

Volume 21.2 Summer 2018

# NEWS

A Publication of  THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Also in this issue:

- Bridging the Gap and Building Relationships between Religious
- People & Places
- Foundation Annual Report

## Companions *in* Mission

Join our Sisters in  
Living the Franciscan Spirit

## Commitment Statement

We recommit ourselves to “rebuilding the Church” by living the passion of the Gospel in the discerning spirit of our Franciscan charism and tradition.

We are willing to take the necessary risks to be a healing, compassionate presence in our violent world especially with women, children, and those who have no voice.

We desire to reflect this commitment in our dialogue with the entire Church, in our own governing structures, and in our relationship with one another as sister.

## Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, choose to live the Gospel in the prophetic spirit of Francis of Assisi and our Foundress Mother Francis Bachmann. With Jesus Christ as Brother, we live as sister with one another, with the entire human family and with all creation. Calling ourselves and one another to continuous conversion of heart, we commit ourselves to a life of contemplation, poverty and humility.

As vowed women of the Church, we respond with diverse gifts in a spirit of collaboration and of mutual service to the needs of others, especially the economically poor, the marginal and the oppressed. Seeking to participate in the Spirit's action in the world, we direct our personal and corporate resources to the promotion of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Filled with trust in the goodness of God, we move forward.

## POINT OF VIEW

**P**ope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete Et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad), is about our call to holiness. He says, “My modest goal is to repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges, and opportunities.” He also states, “Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others.”

*The articles in this issue of Good News demonstrate how our lay brothers and sisters as well as religious and clergy journey side by side responding to the call of the Gospel. Together we support one another in living holy lives.*

*In 1986 we established a companion program sharing our Franciscan spirituality and ministry with men and women who were attracted to our charism. We read about companions Betty Burdick, Lori Spanier, Mari Miller, and Patricia St. Clair. They describe how the program and their relationship with the sisters have transformed their lives. For some, their very image of God has changed. For others, presentations, prayer, reflection, and discussions have altered their daily living. All our companions inspire us by their witness and desire to grow in love and relationship with God.*

*In his exhortation, Pope Francis also states that Christian joy is usually accompanied by a sense of humor. Sister Ann David serves as the delegate for religious in the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware. She brings her caring, joyful spirit and her remarkable sense of humor to the religious whom she serves. Working as liaison to Bishop Malooly, she creates community among the various religious orders serving within the diocese, fostering relationships and support as they offer their particular gifts and ministry to the Church.*

*According to Pope Francis, living our lives in love and bearing witness to Jesus is the key to holiness. Throughout the challenges of life, may God give us the grace to respond to our opportunities to grow in holiness.*



**Sister Mary Kathryn  
Dougherty, OSF  
Congregational Minister**

Blessings!

*Sister Mary Kathryn Dougherty, OSF*



VOLUME 21.2 SUMMER 2018

# INSIDE *Good* NEWS CONTENTS

Point of View.....2

Companions in Mission: Join our Sisters in Living the Franciscan Spirit.....4

*Christian lay women and men with a Franciscan heart are invited to share in and live out the spirit and mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia within their own vocation and lifestyle, to learn the Franciscan spirituality and charism alongside the sisters, and to incorporate the teachings into their own lives.*

Written by Deb Litman  
Photography by Andrea Cipraini-Mecchi

People & Places.....10

Bridging the Gap and Building Relationships Between Religious.....12

*Sister Ann David Strohminger serves as delegate for religious to 33 diverse congregations in the Wilmington Diocese, working to maintain positive relationships and communication between the bishop, individual religious men and women, and their congregational leaders.*

Written by Deb Litman  
Photography by MK Photography

Foundation Annual Report .....16

Focus.....18

**Communications Office**  
609 South Convent Road  
Aston, PA 19014  
Tel (610) 558-7726  
Fax (610) 558-6131  
goodnews@osfphila.org

**Managing Editor**  
Florence Smith

**Assistant Editor**  
Sister Ann Marie Slavin, OSF

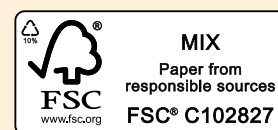
**Editorial Board**  
Sister Corda Marie Bergbauer, OSF  
Sister Marie Therese Carr, OSF  
Sister Constance Jean Furseth, OSF  
Mr. Joseph Glass  
Sister Helen Jacobson, OSF  
Sister Jacqueline Marie Kotz, OSF  
Sister Mary Lonergan, OSF

**Graphic Design**  
Geneen Pintof

The purpose of *Good News* is to further the Gospel mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia by sharing the good news of the congregation with our friends, family, companions, and sisters. Through this publication, we hope to share the charism of our congregation and invite others to become involved in our mission.

*Good News* is published three times a year (spring, summer, winter) by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. We welcome your feedback and comments; correspondence should be addressed to *Good News* at address above.

Visit our website! [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org)



The environmental savings by printing this document with FSC certified stock on an FSC certified press are:  
Trees preserved for the future: 43; Lbs water-borne waste not created: 124.17; Gallons wastewater flow saved: 18,266; Lbs solid waste not generated: 2,021; Lbs net greenhouse gases prevented: 3,979; BTUs energy not consumed: 30,459,240

**On the cover:** Since 1986, the Sisters of St. Francis have invited lay women and men with Franciscan hearts to join with them in living out their charism through the Companions in Mission Program. Today nearly 250 people across the United States identify as either Companions in Faith or Companions in Prayer and are helping to nurture the Franciscan spirit in the world.

*Phyllis Petryk loves attending Mass at Our Lady of Angels Convent and participating in programs at the Franciscan Spiritual Center. Phyllis truly lives her Franciscan spirituality, expressing her faith and values in all aspects of her life, particularly through the poetry that she writes.*





“OUR COMPANIONS ARE CONTEMPORARY  
EXAMPLES OF GOD’S LOVING PROVIDENCE,  
ENABLING THE JOURNEY TO CONTINUE.”

# Companions *in* Mission

## Join our Sisters in Living the Franciscan Spirit

Since 1855 when Maria Anna Boll Bachmann took the name Mother Mary Francis and became the first leader of the newly founded Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, the congregation and its members have upheld a long tradition of loving God and being in relationship through service. Through the years, the charism of the congregation—that unique spirituality that distinguishes the Franciscan approach to prayer, relationship, and ministry—has informed and inspired generations of sisters who live out the Gospel through their lives.

In 1986, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia took a bold step by establishing a companion relationship with Christian lay women and men with Franciscan hearts to share in and live out the spirit and mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia within their own vocation and lifestyle. Companions learn about Franciscan spirituality and charism alongside the sisters, incorporate the teachings into their own lives, and take what they have learned and experienced with them on their life journey.

“Our charism is not our own,” said companion program director Sister Jeanne Nisley, OSF. “It is given to us by the Spirit



*Sister Jeanne Nisley, director of the Companions in Mission Program (center) and Patricia St. Clair, assistant director (left), meet with Companion Lori Spanier to work on a special project in the companions office.*

and it is our responsibility to share that charism with those who have it as well. It is not just sisters being called. We need to nurture the charism in others.”

Those who choose to commit as Companions in Prayer support the mission of the sisters through their commitment to daily prayer for the sisters and their min-

istries. Companions in Faith participate actively in the spirit and mission of the sisters by joining together for faith-sharing and living out the charism by sharing their gift of a Franciscan heart.

Companions in Faith, who make up the largest component of the companion

*continued on page 6*

Companions are invited to an annual retreat day. This year's retreat focused on the Franciscan Moral Vision.



Clockwise from top right: Companion and former staff member Josie Pettinelli enjoys catching up with Sister Elise Betz while on break during the congregational assembly; Companion Kathy Boehm, the previous director of the companion program, talks with Sister Patricia Kane at a gathering; Sisters Patricia Moore, Sheila Mary Byrne, and Julie McCole present Companion Youngin Joo with a token of their appreciation for her beautiful organ playing during the daily Mass at Assisi House; Members of the Trenton Companion group perform a Christmas program for the retired Sisters at Assisi House during their annual Christmas party.



*continued from page 5*

program, gather regularly with one another and with Sisters of St. Francis in small faith-sharing groups throughout the United States. They study various aspects of Franciscan spirituality with sessions led by sisters or by the companions themselves. They reflect and pray on these topics together during their gatherings and on their own between meetings.

The Franciscan Companions in Mission Office, led by Sister Jeanne, provides resources, materials, and suggestions for each group's development and formation. Companions may participate in annual retreat days held on both the east and west coasts. The retreats combine presentations on Franciscan spirituality; time for prayer, reflection, and discussion; and an opportunity to socialize.

Although the companion experience shares a lot in common throughout the country, it is also as varied as the men and women

who are living it out. The following are stories of some of those companions and what their companion journey has meant to them.

### Lori Spanier, Lansdale, Pennsylvania

Lori Spanier was part of the original board of directors for the companion program when it began back in 1986. She first met the Sisters of St. Francis as a teacher at St. Stanislaus School. In fact, Lori felt such a connection with the sisters and their charism that she entered the precandidacy and candidacy programs in preparation for becoming a sister herself. Although ultimately her path led her in a different direction, Lori never veered away from the sisters and their spirituality or charism.

"The Franciscan spirituality of love, openness, and simplicity always spoke to me," said Lori. "When the sisters started the companion program, I thought, 'This is

"THE FRANCISCAN  
COMPANION  
PROGRAM WAS  
THE DESIRE TO LIVE  
MY FAITH IN THE  
WORLD RATHER  
THAN JUST IN MY  
PRAYER LIFE."



▲ The sanctuary at Our Lady of Angles Convent is a beautiful setting for the annual renewal of commitment made by companions during the retreat day liturgy.

◀ Companions relish the discussion and reflection opportunities they have alongside the sisters. The sisters' willingness to share their own personal experiences, along with the resources and materials from Sister Jeanne Nisley and the companion office, provide fertile ground for spiritual growth.

where God was leading me all along.' It was natural. It allowed me to be a part of community as a lay person."

Lori noted that praying together and dialoguing with others on a common theme encourages her to incorporate Franciscan lessons into her own life. She pointed to a recent prayer and reflection topic on the environment that had her waking up each morning with a prayer for the natural world at the forefront of her mind and heart.

Although the Lansdale group to which Lori belongs only meets every other month, Lori feels that the support of the group carries her through between meetings. "I take all my companions with me when I leave the meeting and continue to support them in my prayer life," said Lori. "The companion program is a gift. It is a

blessing. I do not have a biological sister but through the Sisters of St. Francis and the companion program, I feel that I have my sisters in spirit."

**Mari Miller,  
Portland, Oregon**

Mari Miller first became interested in Franciscan spirituality when she began spiritual direction with a Sister of St. Francis seven years ago. Already a Benedictine Oblate, Mari saw the Franciscan companion program as "a good way to expand (her) spirituality into the world."

"The Benedictine association spoke to my inner spirituality but the thing that drew me to the Franciscan companion program was the desire to live my faith in the world rather than just in my prayer life," said

*continued on page 8*

▼ Sister Mary Jo Chaves (front row, center) leads a monthly meeting with the Portland, Oregon, companion group. Members range in age from 25-75 and come from a diversity of faith traditions. Five Sisters of St. Francis from the area participate regularly in the companions' monthly gathering.



## What the Experience of Being a Companion Has Meant:

**"I feel God has truly blessed me by helping me to find this wonderful group of companions and sisters. The love is almost overwhelming."**

—Kathy Rushton, Baltimore, MD

**"I feel that I have gotten closer in touch with my own spirituality through being a companion."**

—Mary Sprague, Federal Way, WA

**"Being in relationship with the Sisters of St. Francis is a blessing in my life. Being a Franciscan Companion has given my life direction. It is often the pacesetter for my decisions, brings me peace, and usually calls me to remember what is really important in life; 'that we love one another' and that we are brothers and sisters to one another."**

—Mary Burlone, Walpole, MA

**"The sisters have helped me to grow spiritually and emotionally. Each one treats me with the dignity and respect a creature of God deserves. As a companion I come together with different parts of the body of Christ and learn how we are all connected as we share our stories of how God works in our lives."**

—Adam Weaver, Portland, OR

► *Right, Clockwise: Patricia St. Clair gazes at the portrait of Mother Francis Bachmann, foundress of the congregation; Karen McEvoy, a companion in faith for many years, enjoys her work as an administrative assistant at the motherhouse; Companion Winnie Hayek takes a moment to pray in Our Lady of Angels Chapel.*

▼ *Companions take time to share with sisters as both continue to expand their faith formation.*



“These three wonderful sisters—Sister Joan, Sister Marietta Culhane, and Sister Eleanor Horneman—had just come to our parish and rejuvenated the spiritual life of all of us,” said Betty. “When Sister Joan told me about the companion program, I was interested right away and sent out emails to get our group started.”

Although Sister Joan passed away just a year later after a battle with cancer, the companion program in Emmitsburg



*continued from page 7*

Mari. “For me the Franciscan piece was about bringing the presence of Christ into the world—to reach the marginalized in our society.”

Mari was working as a trial court administrator when she first got involved with the Portland, Oregon, companion group. Studying how Francis worked with those seen as outcasts got her thinking about the need for comforting companionship for prisoners. Once she retired, Mari completed two spiritual direction training programs—one through the Benedictines and the other through the Franciscans. She used that training to begin her own volunteer ministry serving as spiritual director for women incarcerated at a nearby maximum security prison.

In addition to her personal outreach, Mari is involved with service to the poor and vulnerable through outreach projects that the Portland companions undertake together. These include working at a local food bank, making and serving meals at a



nearby shelter, and helping to repair and refurbish a prison transitional home.

“The companion program is a way to be with serious seekers so we can help one another on our spiritual paths,” said Mari. “The sisters are the core—the reason we exist.”

### **Betty Burdick, Emmitsburg, Maryland**

Betty Burdick, part of the companion group in Emmitsburg, Maryland, became a companion in 2005 at the suggestion of Sister Joan Maenner who was serving as pastoral life director at St. Anthony’s Shrine Parish.



carried on, at first under the direction of Sister Marietta, and then upon her retirement, with Betty herself as coordinator. Today the group takes turns presenting different topics and meeting at different members’ homes.

“The sessions are so enlightening,” said Betty. “Discussions include topics such as how God loves us; seeing God in the world; things we can do to make our own lives richer; and how we can do our part in making the world a better place by making a difference in how we live.”

Betty also explained that the companion program has profoundly and fundamentally changed the way she experiences God. “I no longer see God as up above us and us as little peons down below,” said Betty. “God is all around us and is a loving God. Franciscan theology has shown me that God did not come because we are sinners. God came because God loves us.”

### **Patricia St. Clair, Assistant Director, Companion Program**

Patricia St. Clair has known the Sisters of St. Francis since her time as a student at Little Flower High School in Philadelphia. Her association with the congregation continued during her 32 years as an employee at St. Mary Hospital, first in Philadelphia

then in Langhorne. She became a companion in 1986—when the program first began—after being approached by one of the sisters at the hospital. “I thought I would just be learning about St. Francis and St. Clare,” said Patricia. “But it grew into a much more meaningful relationship between the sisters and me.”

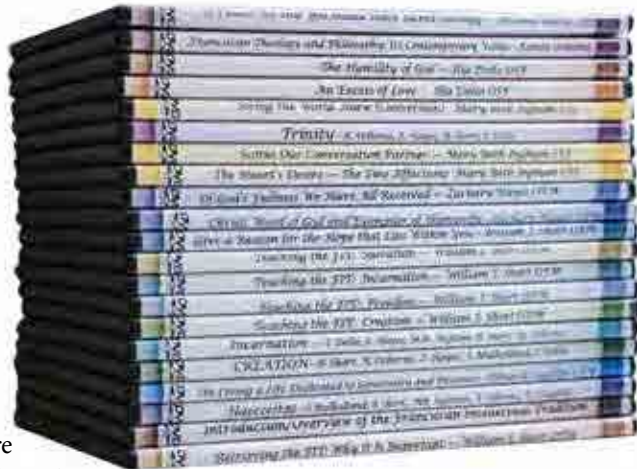
“I found that I wanted to be like them in the world,” Patricia explained, “to interact with gentleness; to help the poor; to see people without judgment; to meet people where they are. Today I feel that the Franciscan spirit has shaped who I am. I take a Franciscan approach to the decisions I make and how I try to interact with the people I meet.”



Companion Lori Spanier enjoys the beauty of the OLA grounds.

Patricia has experienced the companion program on both coasts, starting in the east and transitioning to the west for 12 years while she and her husband were living in Seattle. When they moved back to Pennsylvania, one of Patricia’s main priorities was living close to the motherhouse in Aston. After doing some volunteering with the sisters, Patricia was offered the position of assistant director of the companion program in October 2017—a job that she felt was truly heaven-sent.

► *Companion groups receive information about the Franciscan charism and the mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia from Sister Jeanne Nisley and Patricia St. Clair. A DVD library on various Franciscan topics has been created and items are loaned out to the various groups as needed.*



“When I walk the halls of the motherhouse, I get overwhelmed by the feeling that I am exactly where God wants me to be,” said Patricia. “It took me until age 65 to have that feeling in my job and I can tell you—it is a very peaceful feeling.”

As assistant director, Patricia hopes to continue to grow the companion program and to provide materials that will help lead people into Franciscan spirituality as a way of life. “I think the sisters like the companion program because it allows them to reach out to encourage the laity to live out the Gospel like Francis did,” Patricia explained. “As the sisters become fewer in number, lay people can take these Franciscan values into their workplaces, their families, their relationships—into the world where the sisters can’t always be. We are an extension of the sisters and the good work they do.”

## The Future Of The Charism

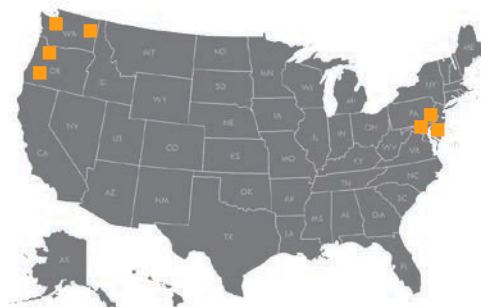
With nearly 240 current companions and more than 25 in discernment, the companion program is poised to grow even stronger as the Spirit continues to move lay women and men to embrace and live the Franciscan charism of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.

“In my six years as director of the companion program, I have developed such hope and optimism that no matter what happens with our sisters, our Franciscan charism is not going to die out,” said Sister Jeanne. “As I look at our companions, I know that the Franciscan heart will continue to develop and be nurtured.” ■

*Are you interested in becoming a companion? Visit [www.osfphila.org/companions](http://www.osfphila.org/companions) or call (610) 558-7756.*

For more information or comments on this article, contact [goodnews@osfphila.org](mailto:goodnews@osfphila.org).

## FIND A COMPANION GROUP NEAR YOU



### EAST COAST

- MD, Emmitsburg
- MD, Fallston
- NJ, Trenton
- PA, Aston
- PA, Bryn Mawr
- PA, Langhorne
- PA, Lenni
- PA, Philadelphia

### WEST COAST

- OR, Klamath Falls
- OR, Portland
- WA, Spokane
- WA, Tacoma

*Don't see a companion group near you? You may choose to pursue a relationship with the Sisters of St. Francis as a companion in prayer. Companions share in the spirit and mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia through either prayer or faith. Contact us for more information.*

# PEOPLE & PLACES



(l-r) Sisters Anne Patrice Hefner; Peggy Juskelis, SSND; Mary Kathryn Dougherty; Ruth Bernadette O'Connor; Margaret Xavier Romans; and Colette Gerry were on hand to receive the award.

## Who are the 'Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia'?

Through this section we hope to share a glimpse of our congregation and the individuals who make real its mission.



Sister Jean O'Connor receives a plaque from Father Michael Nixon in recognition of her 20 years of service.

## MARYLAND

Mother Seton Academy, one of our cosponsored ministries in Baltimore, presents its annual Founders Award to an individual whose service to the school embodies the vision of the founders. This year's award was presented posthumously to our **Sister Joyce Ann Helfrich** who had served on the school's board. The presentation was made during the Founders' Day Prayer Service—a yearly gathering held during Catholic Schools Week.



## FLORIDA

**Sister Jean O'Connor** was recently recognized for her 20 years of service at St. Dominic Parish in Panama City, Florida. A special plaque recognizing her service was presented to Sister Jean by Father Michael Nixon, the pastor, and a special acknowledgement in the parish bulletin outlined the many ways in which Sister Jean has served the people of St. Dominic's over those 20 years.



## PENNSYLVANIA

**Sisters Linda DeCero and Marguerite O'Beirne**, both of whom minister at Neumann University in Aston, received recognition from organizations representing their respective ethnic origins. The Order of the Sons of Italy Chapter at Neumann named Sister Linda as its chaplain. Sister Marguerite was recently inducted as a member of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick in Philadelphia.

## WASHINGTON

**Sister Patricia Millen** was one of approximately 6,500 participants in the 2018 Spokane Women's Persistence March calling for equality and justice for all. In its second year, the Spokane Women's March—now called the Spokane Women's Persistence March—exceeded expectations. Participants came hoisting signs and wearing shirts of protest and pink hats. As the women marched, chants of "We are women; hear us roar. This is how we say 'no more,'" echoed in the background. After an hour of marching, the gathering ended with a rally at the Convention Center.



Sister Patricia Millen attended the 2018 Spokane Women's Persistence March—an event focused on educating people about legislation on issues like equality and human rights.



## HONDURAS

**Sister Maria Orlandini**, director of advocacy for Franciscan Action Network, was part of a delegation of 50 people who traveled to Honduras to show support for the people in their struggle with the government. On Election Day they served as witnesses in case of violence and served as escorts for a group of young people to ensure their safety. They attended a prayer vigil and also met with the acting U.S. ambassador. On their final evening, the delegation attended a fiesta as a "thank you" from the Honduran people.



*Sister Jean Clare Rohe (second from left) enjoys a delicious meal with relatives and friends as she celebrates her 100th birthday and her 80 years as a Sister of St. Francis.*

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Sister Jean Clare Rohe** recently celebrated two milestones: her 100th birthday and 80 years as a Sister of St. Francis. She grew up on a farm in Baltimore County and spent most of her years in ministry as a teacher. Asked how it felt to be 100, she acknowledged God's goodness and credited her longevity to taking life one day at a time and eating fresh food picked straight from the vine.



## PENNSYLVANIA

**Our Franciscan volunteers** threw a Mardi Gras party to celebrate with our sisters. They cleaned, shopped, decorated, and prepared the food: homemade jambalaya, beignets, and a selection of cheeses. Together with their guests, they played Mardi Gras-themed games and enjoyed a selection of jazz music. Both guests and volunteers enjoyed this afternoon of celebration before the beginning of the Lenten season.



*Bottom (l-r) Sister Monica Bauer, Volunteers Laura Anderson, Bianca Martinez; Middle (l-r): Sisters Anita Cattafesta, Stephanie Unger, Elaine Martin, Maria Anna Dela Paz; Top (l-r): Volunteer Rachel Dunlap, Sisters Patricia Smith, Theresa Elitz, Frances Acton.*

## MARYLAND

**Sister Helen Jacobson** was invited back to her alma mater, the Catholic High School of Baltimore, to address the 2018 members of the school's English Honor Society, named in recognition of Sister Corda Marie Bergbauer. Both sisters were former teachers at the school. In her presentation, Sister Helen stressed the importance of having an excellent background in English, especially in positions where the ability to communicate clearly and correctly is of utmost importance. She closed by advising students to "never underestimate the power of words."



*Sisters Helen Jacobson (far left) and Corda Marie Bergbauer (center) joined president Barbara Nazelrod (back center) and chapter advisor Scott Derosier (far right) in congratulating the members of the 2018 Corda Marie Bergbauer English Honor Society.*



## PENNSYLVANIA

On Sunday, March 24, our sisters were well represented at the 2018 **Rise Against Hunger** action held at the Aston Community Center. The gathering was done in conjunction with members of other church groups in the Aston area. Rise Against Hunger is "an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable." Each meal packet contains micronutrients such as enriched rice, soy protein, dried vegetables, and a packet of 23 essential vitamins and nutrients. An accurate count of bags—each a complete meal—was kept. Every time 2,000 meals was reached a gong was sounded. By 10 o'clock the group reached the goal of 22,000 meals!

## PENNSYLVANIA

The presenter for our 2018 **Charism Day** was Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, auxiliary bishop of Detroit and a longtime advocate for justice and peace. His presentation, "The Most Radical Call of the Gospel: Nonviolence/Active Love," stressed the need for today's world to heed that call. He posed the question, "Why is it that our country—which claims to be a Christian country—is so immersed in the culture of violence?" He also referred to the Vow of Nonviolence which helps individuals recognize the violence in their own hearts and to begin—each day—to practice the nonviolence of Jesus.

▼ Ready to head home after a successful morning:  
Kneeling: Sisters Faith Ngugi, Catherine Ndambiri;  
Middle Row: Sisters Edythe Norman, Margaret O'Brien, Kathleen Swan, Susanna Monteleone; Back Row: Jerome Burton, Leigh Burton.



Sister Ann David Strohming, delegate for religious for the Diocese of Wilmington, sees her primary role as bringing people together. She takes time to get to know congregations and individuals on a personal level and makes connections wherever she can. Sisters Agnes and Jyothina, both Sisters of Christ the Light, are two of the many religious who have benefitted from Sister Ann David's welcoming presence and support.



# Bridging *the* Gap

## *and* Building Relationships Between Religious

Sister Ann David finds herself on the road often, traveling from one end of the 5,307 square mile Wilmington Diocese to the other. She says driving up to 200 miles a day is worth the effort in order to interact face to face with every one of the religious women and men she serves. Together with Bishop Malooly, Sister Ann David works with 280 religious in 33 congregations.



“THERE IS NO QUESTION AS TO SISTER ANN DAVID’S SUPPORT. SHE IS THERE FOR THE GOOD AND THE BAD. WHATEVER WE DO, WE WANT HER TO BE WITH US. SHE MAKES US A PART OF HER AND SHE IS A PART OF US.”

A typical day for Sister Ann David Strohming, OSF, can find her leading a reflection for a community of sisters, reviewing health insurance benefits with a major superior, or visiting an ailing priest. As the delegate for religious for the Diocese of Wilmington, Sister Ann David serves as the representative to religious congregations, working to maintain positive relationships and communication between the bishop, individual religious men and women, and their congregational leaders. She also keeps the bishop informed of both personal and congregational happenings that are occurring within the diocese.

The Wilmington Diocese encompasses 33 diverse religious congregations comprised of more than 280 religious men and women. It includes the entire state of Delaware and nine counties of the Eastern

Shore of Maryland, covering a total of 5,307 square miles. That means that Sister Ann David is always busy—staying in touch with the religious throughout the diocese and keeping in constant contact with Bishop Francis Malooly.

### Liaison To The Bishop

“Bishop Malooly is a very pastoral bishop who really knows the religious and their ministries,” said Sister Ann David. “He truly cares about them and desires to be helpful. It is my job to be a liaison so that he can do that in the best way possible.” For example, she lets him know when individuals or congregations are facing illness or other difficulties. Although she sometimes visits religious as the bishop’s representative, it is not unusual for the bishop himself to make hospital visits or to reach out to congregations in times of joy or struggle.

*Sister Ann David and Bishop Malooly meet frequently to discuss a variety of topics—from what is happening in religious life in the U.S. in general to what is going on with the health and well-being of individual sisters and brothers in the diocese.*



Sister Ann David is also responsible for keeping the bishop updated about what is happening in religious life in general. “Religious life is changing with the times and that is good but it is important to keep up with the changes,” said Sister Ann David. “There is a shift from a focus on sponsored ministries—schools, hospitals—to a renewed sense of mission and charism. There are many new forms of association within the scope of consecrated life as well as in secular institutes that diversify the mission of the Catholic Church while spreading the good news of the Gospel. We must be ready for things to look very different from what they did in the 50s and 60s. Our Creator God continues to invite us to service and we have to be prepared to respond in diversified ways.”

### Pastoral Care Agent

As committed as Bishop Malooly is to being present to the individual religious within the diocese, it simply isn’t possible for him to be everywhere. Sister Ann David helps to bridge that gap, serving not only as the bishop’s official representative to religious but also as a pastoral care agent. “She checks in on her religious brothers and sisters, making sure they have what they need and helping with any issues or problems they might be facing,” said Msgr. Steve Hurley, vicar general of the Diocese of Wilmington. “The personal care she

*continued on page 14*

*When she can't make visits, Sister Ann David takes the time to make phone calls or send handwritten letters to connect with people. "I find that people really respond to receiving a personal note," said Sister Ann David.*



*Sister Ann David shares a moment with Sister Catherine Godfrey, prioress of the Benedictine Sisters at St. Gertrude Monastery in Ridgely, Maryland, with whom she works closely. "Even though I haven't known her that long, Sister Ann David has become like an old friend," said Sister Catherine.*

provides is very much appreciated. It lets people know they are important to the bishop and to the diocese."

Sister Ann David writes personal letters and calls regularly to touch base with the sisters, brothers, and priests. In turn, many turn to her to talk through concerns or to report on successes. "She is someone who engenders trust," explained Msgr. Hurley.

The congregations within the diocese are very diverse. Some come from other countries to minister to marginalized people living in the United States. Thus immigration becomes an issue. Sister Ann David is sometimes called on to support sisters and brothers with these concerns. Religious congregations face fears similar to those

of other people. Some religious have been detained as long as two years unable to return to their local congregations. This makes it difficult to have a family visit, especially to Central America and Mexico. Recently a sister of the Sisters of St. Clare traveled to her native Ireland to visit her ailing father. With the current state of immigration enforcement, she faced some concerns about her visa being rejected when it was time for her return. "There has been uncertainty as to whether she was going to be able to return to Wilmington to live and minister," said Sister Ann David. "Her congregation assumed, that since she was traveling to a European-based area, she would have an easy return. Although her father died in October 2017, she is still waiting to have her visa approved. It has been a very difficult time and I keep in close touch with her local community—listening and supporting them in whatever way I can."

### Congregational Supporter

Offering support to the religious in the diocese is a particular strength of Sister Ann David. Despite the vast geographic region, she travels from one end of the diocese to the other visiting every congregation. "The many miles spent on the road never appear to tax her," said Sister Catherine Godfrey, prioress of the Benedictine Sisters at St. Gertrude Monastery in Ridgely, Maryland. "She makes sure to visit every single monastery and convent."

Sister Catherine appreciates the fact that Sister Ann David is willing to travel the more than 70 miles each way to offer her support and aid. The Benedictine sisters have lived and ministered in Ridgely and Wilmington for more than a century, founding and running a school for people with developmental disabilities. With their numbers decreasing, the sisters recently sold the school and the monastery to the Benedictine Foundation. After several years of planning and praying, they broke ground on a smaller monastery in Newark, Delaware, which is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2018. This was a very difficult time for the sisters. Sister Ann David worked with the Benedictines throughout the transition, helping them identify and work through the anxieties, the losses, and the gains that come with that kind

of significant change. “I know that she is always just a phone call away,” said Sister Catherine. “I have a feeling that if we needed her to come down and help us pack, she’d be here filling boxes.”

Sister Ann David also recently eased the transition for the Sisters of Christ the Light who came from India to work at the Ministry of Caring. “She is a wonderful resource for them,” said Msgr. Hurley. “In addition to helping them get settled, she helped with the cultural shift they were facing, guiding them in figuring out what it means to be a religious in Delaware and the ways in which that might be different from what they were used to.” For example, Sister Ann David assisted them in integrating into the local Indian community, invited them to join in diocesan events for religious, and taught them safety practices such as living and ministering in a drug-infiltrated area.

### Event Coordinator

In addition to assisting congregations with their individual concerns, Sister Ann David also fosters relationships between religious congregations. “Many of our congregations have only four or five people so they welcome the opportunity to come together, connect, and socialize,” said Sister Ann David.

Each year she plans a number of programs—the diocesan jubilee celebration in the spring where religious men and women observing jubilees (anniversaries) celebrate with liturgy and a dinner; a prayer service in February that marks World Day



*When she's not tending to the people who have come to depend on her, Sister Ann David enjoys tending to the many plants in her care. Her home is filled with evidence of her green thumb.*

of Consecrated Life; and the annual picnic held each summer allowing the various religious community members to come together to relax and get to know each other better.

In Sister Ann David's first year of organizing the picnic, she showcased her fun approach to the annual event with invitations that featured a graphic of the bishop wearing a chef's hat and flipping burgers. Another year, she put together a quiz game with categories such as “Name that Order,” “Offices of the Wilmington Diocese,” and “Religious Life in the 21st Century.” Winners took home prizes such as gift cards that had been donated.

At the most recent picnic, Sister Ann David arranged for a photo booth complete with crazy hats, glasses, and costumes. Even the bishop joined the fun, donning a “Cat in the Hat” hat for his photo. “It was great for teambuilding,” said Msgr. Hurley. “It's fun to be silly every now and then and when the bishop does it, it allows others to let their hair down also.”

### Cherished Resource

People say it is not simply what she does, but who she is that makes Sister Ann David such a beloved asset to the Wilmington Diocese. “She has a great spirit about her,” said Msgr. Hurley. “She always has a smile and a lot of fun energy.”

“Even to hear her name makes me smile—that's how much I think of her,” said Sister Catherine. “There is no question as to her support. She is there for the good and the bad. Whatever we do, we want her to be with us. She makes us a part of her and she is a part of us.” ■

For more information or comments on this article, contact [goodnews@osfphila.org](mailto:goodnews@osfphila.org).

## HOW YOU CAN HELP...

- Incorporate a prayer for religious sisters, brothers, and priests in your regular prayer routine.
- Send a handwritten letter to a friend or relative you haven't seen in a while. In this age of emails and texts, there is something especially delightful about receiving such a personal expression of care from a loved one.
- Visit with retired sisters near you. Many retirement convents welcome visitors who want to spend time with sisters. Some folks read to or play cards with residents. Others share musical programs or bring in therapy dogs.
- Serve as a support to isolated people in your area. Whether it is a newly relocated family looking to meet new people, a widow who needs to connect with others, or a person with a disability who may be homebound—having someone act as a facilitator can help people overcome the barriers to social interaction.
- Consider using the enclosed envelope to donate to the sisters' ministries and/or retirement.

*The Benedictine Sisters have recently broken ground to build a smaller monastery in Newark, Delaware. Sister Ann David has been with the congregation every step of the way as its sisters work through the many emotional and logistical challenges that come with such a big transition.*



# SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

*Everyone has within a piece of good news.*

— Anne Frank (adapted)

See more good news at [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org)

## Sisters of St. Francis Foundation

Dear Friends,

Peace and all good!

*"Let us seek the grace of remembrance  
so as to grow in the spirit of gratitude.*

*Let us ask ourselves:  
Are we good at counting our blessings?"*

— Pope Francis

The words of Pope Francis give us reason for sharing the 2017 Annual Foundation Report.

Preparing the report provided a wonderful opportunity to review the past year and rejoice in your goodness. Because of you many have received help that would not have been there through any other avenue. You journeyed with us both in caring for the elder care of our retired sisters and in helping us to follow our mission in caring for those in need.

Together we have the ability to achieve far more than we can achieve alone. You give us support, prayerful remembrances, and encouragement. Each time we go forth together to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters, we respond to the Gospel and to the God of Love.

This report celebrates you, gives thanks for the times we have collaborated in responding to the Gospel message, and anticipates continuing to care together for our retired sisters and the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Be at peace and joy as you realize through this report the good that you do for us and with us.

With gratitude and thanksgiving,

*Sr. Deborah Krist, OSF*

Sister Deborah Krist, OSF

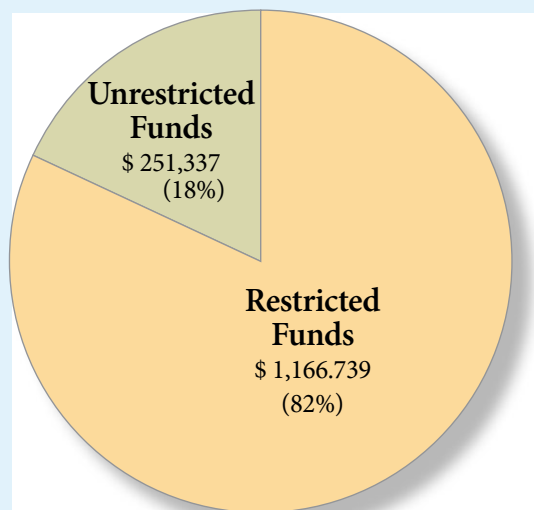
Director of Mission Advancement



**Total Donations: \$ 1,418,076**

**Restricted: \$ 1,166,739 (82%)**

**Unrestricted: \$ 251,337 (18%)**



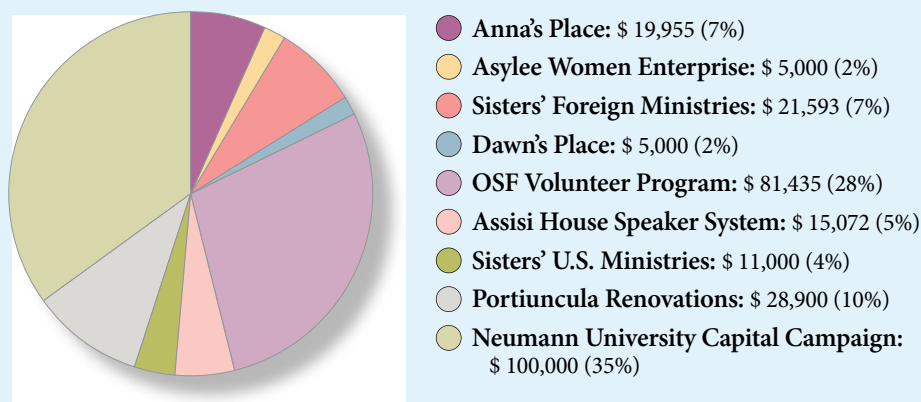
**Sources of Donations:** Raffle, Golf Tournament, Franciscan Night, Christmas Craft Fair, Direct Mail Appeals, Good News, E-News, Memorial Gifts, Memorial Cards, Grants, Recurring Gifts, Website/Social Media Donations, Estates and Inheritances.

*The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia assume operational costs of the foundation.*

# 2017 Annual Report

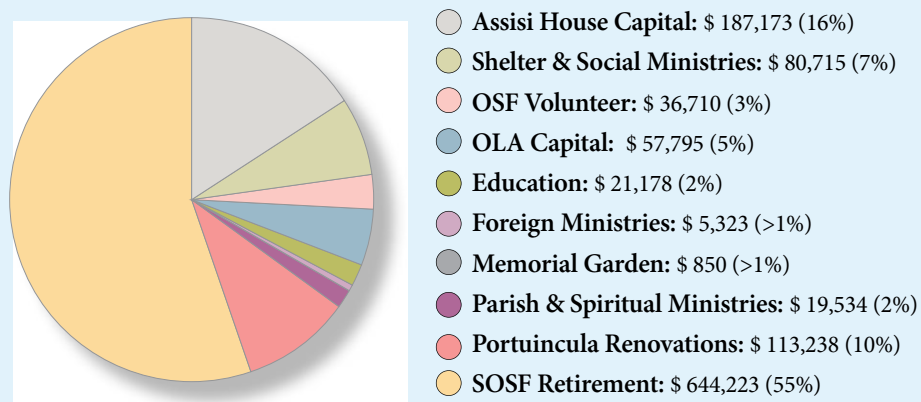
## Distribution of Unrestricted Funds: \$ 287,955\*

Unrestricted funds were designated by congregational leadership to assist various ministries—for example helping trafficked women find shelter at Dawn's Place, fostering social justice initiatives at Franciscan Action Network, and assisting sisters working with those who are poor in various U.S. ministries.



\* Note: \$ 36,618 distributed in 2017 was carried over/received in 2016.

## Distribution of Restricted Funds: \$ 1,166,739



**Distribution of Restricted Categories:** **Foreign Ministries:** Africa, Haiti; **Assisi House:** roof, speaker system, renovations; **Education:** Drexel Neumann Academy, Neumann University; **Parish and Spiritual Ministries:** Franciscan Spiritual Center, OLA Chapel collections; **Memorial Garden:** trees, bricks; **Shelter and Social Ministries:** Alaska Ministries, Anna's Place, Clare of Assisi House, Dawn's Place, Hispanic Ministries of Delco, Red Hill Farm, Spokane Ministries, St Francis Inn, St Mary's Franciscan Shelter.



## In Memoriam

Sister Angela Erhard  
February 9, 2018

Sister Elizabeth Doyle  
(Formerly Sister Elizabeth Joseph)  
April 3, 2018

Sister Kathleen McMullin  
(formerly Sister Kathleen Theresa)  
May 27, 2018

Sister Christine Marie Nicoletto  
June 6, 2018



*Your generous donations to the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation help care for our elderly sisters like Sister Angela Patrice Power and fund programs such as our Franciscan Volunteers of which Mande DeMarco was a part.*



Therefore, every dollar that our donors give is used solely for the ministries and elder care.

# Focus

► In addition to her Franciscan connections, Phyllis Petryk is actively involved with the Lazarus Committee and various Scripture study groups at Church of the Holy Child and several faith and outreach-related committees at Maris Grove Retirement Community in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania, where she resides.



## PHYLLIS PETRYK

"I THANK AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOR THEIR PRESENCE IN MY LIFE AND FOR THE FRANCISCAN VALUES THEY HAVE TAUGHT ME THROUGHOUT MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY."

▼ Phyllis revisits one of two self-published spiritual poetry and prose books—*Our Awesome God and Flower and Tree* and *All that We See*—with good friend Winnie Hayek whose technological expertise, encouragement, and support were invaluable.

Phyllis Petryk's first connection with the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia was as a choir member under the direction of Sister Eleanor Horneman at Resurrection Parish in Chester, Pennsylvania, and as a participant in the charismatic prayer group initiated by Sister Ann Rosaire Bradley. She met several more of our sisters when she earned a degree in liberal arts with a minor in psychology from Neumann University in 1991. She joined the Franciscan Companions in Mission Program at its inception and currently belongs to the Aston Faith Sharing Group and serves on the Companion Advisory Council.

Upon retiring from Astra-Zeneca, Phyllis was hired by Sister Theresa Yanda as volunteer coordinator at Assisi House. During her five years in the position, she recruited and supervised volunteers, planned appreciation programs, and initiated a yearly retreat day. "I really loved my time at Assisi House being with so many wonderful sisters and volunteers. After I left the staff, my sister Flo and I continued to volunteer there until her illness," Phyllis said. "I will always be grateful and never forget the love, kindness, prayers, and support of the sisters, companions, volunteers, and staff that Flo and I received during her illness and which extended to me after her passing."

Often accompanied by Companion Winnie Hayek, Phyllis loves attending Mass at Our Lady of Angels and participating in programs at the Franciscan Spiritual Center. She is a published author of two books of poetry, some of which you may have read in the sisters' congregational e-news. "In both books I thank and acknowledge the Sisters of St. Francis for their presence in my life and for the Franciscan values they have taught me throughout my spiritual journey," explained Phyllis.

"Phyllis truly lives her Franciscan spirituality, expressing her faith and values through all aspects of her life," explained Winnie, "including the wonderful poetry that she writes, her long involvement with the Sisters of St. Francis and the companions, and the great pleasure and help that she gives to friends and neighbors. My friendship with Phyllis and her encouragement and example have led me to consider the Franciscans as my spiritual family."

◀ Phyllis' two favorite activities at Maris Grove are belonging to The Writers' Group and playing pool in the women's league of 30+ members who compete with each other and sometimes in tournaments with the men's league.



# Let's Hear From You!

- ☐ Please add my name to the mailing list for *Good News*. (This is a secure list to which no other mail will be sent unless you request to receive information.)  
☐ I am receiving duplicate copies of *Good News*. Enclosed is the address label that contains the mailing address to be removed from your mailing list. (Mail card and address label in envelope.)  
☐ Please remove my name from the mailing list; I no longer wish to receive *Good News*.  
☐ Please add my email to your e-list so I can receive my copy electronically. In addition, please remove my address from your hard copy list.  
☐ Please send a copy of *Good News* to the following individual:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## Select areas of interest to receive information about the congregation.

- ☐ Companion Program    ☐ Franciscan Spiritual Centers (select one): ☐ Aston, PA    ☐ Milwaukie, OR    ☐ Young Franciscans  
☐ Community Supported Agriculture:    ☐ Sisters of St. Francis Foundation    ☐ Vocations    ☐ Franciscan Volunteer Program  
 Red Hill Farm, Aston PA



### Join Our E-News Mailing List!

Visit [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org) to sign-up. It only takes a minute to enter your email address to receive prayerful, entertaining, and informative e-news from the Sisters of St. Francis twice per month.



### Join us!



Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia



SrsOfStFrancis

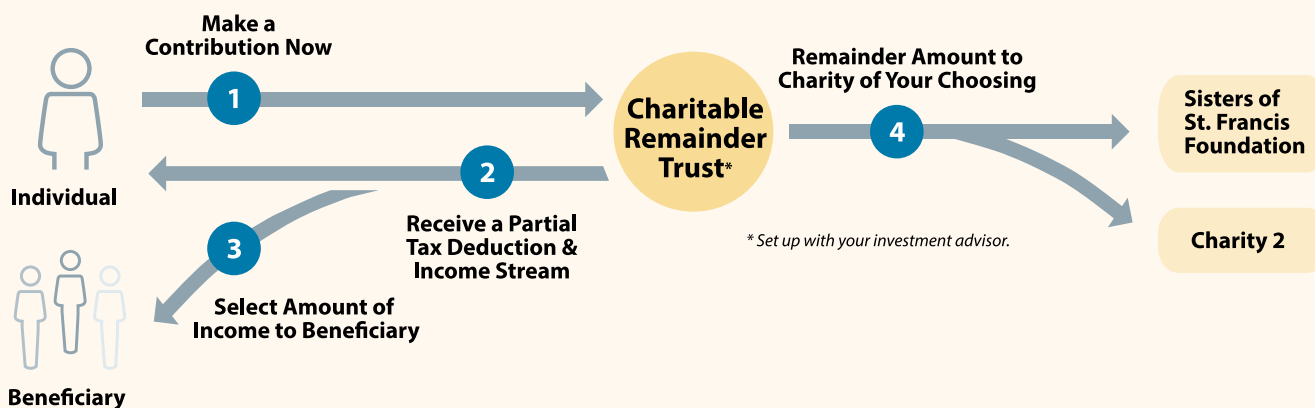
Link directly to our pages from our website homepage: [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org)

## SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS FOUNDATION

### Charitable Remainder Trusts

These trusts are for larger gifts, typically for \$100,000 or more. Charitable Remainder Trusts may offer donors the opportunity to increase income, reduce taxes, and provide for the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation and other charities at the time of their death.

The administrators of your trust can inform you how to designate the Sisters of St. Francis Foundation as your beneficiary.



***I would like to know more about including the Sisters of St. Francis in my Will.***

Please ☐ contact me ☐ arrange a visit.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ HOME ☐ CELL \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Please tear out this page and mail completed to:

GOOD NEWS, Communications Office, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, 609 S. Convent Road, Aston, PA 19014-1207

Visit us online at [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org) or call us at (610) 558-7726

The Sisters of St. Francis  
of Philadelphia  
609 S. Convent Road  
Aston, PA 19014-1207  
Change Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ROYERSFORD, PA  
PERMIT NO. 539



Visit our website at [www.osfphila.org](http://www.osfphila.org)

## Sisters Join In the March for Life

It was a cold and chilly day in March when four of our sisters joined a group of more than 1,000 young adults at Rose Tree Park in Media to send a strong message for the need for common sense gun control. They were also joining with close to a million people in Washington, DC, and in 800 such gatherings around the country demanding that legislators take action to protect our youth from those who would use weapons to kill and maim. One after another, the young adults promised legislators that they would not give up and reminded leaders that, come election time, many will be able to vote!



△ Sister Miriam Eileen Murray, Bill Rupertus, Sisters Kate O'Donnell, Caroline Sweeney, and Noreen Buttimer met with local young adults to call for the need for gun control.



The Companions in Mission Program was established in 1986 when the sisters decided to extend their spirit and mission to lay Christian men and women. The first companion board charged with overseeing the new program and laying the foundation of what the program is today consisted of (front row) Sisters Carol Ann Zurlo, Clare D'Auria, and Jean Ustasiewski. (back row) Companion Carol Fangas, Sister Elizabeth Pepe, Companions Jack Fitzpatrick, Kathy Boehm, (not pictured) Anthony Concilia Griffin, and Roseanne Kurry. Read more about the companion program on page 4.

## St. Patrick's Day Philly Style

This year our sisters participated in Philadelphia's St. Patrick's Day Parade. Quite a few chose to walk the parade. One of those walkers was a special guest—none other than our foundress, Mother Francis Bachmann (aka Sister Christa Marie Thompson). She walked and, at times, moved out of parade formation to chat with folks gathered on the sidewalks—sidewalks she herself had traveled more than 160 years ago! Other sisters traveled on a beautifully decorated float or in a hired trolley.

