

Alive

WITH THE CALL OF THE GOSPEL

School
Sisters
of  St. Francis

A photograph of an elderly woman, Sister Rose, sitting on a grey recumbent exercise bike in a gym. She is wearing a bright green t-shirt with the text 'Movin' 4 MISSIONS' and blue pants. She has short grey hair and is wearing glasses. The background shows a wooden door, a window with blinds, and another exercise bike.

Ministry Marathon:
**Sister Rose Celebrates
90 Years of Service**

**Alvernia Alumnae Cherish
Loving Lifetime Lessons**

**Generous Support Sustains
Missions Around the World**

A Prayer for Our Earth



Art: "Healing Waters" by Sister Dorothy Bock

All powerful God,
 You are present in the whole universe
 and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
 that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with your peace, that we may live
 as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
 help us to rescue the abandoned
 and forgotten of this earth,
 so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
 that we may protect the world and
 not prey upon it;
 that we may sow beauty,
 not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts
 of those who look only for gain
 at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
 to be filled with awe and contemplation,
 to recognize that we are profoundly united
 with every creature
 as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
 for justice, love and peace.

This prayer by Pope Francis appeared at the conclusion of *Laudato Si'*, his encyclical on the environment and human ecology. *Laudato Si'* was released ten years ago this spring.

From Our Leadership

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FRONT COVER

Sister Rose Mack was received into the
School Sisters of St. Francis in 1935,
and this year she becomes the first
of our sisters to celebrate 90 years
of consecrated life. She is seen here
exercising as she takes part in our sisters'
"Movin' 4 Missions" step-challenge
fundraiser. Turn to page 4 of this issue to
read about her remarkable 107 years.

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Our congregation's 150th anniversary year is drawing to a close, but as an international leadership team, we will never forget the joy and excitement that we have experienced in the past 12 months visiting our missions around the world. There truly is so much to celebrate!



The glorious anniversary Mass in Milwaukee last April brought together sisters and associates from across the United States and around the world for a day to honor the courage of Mother Alexia, Mother Alfons, and Sister Clara. We remembered the thousands of faith-filled women, living and deceased, who followed in their footsteps. Since that day, our team has traveled across five continents, witnessing the life-changing work that continues today with the same dedication and passion that our foundresses modeled for us.

In Tanzania, we celebrated the construction of a new formation house in Chengena, which was blessed just a few weeks ago. It is inspiring to see how the selfless work of our sisters from Assisi Province (South India) as teachers and catechists has born so much fruit. More and more young women in East Africa are following their example and saying "Yes!" to a call to serve as women religious. In fact, this past August, we celebrated the first two Tanzanian professions of sisters for Assisi Province.

Our European region celebrated the lives of our foundresses and the remarkable musical heritage of our congregation with an anniversary concert in September. Sisters and neighbors from throughout the region gathered in the former convent chapel in Erlendbad for an event that beautifully told the story of our foundresses' German roots, their emigration to the United States, and the congregation's return to ministry in Europe.

Our congregation's service throughout Central America and South America was celebrated in a special way with an anniversary Mass in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The celebrant for that Mass, Archbishop Emeritus Óscar Rodríguez Maradiaga, is diligently advancing the cause of sainthood for our beloved Sister Maria Rosa Leggol, popularly known as "the Mother Teresa of Honduras." In January, our St. Francis Province (North India) commemorated the half-century of service of our Indian provinces with a Mass of celebration in Bhopal.

What a year of milestone anniversaries and groundbreaking new initiatives we have experienced! With great joy, we can exuberantly acclaim: Our congregation is creatively and passionately alive with the call of the Gospel!

An Extraordinary Life of Faith and Service

Sister Rose Mack reflects on 90 years of consecrated life

In a historic moment for the School Sisters of St. Francis, Sister Rose Mack will celebrate her 90th Jubilee this summer, becoming the first sister in the community to reach this extraordinary milestone.

Sister Rose plans to celebrate alongside other sisters celebrating anniversaries at the Jubilee Mass in St. Joseph Chapel on June 21. For the sisters of our congregation, it will be a day to honor her nine decades of faithful service and selfless commitment to the community she joined in 1935. It also is recognition of Sister Rose's extraordinary journey of devotion to caring for others, and a reminder of the enduring power of her religious vocation.

Sisters Kathleen O'Brien, Mary Schneider, and Kathy Braun of the U.S. Province Leadership Team noted, "Sister Rose celebrated 107 years of life last December 7, and this year, she celebrates her 90th Jubilee year. She is the first School Sister to achieve this record in our 150-year history!

"Numbers alone do not convey the vibrant, caring, and prayerful person Sister Rose has been to all those she has served. Nor do they express her alert mind, keen observations, and love of nature – especially fishing! Our Provincial Team salutes her, we honor her, and we count ourselves fortunate to call her our sister."

Answering an Early Call

Sister Rose was born in rural Saskatchewan, Canada, and moved to Wisconsin at a young age to live with an aunt following the death of her mother. It was while attending St. Michael School in Dane that she encountered the School Sisters of St. Francis and considered the possibility of a religious vocation. (To read more about Sister

Rose's early life in Canada and rural Wisconsin, please see the story on our website's Media Room: www.sssf.org.)

She entered the community in 1932 at just 15 years old. As part of her training, Rose helped with chores around St. Joseph Convent, assisting with daily cooking, cleaning, and the laundry for hundreds of sisters and sisters-in-training. "I was assigned to the laundry," the diminutive Sister Rose recalled, "Sister Viola said, 'The little ones go to the laundry!'"



17-year old Sister Rose Mack in 1935

Rose's dream was to minister in health care, but Mother Stanislaus, the Superior General, had other plans. "I wanted to be a nurse when I came to the convent," Sister Rose recalled, "but Mother said, 'We need homemakers.'" Nineteen-year-old Rose was assigned to St. Martin Parish in Chicago.

"I was sent to care for 21 sisters, and I had no experience," Sister Rose recalled. "I didn't even know how to cook!" Overwhelmed and struggling, she remembers crying and being unsure of how to manage her new responsibilities. Fortunately, kind-hearted Sister



Above: Sister Rose attended the wedding of Kristi Buchman, whom she helped to raise.

Patrice dedicated a week to teaching Sister Rose how to cook and manage the household of nearly two-dozen teachers. This loving lesson would stay with Sister Rose throughout her years of service.

Sister Rose quickly learned the skills of a convent homemaker and she served in parishes in Illinois, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Michigan. After 33 years in this role and in her early 50s, Sister Rose recalled her teenage interest in becoming a nurse's aide. Convinced that it was never too late to follow her dreams, she made the bold decision to enroll in classes at Chicago's Broadmoor Academy. Although the experience was challenging, she embraced the opportunity to grow and learn in a field she was so passionate about.

Sister Rose ministered as a nurse's aide in various hospitals and religious retirement centers in Chicago for nearly two decades. Her favorite part of the job was working in the nursery. "I loved the little babies," she gushed.

Keeping a 40-Year Promise

When Sister Rose read in her parish bulletin about a mother who was seeking someone to

care for her baby, she jumped at the opportunity. The mother, who was battling colon cancer, was searching for a caretaker for her six-month-old daughter, Kristi. Sister Rose was 68 years old and had just retired from Thorek Hospital on Chicago's North Side. She embraced the chance to care for the little girl, who was born prematurely and with congenital hydrocephalus.

Shortly after Kristi's fifth birthday, her mother passed away. Though Kristi's father was loving and involved, he worked full-time and long nights to support the family. That was when Sister Rose transitioned from caregiver to true parental figure, forming a deep and loving bond with Kristi.

"Sister Rose answered my parents' ad and her first day of work was Valentine's Day 1987," Kristi Buchman recalled. "From that first day, she was a gift from God." That day, Kristi's parents gifted Sister Rose with a photo of Kristi that she has kept with her ever since.

"From the very beginning, Sister Rose became an important part of our family," Kristi recalled. "As a baby and toddler, she cared for me at home. As my mom got sicker, she cared for her as well.



From top: Sister Rose joined Kristi and her husband for a Cubs game at Wrigley Field; Sister Rose enjoys fishing trips to northern Wisconsin with other sisters; Sister cooled off on an outing with Kristi.

She always had dinner on the table when dad got home from work.”

Sister Rose cared for Kristi until she moved away to attend college. Kristi now lives in Indianapolis, where she is married and works as a paralegal, but the distance from Sister Rose has not weakened their loving bond. They continue to be an essential part of each other’s lives.

“Sister Rose promised my mom that she would take care of me for as long as she could, and for nearly 40 years, she has taken that promise to heart,” Kristi said. “Rosie has been a constant, loving, and beautiful part of my life.”

(To read more about Sister Rose taking on a parental role in her 70s, please see the story on our website’s Media Room: www.sssf.org.)

Navigating Life’s Changes Skillfully

In 2008, at age 90, Sister Rose retired from her caregiving in Chicago and moved to St. Joseph Convent in Campbellsport, Wisconsin, to begin a ministry of prayer and presence. She has continued that ministry at Maria Linden Apartments and, since 2023, at Sacred Heart, the community’s continuum of care facility in Milwaukee.



In her 90 years of religious life, Sister Rose has lived through enormous changes in the Church and society. For example, she remembers when sisters stopped wearing habits in the 1960s. “At first, it felt funny, but I got used to it, and it was more convenient.” Other changes were more significant, such as the Second Vatican Council’s decision to change the language of the liturgy from Latin. “Before, people just sat there and more or less listened to the Latin,” she recalled. “It was a big change when we could really understand the prayers of the Mass.”





Clockwise from above: Sister Rose completed a 1,000-piece puzzle of her beloved Wrigley Field; Sister Rose (center) raised a glass with other sisters in the St. Joseph Center garden to promote the community's Sister Water Beer Garden fundraiser; Sister enjoyed a happy moment with her friend Sister Claradine Bauer in the chapel of St. Joseph Convent in Campbellsport.

Sister stays active with daily walks, attending Mass, and spending time with other sisters. A lifelong Chicago Cubs fan, she enjoys watching and listening to broadcasts and shared that when she ministered at Immaculate Conception Convent in the early 1960s, she walked to Wrigley Field to attend games!

Sister Annette Martinek, a close friend, said, "We enjoy getting together for gardening, picking apples, working jigsaw puzzles and playing Yahtzee, and, of course, fishing!" For that, they still enjoy making annual trips to small towns and fishing spots near the Upper Peninsula.

Sister Ruth Ann Iwanski, another friend, ministered down the hall from Sister's apartment at Maria Linden. She noted Sister Rose's dedication to her community, including her participation (well past her 100th birthday) in the "Movin' 4 Missions" step challenge fundraiser each year. Sister faithfully tracked her steps on

her walks around the convent and on her daily workouts on a recumbent cross training machine.

Her efforts helped raise more than \$100,000 in donations to the community's retirement fund. Sister Ruth Ann said, "When Sister Rose would ask me, 'Why am I still here?' I would respond. 'So, you can continue to inspire us and celebrate your 90th Jubilee!'"

Sister Rose's lifelong journey from a Canadian farm to becoming a cherished member of the School Sisters of St. Francis community is a testament to her spirit of adventure and her unwavering commitment to her religious vocation. Through her roles as a homemaker, nurse's aide, and caregiver, Sister Rose has touched countless lives with her kindness and compassion, faithfully embracing all that God has sent her way.



Alvernia students took part in a home economics class in 1966.

“Making a World We Can Share”

Alvernia High School alumnae reflect on the values that shaped their lives

Alvernia High School was ahead of its time. Opened in Chicago in 1924 by the School Sisters of St. Francis, the all-girls school embraced and modeled Gospel values while offering a demanding curriculum, a range of clubs and activities, and even had a gym before girls' sports were prized.

What truly set Alvernia apart were the sisters. These fun, wise, challenging, forward-thinking, and loving women made Alvernia a place that students would treasure for life.

“No ideas were wrong, no comment insignificant,” said Pat Feeny Kimberley, class of 1955. “We were guided into analyzing and thinking for ourselves.” She fondly recalled one of the students' favorite annual events, the Junior and

Senior Luncheon in downtown Chicago. The girls dressed in their finest clothes, donned beautiful hats, and pulled on satiny gloves. They even took classes from Mrs. Duffy, a modeling agency instructor. “Mrs. Duffy turned us into ladies with poise and confidence,” Pat said.

Several members of the Alvernia Alumnae Association recently joined Pat in sharing reminiscences about their Alvernia experiences, and the lifelong impact that they made.

Sharon Renkosiak Smogor, '69

“We were mostly working-class Chicago girls living through a major cultural, political, economic, and religious transformation. The teachers at Alvernia gave us a safe space to process these changes and prepare us for life.

“Daily prayer was a part of every class, and the students felt connected to the liturgies. I especially liked spending some quiet time in the beautiful chapel on the fourth floor. The St. Francis Prayer for Peace has been a guidepost for my life, and our class motto was, ‘Now is the time for making a world we can share.’ That message was important in the turbulent years of the 1960s. It might be even more important today.”

Jeanne Cecchin Fec, '73

“We were inclusive and supported our Black classmates, and we also accepted openly gay students in our class. I feel this attitude of acceptance truly stayed with me, and I am vocal about my support for gay rights, transgender lives, and no child left behind. My charitable work and volunteer time is focused on feeding and caring for the poor in our surrounding Chicago area.”

Mary Grimes, '65

“In senior year, I got into a ‘tired-of-school’ mode, and a teacher asked if I had applied to college yet. I said I thought I’d skip it for a while. The discussion turned to what kind of person I wanted to become, what I valued, and to what extent I would choose to live out those values rather than just profess them.

“Values permeated the whole environment. It was much more than religion classes; and more often in discussing what was right, or good (or not), in history, social studies, behavior, and in everyday life. I did go to college, and from there I enjoyed a 37-year career at Catholic Charities.”

Peggy Anderson Smykowski, '61

“I remember Sister Vitalis’s support in speech class, which enabled me to stand up and speak in front of others. I feel that the sense of strength, courage, and inner peace instilled in each of us enabled us to challenge the world, and find a true sense of accomplishment.”



Alvernia alumnae gathered for a reunion luncheon in October 2018.

Putting values into action

Though the high school closed its doors in 1989, the Alvernia Alumnae Association has worked hard to support both the tight-knittedness of their high school community and their commitment to the sisters themselves.

“For 30 years, Alvernia alums have gathered for a luncheon, keeping Alvernia alive in us,” said Sister Barbara Kraemer, an alumna who now serves as the congregation’s liaison to the group. “Our first moderator, Sister Vitalis, would say to us, ‘Remember girls, you are Alvernia,’ and we have remembered.

“Along with this annual celebration and renewal of relationships, Alvernia alums have recognized the important role of the School Sisters of St. Francis in their education and have contributed generously – over \$5 million – for the support of our retired sisters,” Sister Barbara continued. “There are no words to fully express the gratitude of our religious community for their love and support.”

“At Alvernia, we acquired the values that made us the persons we are today,” Pat said. “It’s why we support the sisters.” Sharon agreed, noting, “The sisters were dedicated to helping us learn inside and outside of the classroom to become the people we were called to be. Supporting the sisters is our way of putting SSSF values into action. Now it’s our turn to help them.”

Read more about drama at Alvernia in the story on our website’s Media Room: www.sssf.org.



Joyful Gala Shines the Light on 150 Years of Ministry

On December 7, the School Sisters of St. Francis hosted our congregation's first gala fundraiser at Saint Kate – The Arts Hotel in downtown Milwaukee. The evening's theme was "Shining the Light and Joy" and it was truly a joyful night in which more than 200 of our sisters' benefactors, supporters, and friends came together to honor the community's 150 years of worldwide mission.

Associated Bank Private Wealth was the presenting sponsor for this first-of-its-kind gathering, which raised more than \$165,000 for our many ministries in the United States and around the world.

The evening began with a lively cocktail reception and silent auction. Guests then proceeded to the beautifully arrayed ballroom. Sister Deb Fumagalli shared a welcome message, and the International Leadership Team offered an opening prayer. Jim Sajdak, the president and CEO of Stan's Shoes and a member of the gala planning committee, presented Sister Deb and the team with a beautifully framed Apostolic Blessing from Pope Francis, congratulating the congregation on 150 years of ministry.

The carefully curated dinner menu offered delights for every palate, and the pace of the

evening quickened as guests put down their forks and picked up their auction paddles. The live auction was led by award-winning emcee and auctioneer Yve Rojas, whose expertise helped the congregation raise tens of thousands of dollars from a variety of unique items and travel packages.

The lights were turned down for the premiere of a video highlighting the congregation's global ministries and the care of our retired sisters. Yve then encouraged guests to support this work, and the outpouring of generosity was inspiring.

The evening's entertainment included a performance by Adrian Dominican Sister Nancy Murray, an actress who portrayed the life of the Franciscan St. Catherine of Bologna and also recounted the inspiring journey of our own foundresses 150 years ago. The evening concluded with an energetic musical performance by Mariachi Monarcas de Milwaukee.

"We are so grateful and touched by the spirit of generosity we experienced at the gala," said Amanda Ferguson, Mission Advancement Director. "The funds that were raised during this remarkable event will contribute significantly to our worldwide missions and the care of our sisters in retirement."

Gifts Make a Global Impact

Generous support helps young women in formation and elders in retirement

In recent months, our donors' generosity has made a life-changing difference in our sisters' ministries around the world. Six weeks ago, our sisters ministering in **Ranchi, India**, celebrated the blessing of the new St. Francis Nilaya formation house.

"Your support has been instrumental in helping us create a comfortable environment for our sisters and women in formation," said Sister Reena George Kannanaikal. She said the house serves as a hub for sisters, their parents, and relatives to meet after traveling eight hours or more.

"Many women in formation come from underprivileged backgrounds," Sister Reena George noted. "They rely on us for the education that will shape their future. Having this comfortable space to stay is essential for their growth. Your kindness, love, and generosity will ensure that we can furnish our new house."

In **Guatemala City**, Guatemala, Sister Albertina Paz, 87, and Sister Josefa Sandres, a 73-year-old cancer survivor, are the first two sisters in Guatemala to reach retirement age. "They are examples of fidelity and dedication for the sisters in Guatemala and in Latin America," said Sister Inés Albizures, our regional ministry coordinator. "We are deeply grateful to those whose generous financial support makes it possible for these sisters to have a dignified home, access to necessary medications, and a caregiver to assist them," Sister Inés said. "We offer our prayers in heartfelt thanks for all those who help us provide a comfortable, dignified life for our sisters at this stage of their life journey."

In **Azara, India**, new furnishings at St. Joseph Convent have enabled our sisters to engage

more effectively with young women in formation and education. "The comfortable, welcoming environment now allows our students and sisters to focus more fully on their spiritual and educational journeys," said Sister Jenova Pereathara. "In study rooms, classrooms, and shared spaces for reflection and prayer, the furnishings promote comfort and a sense of peace."



Young women study at St. Joseph Convent in Azara, India, as they prepare for consecrated life.

"Our generous donors and supporters have made a direct, meaningful impact on the lives of our sisters and the young women entrusted to our care," Sister Jenova continued. "Your kindness strengthens our mission of formation and education, helping us nurture future leaders who will serve with compassion and wisdom."

Sister Reena George speaks for all our sisters when she says, "You are the angels God has sent to us. We will never forget your help and support."

Changing Lives Through Charitable Gifts

The Catholic Community Foundation grants enhance sisters' lives

In nearly a quarter-century of service to Southeast Wisconsin, Milwaukee-based The Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) has awarded more than \$20 million in grants from donor funds to Catholic and non-Catholic organizations that fit the mission of the Church and that are addressing needs in education, health care within Milwaukee, community building, and leadership development. The Foundation establishes permanent charitable funds to ensure long-lasting support to causes for which donors have a special passion.

For nearly a decade, the School Sisters of St. Francis have benefited greatly from CCF

grants, particularly in meeting the health care needs of our elderly retired sisters.

“We deeply appreciate the longstanding support we have received from The Catholic Community Foundation,” said Amanda Ferguson, director of our International Office of Mission Advancement. “As our sisters age, their health care costs typically increase, and the median age of our sisters residing at Sacred Heart, our continuum of care facility in Milwaukee, is 86 years. It is our responsibility to ensure sisters receive the respectful, high-quality, and compassionate care they deserve.”

Grant funding from The Catholic Community Foundation has helped meet the health care needs of retired sisters living at Our Lady of the Angels Convent.



“Thanks to the generosity of CCF, and other donors, we can provide this care at our facilities in Milwaukee and Greenfield,” Amanda continued. “Our sisters benefit from a full spectrum of services whether they are in independent living, assisted living, receiving nursing care, or specialized memory care. CCF is a true partner with us in our mission to deliver the highest quality care to these women, who have given so much to others.”

In her role as executive director of Sacred Heart, Cathleen Kelling sees the positive impact of CCF grants firsthand every day. “Thanks to the generosity of CCF and other generous donors, we can provide the sisters with necessities that enhance the quality of their lives in many ways,” Cathleen said. “From equipment and supplies that assist in the provision of medical and nursing care, to everyday comforts such as beds, recliners, lighting, exercise equipment, and massage chairs, CCF’s support and contributions have made a significant impact on our community and the sisters we serve.”

Mary Ellen Markowski has served as CCF’s President since the Foundation’s inception in 2001. She reflected on how donor funds, like the fund that is helping to meet our retired sisters’ health care needs, enable donors to make a positive difference by meeting a need that is close to their heart.

“I have found through the years that our donors have a passion for those things that have been important to them during their lifetimes,” Mary Ellen said. “Through a donor fund, they can continue to make a difference with those organizations that have had a significant impact in their lives. It is a wonderful thing to be able to see our donors do something tangible which fills their hearts, and helps others in need in the process.”

For those who are “dreaming a dream” about ways to work with CCF to honor loved ones or establish a legacy through financial support, Mary Ellen advised: pick up the phone.

“My advice would be to call CCF and start a conversation,” she said. “It is one thing to read about what we do, but it is always better to sit and listen to someone and meet them in person because then we can truly get to know them and help them with their next steps. Everyone is different, and we meet people where they are and work with them to fulfill their dreams of leaving a lasting legacy.”

Asked to reflect on what have been the most gratifying aspects of her work as CCF’s President, Mary Ellen said “the memories are countless but it all starts with the generosity of our donors.”

“The donors I have met and worked with have truly captured the vision of the Foundation,” she said. “They are incredible people who make it possible to award grants, and it always makes me smile to see the impact our grants have made in the lives of so many people. I am also grateful for all the people I have worked with – from the Archbishop and his staff to our board and the pastors and parish members. I have always walked away from meetings so impressed by how dedicated they are to serving the mission of the Catholic Church and the Foundation.”

Sacred Heart’s Cathleen Kelling shared that “CCF’s grants are making a meaningful difference in the lives of the sisters we serve. We thank the Foundation, and their donors, for believing in our congregation’s mission, and helping our staff to make a positive impact. That generosity and support for our sisters is so inspiring, and appreciated more than words can express.”



Alice enjoys assisting our sisters at a Sacred Heart Earth Day celebration.



Alice's spiritual journeying included a visit to a mosque in New Delhi.

Joy in the Journey

Mentored by our sisters, Associate Alice Hatzenbeller now ministers by being present to them

The School Sisters of St. Francis have made a profound impact on Alice Hatzenbeller at several inflection points on her spiritual and vocational journey.

“We made it formal in 2023, but my entrance into Associate Relationship with the School Sisters happened many years ago,” Alice noted. “As an associate, you are asked to be a Franciscan presence wherever you live, work, pray, and play, and to be involved in the life of the community as much as it suits you at this point in your journey.”

The image of journeying is an apt one for Alice, who has visited nearly every U.S. state and more than 40 countries. In 2023, she made a trip to England, Egypt, Jordan, India, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Oman. “I learned so much about the people, the food, the culture, and the religions – Wicca, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikh, and Islam.”

A curiosity about religion was evident when Alice – in her 30s and a mother of three – returned

to higher education by enrolling in the Weekend College program at Alverno College to major in Business with a support area of Religious Studies.

“Sister Margaret Earley was one of the best professors I ever encountered,” she recalled. “She had a wonderful way of expanding our world view and opening us to critical thinking. She continued to be a mentor and friend after graduation, and often came to our home for dinner and great conversations.”

Another professor who mentored and guided Alice was former Sister Patricia Jensen. “She helped me understand how valuable management and leadership classes would be when I was in parish and church work: organizing committees, developing budgets, and making presentations convincingly to the parish council, parishioners, and staff.”

After graduating from Alverno, Alice began ministering as director of adult and child formation at St. Matthew Parish in Oak Creek.

“I was fortunate to have Sister Carol Ann Jaeger help me settle into this new ministry,” she said. In her third year of parish work, Alice was invited to become the pastoral associate, broadening her ministry to include the duties of a pastor except for administering the sacraments.

“Archbishop Weakland had opened the doors of Saint Francis Seminary to the laity,” Alice said. “We prayed and studied alongside our seminarian brothers with whom we would serve in parishes and other church ministries. It was a glorious time of seeing how church leadership could be dynamic and inclusive of all the gifts of God’s people.”

Spiritual direction and grief counseling are two more areas of learning that Alice cited as being a special blessing to her ministry. She said she received authorization from the Chancery Office to preach at Masses during the time of the homily, which was one of the most rewarding aspects of her nearly 40 years in professional ministry. “I was truly fortunate,” she said. “Breaking open God’s word deepens the heart and faith of the community and the preacher.”

When Alice moved from parish ministry to join Clement Manor retirement center as director of pastoral care, she again received invaluable guidance from a sister.

“Sister Kate Fink took me under her wing, helping me with the ins and outs of doing pastoral care in a continuum of care setting where she, too, had served,” Alice said. “I was privileged to be able to share the story of the School Sister of St. Francis and their many ministries in new employee orientation, and to help keep the mission central to all we did.”

Since 2022, Alice has ministered with many more of our sisters as coordinator of pastoral care at Sacred Heart. “What an honor to serve these wonderful sisters and join in their ministry of prayer and presence,” she said. “I get to listen to the stories of their many years of serving God’s people: their innovations, successes, great joys, challenges, and losses. We pray, laugh, and celebrate together what it means to be the love and tender mercy of God for one another.”

Alice values her Associate Relationship for the way it enriches her life. “I find the Area Community meetings a wonderful opportunity to meet with sisters and other associates to pray, learn, and celebrate together,” she said. “Participating in Spirituality Conferences and retreat days nourishes and expands my spiritual self. I’ve been mentally stimulated and physically embraced by the love and care of this wonderful community. Truly God is good all the time!”

Alice loves spending time with her children Jeff, Theresa, and Viki, and her grandchildren.





Our Chapel Restoration is Complete!

On June 17, 2024, workers began carrying in scaffolding to undertake the monumental task of restoring the safety, integrity, and beauty of St. Joseph Chapel in our Milwaukee motherhouse. In the months that followed, virtually every inch of the chapel was repaired, cleaned, repainted, and beautified in some way, from the tile on the floors to the plaster at the top of the ceiling – and everything in between. The skilled restoration experts and craftspeople of Daprato Rigali Studios have done a truly masterful job.

Last month, sisters, associates, staff, and friends of the community gathered for a Eucharistic liturgy celebrating the chapel's reopening and the Feast of St. Joseph. The Mass was preceded by tours of this sacred space, and followed by a festive reception.

Sister Deborah Fumagalli, our congregation's President, shared the exciting news that thanks to the work of Mission Advancement Director Amanda Ferguson and her dedicated team – and the generosity of many people – all the costs of this extensive chapel restoration project have been paid in full. St. Joseph, our beloved patron, has once again bountifully blessed this congregation in its 150th year.

Thank you for the support that has made the project such a breathtaking success that will be appreciated for generations to come. We rejoice in once again being able to welcome all our friends to St. Joseph Chapel for Masses, concerts, special events, tours, and private moments of prayer.