



Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration

# FRANCISCAN PEAKS

## CHILDREN'S VOICES FILL THE AIR AT MOUNT SAINT FRANCIS

As we bring in the 2019 New Year after celebrating the joys and wonders of the Christmas Season, I am drawn to reflect on the joys and wonders of children. Christmas would not be Christmas without the Christ Child and all the children brought into life throughout the world. In the midst of the terrible abuses inflicted on children in our current culture of violence, these precious children are still our reason and hope for a better tomorrow.

Perhaps in years gone by, we thought of convents as isolated places where nuns were confined to their convents and separated from the rest of the neighborhood as they quietly went about their ministries of prayer and service. However, that gradually changed with the advent of Vatican II when we were encouraged to engage with the laity and become more viable and visible witnesses to the meaning of religious life and our ministries by working side-by-side with the laity.

In the early 1980's, Mount Saint Francis opened its convent doors and welcomed the laity who came to worship and participate in our Sunday Liturgies. This was the beginning of what is now Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Our sisters gradually got used to the whimpers, laughter and sounds of children around them as they tried to concentrate on their pious devotions. For many sisters, these were welcome sounds: sounds of life and joy; sounds of hope and promise. The sisters heard the sounds of children not only in church, but outdoors, around the convent, as the children gathered for religious education classes and special events in the parish. The sounds of children soon became familiar sounds that filled the air and reminded the sisters of the years when they nurtured children in our hospitals, schools, orphanages & parishes.

Today, Mount Saint Francis, welcomes another reason to enjoy the sounds of children through **Family Promise**, a program initiated by InterFaith Hospitality Network. Currently, our sisters have leased three of their houses, located on campus, to **Family Promise** to provide housing to families who would otherwise be homeless. These families are in transition as they seek ways to self-sufficiency and sustainability. When this happens, they move on to settle in their own homes and sustain themselves, at which time a new family moves in. The sisters support **Family Promise** because it is our belief that "every child deserves a home". Once again, the sisters hear the sounds of children in their neighborhood: they enjoy them riding their bikes, whisking by on their skate boards, running down the roads, and doing the things children like to do; once again, the children are here to remind us that without Children there is no Christmas; once again, the children are here to fill the air with the sounds of life and to remind us of Jesus' teaching: "Unless you become as little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 18:3)—submitted by Sr. Stephanie McReynolds, osf



Blessed Mother Maria Theresa Bonzel invites us to accept all that will be as we begin a New Year: "In the holy name of Jesus, we begin this new year and in this holy name may all our works be blessed. Whatever crosses and difficulties come our way, all come from the hand of our Father in heaven and are, therefore, welcome."





## Companions on a Journey



### Meet Our Candidate

#### Helen Cason

Helen Cason is a native of Guam, a U.S. territory. She is married to Kevin Cason of Gainesville, Texas, and has two sons, Shawn and Ryan; two grandsons, Christian and Ansel; and a miniature schnauzer, named Willow.

Helen received a Master of Science in Public Administration from Central Michigan University and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Human Resource Management from Hawaii Pacific University. After living in Honolulu, Hawaii, for 12 years, Helen and her husband moved to Colorado Springs in 2015, to be closer to their grandchildren.

Prior to retiring in 2018, Helen was employed as the Management Specialist for the 302nd Airlift Wing, U.S. Air Force Reserve, at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

She is a recent member of the Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in Colorado Springs, spends her free time walking her pet, studying God's Word, and is currently a candidate of the OSF Companion program.

Mount the weekend of July 27-29, 2018, for the annual retreat and to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Companion Relationship. The weekend was abuzz with activities to commemorate this occasion.

Our brothers and sisters arrived from Wisconsin, Kansas, South Dakota, Arizona, Florida and New Mexico. Some drove, while others flew. However, one brave and adventurous Companion, Marie Allen from Ft. Defiance, Arizona, rode a train, a bus and then a taxi to reach us. Three of our Denver girls, who typically camp over this weekend, spent the night at Sister Michelle's house in order to escape the daily monsoon rains that had drenched Colorado Springs for a week in advance of the retreat. The rest of us were relieved that they chose to stay high and dry.

Our retreat facilitator this year was Sister Paula Gallagher, IHM, a member of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart. Through six conferences, Sister Paula helped us to better understand and relate to the Holy Spirit. She helped us to dig deeply into how the Holy Spirit works in the Torah, the prophetic books, in Wisdom literature, the Gospels and in the Book of Acts.

Saturday afternoon was full of activity as we gathered for a renewal ceremony for all Companions, as well as the five-year anniversary of Mary Sutton (Kansas). We also welcomed four new Companions into our congregation. They are Gary Lowman and his wife, Karen Lowman of Colorado Springs; Jill Karlsson of Wisconsin; and Mary Austin of Kansas. During the intercessions, we honored our Companion brother and sisters who have gone before us since the inception of Companion Relationship.

Throughout the year, donations were collected from our members to purchase and plant a Red Maple tree to commemorate our 30-year apostolate. That afternoon, we gathered under thunderous storm clouds, and blessed the tree while nervously glancing toward the western blue-gray sky in anticipation of being drenched or worse. Our Director, Sister



Participants in the Companions' Retreat

### 2018 Companions' Retreat

Companions from 7 states converged on the

Michelle, trying to keep the attention of the nervous flock, proclaimed that the storm would not arrive for another 15 minutes. Each Companion blessed the tree with holy water, then several minutes later, when we were all safely back inside the convent, the Lord opened the clouds and blessed the tree bountifully.

During the Saturday evening meal, an anniversary quilt was unveiled. Through the collaborative efforts of Companions and two quilting ladies from St. Francis parish, this quilt took over 100 hours to complete. It features Companions' favorite Scripture quotes as well as the Companions' motto of Micah 6:8. "To act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God". It now hangs in the hallway of the convent.

By Cindy Tenis, Companion



Quilt depicting the Companions' favorite Scriptural quotes and the states where they live.

### Companions' Received Financial Report

Each Companion received a detailed report of the \$1,325.00 that was donated toward the Maple Tree project. Following are pictures indicating how the money was spent.



Red Maple Tree planted on the grounds near the statue of Blessed Mother Maria Theresia. A bench is near by to sit, reflect and pray with a peaceful view of the campus.



Close up of the plaque on the rock near the tree.



Due to the generous donations, the Companions were able to send a check to Cross Catholic International for The Brothers of Good Works project which was new toilet facilities that offer peace, privacy and protection to some of the poorest people on earth.

– Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

### Companions' Web Site

Please take note on the update of the Companions' web site. [www.stfrancis.org](http://www.stfrancis.org)

The spring renewals and Companions are featured as well as the 2018 Companions' Retreat at the Mount.

### Companions' 2019 Retreat

**When:** July 26–28, 2019

**Who:** Companions, Candidates and guests

**Where:** Mount Saint Francis

**Facilitator:** Sister Paula Gallagher, IHM

**Contact Person:** Sister Michelle Micek, OSF—  
719-649-4847.

Sisters of St. Francis  
Mount Saint Francis  
7665 Assisi Heights  
Colorado Springs, CO, 80919

## 2019 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**January 26**—World Day for Consecrated Life  
**January 27**—Woman's Story Gathering: "Walking with God", presented by Sr. Rita Beason  
**February 9**—Blessed Mother Maria Theresia's Feastday  
**March 19**—Feast of Saint Joseph  
**April 16**—Renewal of Vows  
**April 22**—Convent Jubilee Day  
**April 22**—Earth Day; initiate ban on the use of Styrofoam  
**April 27**—Woman's Story Mini-Retreat: "Come to the Water" presented by Emma Lee  
**June 2**—Women Partnering fundraiser—"Flying W Wranglers"  
**June 23-28**—Sisters' Retreat presented by Fr. Steve McMichael  
**July 7**—Jubilee Celebration with the parish  
**July 20**—Foundation Day  
**September 29**—Woman's Story Gathering: "The Ladder of the Beatitudes Rung by Rung" presented by Donna DeBartolo  
**October 3**—Transitus of St. Francis  
**October 4**—Feast of St. Francis  
**October 25**—Women Partnering fundraiser—Wine & Cheese  
**November 17**—Woman's Story Gathering: "Seeds of Holiness: Women in Scripture" presented by Kathi Reddan & Maribeth Netherton  
**November 28**—Thanksgiving  
**December 25**—Christmas

### CO-EDITORS

**Sister Stephanie McReynolds**  
Director of Archives  
Voice: 719-955-7013  
E-mail: [stephanie@stfrancis.org](mailto:stephanie@stfrancis.org)

**Sister Michelle Micek**  
Director of Companions  
Sisters' Coordinator  
Voice: 719-955-7017  
E-mail: [michellem@stfrancis.org](mailto:michellem@stfrancis.org)

Companions' website:  
[www.stfrancis.com](http://www.stfrancis.com)

Sisters of St Francis web site:  
[www.stfrancis.org](http://www.stfrancis.org)

### "PEAK" MOMENTS In 2018

**WOMAN'S STORY 21st ANNUAL RETREAT:** On January 27, 2018, Sr. Marilyn Uhing, Director of Woman's Story, introduced Donna DeBartolo, retreat facilitator, to 55 women in attendance. They were inspired by the theme: "**In Praise of Women: Exploring the Unique Call and Contributions of Women**".

**COMMUNITY DAYS:** On February 9th the sisters enjoyed the celebrations of the Feast Day of Blessed Mother Maria Theresia and on March 19, the Feast of Saint Joseph. Several Companions, SFO's, parish members and friends joined the community for these joyful celebrations.

**JUBILEE DAYS:** The sisters honored our 2018 Jubilarians on Easter Monday, April 2, with an inspiring Liturgy, festive meal and song fest. Sr. M. Ethel Widhalm celebrated her 80th jubilee; Sr. Elizabeth Fuchs, 75th; Sr. Juanita Parra, 70th; Sr. Laetitia Choi and Sr. Rose Marie Imig, 60th; and Sr. Marietta Spenner and Sr. Nadine Heimann, 50th. Sisters Laetitia, Rose Marie, Marietta and Nadine also celebrated with the parish community, family and friends on July 8th. A festive, delicious meal was enjoyed after the beautiful celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

**PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS:** The Sisters congratulated the following Sisters on their elected positions: Sr. Marietta Spenner, Provincial; Sister M. Frances Sedlacek, Councilor and appointed Treasurer; Sister M. Liz Rutherford, Councilor and appointed Secretary; and Sister M. Diana White, Councilor and appointed Vicar. The following sisters of the General Council were present at our Provincial Chapters: Sr. M. Magdalena Krol, Superior General (Germany); Sr. M. Sigtrudis Lueneborg, Vicar (Germany); Sr. M. Ann Kathleen Magiera, Councilor (Indiana); Sr Madonna Rougeau (Indiana). The Chapters ended with a wonderful evening of entertainment, "**Talent Galore**" with skits, jokes, songs, melodrama, good snacks and refreshing drinks.

**FUNDRAISERS:** Women Partnering Fun/draisers, the **Flying-W Wranglers** (June) and the **Wine/Cheese Tasting with Silent Auction** (October), brought the Community, parish, Companions, and friends together for entertainment and shared comradery.

All of these events were interspersed with meetings, social events in Mount Saint Francis Nursing Center, Knights of Columbus barbeques for the sisters, Boy Scout dinner for the sisters and Christmas caroling in December and so much more. Through it all, the sisters were refreshed and inspired during their **Annual Retreat**, May 27-June 1, presented by Sister Gabriel Uhlein, who also facilitated our Provincial Chapters.

### IN MEMORIAM



+**Michele (Stillmock) Miser (59)**; niece of Sr. M. Rose Ann Stillmock, died on July 24, 2018, in Hagerstown, MD.

+**Carolyn Utley (72)**; niece of Sr. Margaret Mary, died on July 25, 2018, in Fairview, MI.

+**Mary Hoffman (55)**; niece of Sr. Marilyn Uhing, died on August 14, 2018, in Lincoln, NE.

+**Shirley Pearson (80)**; sister of Sr. M. Diana White, died in Billings, MT, on Aug. 27, 2018.

+**Roland Preister (87)**; cousin of Sr. Margaret Mary Preister, died on October 29, 2018, in Fremont, NE.

+**Tessie Slusarski (94)**; sister-in-law of Sr. M. Roseria Slusarski, passed away on November 14, 2018, in Columbus, NE.

+**Msgr. John Slattery (87)**; Sisters' chaplain; died on November 28, 2018. Funeral Liturgy was celebrated at St. Patrick's Church in Colorado Springs.

+**Alan Backes (55)**; nephew of Sr. M. Margaret Chochon, died on December 22, 2018, and was buried in Columbus, NE.

+**Jim Kurka (86)**; cousin of Sr. M. Dolores Smagacz, died on January 9, 2019, in Palatine, IL.

+**Mary Louise Widhalm (96)**, sister-in-law of Sr. M. Ethel Widhalm, died on January 9, 2019 in Valier, MT.