

In June, six Clinton Franciscan Sisters will celebrate a total of **380 years of service** to the Church and to the people of God. We rejoice with them and honor their fidelity to God's grace and to our mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking. These sisters have ministered in education, pastoral ministry, congregational administration, and social services across the country. It is impossible to count the lives these sisters have touched as women religious, or the times they have been instruments of God's love.



Sr. Donna Burke
75 Years

Celebrating 75 years of religious life, **Sister Donna (Donald Marie) Burke** has graciously served in education as a teacher and administrator as well as in pastoral ministry as a Pastoral Associate.

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on September 8, 1951, at the age of 18. She earned her A.A. from Mount St. Clare College, a B.A. in Education from St. Ambrose College, an M.A. in Education from the University of Northern Iowa, and an M.A. in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University. She also received a Certificate in Cultural and Creation Spirituality from Holy Names College.

Her love of learning was reflected in her ministry in elementary education for thirty-three years. In Clinton, she was principal at St. Patrick School and Seton School. She also taught in Vail and Varina, IA; Cameron, MO; Chicago Heights, IL; and Maysville, KY.

Sister Donna served the congregation as Director of Vocation/Formation at Mount St. Clare Convent, and as director of the Associate Partnership program. She concluded her active ministry years as a Pastoral Associate at St. Athanasius Parish in Jesup, IA, for twenty years.

She retired from full-time ministry in 2016. In retirement, she continues to serve others, for example, by planning spiritual retreat days for the congregation and visiting the elderly at area nursing homes.

She shares, **"My greatest blessing is knowing and delighting in God's abundant love for all of us."**

Sister Maria (Maria Goretti) Zeimen exemplifies a life of service, dedication, and leadership. Celebrating 75 years of religious life, she has ministered in education, pastoral ministry, congregational administration, and social services.

At the age of 17, she entered the Sisters of St. Francis on September 8, 1951. She attended Mount St. Clare College, earned a B.A. in General Science from the University of Iowa, and a Ph.D. in Animal Biology from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

She began her teaching ministry in Oak Lawn, IL, and Fonda, IA. After obtaining her doctorate, she spent sixteen years teaching biology at Mount St. Clare College and Academy. She served as a pastoral minister and teacher in Macomb, IL, and as a pastoral minister in Moline, IL.



Sr. Maria Zeimen
75 Years



Sister Maria answered the call to congregational leadership, faithfully serving as Vice President of the Sisters of St. Francis from 1976 to 1980 and from 1984 to 1988. She served as President from 1988 to 1996. During that time, she led the congregation to a deeper knowledge of and commitment to Franciscan spirituality while defining the mission of active nonviolence and peacemaking.

Her leadership also extended beyond the local community. She was elected second vice president of the Franciscan Federation of the United States and served two years as its president.

Sister Maria's love for all God's people was shown in her ministry with L'Arche. She helped found the L'Arche community in Chicago, IL, and served as its first community leader. She also ministered with other communities throughout the United States and was the Assistant Regional Coordinator for Central USA L'Arche.

After retiring from full-time ministry, she remained in the Chicago area and volunteered at Garden Center Services for people with intellectual disabilities. She also dedicated her time to the Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants, praying for and visiting detained immigrants.

She returned to Clinton in July 2024 and continued to show compassion and serve others through her volunteer and advocacy efforts. She expresses deep gratitude for ***"being able to celebrate and rejoice in the present moment whatever that moment might be."***



Sr. Marilyn Barry
70 Years

Throughout **Sister Marilyn (Mary Pierre) Barry's** 70-year journey as a Clinton Franciscan, she has served in the areas of education and pastoral ministry.

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on September 8, 1956, at the age of 18. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from the University of San Diego and completed graduate work for an M.A. in Pastoral Ministry at Seattle University.

She began her teaching career at parochial schools in Macomb and Oak Lawn, IL; Chino, CA; and at St. Patrick School in Clinton. She dedicated twenty-five years to pastoral ministry and religious education in parishes in Iowa, California, Missouri, South Carolina, and Oregon.

After retiring from full-time ministry, Sister Marilyn volunteered at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Lake Oswego, OR. She is devoted to the Blessed Mother and the rosary. She enjoys handcrafting one-decade rosaries and distributing them widely, especially to those mourning the loss of a loved one.

Sister Marilyn just returned to Clinton in May and is adjusting to her new daily routine living with her sisters at The Canticle. Reflecting on her jubilee, she states, ***"Life as a Clinton Franciscan has been a journey of love, growth, humility, care, and finding God in people, prayer, plants, animals, trees, and rivers...an adventure of finding God in the large mountains and small ant hills. How honored I was to participate in the funeral luncheon ministry at Our Lady of the Lake. The love for the Poor Souls has enriched my daily prayer life. I thank Mother Mary and Jesus for walking with me."***

Celebrating 70 years of religious life, **Sister Martinelle Bonnell's** passion for teaching and mentoring has transformed the lives of countless students in the communities she has served. Her lifelong ministry in the field of education has spanned elementary, high school, and higher education levels.



She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on December 8, 1956, at the age of 18. She earned a B.A. in English from St. Louis University, an M.S. in Education from St. Louis University, an M.S.A. from Notre Dame University, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education from St. Louis University. Sister Martinelle ministered as teacher and administrator at schools in Clinton, Hawarden, and Fonda, IA; St. Louis, MO; Chino, CA; and Oak Lawn, IL. She served twelve years as Associate Principal and Academic Dean at Regina Dominican High School in Wilmette, IL. At Mount St. Clare College and its successors, she served in the roles of Dean of Students, Academic Dean, Interim President, and Academic Coach.



During her tenure at the college, Sister Martinelle also responded to the call of her community, serving as General Councilor for the Sisters of St. Francis for four years and as Canonical Councilor for four years.

Sr. Martinelle Bonnell
70 Years

She retired from full-time ministry in 2015. Now residing at The Canticle in Clinton, she continues to live out her commitment to her religious vocation through prayer and social justice advocacy efforts. Sister Martinelle celebrates her abundant blessings affirming, ***“God has been so good to me! I loved teaching and meeting new students to challenge. I also enjoyed my years as an administrator as I tried to influence teachers, staff, and students.”***



Sr. Marilyn Shea
70 Years

Encouragement and support have been demonstrated throughout **Sister Marilyn (Mary Jolene) Shea’s** 70-years as a Clinton Franciscan. Whether it was teaching in a classroom, overseeing the school as a principal, or guiding student teachers, her commitment to uplifting and educating others has left a lasting impact.

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on September 8, 1956, at the age of 19. She earned an A.A. from Mount St. Clare, a B.S. in Elementary Education from Cardinal Stritch College, and a M.Ed. in Educational Administration and Supervision from Marquette University.

For thirty-three years, she served in the ministry of teaching and administration. In Clinton, she served at St. Boniface School, Sacred Heart School, and Trinity Catholic School. She also ministered in Oak Lawn and Chicago Heights, IL; Riverside, CA; and St. Louis, MO. She spent three years at the Adult Education Center in Hayti, MO, providing literacy training and parent education and directing the childcare center.

Helping empower college students as they studied to become teachers, Sister Marilyn ministered as the Coordinator of Practicum and Field Experience in the teacher education department at Mount St. Clare College and its successors. Her role expanded to include teaching and supervision.

Throughout her years of religious life, Sister Marilyn has served in leadership roles for the Sisters of St. Francis, including General Councilor for four years and General Secretary for nine years.

Now retired from full-time ministry, she continues to show compassion and serve others through her volunteer efforts with MercyOne Hospital, Clinton YWCA Empowerment Center, and Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace Parish. Reflecting on her jubilee, Sister Marilyn shares, ***“I celebrate this jubilee with gratitude and joy for the many blessings I have received as a Clinton Franciscan. The people and events of each day continue to reveal God’s presence among us.”***



Prior to entering religious life, **Sister Sarah Martz** received a B.A. in Art from Mount St. Clare College. She worked as Office Administrator at St. Mary's parish in Iowa City and then received an invitation from the former president of the Clinton Franciscans to join her as a staff member at The David School in David, KY, a non-denominational private alternative high school deep in the heart of Appalachia, where she ministered as a volunteer Art and English teacher.

She joined the congregation's Associate Partnership Program and remained an Associate for three years before becoming a candidate of the Sisters of St. Francis, entering on October 21, 2006, at the age of 26.

Embarking on her new journey as a Clinton Franciscan, Sister Sarah served as a catechist and youth ministry coordinator at St. Patrick Church in Iowa City and as a site facilitator for the 21st Century Community Learning Center at Washington Middle School in Clinton.

As a canonical novice, she served as a mentor and children's advocate at The Port Ministries in Chicago, providing fundamental needs to under-resourced and underserved residents of the local community. She continued to minister in this setting for five years.

Sister Sarah professed final vows on July 20, 2013. In 2016, she earned a M.A. in Justice Ministry with a particular interest in Reconciliation and Peacebuilding from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Presently residing in Chicago, Sister Sarah is a long-time choir member in her parish's music ministry. She also ministers as a Recovery Support Specialist at Metropolitan Family Services, first in The Living Room program, a free, walk-in mental health crisis center designed to support individuals experiencing emotional distress, anxiety, or depression in a comfortable setting. Following that role, she now continues her work as Recovery Support Specialist in MFS's general behavioral health program, providing therapeutic support for clients on an individual and group basis.

Reflecting back over the last 20 years, Sister Sarah expresses, ***"I have been loved and supported by my community in ways that I could have never imagined prior to joining the Clinton Franciscans. Their support has encouraged me to try new things and to share the love and support that I have received with every person I encounter each day."***



Sr. Sarah Martz
20 Years

With deep gratitude, we celebrate our Jubilarians as they mark these milestones in their journey of faith. Their years of dedication to prayer, service, and compassion are a testament to lives deeply rooted in purpose and grace.

In honor of our 2026 Jubilarians, please consider a donation to the Sisters of St. Francis to help sustain our mission of living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking. Thank you!



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