensures they are still counted in the numbers.

Sisters Marilyn Shea and Kathleen Holland assisted the Clinton YWCA Empowerment Center as they prepared for the January 28, 2026, PIT Count. They graciously assembled fifty nutritious sack lunches, which were

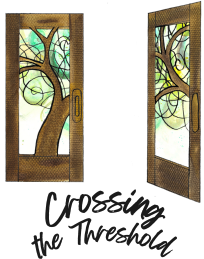


Sisters Kathleen Holland and Marilyn Shea assist with PIT Count sack lunches and outreach bags.

handed out to individuals that volunteers met during the count. They also worked with the Zion/St. Paul Lutheran Confirmation class to package fifty "outreach bags." The drawstring bags included snacks and drinks, toiletries, hats, socks, gloves, hand warmers, and other items that the congregations collected. These were also distributed during the PIT Count.

Thanks to the dedication of volunteers like Sisters Marilyn and Kathleen, the Clinton YWCA Empowerment Center was able to carry out this vital work with care, accuracy, and compassion. The information collected during the 2026 PIT Count will be used to shape local and national policies, improve services, and ensure that every person in our community has access to safe, stable housing.

- Continuation of 2025 Chapter



As current members age, and the number of women entering religious life declines, many congregations are exploring how to collaborate to find new ways of supporting religious life as demographics rapidly shift. In light of our current reality, we began exploring options that would provide for someone other than our own sisters to carry out the ministry of leadership.

For over twenty years, the leadership team has undertaken planning with an eye on the future. It has been a time of discernment for us with lots of prayer, conversation, and decision-making. The journey has been marked by a letting go of past structures and a courageous embrace of a new reality. In 2023-24, the community engaged in a discernment process regarding whether we would be able to elect another leadership team at the Chapter in 2025. We decided we could not.

We needed to request the Vatican's Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to appoint a Commissary (Appointed Leader) to serve as our canonical leader. Sister Janice Cebula, President, re-convened our 2025 Chapter on January 24, 2026, and she was authorized to submit the request letter to Rome.

Please hold our congregation in prayer as we await the decision to be made by the Dicastery.

- Lenten Observances

Refuse to Look Away: NAGV Lenten Fast

by Jennifer Kryszak, Director of Strategic Planning, Franciscan Peace Center



"Gun violence is not only a policy issue. It is a spiritual crisis. It challenges our belief that every life is sacred and that community is stronger than fear. We cannot be at peace while our neighbors live in terror." - Phil Andrew, NAGV Lenten Fast Reflection, 22 February 2026.

"Gun violence is. . . a spiritual crisis." These words from Phil Andrew compel reflection on the expansive impact of gun violence on our society. Individuals, families, and communities struggle daily with the loss of life and the on-going trauma of gun violence, but Phil's words are also directed at those not directly affected by gun violence. He writes about the pervasive effects of gun violence on our ability to recognize the humanity of others.

Phil is a survivor of the 1988 Winnetka school attack and a former FBI Agent and Hostage Negotiator. He is also the Founder and Principal of PAX Group, a global crisis management firm, that partners with organizations to build cultures of safety and resilience. In his reflection for the Nuns Against Gun Violence (NAGV) Lenten Fast, Phil shares how he was changed by his experience with gun violence, as well as how gun violence and trauma can erode empathy and belief in the dignity of all human life. He encourages readers to work for peace through engagement with individuals, families, and communities. As he contends, "Peace is not passive. It is practiced. And, it begins, as your mission has long shown, by refusing to look away."

During this season of Lent, Nuns Against Gun Violence invites you to look more deeply with us at how gun violence affects individuals, families, and communities. Each week during Lent, NAGV is sharing a reflection written by someone who has been directly affected by gun violence or by someone who journeys with individuals and communities. We will hear from survivors of domestic violence and gun violence, as well as families and citizens who continue to heal and advocate for safety and nonviolence.

To receive the Sunday reflections, complete the [NAGV Lenten Fast Commitment form](#). The reflections are also posted on the [Nuns Against Gun Violence](#) website.

2026 PEACE SOUP SUPPER SERIES

Gather in fellowship over a simple meal of soup and bread and engage in meaningful conversation.



Prince of Peace Parish Hall
1105 LaMetta Wynn Dr, Clinton, IA 52732

Tuesdays:
February 24, March 3, March 17, and March 24

Supper: begins at 6:00 p.m.
Presentation & Discussion: concludes by 7:30 p.m.

February 24 - NEST Café: Food Insecurity
Rev. Laura Evans Mahn, Founder and Executive Director

March 3 - Immigration
Deacon Kent Ferris, OFS, Director of Social Action and Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Davenport

March 17 - Round Table: Dilexi Te
Sister Phyllis Morris, Clinton Franciscan and personal friend of Pope Leo, and Father Paul Appel, Pastor of Prince of Peace, will speak briefly before round table discussions

March 24 - Human Trafficking
Sisters Marilou Irons, PBVM, and Mary Letchenberg, OSF, co-chairs of the Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking

A free-will offering will be collected to support the ministry of the evening's speaker. We encourage you to bring your own soup bowl, spoon, and drink container.

**HOSTED BY THE JUSTICE & PEACE COMMISSION
JESUS CHRIST, PRINCE OF PEACE PARISH**



Peace Soup Supper Series

Peace Soup has been a part of the Clinton community since 2005, when the Sisters of St. Francis and Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace Parish's Pax Christi group initiated a weekly Lenten gathering focused on timely, relevant social action topics. This year's theme is **Compassion, Hope, and Action for Those Who Are Vulnerable**. Topics addressed will be food insecurity, immigration, compassion for all, and human trafficking.

Each evening will feature a soup and bread supper at 6:00 p.m., followed by a presentation from a guest speaker representing an organization making a difference through faith, hope, and love — locally and globally. A free-will offering will be collected to support the ministry of the evening's speaker. Upcoming presentations include:

March 3 - Immigration Deacon Kent Ferris, OFS, Director of Social Action and Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Davenport, will offer a powerful reflection on immigration through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching and his own lived experiences.

March 17 - Round Table: Dilexi Te Sister Phyllis Morris, a Clinton Franciscan and personal friend of Pope Leo, will share heartfelt reflections on her ministry alongside then Father Robert Prevost in

Peru. Father Paul Appel, pastor of Prince of Peace, will introduce Pope Leo's first major papal document, *Dilexi Te* (I Have Loved You). These themes will be explored further through small group discussions.

March 24 - Human Trafficking Marilou Irons, PBVM, and Mary Letchenberg, OSF, co-chairs of the Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking, will lead an informative and impactful presentation addressing the urgent issue of human trafficking. Attendees will gain insights into the realities of trafficking, learn practical strategies for prevention, and discover ways to promote safety and awareness.

Lenten Day of Reflection

Our annual Lenten Day of Reflection was held on Ash Wednesday, February 18, at The Canticle with fifty members of the Clinton Franciscan Family and the local community in attendance. Bishop Dan Turley, OSA, offered reflection on [*Dilexi Te*](#) and our Lenten journey as well as presided at Mass with the blessing of ashes.

"Bishop Dan challenged each of us to recognize the burning bushes all around us and not to be indifferent to the sufferings of others. He challenged us to take action and not just walk on by," said Sister Theresa Judge.



Bishop Dan Turley and Pope Leo XIV

Dilexi Te

Pope Leo XIV named his first apostolic exhortation *Dilexi Te*, which is Latin for "I have loved you." It was built upon Pope Francis' fourth encyclical, *Dilexit Nos*, and signed on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, October 4, 2025.

In it, Pope Leo calls us to reject the "empire of money" and the corrupt system that creates poverty and instead, join in loving solidarity to "honor the image of God and build a better society" (72).

"Bishop Dan used Cameron Bellm's poem, [*A Prayer for Living Delexi Te*](#), for our day of reflection. Every line calls us to love deeply enough that our love actually becomes the Liturgy of our lives," explained Sister Ruth Cox.

NETWORK has published a [guide](#) that offers brief summaries of and key quotations from *Dilexi Te*'s five chapters, with short reflections on how Pope Leo's call guides and nourishes social justice work. You can use it for your own reflection, or even better, with a group.



Top Left to Bottom Right: Bishop Dan Turley; Sisters Carmel Jacobs and Ruth Cox; Lenten Day of Reflection participants; Bishop Dan Turley; Sisters Joan Theiss and Teresa Kunkel; Sojourner Lou Egging and Associate Mary Rickerl.

- Upcoming Events

March 1 - Immigration Mythbusting: Immigration and Healthcare

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clinton. Join us for a church service and discussion on immigration and healthcare with Christina Mahoney, member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clinton.

April 13 - Immigration Mythbusting: Legal Pathways and Due Process

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Clinton Public Library. Sister Janice Cebula will facilitate a discussion on the legal pathways and right to due process that immigrants have available to them when entering the United States.

June 28 to July 1 - Summer Retreat at The Canticle

6:00 p.m. Sunday to 12:00 p.m. Wednesday, The Canticle, Clinton. *How does continual conversion help us through times of change, grief, or letting go, both personally and communally? Directed by Sister Mary Elizabeth Imler, a Franciscan Sister of the Sacred Heart from Frankfort, IL, we will explore the root of the word and its particularity as Franciscans. Registration available at www.clintonfranciscans.com.*

- Remembering Clinton Franciscan Associates



Beverly Goebel
1943 - 2025

Beverly Goebel, an Associate of the Sisters of St. Francis for thirty-five years, passed away on January 28, 2025, in Texas.

She committed to our Associate Partnership on January 18, 1990, along with her husband, James. She was interested in being an Associate for "shared experiences and encouragement in our daily lives in living the Christian faith."

Living with chemical sensitivity, Beverly associated with others who experienced chemical sensitivity and was a part of the chemically injured support group in Austin, TX. She worked to increase public awareness on the impact chemicals and toxins have on the environment and health, and encouraged public action to prevent further chemical damage to present and future generations.

Beverly worked as a switchboard operator and in the clothing department at Sears. She enjoyed sewing, golf, bowling, and basketball. Most of all, she enjoyed spending quiet time in prayer with our Lord each day.

She is survived by one son, one daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, James, on December 11, 2003.

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
- 2 Timothy 4:7*



Beth VanConia
1936 - 2025

Margaret "Beth" VanConia, an Associate of the Sisters of St. Francis for twenty-seven years, passed away on December 22, 2025, in Belleville, IL.

She committed to our Associate Partnership on October 24, 1998. She was introduced to us through Sister Judy McKenna, who ministered at St. Nicholas Catholic Church in O'Fallon, IL, where Beth was a member and volunteer. The "continued challenge and

opportunities to serve others, study of St. Francis' teachings, commitment to nonviolence, and greater patience and understanding of others" was what interested Beth in becoming an Associate.

Beth worked as a secretary at Scott Air Force Base, retiring in 1998. She also worked part-time at Ackman Fabrics. She enjoyed sewing and crafts, church activities, and time with her grandchildren.

She is survived by one son, one daughter, three grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, one sister, and her dear friend, Sister Judy.

She was preceded in death by her parents and one brother.



Robert Ketelsen
1933 - 2026

Robert "Bob" Ketelsen, an Associate of the Sisters of St. Francis for twenty-nine years, passed away on February 20, 2026, at his daughter's home in Illinois.

He committed to our Associate Partnership on October 20, 1996. He was also an affiliate of the Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe, reflecting his deep faith and lifelong commitment to service.

Bob joined the United States Navy and served his country during the Korean War. His lifelong love of travel ultimately led him to open his own travel agency in Wheaton, IL. He arranged Franciscan pilgrimages to Assisi for our sisters.

After retiring, he spent time traveling throughout the Southwest. On one of those trips, he stopped at St. Mary Mission on the Navajo Nation in Tohatchi, NM, intending to volunteer for just a day. That turned into nearly 20 years of devoted service to the mission and its people.

Bob is survived by three children, seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.



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