Sisters of Saint Francis
1001 14th Street Northwest | Rochester, Minnesota | 55901
507-282-7441 | www.rochesterfranciscan.org

# *interchange*

***Adapting to Change***

Volume 25, Issue 2 - Summer Edition - August 2020

Dear Friends,

As the summer comes to an end, we take time to stop, contemplate, and assess our current situation. So much has happened in such a short period of time, it is often difficult to adjust to our new reality--whether it be taking precautions due to the pandemic, understanding escalating racial tensions, or watching peaceful protests turn into riots in our cities. Now, add to this the feeling of helplessness as we watch our western states burn, our southern states brace for tropical storms, and witness crops and homes in Midwest flattened by a derecho! It seems we are surrounded by upheaval, chaos, and change.

Yet, during this time of shelter-in-place, we have also found that inner quiet voice reassuring us that we can endure, we can find joy in the small meaningful moments of life, and we can be grateful for what we have to give.

For the Sisters of Saint Francis, this has been a prayerful time. We continue to pray for our nation, our Community, and our friends and families. We reach out to support those who are less fortunate, and we have hope for a better tomorrow.

May you find joy in the small meaningful moments of life, and find comfort in the realization that God is present with us always.

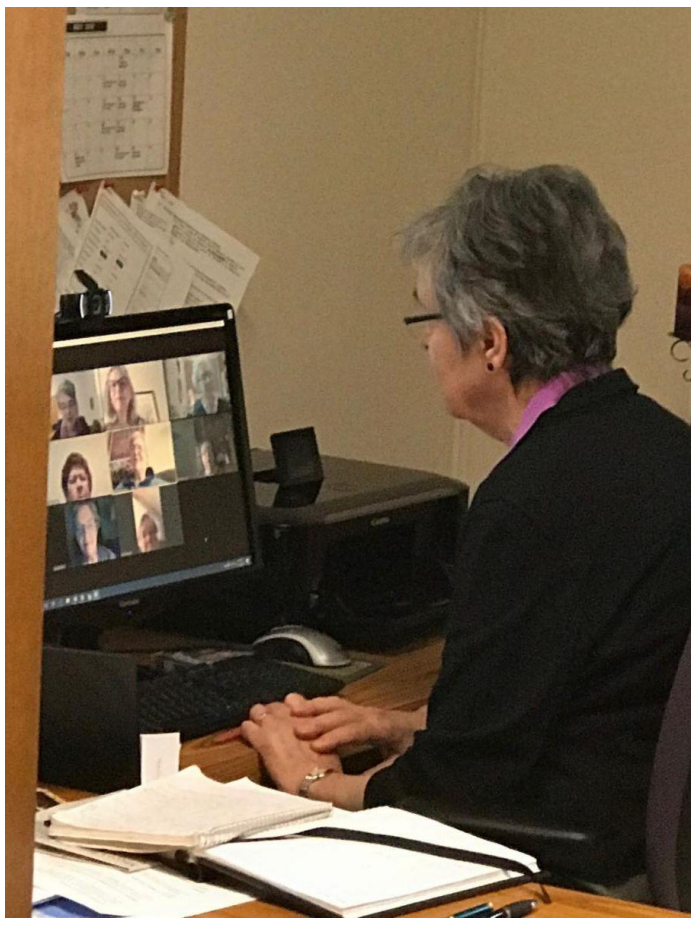
Peace and all good,

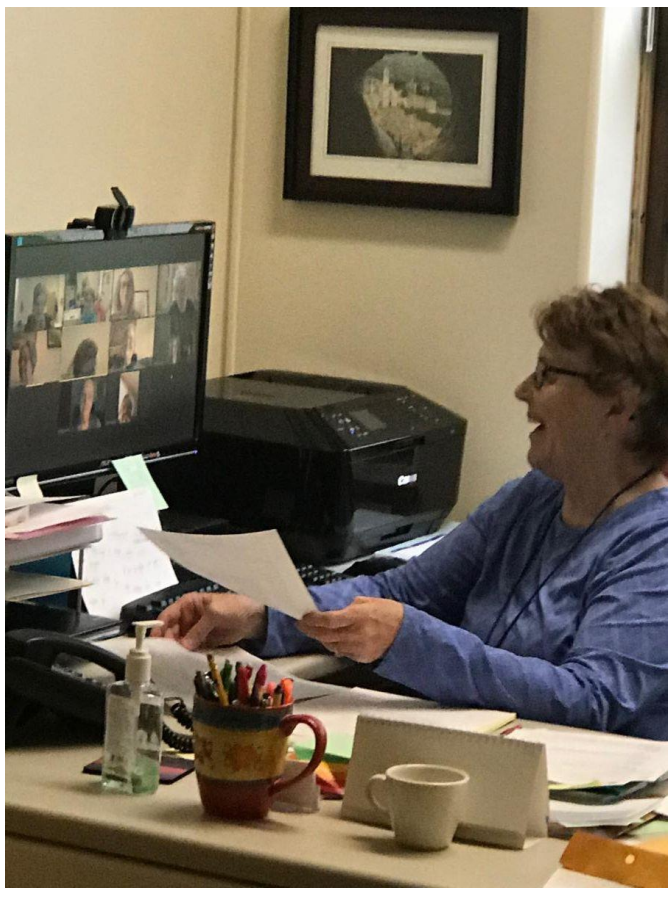
*Sister Ramona Miller*
*Congregational Minister*

ZOOM meetings have become a way of life -
keeping Sisters and Cojourners connected, whether near or far!

Above top row: Sisters Linda Wieser, Kathleen Warren and Sue Reif. Center: Sisters Val Usher, Anne Walch and Marilyn Geiger. Bottom: Sisters Barb Goergen and Wanda Mettes.

Below left: Sister Ramona Miller is shown attending a Zoom meeting of the Cojourner Advisory Group, and you'll note in the photo below right, Cojourner Coordinator Margo Kroshus is attending the same meeting... just down the hall from Sister Ramona!





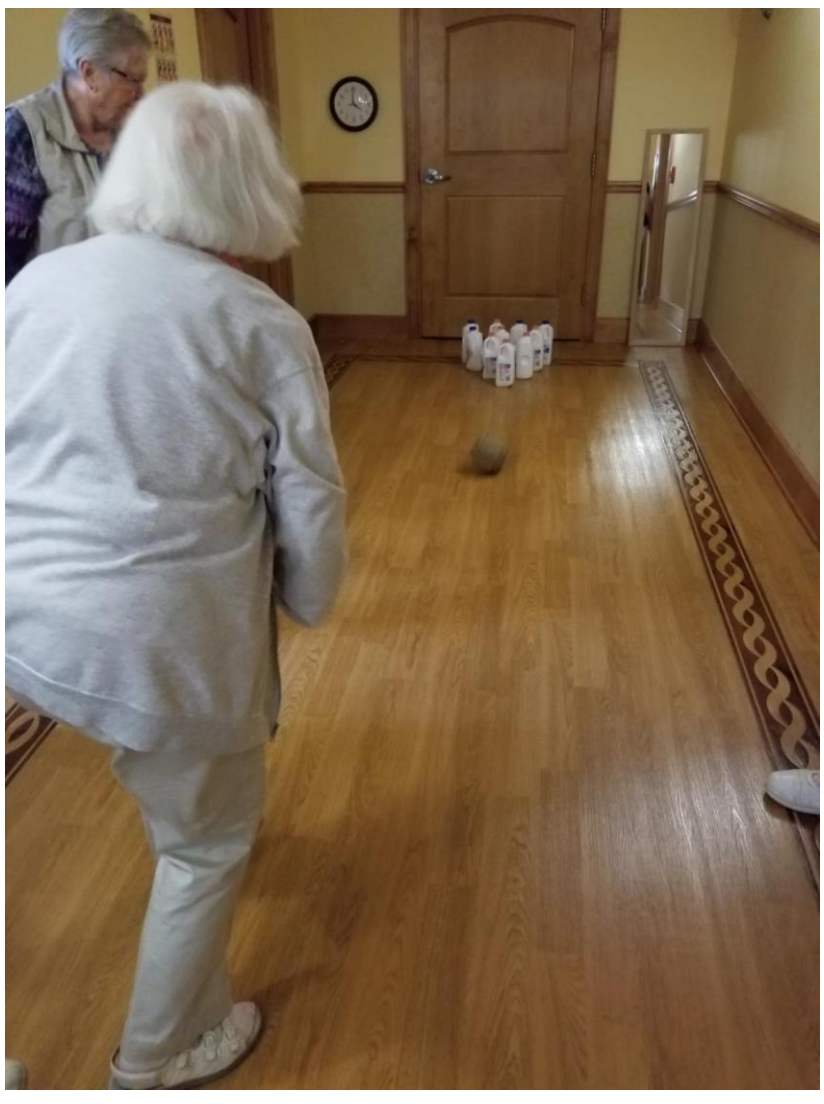
A long time had passed without regular interaction between the Sisters and staff, so a time and date were set for employees to go to the Courtyard to greet Sisters looking out from their windows!

See photo on next page…

With proper social distancing, resident Sisters from the 4th Clare Corridor were able to gather for an afternoon prayer service at Canticle Park. Shown below, left to right, are Sisters Patricia Jean Schlosser, Darleen Maloney, Dorothy Hansen, and Faith Huppler.  (And it appears that Sister Ancel Fischer is seated on the far left!)

Our Cojourners provided baskets to lift the Sisters' spirits, and volunteered their time and energy to care for our public spaces with polish and cleaning carts at hand!  Cojourner Maureen Bigelow is shown at left, and Cojourner Joanne Kellen with her husband, Larry, are shown on the right!

Sisters used their creativity for fun and enjoyment. Sister Yvonne Elskamp, a resident on the 4th Francis Corridor, is shown bowling with empty milk cartons, as Sister Jean Keniry looks on. And then, of course, the "pins" need to be reset, so Sister Elizabeth Gillis offered her assistance!  (During the shelter-in-place, Sisters were limited to staying and only interacting with others on their corridor for several months. Now, they may leave their corridors and interact with other Sister residents, as long as they continue to maintain social distancing and wear masks.)



**Assisi Heights Spirituality Adapts to Changing Reality** *by Sister Marlys Jax*

Dear Friends,

The pandemic has deeply affected all of us. We, at the Assisi Heights Spirituality Center (AHSC), are being asked to step into a tomorrow that will never be like yesterday, and ask ourselves, "What learning will we take away from this experience?"

Currently, our grounds and building are closed to the public. When safe gathering is again permitted, our programs where relationships are of essence will be offered on-site. However, we are committed to continuing to offer programs that engage this question with reflection and grace. It is time to harness the creativity and innovation that drives our passion for a better world. Our mission is to continue offering spiritual and educational programs highlighting compassion, peace, justice, and care of our one earth.

At the Assisi Heights Spirituality Center (AHSC), we are creating new virtual programs via ZOOM, starting in September. It is more than a response to COVID-19; it is an investment that will live past the pandemic and provide resources to individuals who previously may not have been able to attend due to a variety of reasons such as weather, transportation, or time limitations.

Please check our event calendar often for updates and registration.

**From the Office of Mission Advancement** *by June Howard, Director*

Dear Friends,

We regret to inform you that we are canceling the Christmas on the Hill event for 2020. We appreciate your support of this event over the past 10 years.

It was a difficult decision for us, but we believe this is in the best interests of our resident Sisters and the attendees since we do not know when the situation will change concerning the pandemic and the limitations placed on large event gatherings.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact June Howard, Director of Mission Advancement at 507-529-3526.

We will miss celebrating the holiday season with you.

**Memories, Traditions, and Dreams** *by Sister Briana McCarthy*

What holds a country together?

What deepens a culture rooted in **memories**?
What **traditions** give life and meaning to people?
Where do **dreams** come from that move a people forward?

**Memories** stored in the mind and heart preserve an identity.
**Traditions** allow communities to celebrate.
**Dreams** give glimpses of what is possible beyond...

**Memories** carry us to times of meaning:
When first loves alter reality, expanding time and space;
When families launch friendships and bonds of being;
When faced with tragedy, we cry and beg for answers;
When surprises of delight brush our cheeks with gratitude;
When death stops time, life drops certainty.

***All memories find their source in the Glory of God!***

**Traditions** carry the graces and joys of a given culture.
Irish dance to harp music, tell stories, and love to laugh.
Italians sing their operas, share their pasta and talk with their hands.
Germans are masterful cooks, create great beers, and raise great theologians.
Latinos bring the love of family, song and dance, and lively faith.
Americans value freedom, creativity, and explorations here and beyond.

***All traditions find their source in the Glory of God!***

**Dreams** are sparked from within, bubble up, and can be very playful.
Dreams are like clouds, often fluffy white, but sometimes dark and ominous.
Dreams enter the back of the mind and awaken the imagination.
Imagination, once awake, links dots, paints moving colors, designs, and patterns.
It finds musical notes in the air, flings words onto paper, sees in 3-D, and sometimes E.
Dreams, Spirit Rays, tumble then gleam...sprinkling cells of love for all.

***All dreams find their source in the Glory of God!***

**Memories** light our paths.
**Traditions** ground us as we walk, and
**Dreams** lift us up to see beyond that which prevents us to move forward.

**Dreams are powerful!**
Joseph had a dream: protect Mary and the Child.
Elizabeth had a dream: in old age, she would bear a child named John.
But Mary was visited and was promised a son:
**Jesus, the Christ!**

***Let us give praise to the Glory of God!***

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