

Allegany

Connections



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Mission Statement

We, the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, seek to live the Gospel of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. we witness to God's love in the Franciscan tradition by living as sisters with all creation and by joyfully serving others, especially those who are poor or marginalized.

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IN THIS EDITION: *Congratulations, Jubilarians*

House of Prayer Update

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Please note: At the time of publication, Sr. Frances Gavin has also died. However, her funeral is scheduled for after the release date for this issue. Her full eulogy will be printed in the next edition of *Allegany Connections*.



Congratulations



Lorraine Chen
OSF



Margaret Mary
Kimmins OSF



Eileen Lambert
OSF



J. Miriam
Natale OSF



Sharon Radice
OSF

Golden Jubilarians

A House of Prayer for All People



Dear Ones, All:

My last Update was in late August 2014 as I was getting ready to fly to the Holy Land to take up residence in Jericho at a house donated by a friend, rent free, for the House of Prayer. A lot has happened since then; and allow me to say at the outset that the House of Prayer for All People remains a viable project. I appreciate so very much your fidelity, as you read this, to the House of Prayer as a concept and as a fledgling reality. It is your prayers that have kept the HoP in flight.

The location of the House of Prayer cannot be in the Holy Land in the near future – I will explain that shortly – thus I am looking for another location. As ever, I want to encourage your on-going participation in the project: as a praying contact, a donor, a Core Group member, in a Sister-organization, etc. Let me hear from you!

After a brief stay in Jerusalem, I began living at the Jericho house on September 13, 2014. Immediately, I started the considerable task of rehabbing the three-story building so that there would be a Prayer Room and a Hospitality Room for the prayers, as well as living quarters for up to three Core Group members, men and women. This work occupied me 24/7, hiring and overseeing workers among other things.

House of Prayer update from Kathie Uhler

Understandably, I hope, I hesitated to write an Update until I had a more finished product to show you.

In October I was joined by Annerose Schulz, a Core Group member from Germany. My burdens were halved and my joys were doubled! I am attaching an article I wrote for Musings, the e-newsletter of the Franciscan Federation (www.FranFed.org), that describes the progress of the HoP through October.

Early in November, I began to suffer a pinched sciatic nerve. On November 12, I traveled – now on a cane – to the airport in Amman, Jordan

to meet another Core Group member, Marian Klostermann, a Franciscan sister from Dubuque, Iowa. Unfortunately, she and I were denied entry into Israel for five years! No reasons were given, as is usual practice by some passport agencies. After two nights in a hotel, Marian and I moved to the retreat and conference center of the Rosary Sisters in Amman. The sisters lavished much appreciated Palestinian hospitality upon us. I

had wanted to remain in Amman till my flight in early December, but I was now in a wheelchair and could not even stand. Marian and I flew back to the States on November 21. I went directly from JFK airport to a hospital emergency room near my convent in New York City. I was there for six days and then in rehab for thirty-one days. I finally returned to St. Anthony's Convent after Christmas. My mobility and energy levels are back in the normal range, thank God. I am able now to work again on the HoP project in full force.

Here are some current developments and activities in the House of Prayer project:

- I am sharing day-to-day decision making with Paul Rehm and Susan Kerin. They are members of the HoP Core Group. I am grateful for their generous assistance in the project.
- Application for incorporation of the HoP as a not-for-profit corporation is in process with New York State.

- I intend in the near future, with appropriate counsel, to seek redress for the denial of entry into Israel. More on this in the next Update.
- In particular, and seeking YOUR input, for a new location for the House of Prayer, since, as noted above, I will not be able to re-enter the Holy Land for five years. Jericho and other West Bank towns were ideal locations because I knew the region and the people from having spent six years with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron. An essential aspect of the HoP has been its location in an area of oppression. Persons of conflicting parties would have the opportunity, then, to pray together for peace in peace.

- USA – Ferguson, MO, Baltimore, MD or other sites. Black lives matter and other social reforms. Also Islamophobia
- Northern Ireland - Protestant and Catholic strife, while resolved, some problems remain
- Assisi - Story of St. Francis and the Sultan; difficult to est. something “new” there; Franciscan Sisters’ retreat house may be a way in?
- South Africa - Site of former and current conflicts. Has many religions. English language.

What is your advice?

A word about grief and loss.

One of Ernest Hemingway’s characters said he was awake for about an hour before he remembered he was brokenhearted. Yes, I have been enduring a lot of loss and grief since November. I do not regret one second or one penny of all that it took to renovate the house at Jericho – and all three floors were finished, except for curtains and an air conditioner for the Prayer Room.

The morning after our denial, the loss of it all hit me. This feeling did not last long before I recalled that, on the previous Sunday, the young man next door in Jericho had his car stolen and within it all his ID, newly received work permits and metal working tools. He was the only one with a job in his family: a young, widowed mother and four young adult children. They were living from one meal to the next because of unemployment. I had been empathizing all week with them in their loss. But on Friday, the morning after our denial, I realized that I had experienced a similar loss, and I was grateful to suffer in closer solidarity with the Palestinian people. I phoned the mother, told her my tale and how grateful I was to feel somewhat more what her son was going through.

Putting grief and loss in perspective would only be a mental exercise without prayer: your prayers for me and all of us involved in the HoP project. Truly, there have been continuous signs that the HoP is of God. This belief in the House of Prayer for All People buoys me up!

Mission Statement:

The House of Prayer for All People is a place where individuals and groups come to pray for peace and reconciliation in the world, particularly where the House of Prayer is located. The House of Prayer is not a church or a mosque or a synagogue: it is a place made holy by the people who come there.

*“My House Shall Be Called
a House of Prayer for All
People” Isaiah 56:7*

These are the basic criteria for a HoP location:

- Geographical location with ease of travel, visas, language Area of oppression, with various religions permitted
- Local contacts, providing interpreters and possible sources of indigenous Core members

Some other countries for the HoP have been suggested:

- Cuba - Site of Guantanamo and strained but opened relations with the US; close to US; Spanish language.
- Cyprus - Conflict between Turkish Cyprus and Greek Cyprus; only two religions.
- Jordan - Has refugees from Iraq. Biblically historic. Some contacts are known.
- Kurdistan - Has refugees from Iraq. Has history of persecution; stable government; presence of Christian Peacemaker Teams; one religion.

In Memory

From the eulogy given by: Helen Owens, OSF

Elizabeth Corry, OSF

When I think about Elizabeth, I think of a woman of courage, strength of character, totally centered in God. Her spiritual life as a Franciscan Sister was filled with love for God's people, especially the poor. She never wavered from the importance of family and friends, as witnessed here today and through the many seasons of her life.

She was a profoundly holy person with a great sense of humor, and her stores are famous among her family, community members, and colleagues.

It is my privilege to be able to add a few more glimpses to her story. As a young sister I remember hearing about Sr. Elizabeth and her very dear friend, Sr. Elizabeth Sweeney. I was home for a few months from my ministry in Bolivia and attended a community gathering. At that early meeting, I was very impressed by the comments, ideas, and courage of Elizabeth Corry. This may have been my first personal experience of her.

Years later, when discerning my next ministry, I had the opportunity to visit some of our Franciscan healthcare facilities, Our Lady of Lourdes being one. I met with Elizabeth and as part of the interview, we walked through the halls of Our Lady of Lourdes. The thing I remember most was her smile and her ability, and gift, to greet each person by name as they walked by.

When she talked about the hospital, its people and programs, she was filled with enthusiasm and energy. Her Franciscan values made it clear that if any sister wanted to come to Lourdes to minister, there was a job available. At that meeting, she and I created the position of "Community Health Education". Then Elizabeth, in her characteristic way, sent me forth to develop it. This was the type of leader she was.

Elizabeth quickly became my mentor, and

the person I looked to as a leader of our Franciscan mission at Lourdes in Camden, the poorest and most dangerous city in our states. Elizabeth was such a strong female presence as a leader in the Catholic health world. She enabled, facilitated, and freed me and so many others at a time when our work and tasks in the emerging healthcare scene were revolutionary. She empowered others to develop and address the needs of healthcare, especially in our city at that time. I would often ask her at the height of her hospital administration career how she got through the days and her response was clear and succinct: If I didn't pray and laugh, I might be jumping off this roof.

She was the driving force behind, and an active participant in, developing programs such as: dialysis; the Osborne Family Health Canter; a clinic for the poor; and programs for mother and child. Dear to my heart, she was first on the scene to encourage the development of our Wellness Center, a new way of thinking about health care. So revolutionary was this concept that when I was giving a wellness lecture at one of our local schools, they asked if I was trying to put the hospital out of business. My answer, and hers, was always: No, we are enhancing life.

At her retirement dinner, her dear friend and Chief of Medicine, Dr. John Capelli, referred to her as "Our Lady of Lourdes." Today we can still see the results of the many years of her creative vision.

She embodied in her philosophy and spirituality the words that are carved in stone above the entrance to Lourdes Medical Center: "The body is often curable, the soul is ever so."



In Memory

From her obituary

Ann Perpetua Keady, OSF

Sr. Ann Perpetua Keady was born Barbara Marie Keady on August 13, 1919, in Westbrook, ME, the daughter of Peter and Delia Flaherty Keady of Norwood, MA.

She was received into the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, NY at St. Elizabeth Motherhouse on August 15, 1939 and professed her final religious vows on August 16, 1946. Sr. Ann Perpetua faithfully lived the Mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany for over 75 years.

Sister attended the Shattuck grade school and Norwood Junior and Senior High in Norwood, MA. Just one day after her 19th birthday, and with full heart, she entered the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. Over the years to follow, in addition to her ministry work, Sr. Ann Perpetua diligently pursued her studies, earning both her B.A. and M.A. in Sociology from St. Bonaventure University, Allegany, NY.

Sister's years of ministry were spent in the field of education. Religious education was always a part of her teaching. Sister had a special interest in and talent for teaching small children. In between teaching assignments, there were times when she was asked to assume other tasks, such as working toward her master's

degree, acting as principal at St. Bonaventure parochial school or being appointed Directress of Junior Professed at the St. Elizabeth Motherhouse. Most of Sr. Ann Perpetua's assignments centered in New York State: St. Joseph's, Niagara Falls; St. Mary's, Cortland; St. Helen's, Rochester; Christ the King, Snyder; St. John's, Olean; St. Bonaventure, Allegany and St. Patrick's, Catskill. In 1957, a new school, St. Francis in Triangle, VA, opened, where Sister ministered in administration and also taught. On the side, she offered remedial reading to students, at one time trained altar boys, took her turn cooking at the convent, and was vocation moderator.

In 1992, Sr. Ann Perpetua retired to the St. Elizabeth Motherhouse, where in her quiet way, she continued to serve. Always a source of cheerful hospitality and community, she loved to prepare small goodie bags for individual sisters on special feast days and holidays. She was ever an example of Franciscan simplicity and prayerful devotion.

Sr. Ann Perpetua was predeceased by her parents, sisters, Sr. Mary Cordia, Margaret, and Josephine, as well as a brother, Peter. She is survived by several nieces and nephews.



We Remember in Prayer:

Robert Lafferty

Thomas E. Higgins

Eve Chin Fatt Burkart

Eileen Roberts Shea

Larry Augustini

Tom Frascino

Joseph Regan

In Memory

From the eulogy given by: J. Miriam Natale, OSF

Mary Laffey, OSF

It has struck me, as we participate in the last rituals that are performed before we lay our sisters to rest, that we often come to know them in new and more expanded ways as we relate stories and construct vignettes about them from our observations and memories of living and/or ministering with them. Each memory becomes a gem that is carefully crafted to fit into the mosaic of her life; each memory reveals more and more of the picture of who she is and was...and gives us a fuller appreciation of one who walked among us and was companion on the journey. Yet, even with all the memories and stories told, we know that the sister, and in this instance our sister, Mary Laffey, was so much more. Now, residing in the loving embrace of our Great and Loving God, the fullness of her life, her life in God, has been fully and completely revealed.

Mary Delia Laffey was the loving daughter of Thomas and Nora Leonard Laffey and the loving sibling of Thomas and Esther. She was the proud aunt and great-aunt of a number of nieces and nephews, a cousin to some, and a friend to many. Her pride in and love of family was evident in her frequent conversational exchanges with other sisters and the nursing staff who cared for her in later years.

Mary's pride extended as well to her Irish heritage - as one person put it: all things Irish! She was great at telling stories, had a fine Irish wit, and a bit o' the gleam of an Irish leprechaun in her eyes, an ease with laughter, and, a fantastic memory for people, events, and circumstances. Mary could easily call from memory stories about sisters and past community events making her a fascinating purveyor of some of the community history that she actually lived and witnessed.

Another mark of distinction and pride was Mary's membership in what some of us call the Utica

Club, a small group of us who hail from Utica, New York, most of whom were parishioners of the Church of the Blessed Sacrament where our sisters ministered for many years and located across the street from where Mary lived.

Mary had a favorite table in the MH dining room where she would, shall I say, hold court. There would be much laughter and much conversation, local, church, community news and no doubt a wee bit of friendly banter exchanged among the regular four or five some that sat together. Even though the table was round, Mary seemed to occupy the "head seat".

As I reflected on Mary's life, there were a number of qualities that struck me, and two in particular stand out.

The first quality: as I became aware of all of the ministries that she

engaged—primary education, school principal, high school guidance, prefect of girls at St. Elizabeth's Residence, second year novice mistress, local coordinator, or minister of the Motherhouse and assistant administrator of the Motherhouse, Mary's response was always a resounding "Yes". I have to believe that she was well educated and suited for many of these roles. However, for some of these ministries, there were no instruction manuals at the time and one might be operating solely on the Grace of God, one heck of a whole lot of faith, and the God-given talent and common sense one was blessed with.

Can you even imagine being a prefect for (I'm not even certain what that means) a bunch of college aged girls who are away from the confines of their parents home? It would be no picnic today, but I am certain it was a challenge then as well, in that age of innocenc, especially rounding up the girls after an event and making certain that all entrusted to her care were safe and sound and where they

Continued on Next Page



In Memory

Mary Laffey cont...

were supposed to be. But wait! One more co-ed needs to be in the house before Mary can go to bed herself. Out to the driveway and heading to the parked car, Mary finds her "delinquent" co-ed with her boyfriend and raps on the car window to summon her in. Maybe a little embarrassing for all concerned? The story continues: this same young lady, years later, visited Mary, and, yes, she married that boyfriend!

Mary said "yes" again; this time it was to become the second year novice mistress. This was a new addition to our formation program. I am certain she was handed no instruction manual for this undertaking. I and my class- or band-mates were the first group to have the "honor" of being Scholastic Novices after our canonical novitiate ended. We were all set for our first profession of vows when word came that our formation period would be extended for another year (whatever did we do to deserve that?)

Mary did her best to assuage our disappointment due to this additional year's extension. Daily, she faithfully guided us from the book: *The Spirituality of the School Sister*.

I for one, hope that I did not disappoint her since my ministerial pursuits followed a different path. When Mary had the presence of mind to ask several of us before we were first missioned what we really wanted to do, I responded: "nursing!" Thank you, Mary, for listening.

Another "yes" came in the form of her pastoral presence as she ministered to our sisters who were no longer active in ministry and confined to our then "healthcare" floor. Mary would make calls and write cards and letters to families from the sister{s} so that family bond and connection would not be broken. In her own life, family - whether family of origin or FSA family - was paramount, and she wished to keep these same bonds intact for those unable to do so for themselves. She often was the link between family and sister, giving needed and welcomed updates to both. What a comfort and consolation for both the sister and the families!

The second quality: Mary was a woman of light. That is, her life's journey began and ended in constant pursuit of deepening her relationship with Jesus. Her life radiated the light of Christ as she understood the Gospel message in her life and sought to live it out. In short, to spread that light wherever she was and with whomever she was with.

While speaking to a number of Sisters and to the Motherhouse nursing staff I asked: if you had one word to describe Mary, what would that word be? These are some of the qualities that they articulated, and, this is some of the light that Mary spread while she was among us:

They said Mary was: Welcoming....hospitable...made you feel at home...hospitality was a hallmark...concerned for sisters and their families...prayerful...kind...a community woman...made a point of meeting and greeting people...motherly...funny....entertaining...encouraging....light-hearted...faithful friend...cheerful....always laughing....great story teller....a giving person....sharing....modest....dignified....loved everything Irish... "FSA historian"...independent/independently dependent....possessed a great memory...grateful.

These are only some of the tiny shards of the beautiful mosaic that was our sister Mary...there was so much more. Family, friends and acquaintances can deepen the color of this mosaic as memories flow in our thoughts, hearts and conversations.

Mary you were loved into life on June 6, 1928. On March 15, 2015 you have been loved into Love. Thank you for walking among us. Thank you for your faith-filled "yes" in response to the many "calls" in community. Thank you for spreading your unique light and joy wherever you have been.

And so...as we say our "goodbyes" at journey's end, we bless you:

**Christ with you,
Christ before you,
Christ behind you,
Christ in you,
Christ beneath you,
Christ above you,
Christ on your right,
Christ on your left,
Christ all around you..... Amen**

In Memory

Theresa Eugene LeClair, OSF

From the eulogy given by: Jean Hayes, OSF

On behalf of all the Sisters in the Motherhouse, I wish to extend our sincere condolences to Harriet, Bud and Jeanne. You were so faithful to her in life and you are present today to help us to say farewell. The Invocation taken from the Office of the Dying opens with the following: "Come, all you who have heard my word and kept it. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The Antiphon that follows clearly echoes the same message "Let us desire nothing else, let us want nothing else, let nothing else please us and cause us delight except our Creator, Redeemer and Savior."

The above encapsulates Sr. Theresa's love for her Lord and how she lived this love through her vocation as an Allegany Franciscan.

In reflecting back over the gift that she gave to the Lord during her 68....years as an Allegany Franciscan, I was edified by her example and the way that she lived her commitment in serving the people of God. Her gentleness and love of the Lord were possible because she heard the "call" and responded, "Here I am Lord, I come to do your will."

I am quite sure that Sr. Theresa Eugene had no idea of the Plan of the Lord when she walked up the steps of the "old" Motherhouse. She knew her need to serve the Lord was strong and she was more than willing to do what was asked.

As the Plan of the Lord unfolded in her life, the richness of the Love of God guided her steps as began her journey as an Allegany. Her years spent as a teacher provided the vehicle that spread the message of the gospel not only to those children that she taught but to their extended families. There was a ripple effect that was felt far beyond the walls of the classroom. She loved the Ministry of Education and it was her means of

strengthening her relationship with the Lord.

God gave Sr. Theresa Eugene a loving personality and kind disposition. She saw the best in everyone and used this ability to reach out to those who were hurting.

God turned her life into an adventure that brought joy, satisfaction and peace.

Together we join our prayer in thanking God for His kindness in allowing us to share in Sr. Theresa Eugene's life and we rejoice that we were fortunate to be part of her community here in the Motherhouse.

We celebrate her entrance in joining with the rest of her family in Heaven.

We pray the Lord will welcome her as we feel she deserves to be welcomed and that she will enjoy everlasting rest and peace.

We are sure that in her joy in Heaven, she will continue to remember us as we journey back to the Lord and to our eternal home.

Theresa, May God's Light shine ever upon you, may you rest in the arms of God: May you dwell for evermore in communion with all the blessed. May the angels lead you into paradise.



In Memory

Marie Rosaire Orvis, OSF

From the eulogy given by: Carol Kenyon, OSF

In 1930, Gwen Louise, known to us as Sr. Marie Rosaire, was born to Gladys and Cylon Orvis of Vermont. Rosaire, their only girl child, had five brothers. And, knowing Rosaire, I don't doubt for a moment that she was the one in charge.

As a young woman Rosaire converted to Catholicism and, as a result, was temporarily disowned by her family. We can only imagine their dismay when she entered the convent and was received into the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany on August 15, 1953.

Those must have been tough times for her but she was tougher. It was her inner strength and deep faith that most likely got her through this difficult time.

Before long there was some reconciliation and Rosaire began going home for visits, and with God's grace, drew close to her family again.

Later on, when she could no longer travel home and her family could no longer come to Allegany, they would frequently connect by phone and send loving gift packages to one another.

As a young sister Rosaire received her degree in education and taught in a number of our schools, including Christ the King in Snyder, St. Mary's in Pompton Lakes, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Buffalo, St. Joseph in Niagara Falls, St. Johns in Olean, St. Henry in Averill Park, and Holy Cross Academy in the Bronx. Besides working with children, Rosaire also enjoyed visiting our sisters in the infirmary. So, in 1974, she went to St. Francis Hospital in Olean and earned her LPN.

Soon after Jean asked me to do the eulogy for Rosaire, I happened to be talking to a nurse who had worked with her as an aide in the late 1970s, soon after Rosaire had become an LPN. This nurse very graciously shared two stories about Marie Rosaire that she had never shared before, and I would like to share them with

you.

This first one shows Rosaire's unique sense of humor.

One exhausting night when just the two of them were on duty, they met up with each other towards the end of the shift. Rosaire, looking exhausted with her veil crooked and a mischievous grin on her face said

to the nurse: "Do you know what I want to do when I get old? I want to put my veil on sideways, get down on the floor, crawl around, and bark. Then I'll finally be free and be able to do what I want. No more rules or regulations!"

Another time, this same nurse and Rosaire were the only two on nights again, and again were very busy. Among their many duties they needed to turn the Sisters who were bedridden three times during the shift. One of the Sisters who was in great pain could only be turned by two nurses working together, with great care, one holding her arm,

which was very swollen. After caring for the other sisters and giving out medication, Rosaire and her aide – who were already late – hurried to Sister's room to turn her for a third time.

Upon reaching Sister's room, they both stood in awe and wonder. Sister was already turned on her other side. Her sheets were immaculate, pulled tight with not a wrinkle, her hair was combed, and she looked relaxed and peaceful. When Rosaire finally found her voice, she asked "who turned you?" Sister looked around and asked "Where are the children?" Rosaire asked "what children?" and Sister answered: "There were children here with a beautiful lady."

Later on, Rosaire, encouraged by the Sisters, went to Lodi, NJ and earned her RN in 1986. After just a few years of working as an RN, Rosaire became

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Marie Rosaire Orvis Cont...

critically ill and returned to the Motherhouse by air ambulance. It was thought by many, even her doctor in New Jersey, that there was no hope of recovery. But due to the quick thinking, research, and compassion of Joan Nanon, our head nurse at the time, and Joyce Ramage, Director of the infirmary, arrangements were made for Rosaire to see a specialist. This amazing woman put Rosaire through tests, diagnosed her, and provided the medication, treatment, and hope Rosaire needed.

Before long, Rosaire was out of bed and in her wheelchair, padding with her feet all over the second floor, in and out of the Sisters rooms, helping the nurses and aides, encouraging the sisters and running errands for them. In the late morning she could be seen in the basement waiting for the mailman so she could deliver mail to her Sisters.

Rosaire had many hobbies, some of which continued until she could no longer use her fingers. She did wonders with leather; she also did ceramics. I was told some of her bud vases are still around. Her knitted and crocheted afghans and blankets were beautiful and very popular among the nursing staff, who would keep

her busy ordering them from her for family and friends. Although extraordinarily gifted, Rosaire was at the same extraordinarily ordinary, perhaps a good description of a Franciscan.

Rosaire may have seemed gruff at times, and she was. One of her bandmates related this story: One evening in the summer, Rosaire's band would get together and go out for supper. They would always invite Rosaire to join them. One time her response was: "Why should I go out with you people? I never liked you anyway." And she didn't go.

Rosaire was a strong person, forthright and honest, with a heart of gold and a smile to steal your heart. She was also down-to-Earth and full of joy. No wonder the nursing staff loved her. She loved them and knew them each by name, shared in their sorrows and joys, and understood how difficult some of their lives were. She accepted them as they were, befriended them, and prayed for them.

Thank you, Rosaire, for all you taught us about being Franciscan. Thank you for being our sister and friend. We love you and will miss you.

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