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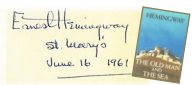
**Act of reparation**  
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**Another way to lead**  
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**Francis and the Carol**



## Updates & Calls to Action by Holly Fiedler FCA Board President

### FCA partners get involved, provide expertise, offer input as plans develop, momentum grows

The Franciscan Central Archive (FCA) is happy to announce that we now have **11** partner members! We warmly welcome our newest partner...



#### Franciscan Sisters of the Poor in Cincinnati, Ohio!

They join our established partners:

#### Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity

- Holy Name Province (Stella Niagara, NY)
- Sacred Heart Province (Denver, CO)
- St. Francis Province (Redwood City, CA)
- Franciscan Sisters of Allegany (NY)
- Sisters of St. Francis (Rochester, MN)
- Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi (St. Francis, WI)
- Wheaton Franciscan Sisters (Wheaton, IL)
- Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate (Joliet, IL)
- Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (La Crosse, WI)
- Franciscan Sisters of Chicago (Lemont, IL)

The FCA continues to be mindful of the finances of both the organization and its partners. To date, much of our work has been possible through partner matching grants from the Academy of American Franciscan History, along with the gifts of time and volunteer expertise given to the FCA by our partners. Without this generosity, we

Any remaining Franciscan entities considering joining the FCA for this phase of construction need to reach out and begin conversations as soon as possible as plans for common spaces and storage capacity will be finalized in June. The FCA plans to open the archival center by or before

# 2030

UPDATES & CALLS TO ACTION continued on page 2 ...

**A sustainable, charism-based collaborative repository for the combined archival collections of Franciscan entities across the United States.**

## Franciscan Central Archives Board



Holly Fiedler  
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OSF, Vice President

Veronica Buchanan  
Secretary,  
Consultant

Sr. Mary Serbacki,  
OSF, Treasurer

Sr. Jeanne  
Bessette, OSF

Annette Skafgaard

Ted Behncke

... UPDATES & CALLS TO ACTION continued from page 1

would not be where we are today.

During the past six months, the organization has grown in response to its present and future needs. The board expanded from four to seven members, with four of our partner communities now represented. We encourage *all* our partners to have representation on the board. In addition, specialist advisors also donate their time and expertise to support the work of the FCA.

Legal support also is broadening in response to planning needs:

**Tiffany Gorman Thompson** of KGG LLC provides counsel related to real estate, land use and development, construction, municipal law, and business matters.

**Sister Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA,** offers us canonical counsel and is reviewing the possibility of the FCA joining or creating a public juridic person (PJP).

**Sister Amy Hereford, CSJ,** consults on archival agreements.

**Peter Jaszi and Brandon Butler** of Jaszi Butler agreed to work on archives and intellectual property rights issues.

Over this past winter, the FCA increased the number of active committees. There is always room for more participation.

- Council of Partners
- Archives
- Education, Outreach, Publications
- Advancement
- Business Plan
- Building

Each committee undertakes specific tasks to move the FCA to essential next steps. One big recent step in the Advancement committee is the advertisement of a one-year contract for an **Advancement Director.**

Progress also continues related to the FCA's future home in Frankfort, Illinois, on the grounds of the **Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart.** Together with **JLK Architects,** we held an initial meeting with the village concerning the site vision, zoning, ordinances, and permits. After vetting and meeting with

many highly regarded firms, the FCA assembled the following design and construction team:

**Owner's representative:**  
**RLE Project Management**

**Construction Management:**  
**Bulley & Andrews**

**Civil Engineer:** **V3**

**Structural Engineering:** **TYLin**

Programming and concept design have begun and will conclude by mid-summer. ☞

## Specialist Advisors



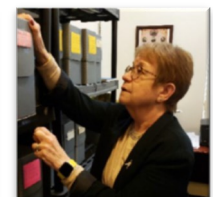
Sr. Kathie Uhler,  
OSF, Advisor to the  
Council of Partners  
& EOP Committee



Sr. Sue Artone-  
Fricke, OSF, Advisor  
to the Finance  
Committee



Dennis Masters,  
Advisor to the  
Building  
Committee



Denise Gallo,  
Advisor to the  
Council of Partners  
& Archive  
Committee,  
Consultant

# FSPA returns property to the Lac du Flambeau Tribe A Historic Act of Reparation



Sister Roselyn Heil, FSPA  
Bishop James Powers



CEO Larry Turner; President Sister Sue Ernster,  
FSPA; Chairman John D. Johnson Sr.



Tinker Schuman  
Sister Marla Lang, FSPA



A gathering of two communities

In a landmark act of healing and relationship, the [Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration](#) (FSPA) have returned the Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center property in Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin, to the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, the original caretakers of the land. The transfer closed on Oct. 31 and is believed to be the first known return of Catholic-owned land to a Tribal Nation explicitly as an act of repair for colonization and Indian boarding schools.

Located on the shores of Trout Lake, the Marywood property will once again become part of the Lac du Flambeau Tribe's land base. The Tribe envisions the site supporting Ojibwe culture and traditions, restoring critical lakeshore access, and potentially providing housing for health care workers. The Sisters sold the property for \$30,000 — the same amount they paid in 1966 — representing just over one percent of its current market value.

For the Lac du Flambeau Tribe, rebuilding Tribal land bases is central to sovereignty, self-

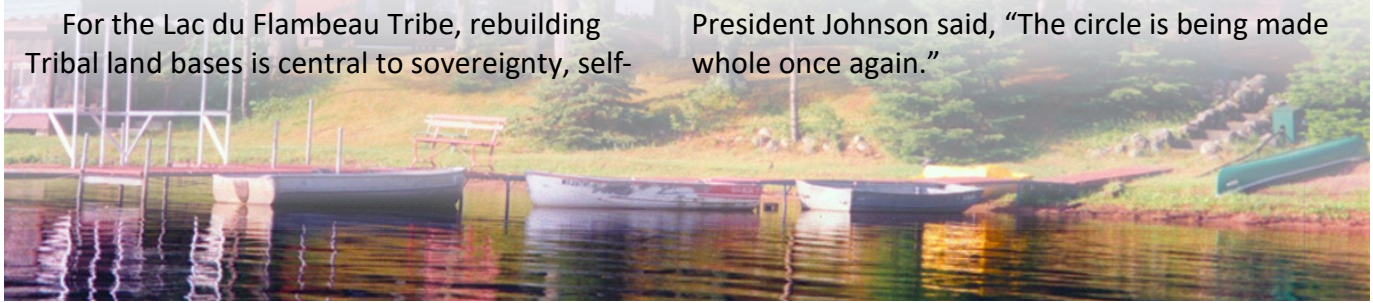
determination, and cultural preservation.

"This return represents more than the restoration of land — it is the restoration of balance, dignity, and our sacred connection to the places our ancestors once walked," said Tribal President John D. Johnson Sr.

The decision followed years of discernment by the FSPA community as they reckoned with their historic role in St. Mary's Catholic Indian Boarding School and sought land transitions aligned with their values of right relationship, equity, and Gospel living.

"The return of Marywood is both a conclusion and a beginning," said Sister Sue Ernster, FSPA president. "We see this transition as a hopeful step toward healing."

With support from Land Justice Futures and collaboration with the Lac du Flambeau Business Development Corporation, the return of Marywood stands as a powerful example of how land can be restored, relationships renewed, and history addressed with courage and humility. As President Johnson said, "The circle is being made whole once again."





## Sister Diana De Bruin opens her heart to migrant families through border ministry

Following 16 years in congregation leadership for the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi in St. Francis, Wisconsin, Sister Diana De Bruin, OSF, planned a sabbatical year that began in 2023 with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and ended in fall of 2024 at another sacred site – the U.S.-Mexico border at Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. One of the largest ports of entry for migrants, this is where the Kino Border Initiative established their ministry, offering food, clothing, legal assistance, medical care, and shelter. Here, Sister Diana spent a month immersed in the heartbreaking and complicated lives of families seeking asylum.

“I marveled that their faith could be so strong and resilient, and they could be so grateful for everything,” Sister Diana wrote in an article published in *Global Sisters Report*. “My faith was deepened because of their example.”



Sister Diana (left) hikes to a water drop site in the Sonoran desert along a suspected migrant trail.



Sister Diana (left) leads a migrant procession through Nogales, Sonora, Mexico on World Day of Migrants and Refugees.



by Sara Woelfel  
Archivist Assistant  
Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi  
(St. Francis, WI)

Her border experiences included working at the shelter, praying with families, leading a migrant procession in celebration of World Day of Migrants and Refugees, and making a food and water drop in the desert.

Though she studied Spanish before arriving at the border, Sister Diana creatively used a translation app and nonverbal gestures to communicate with the families. By the end of her time, she discovered a Spanish phrase that most fully expressed her heart as she accompanied them – “Tú vales,” or “You matter.”

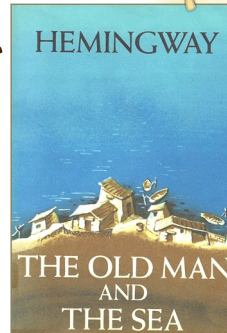
“I would also tell people, ‘When you are not free, there is a piece of me not free,’” Sister Diana wrote. “I know it touched their hearts by the looks on their faces. I hoped that the care I shared and the compassion I felt continued with these families as they departed from the Kino Border Initiative.”

After working with migrants at the border, Sister Diana returned to Milwaukee and continued helping families closer to home. She now also serves in a new full-time role as vicar for religious for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

by Sister Marisa McDonald, OSF  Archivist, Councilor, *Sisters of St. Francis (Rochester, MN)*

# The 65-year journey from Rochester, Minnesota...

# 1961



To Sister Immaculata  
this book, hoping  
to write another one as good  
for her when my writing  
luck is running well  
again.  
and it will  
Ernest Hemingway  
St. Mary's  
June 16 1961

An artifact from the [Rochester Franciscans](#) has found a new home at the Nobel Prize Museum in Stockholm!

In 1961, Ernest Hemingway was a patient at Saint Marys Hospital, affiliated with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. During his stay, Hemingway inscribed a copy of *The Old Man and the Sea* for Sister Immaculata, later known as Sister Helen Hayes. That note is believed to be among the last written by Hemingway before his death 16 days later.

The book languished on a shelf in the Saint Marys Convent for years until a Hemingway scholar asked the hospital archivist, Sister Lauren




Sister Tierney Trueman, OSF, with Hemingway scholar Dr. Curtis DeBerg

Weinandt, if there were any artifacts related to the author. In 2021, she discovered the book and contacted the scholar, Dr. Curtis DeBerg. Before her death in 2023, Sister Lauren gave the book to the Community Minister for safekeeping.

In fall 2025, DeBerg visited the Nobel Prize Museum in Stockholm and inquired if they had any Hemingway artifacts. Subsequently, he contacted Rochester Franciscan Archivist Sister Marisa McDonald, asking if the Congregation would be open to donating the book, and the Leadership Team agreed. In November, DeBerg came to Minnesota to receive the book, discuss his research and share his excitement in facilitating the donation.

On Jan. 23, 2026, DeBerg handed over the inscribed book while in Stockholm as part of a conversation about Hemingway's place in the literary world. The Rochester Franciscan Congregation is very pleased that this priceless artifact is now in a place where it can be enjoyed by a much larger audience.

An article appeared in the New York Times chronicling the 65-year journey of the book from Rochester, Minnesota, to Stockholm, Sweden. The Nobel Prize website also [posted a press release](#) detailing their new acquisition. 

# 2026

...to Stockholm, Sweden

# SISTER KAREN BOCCALERO

## Brought light, expression to the Mexican American community

By Melissa Martin  Archivist, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, St. Francis Province (Redwood City, CA)

**A**mid the turmoil that immigrant communities are experiencing in U.S. cities, there are beacons of empowerment and solidarity. Sister Karen Bocalero of the [Sisters of Penance and Christian Charity, St. Francis Province](#), recognized these needs. Beginning in the 1970s, she devoted her energy to becoming a light for East Los Angeles. Shaped by formative years spent with her Italian American family in Globe, Arizona, and El Paso, Texas, she was keenly aware of the struggles of those making a new life in a different country.

Sister Karen initially pursued her art education at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, under the mentorship of Sister Corita Kent. Later, she worked with master printmakers in Rome, and, while in Indonesia, studied the ancient technique of batik printmaking. Sister Karen received her master's degree in fine arts from Temple University.

Back in the U.S., she joined with other artists in creating works reflecting the rich heritage of the cultures from which they came. At first, they worked in the garage of Sister Karen's house. As their notoriety grew, Sister Karen secured a larger space. Eventually, [Self Help Art and Graphics](#) formed and continues to operate, educate, and foster artists in East L.A.

In 1974, Sister Karen organized the first local Day of the Dead observance, a Mexican tradition honoring deceased ancestors that is celebrated on All Souls' Day. She decorated altars, planned Mass at the local cemetery, and organized a colorful and energetic procession as well as music, food, and dance.

Sister Karen also initiated the [Barrio Mobile Art](#) project, which brought a traveling van with supplies and instructors to school children. The project encouraged their creativity and provided a channel for cultural heritage expression through art.


"Sister Karen's numerous contributions to the Mexican-American community have been memorialized in an impressive [tiled](#)



© Ann Murdy

[mural in the entryway of the local East L.A. Library](#), which honors local leaders 'who have formed indelible aspects of the socio-political Chicano (Mexican-American) identity.'" wrote associate Katherine Carlsten in a 2017 *Glance* article.<sup>1</sup>

In 2006, Sister Karen was one of the prominent figures depicted on banners displayed along major streets in East L.A. However, as Carlsten noted, her lasting influence on her co-workers and students stands as a testament to the compassionate and visionary person she was. Katherine quoted one student as saying, "...anyone who knew or worked with Sister Karen quickly saw that she was not about silence or complacency, that daily she challenged racism and worked for the dignity and respect of everyone she encountered."

Sister Karen died at age 64 in 1997, having lived in Franciscan community for 40 years. 

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts are from a *Glance* article (September 2017, Vol. 2017 #3) written by Katherine Carlsten, an Associate of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity in Redwood City. Permission granted by author.



by Kevin Korst  Archivist, *Wheaton Franciscan Sisters (Wheaton, IL)*

## Wheaton Franciscans commemorate 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wreck of the


This past December, Sisters Glenna Czachor and Toby Bonny, along with General Superior Sister Magdalena Schmitz, traveled to Stratford, England, to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wreck of the *SS Deutschland*. The tragic event, later the subject of the Gerard Manley Hopkins poem "The Wreck of the Deutschland", occurred on Dec. 6, 1875, when a steamship traveling to America from Germany ran aground off the coast of England.

Among the 50 passengers who perished were five Franciscan Sisters fleeing religious persecution in Germany: Sisters Henrica Fassbender, Barbara Hültenschmidt, Brigitta Damhorst, Norberta Reinkober, and Aurea Badziura. One week after the disaster, a Solemn Requiem Mass and funeral rites were celebrated at St. Francis Church in Stratford, and the Sisters were buried

# SS Deutschland



at St. Patrick Cemetery in neighboring Leytonstone. Although the body of Sister Henrica Fassbender was never recovered, all five names were etched into the gravestone.

The loss of the five Sisters holds a prominent place in the history of the Wheaton Franciscans and St. Francis Church. As part of the 2025 commemoration, a memorial service was held, and Mass was celebrated by Bishop Alan Williams of Brentwood. In addition, Sisters Glenna, Toby, and Magdalena visited the gravesite and laid a wreath. Despite the passage of time, the sacrifice of these Sisters endures, bearing witness to the lasting power of faith and collective remembrance. 

### Remembering Sisters

†*Henrica Fassbender*  
†*Barbara Hültenschmidt*  
†*Brigitta Damhorst*  
†*Norberta Reinkober*  
†*Aurea Badziura*



Sisters Magdalena Schmitz, Glenna Czachor, and Toby Bonny at St. Patrick's Cemetery



2025 memorial Mass commemorating the 150th anniversary of the shipwreck



Sister Theresa Fifer

Ten years ago, Sister Theresa Fifer, OSF, felt called to Water for Ishmael in Toledo, Ohio, where she is an English instructor. In addition to language classes, the organization offers transportation, childcare, and a workforce development program.

Working with immigrants has changed over the past year. Some students, Sister Theresa said, now are afraid to come to school and have dropped out due to concerns about ICE.

“Your heart breaks for people,” she said. The work “keeps my heart open” and “allows me to grow in my own faith.”

Along with the pain of the hard times, Sister Theresa witnesses growth and flourishing.

“It’s amazing how they just bloom here, from the support from volunteers and from each other.”

Sister Theresa finds that her work stems from a love of Jesus and the need to share His spirit.



Photo courtesy of Water for Ishmael

## Sisters extend love & support to immigrants in America

*As ICE raids become commonplace in Chicago and around the country, and immigrants fear deportation or detention at inhumane facilities, many Sisters are seeing the increased need for care and love among these communities. Recently, I had the opportunity to interview two Joliet Franciscan Sisters who work toward immigrant justice.*

by Elizabeth Piskorski  Archivist, Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate (Joliet, IL)

In 2017, Sister Dolores Zemont, OSF, (or DZ, as many call her) helped start Bethany House of Hospitality, a facility that supports young immigrant women and children in gaining independence in America. Bethany House offers a variety of services including housing, assistance from attorneys and social workers, and connections to health care and immigration services.

Sister DZ is the board president of Bethany House. She said that while it can be hard to see the trauma the women have endured, it is also rewarding to see what those who have “graduated” from Bethany House can achieve. She remembered one went on to receive a full ride from a prestigious university.


Sister DZ also attends days of public witness in

*“There isn’t anyone you couldn’t love, once you have heard their story.”*

Quote Sister DZ heard at a workshop



which she and a group of religious from the Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants go to communities where members are facing threats from ICE. Once a month, with signs in hand and expressions of love on their faces, Sister DZ and the other witnesses stand on street corners quietly offering their support. It is a way to say, “We see you. We care.” Sister DZ said this is often met with an outpouring of love and joy from the community. Cars honk and people wave, often holding their hands in prayer as they pass.

Other days, Sister DZ works as a shopper in a food pantry, helping guide those who need assistance. Through this work, she hears heartbreaking stories. “How do you tell a family of six that they can only get one loaf of bread for the week?” 

Sister Dolores Zemont

# Another way to lead

## Transcending differences by meeting heart-to-heart



by Sister Kathie Uhler, OSF  
*Franciscan Sisters of Allegany*  
 (Allegany, NY)



*Sister Kathie Uhler, OSF, in the UN Garden, New York City, with a bust of Francisco de Vitoria, OP, founder of human rights law (1999)*

*Have you ever worked for a charismatic leader? Looking back over six decades of various kinds of ministry, there was only one such leader in my life:*

*Chung Ok Lee, founder of the Won Buddhist Center at the United Nations in New York City.*


Chung Ok Lee's method of decision-making was always bookended by meditation, followed by sharing among everyone at the table. And, finally, drawing upon all of the above, Chung would make a decision. I experienced her process several times, and it was always followed by my participation in an event at the Center, usually as a panel moderator or respondent.

There also was an all-expense paid trip to Seoul, South Korea, for Chung's two summits of male and female leaders. This was held alongside the G20 meetings from Nov. 6-14, 2010. Twelve of us, as representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGO) at the UN, were invited. At the time, I was co-director of the NGO Franciscans International.

Upon our arrival in Seoul, we formed a circle with Chung and some 50 other invitees. After meditation and introductions, I was looking forward to enjoying the summits and the G20 when Chung approached me, as she was doing with others, to assign tasks.

This is when her charisma became operative.

Chung "asked" me to serve as the coordinator of the NGO G20 Moral Summit. Of course I said, "Yes!" Among other things, I was expected to moderate panels on G20 creativity and spirituality, and to respond at two sessions – one with Bill Clinton and one with Michelle Obama. In between the sessions, I participated in drafting two NGO declarations discussing the Ethics of the G20 and the Women's Declaration.

Chung Ok Lee is a benevolent charismatic leader and remains a dear friend. When I left my ministry at the UN, our parting was tender and tearful. This was in part, I believe, because Chung and I transcended the differences in our spiritual, cultural, and professional identities to meet each other heart-to-heart. 



The Franciscan Central Archive (FCA) preserves, protects, and provides access to the records of its Franciscan entities for the purposes of research and knowledge through a collaborative repository that will carry the Franciscan charm and legacy into the future.



*We recognize the urgency for Franciscan congregations to find permanent repositories for their archives that will safeguard the community's charism and legacy for future generations. The Franciscan Central Archive will be a physical center, following national archival standards, with a reading room, exhibition space, lecture hall, and robust virtual presence. Researchers will be able to study congregational ministries, shared vocations, and Franciscan charism across the collections. The FCA will be supported by charism-based educational programs and social engagement to ensure its members' legacies are carried into the future. Participation is open to Franciscan communities and organizations.*

## Services and Initiatives

- Provide guidance and resources concerning archives
- Assist leadership with hiring or contracting archivists
- Guide needs assessment and strategic planning for members and FCA
- Assist members to prepare their archives for transfer
- Seek grants and donations to assist members and reduce costs
- Enable donor development and gift campaign to support efforts
- Initiate agreements for members
- Facilitate move of members' archives to the FCA
- Promote and increase accessibility to FCA collections, bringing forth the shared Franciscan spirit

## Volunteers and Funding

- Funding is dependent upon grants, donations, legacy gifts, and participating member contributions. We need your help to see FCA through next steps and into the future.
- Volunteer assistance is welcome for grant writing, development, fundraising, administrative tasks, and other projects.



### PURPOSE

History & Memory  
Knowledge



### GOALS

Preserve  
Inform & Connect  
Foster Collaboration  
Engage & Inspire



### VALUES

Responsible Stewardship  
Integrity & Accountability  
Professional Service  
Sustainability



## Executive Board

President:

Holly Fiedler

Vice President:

Sister Celia Struck, OSF

Secretary:

Veronica Buchanan

Treasurer:

Sister Mary Serbacki, OSF

## Connect with us!

FCArchive@franciscanway.org

Holly Fiedler:

(303) 458-6270 x112

*[FranciscanCentralArchive.franciscanway.org](http://FranciscanCentralArchive.franciscanway.org)*