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interchange

forgiveness

Sisters of Saint Francis

Exploring values common to you and today's Rochester Franciscans

interchange

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Letter from the Editor

by Kathy Gatliff, Director of Communications

Why the topic of forgiveness? As I looked at the list of recent programs offered by the Assisi Heights Spirituality Center, forgiveness and compassion seemed to be an underlying theme.

It is also an underlying theme of the Gospel. God pardons our sins, and it is our obligation to pardon (forgive) others. It is so important that our eternal destiny depends upon it!

Practicing forgiveness on smaller transgressions can help us gain the skills to deal with bigger things. It makes us more resilient, happy and content. Whether we need to forgive one another, or even ourselves, unless we forgive, we cannot heal or move forward.

When deciding what cover art could represent forgiveness, I selected this statue. Located in the Clare Reflection Space, it was given as a gift to the Sisters of Saint Francis. Sister Ramona Miller agreed with the decision. In her words, "forgiveness frees us, and this statue suggests freedom (release)."

Forgiveness is a state of grace. It is nothing you can force or pretend. It requires an act of compassion. It lightens our spirit. Forgiveness is an act of generosity. We find the word "give" in the center, where it should be: the center of our hearts and minds.

It seems that many of the problems in our world could be solved if we started with a clean slate; as reflected by wiping away our sins in the sand. If only we could forgive, and move forward with a new approach…

The Power of Forgiveness

by Sister Lois Knipp

There are many kinds of power in our culture. There is power in money and the status, influence, and material possessions that money can buy. There is power in physical and mental strength. All can be misused to overpower others. There is power in groups banding together to promote causes, but those causes can be both good and bad. There are other kinds of power. One of these is the power of forgiveness, but in a culture of "tit for tat," forgiveness can be mistaken for weakness. Forgiveness is actually far from weakness.

When I wound another with my words or by my actions, it is almost impossible for me to make up for the pain I caused. The relationship has been weakened or even broken. Even when I apologize, I alone cannot repair the rupture. Only the person who was injured can repair it. Forgiveness is the key to healing and I cannot demand or even expect it. I must simply ask for it.

On the other hand, if another person wounds me, I do have a choice. I can refuse to forgive and hang on to the power that I think that stance gives me. However, while a just response might make sense to me, it usually only brings more division. My other option is to freely choose to forgive.

The quality that I need in order to forgive someone who has wounded me is compassion. Compassion is the ability to place oneself in another's situation and feel some degree of empathy for that person. Compassion is my gift to another and is a crucial step which carries me beyond my need for justice to the freedom of forgiveness.

A person who has no need of mercy from others is a perfect person. Who among us can claim that perfection? When we refuse to forgive, we are claiming personal perfection. It is much easier to live with ourselves if we are merciful to ourselves instead of claiming perfection. And that is true for all those who must live and work with us.

The peace prayer attributed to St. Francis says, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace… It is in pardoning that we are pardoned."

Above: Sister Lois Knipp, left, exchanges words of compassion and forgiveness with a friend.

Sisters Kathy Warren and Linda Wieser (center) gather with friends at the 2014 Journey of Peace.

International Forgiveness Rooted in Personal Forgiveness

by Sisters Kathy Warren and Linda Wieser

How is the message of forgiveness experienced in the clash between the various cultures and religious traditions of our world?

Daily events in too many towns and cities in our country, such as Ferguson, Missouri, Ft. Hood, Texas, and border towns throughout the southwest, reveal the inability of peoples to accept 'the other.' It seems that no one can escape being aware of the implications of this behavior – either on the global, local, or personal level.

A group of people in Rochester want to change this reality. They have gathered for five years in October at a "Journey of Peace" event. They come to build relationships, dispel myths, learn some of the basics about other religions and broaden their consciousness in learning of commonalities they share. Coming with an open heart and a desire for nothing less than a transformation – of both attitudes and behaviors – these faith-filled pilgrims find energy, hope and goodness in connecting with one another.

This year's gathering used the words of a recently released declaration entitled "In the Face of Conflict" to affirm their commitment to actions on behalf of peace. Echoing statements of the declaration, the group boldly proclaimed:

> *WE BELIEVE in the sanctity of life and the inherent dignity of the person. WE BELIEVE that dialogue among people of different religions and cultures is the path to lasting peace and social cohesion.*
>
> *We RESOLVE to promote mutual respect and understanding among followers of all religions and people of all cultures, particularly through dialogue. Let us look upon each other as sisters and brothers and, let us appreciate difference as enrichment rather than fearing 'otherness' as a threat.*

Forgiveness and reconciliation are possible through such beliefs and resolutions when there are people courageous enough to speak them and act on them. This cannot happen just once a year. It must be a daily commitment. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated: "Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a permanent attitude." Surely, Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malek al-Kamil, from our own 13th century Franciscan tradition, witnessed to this behavior and truth. Will we do less?

The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, New York. (http://www.kaiciid.org/en/the-centre/the-centre.html)

For further information view, "In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan: A Model for Peacemaking" (www.FranciscanMedia.org/francissultan)

Serenity Through Forgiveness and Compassion

by Sister Judy Chiodo

Because I have conducted a Serenity Retreat at Assisi Heights, I was asked to write an article on Forgiveness and Compassion. The 12-Step Program has been a stronghold in my life. It brought me to where I am today, for which I am grateful.

It all began when my mother got married just three years after my father died, which was very painful for me and my siblings. What made it more painful was the fact my stepfather was an alcoholic. In those days, the label was "a drunk." We lived with uncertainty not knowing what each day would bring. I left home at age 20, to join the Sisters of Saint Francis in Rochester, MN.

My first mission assignment was serving three years as a teacher at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School in Rochester. My next mission was to teach in Waseca, MN. It was there, in 1968, that I heard about an Al-Anon meeting from some of the women who were already members. In our conversation, they invited me to come to a meeting. No pressure, they left it up to me to do what I wanted to do. That gave me some insight to my taking responsibility for meeting my needs. I joined the group. I was able to share my story for the first time. In so doing, I became very vulnerable and realized how angry, hurt and resentful I felt inside and begin to cry. No one rushed to take care of me, they just waited and let me be where I needed to be. When I got my composure, I could feel the compassion, especially from their responses. They could understand exactly what I was going through, as they had gone through it already. What I didn't exactly realize then, but have learned over the years, is compassion is a two-way street – we need to move out of our ego and be fully present to the other person. What I have come to know is that compassion is not self-pity. What I needed to learn was how to be compassionate toward myself. It is not always easy, but it is possible.

I needed to let go of my anger, hurt and resentment towards my stepfather. This was not easy, but working with others helped me to make amends. Walking with others who are doing their 'internal' work is such a great support. It lets us know we are no better or no less than another.

Resentment is the worst thing to carry inside of yourself, as it moves toward hatred and an inability to recognize your own dignity and the dignity of others. Also, it keeps you in bondage. Forgiving oneself is just as important as forgiving another. Getting support from others helped me to understand that my stepfather was not a bad person, but a person who had an illness.

Forgiving was a gift to myself, and that is what it is all about. The suggestion to pray for him was also very helpful and it worked. In doing so, I believe grace walked with me.

Forgiving ONESELF IS JUST AS *important* AS FORGIVING *another*.

In 1970, I was missioned to teach in Wilmont, MN. I was only there a week, when I received a phone call informing me that my stepfather had died. I went to the funeral in peace and was able to cry from my heart. I was truly grateful for the gift that forgiveness had given to me. I must admit, I believe the grace of God was in this journey with me. At first, my stepfather was a "woe" in my life, but eventually he became a "blessing." For if it was not for him, I may not have gone into the Chemical Dependency profession. We all have "woes" and "blessings" in our lives. What may surprise us is that "woes" can become "blessings" if we allow them to reach us through forgiveness and compassion.

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me a instrument
of your peace,
Where there is hatred,
let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Teacher,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning
that we are pardoned
and it is in dying
that we are born to eternal life.

Forgiveness: The Role and Responsibility of the Community

by Father James Buryska and Sister Christine Stanoch

In the Roman Catholic context, the word, "forgiveness" is associated by most with its sacramental expression: the Sacrament of Reconciliation. And surely the sacrament plays an irreplaceable part in helping the sinner to acknowledge the sin, repent and ask forgiveness; and the community, as represented by the confessor, receives the sinner, hears her/him and extends (or in very rare cases, withholds) forgiveness. This practice of concentrating the role of the community of believers in the person of the confessor has a long history and plenty of theological and scriptural warrant. On the other hand, focusing the human side of the sacramental encounter on the penitent and confessor, leaves aside the role of the believing, worshipping community in the dynamic process of forgiveness and reconciliation

In the ancient church, as is well known, the Sacrament of Penance was born out of persecution and the community's response to the situation of those who, under duress, had denied their baptismal promises: the connected sins of apostasy and idolatry. Could they be reconciled? Eventually deciding they could, the church developed the practice of Penance, a second forgiveness of sin (after that of Baptism). Early Penance was both rigorous and public: profession of sin and reconciliation took place in the presence of the body of believers (in the sense that the sin was public and the liturgy was, also); and reconciliation might be attained only after a long and arduous penitential process – even a lifetime.

As the centuries moved on, a number of circumstances conspired to move the Sacrament of Penance toward the more frequent and private expression with which we are familiar:

- A gradual shift in the theology of priesthood transferred the power of forgiveness to those ordained rather than in the entire community. John 20:23 ("…he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'") was

Writing prayers of healing in the sand: (l to r) Lynn Streefland, Liturgy Coordinator; Sisters Christine Stanoch and Kathleen Welscher.

understood in light of Matthew 16:19 ("I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.") as conveying to Peter and the other apostles and their successors, the power to forgive.

- The monastic penitential practice of devotional confession of sins to a superior or other member of the religious community gradually made its way into the broader life of the church. On this premise, the priest was the visible and logical representative to receive confession of sins and to pronounce forgiveness.

My [Fr. Jim's] suggestion for recovering some place for the entire community in the sacramental dynamics of sin and forgiveness is simple: what if John 20:23 is not understood primarily to emphasize the power of the ordained, but is instead taken to apply to the entire community of the faithful? Understood thus, hearing the acknowledgement of sin, receiving penitence and extending forgiveness, becomes, somehow, the role and responsibility of each and all. Our experience with ritual to express this reality is sparse, but deserves further exploration. Our recent Reconciliation Service at Assisi Heights is a promising example; the role of the celebrant and that of the community are complementary, not competitive.

In Greek, the word for *reconciliation* means "to walk together." During this past Lenten season, our Liturgy Committee engaged us in a reconciliation service that allowed us to ask for forgiveness and to offer forgiveness to each other. We used the following text of the Gospel of John. You will find excerpts below. The assembly of penitents gathered at tables where a tray of sand was found. Each Sister participant was invited to pray as she wrote in the sand whatever she wanted healed. After the Sister shared this with the Sister next to her, she said "Your sins are forgiven," as she wiped the tray clean.

Gospel reading: John 8:1-11

Excerpt

'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? 'She said, 'No one sir.' And Jesus said,' Neither do I condemn you.'

This exchange provides the encounter of asking for forgiveness, offering forgiveness as well as receiving it. After all the Sisters had finished this exchange with one another, each one went to the priest, who extended his hands over her giving absolution. There was a blessed silence in the space as we witnessed this ritual. The community was living out forgiveness and reconciliation.

Looking at this from the Sister's perspective:

As a penitent in this Reconciliation service, I found myself being open to a new awareness that we were all in this together. My personal reflection gave me the truth-telling I needed so that I was ready for a ritual that offered me the true sense of the process of forgiveness. Once a person faces herself, it is easier to see that decisions and actions within the community needed to be tended. I live within the community who is affected by my words and actions. I was struck in our prayer by this question: Can I indeed choose reconciliation and be willing to walk together?

From the priest's perspective:

The role of priest in the process of forgiveness often gets center stage. Forgiveness and reconciliation have many more dimensions in addition to the encounter of the priest with the penitent to it. As a priest and minister of the sacrament, I am always humbled by the movement in the person's heart followed by the active seeking for God's compassion. I often see my role in this dynamic as affirming, humbling, and compassionate. The penitent may lose sight of the power of forgiveness and the awareness of how the community remains unhealed until the reconciling. The presumption that if I confess my sins to the priest, the job is complete; which is limiting. In this particular service, the community entered a deeper level in understanding the complementary roles of the priest and the community in the dynamic of reconciliation.

Franciscans and the Power of Forgiveness

by Sister Ramona Miller

When a few men began to join Francis of Assisi to live in great simplicity and poverty, they were considered social outcasts because of their sudden change in lifestyle. Francis knew that to protect them from being considered heretical, they would need to have a papal blessing. For this reason, the small group left Assisi to walk to Rome to speak with Pope Innocent III. They stopped at Poggio Bustone in the Rieti valley. There, Francis found a private place to pray high up on the mountain. Thomas of Celano described, in the first biography of Francis, that while Francis was reflecting upon his past life, and begging God for mercy, "gradually an indescribable joy and tremendous sweetness began to well up deep in his heart" (1Cel 26). Francis knew experientially the certainty of God's forgiveness. From then on he felt the assurance that he was a good person, and that everyone that God created was created good. Therefore he went into the village crying out, "Buon Giorno, Buona Gente" (Good Morning, Good People).

His struggle to let go of the past memories of wrongdoing compelled Francis to go apart, to find a private place high on a mountain where he humbly prayed, admitting his need for God's mercy. God's joyful troubadour was gifted with spiritual joy when he pleaded for God's benevolence. The image of a person in shackles symbolizes what happens to us when we are weighed down because we hold on to memories of our own wrongdoing and/or when we carry grudges and resentment toward others who have offended us. Carrying negative emotions causes misery to ourselves.

What must we do to become lighthearted and joyful? We need the power of forgiveness to become

Poggio Bustone: One of Francis' places of prayer and reflection.

free. We can imitate Saint Francis by sincerely begging God for forgiveness for the ways we have not lived up to being our very best self. And, we can forgive others who have injured us. According to Robert Enright, the founder of the Institute on Forgiveness, to experience forgiveness we must be willing to "abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward her/him."

The power of forgiveness dispels emotional shackles. This power generates a new energy for reaching out to others. It was Francis' experience of forgiveness that enabled him to teach others to forgive. He wrote to a friar troubled by the behavior of another friar: "love those who do these things to you…" And then he went on to say, "and if he would sin a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him to the Lord." Francis' teaching reiterates Jesus words, "forgive seventy times seven."

Forgiving another conveys a deep human recognition that no one is perfect, and we are all capable of making mistakes. Forgiveness says "let the past be in the past," and let's begin anew to walk in unity toward our final destination.

Nelson Mandela serves as an exemplar of forgiveness, the kind of forgiveness that paves the way for a better society. When he was elected President of South Africa in 1994, he personally met with senior figures of the apartheid regime telling them that "courageous people do not fear forgiving, for the sake of peace." His personal witness of forgiveness generated a new chapter of history for South Africa. This witness reminds us that the power of forgiveness creates new bonds of relationships for the common good. Mandela appealed to the people of South Africa to demonstrate Masakhane, a political slogan of solidarity meaning "let us build together."

Franciscans engaged in efforts of peacemaking are mindful of the message that Jesus spoke to Francis: "go, rebuild my house; as you see it is all being destroyed." Repairing broken relationships through forgiveness builds bonds that indicate the presence of God. God dwells here with us where forgiveness brings about mutual love.

WHAT MUST WE DO TO BECOME *lighthearted and joyful?*
WE NEED THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS *to become free.*

Sisters who have entered Eternal Life

Sister Guillaume Ryan (February 5, 1910 - April 11, 2014)

Prior to entering the Sisters of Saint Francis, Sister Guillaume, then known as Margaret, enrolled at the College of Saint Teresa (CST), with a focus in mathematics and French. Unfortunately, when she graduated in 1931, the country was in the depths of the Great Depression and she was unable to find a teaching position. Undaunted, she continued to live in the family home and began work on a Master's Degree in Mathematics at the University of Wisconsin, receiving the degree in 1934. Again, no teaching position was available, so she took the required tests and was able to spend three years as a social worker in the area.

Margaret decided to join the Rochester Franciscans, whom she had come to know at CST. Following the Novitiate and First Vows, she was assigned to teach math at the high school in Winona. Her years there, followed by assignments in southeastern Minnesota, as well as in Ohio, kept her involved in education. In addition, she received a National Science Fellowship. Her expertise was later put to use in the Alumnae Office at CST, followed by ten years in the Business Office of the Congregation at Assisi Heights. She had sewing skills and also learned embroidery and crocheting, and soon was specializing in preparing hand towels for sale in the Gift Shop at the Heights, as well as sewing special items for use in the Chapel. In all these endeavors, Sister Guillaume was known for her patience, her professionalism, and the self directed gifts which enabled her to bring a touch of professionalism to all that she attempted.

Sister Cabrini Walch (October 15, 1926 - May 20, 2014)

Growing up in Altura, MN, Sister Cabrini, then known as Bernadette, went to the College of Saint Teresa (CST) in Winona after high school. At Christmas time in her sophomore year she became a postulant in our Franciscan Community. In 1948, she began extensive years of teaching, thoroughly enjoying small children... they seemed like family to her. In the mid 1960's she received her Master's degree in Theology at St. John University, Collegeville, MN. She developed further her love of scripture, liturgy and research. In 1978, she worked in pastoral care at St. Mary's in Tucson for about 8 years.

After returning to Rochester, Cabrini served in Pastoral Care ministry at Assisi Heights for 25 years. Gardening she loved, but respiratory/allergy problems later caused her to discontinue gardening except for a flower box which she planted each year. Sister Cabrini had other ways she enjoyed using her talents, which included selection and hanging artwork throughout Assisi Heights. Another talent was Cabrini's creative writing. She wrote an awesome piece of prose about the beautiful evergreens outside her window. Throughout Cabrini's lifetime, her family was always very dear to her.

Sister Lillian Silvers (September 8, 1919 - July 10, 2014)

Sister Lillian professed her first vows as a novice when she was ill and in danger of death. The Novices prayed and she recovered, she then professed her vows again in August, 1956. Upon completing the Licensed Practical Nurse program in 1953, Sister Lillian's first and only mission assignment was to the healing ministry at Saint Marys Hospital, from 1956-1988. The majority of those years were spent in the post-operative recovery section of surgery. Sister Merici, the supervisor of the 32 operating rooms at the time, said that Sister Lillian was steadfast in her work, well-liked by surgeons, generous with her time and gentle in her care-giving. From 1988-1993, Lillian cared for the children of a family in their home, which was a joy for Sister Lillian. Prior to moving to Assisi Heights in 1998, Lillian served as an Auxilian at Saint Marys Hospital. Her ability to read, speak and translate German to English was a definite advantage to numerous people with German speaking relatives and friends.

A gifted seamstress during her 20s and 30s, the novitiate sewing room was an easy fit for Lillian. Returning to Assisi Heights in 1998, she now had the time to return to her creative sewing skills as she fashioned patterns and created stuffed animals of all kinds and shapes for the Assisi Heights Card and Gift Shop. Words describing Lillian were: deliberate, steadfast, never complaining, "oil on troubled waters," peace-filled, holy, a woman of faith, ordinary, lived simplicity, generous, reached out to the lonely, always smiling and grateful. Sister Lillian loved being a 'Sister' and was loved because of who she was and how she related to all whose life she touched.

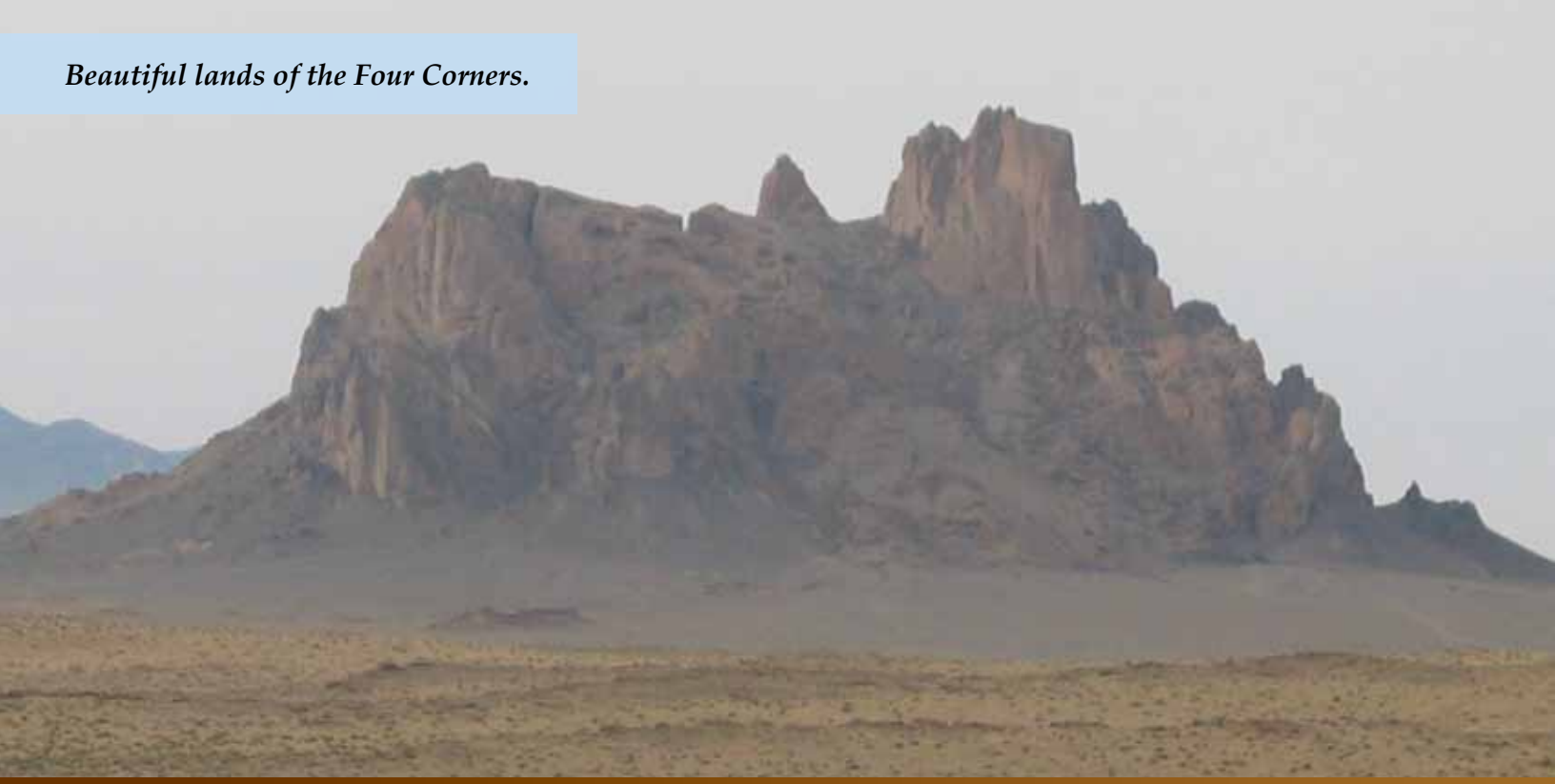
Sister Jacqueline Farrell (June 27, 1910 - September 13, 2014)

For over 60 years, Sister Jacqueline taught in Catholic schools. Of her younger days as a teacher, Sister Jacqueline said, "I loved acting and directing school plays." Her leadership skills and dedication to quality education were manifest in her many years serving as a school principal. Sister Jacqueline earned her Master's Degree and was known for her administrative skills; she diplomatically and tenaciously accomplished great projects even in the midst of some adverse situations. Her quiet and observant manner projected an "in charge" attitude that was both gentle and demanding. A significant highlight in Sister Jacqueline's life was the ordination of her brother, Patrick, in 1943, who served in the Winona diocese. Also, an event that would light up her eyes in her retelling, was the account of being out on the prairie near Des Moines, Iowa, on October 4, 1979, to see Pope John Paul II.

Sister Bona Mueller (August 17, 1925 - September 14, 2014)

For twenty-four and a half years, Sister Bona taught in parish schools, some years serving as Principal as well. Her classmates and Sisters with whom she lived became close friends. Vatican II impacted her life, especially with respect to changes in the parochial schools and the number of Sisters available to teach. She – like many others – decided to look at other fields. For three years she served the retired Sisters at Assisi Heights, followed by a year working with needy children at Hiawatha Homes, and later, served as a Chaplain at Saint Marys Hospital for almost a decade before accepting a similar position at Mary Corwin Hospital in Pueblo, Colorado.

Sister Bona enjoyed canoeing, biking and mountain hiking, as well as less physical outlets, such as calligraphy, music appreciation, sewing, art, woodworking, making greeting cards and writing brief poetic pieces. She loved a good joke, and looked forward to gatherings with her classmates and other friends.



Beautiful lands of the Four Corners.

Forgiveness and Doctrine of Discovery

by Sister Joan Brown

As I stand in the skeleton of a stone church on the Hopi Third Mesa, I hear the cries, voices and music of history swirl around me in the desert sand. This late summer afternoon I pray and chant for forgiveness with Mercy Sister and Daughter of Charity Sister friends, a Catholic, and Mennonite woman. We are not tourists seeking the next experience of native culture in the Southwest. Our intention for being with several Hopi men on the Third Mesa is very intentional—healing and reconciliation.

Living in the Southwest for some 30 years, I am aware of the wound of the Doctrine of Discovery which used religion to justify political and personal violence against indigenous nations, peoples, cultures, religions and territories. In the region where I live, life camouflages itself against the harsh desert elements because hiding is difficult. So it is with the conquest and colonialism, which are always on or near the surface in many multicultural interactions and which are woven into the fabric of the United States. The wounds of enslaving native women to build stone churches, selling children for church bells, appropriating land, forcing conversions to Christianity and abandonment of culture and language, destroying sacred Kachinas of the Hopi and numerous atrocities are part of the stories told again and again to those of us who have ears to hear.

Repentance and healing are needed to heal the wounds. Admitting the wrongs and praying for healing bring us to the Hopi Mesa this summer day. We are all engaged in ministry in New Mexico and Arizona and know the complexities of living and working in a multi-cultural setting laden with intricate beauty, diversity, complexity and pain. Whatever ministry one is engaged in, the long, and patiently embraced art of healing and reconciliation are small threads that must be woven into our lives. The spiritual aspect is necessary.

The sense of superiority and genocide that claimed European intruders were justified in God to overpower the people and land is still very alive. In the complex and violent moment which we live, struggles for power over certain peoples and Earth herself surround us. New ointments of healing and reconciliation are required if we choose to evolve on our spiritual paths and as a human species.

This summer, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious applied a new healing ointment to the very old wounds when they passed a resolution calling

on Pope Francis to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery. Previous to the resolution being presented, the Rochester Franciscans had signed a document initiated by the Loretto Sisters.

The Doctrine of Discovery is a legal principle which has passed from Church law into common law. It granted the European discovering powers a kind of unrestricted sovereignty over the lands and peoples they discovered. It began with a series of papal bulls issued by Pope Nicholas V and Pope Alexander VI before and just after Christopher Columbus returned from his first contact with the Americas.

This series of papal bulls, or decrees, gave Christian explorers the right to lay claim to any land that was not inhabited by Christians and was available to be "discovered." If its inhabitants could be converted, they might be spared. If not, they could be enslaved or killed.

In modern terms, the doctrine's influence re-emerged recently in the debate about the racism and exploitation of Native American sports mascots, and has justified efforts to eliminate indigenous languages, practices and worldviews, and it also affects Native American sovereignty and treaty obligations.

Since 1823, it has also been enshrined in U.S. law. In 2005, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg cited the Doctrine of Discovery in a land-claim ruling against the Oneidas, one of the six nations of the Haudenosaunee. Indigenous groups have sought to overturn the doctrine since at least

Larry Lente of the Laguna Pueblo, points out the devastation of land from mining.

1984. In its 2007 Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations criticized policies like the Doctrine of Discovery as "racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust."

So, on this summer day we have traveled to the Hopi Mesa. As we arrive, our Mennonite friend remembers that her uncle was a missionary here. The church skeleton, which stands as a persistent sentinel to a time when the Hopi were forced to build a church, is an invitation to us. We visit a Hopi friend, whom we assisted as he and other runners made the monumental trip from their land to Mexico City for the 2006 World Water Forum – praying for *Sister Water* and an end to coal mining on Black Mesa.

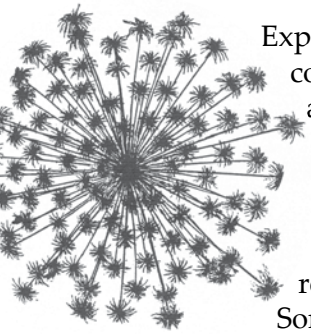
After a visit clocked in "Hopi time" in his humble home, he finally says that he will take us to the Mesa. Upon arriving in his pickup he approaches his Hopi brothers seeking permission for us to go to the outskirts of the Mesa and the church, which are "off limits." Several hours later, we find ourselves walking with these Hopi brothers as they point out important stones and sacred places on the Mesa that they felt were okay to note. Information, like the size of the stones on the church – which are small because women were enslaved to build it – is exchanged. Several times we ask if we could go to the church and pray for forgiveness and healing. Finally they say. "You can go over there and pray if you want. We will go over here and sit." They had no desire to go near the church.

As the sun hangs over the edge of the world, we Catholics chant "Kyrie, Elison" and our Mennonite sister sings a German Mennonite song. *Brother Wind* swirls and mingles with too many memories of enslavement, weeping over the burning of Kachinas and the blight of poverty, a result of sins against a land, people and culture. Our Hopi friend tells us that dreams of the people continue and the lost Kachinas and their songs are coming back. "Kyrie, Elison" continues to sing through me often as I work.

Assisi Heights Spirituality Center Events

Compassionate Living Retreat
January 23-24, 2015
Friday: 7-9pm, Saturday 9am-3pm

$90 per person, includes refreshments and lunch on Saturday. Optional overnight accommodations with breakfast: $35.



Explore empathy, mindfulness, concern, and genuine recognition as some of the elements of compassion. Resources from both neuroscience and spirituality will form the underpinnings of the process, with input and personal reflective time and optional sharing. Some topics include:

- Finding peace and calm in difficult times
- Neurons of compassion
- The "how" of happiness
- Spiritual path of compassion
- Compassion as a choice!

Freedom Through Forgiveness
February 6-7, 2014
Friday: 7-9pm, Saturday 9am-3pm

$90 per person, includes refreshments and lunch on Saturday. Optional overnight accommodations with breakfast: $35.

Relax in the quiet of sacred space and process lingering stumbling blocks to great freedom and joy in life. Shed the pressures of persistent resentments and angers. Let the process of prayer, input, meditation and journaling transform your inner self to know a lifted heart. Forgiveness is a choice! Learn the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation, the eight steps in forgiving another and five steps to forgive yourself. Come home to a new self!

To make your reservation, go to www.rochesterfranciscan.org or call Angie Grimm at 507-280-2195.

Assisi Heights Spirituality Center
1001 14th Street NW | Rochester, MN 55901-2525
www.rochesterfranciscan.org | 507-282-7441

Christmas on the Hill

An Umbrian Celebration

Saint Francis began the wonderful crèche tradition that continues to resonate with all of us during this season of anticipation.

Come join us as we celebrate the Christmas story. You will be refreshed and inspired.

Feel the joyous noel!

Saturday, December 6, 2014

6:30 pm	**Nativity Vignettes in the Assisi Heights Parlors**
7:45 pm	**Compline Service (music and prayer) in the Lourdes Chapel**
8:15 pm	**Music, food, and beverages in the Dining Room with Silent Auction**
9:15 pm	**Fund-the-Need Presentation**

Reservations required.
www.rochesterfranciscan.org

Sisters of Saint Francis
Assisi Heights | 1001 14th Street NW | Rochester, Minnesota 55901 | 507-282-7441

Lourdes Chapel Restoration Update

This fall, Lourdes Chapel at Assisi Heights is undergoing restoration. While we don't boast an artistic masterpiece like the Sistine Chapel, we are every bit as excited that this space is receiving the attention it deserves. In the 60 years of its existence, Lourdes Chapel has never been repainted. Ceiling panels were peeling and acoustic tiles needed repair.

How do you approach a project of this magnitude? A family of painters, Riehle Decorating from Cresco, Iowa, who specialize in painting churches, was selected for the project. Jerry Riehle, whose grandfather founded the business in the late 1930's, said, "We're not painters, we're decorators."

Work on the project began immediately after the annual observance of the Feast of Saint Clare on August 11, 2014. Members of the Riehle family can be seen every day working in the Chapel high atop scaffolding. The effects of their work are spectacular. Jerry was recently quoted in a *Rochester Post-Bulletin* story, "There's so much satisfaction in what we do. We witness exclamations upon entering the renewed worship space and we become friends with the community members along the way. We're blessed, really, with our type of work."

Painting Lourdes Chapel is a project that was made possible by generous donors who directed their gifts to the Chapel Fund. The next project for Lourdes Chapel will be making necessary repairs to the beautiful stained glass windows. We invite your gift to the Chapel Fund as we continue to be good stewards of our buildings and grounds.

Photo far right: Jerry Riehle takes a break to show the family's work off to Sisters Ingrid Peterson, Catherine Zimmerman, and Zoa Braunwarth. Employees Dick Hines, Yuwatey Suy (hidden), Christine Schreyer and Marie O'Toole are in the background.

From the Office of Development

by Barbara DeCramer

I heard it again last week during a phone conversation with a friend of the Sisters of Saint Francis. "I feel such a sense of peace when I enter the Assisi Heights property and drive up the hill," he said. "What is it about this place?" we wondered. Certainly, Assisi Heights is a lovely setting. But there are many lovely settings in this world and not all carry that sense of peace. We concluded that it is the spirit of the people who are here, and those who have gone before us, in whom that peace truly resides and from whom that peace radiates.

Might that peace stem from knowing that we are forgiven? And from allowing ourselves to forgive? Mother Theresa said, "If we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive." Perhaps that peace that we feel when we come up the hill at Assisi Heights is forgiveness.

The Sisters of Saint Francis are blessed with many generous donors and friends who make it possible to continue the ministries that bring the peace of Assisi Heights to the world. It is with grateful hearts that you are in our prayers every day.

Forgive others NOT BECAUSE THEY DESERVE FORGIVENESS BUT BECAUSE *you deserve peace.*

- Jonathan Lockwood Huie

Sisters of Saint Francis
Academy of Our Lady of Lourdes

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TO THE MAX
give DAY
NOV 13, 2014

Double the value of your gift this year!

Last year, on Give to the Max Day, over $22,000 was raised to support the mission and ministries of the Rochester Franciscans. Thank you! This year, a generous anonymous donor has pledged to match the first $20,000 that we receive on Give to the Max Day 2014. ***This pledge will effectively double the value of your gifts on November 13*** – your gift of $50 to the Sisters of Saint Francis will mean $100 in support.

Each year, generous friends like you celebrate Give to the Max Day by making your online donations through GiveMN.org. Your generosity on this day makes a difference far beyond the 24-hour giving event. As you know, the Sisters of Saint Francis are changing lives every day through ministries and prayer. On November 13, Minnesota's Give to the Max Day, your gift of any size has the power *"to be a compassionate presence for peace in our world, striving for justice and reverence for all creation."*

Please remember the Rochester Franciscans on November 13 and Give to the Max!

To Donate on November 13: https://givemn.org/organization/Rochesterfranciscan