

Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois

# JUST *Words*



Fall 2023 Vol. 23, No. 3



# THE CONTEXT

Dear Friends,  
At Machu Picchu in beloved Peru, an ancient stone monument called Intihuatana (“Hitching Post of the Sun”) serves as a solar clock to mark the near-balance of light and darkness at the time of equinox. As I write these words our earth is experiencing this natural phenomenon. For some readers it is the autumn equinox and for others, the spring equinox. As creatures we journey with our earth around the sun and note the changes in our being as the re-apportionment of light and darkness occurs. We are reminded that life is never static! All of life is movement. Along with all creation, we intuitively seek balance...equilibrium...wholeness... amidst the light and darkness, highs and lows, agonies and ecstasies of our personal and communal lives.

In the recent past Pope Francis has offered us a new way of creating that balance or wholeness in the Body we call church. Francis calls us to synodality, an old concept newly embraced. In this edition of *JUST Words*, we are encouraged to walk together as Pope Francis suggests. We step across

the threshold of 150 years of blessed Dominican presence in central Illinois. We mark with joy sisters’ jubilees of religious consecration. We are challenged to fuller participation by the witness of Faith Camp students, partners in mission, and pastoral volunteers.

The spirit of communion is present in the invitation of Sister Phyllis Schenk as she chides us into accepting the restlessness felt on a daily basis as “healthy!” Her call is echoed by an SHC co-worker, Dominican associates, friends, and a sister celebrating 75 years of consecrated life, all of whom humbly share their personal practices of maintaining an awareness of God’s presence in their lives. Each exhibits an understanding of how this enhances their preparedness for mission.

Take time to journey with these persons who share their stories. Practice the skill of deep listening which Pope Francis encourages in the synodal process. Pause, reflect, imagine, recall, relish the moments of your own journey. Be refreshed, energized, and uplifted.

*Sister Rose Miriam Schulte is a member of the Dominican Sisters’ leadership team.*



## Mission Statement:

Called by God  
into right relationship  
with all creation and  
graced by  
Dominican life and mission,  
we compassionately preach  
the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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# The “Healthy Restlessness of Incompleteness” Groundings for a Synodal Future

By Sister Phyllis Schenk

We find ourselves in a time of all-encompassing unrest. There are great divisions in our world with violence and inflation; pandemic and immigration; political and religious beliefs which are poles apart. Those things we counted on in the past now appear uncertain. There is so much fear and insecurity. All our endeavors are moving at such a fast pace. Where is the firm ground where we can feel rooted and centered?

At one time in his life, the Jesuit paleontologist and theologian Teilhard de Chardin had those same questions. When nothing seemed certain or solid, he carried a rock in his pocket—the most unchanging thing he could think of—so he would have something secure to hold on to. When he died in 1955 his work was suspect, but today theologians who explore his work find there what they need to reconcile religion and science, evolution and faith.

I’m reminded of one of our sisters who was a wood worker. Sister Margaret Therese Hebert could hold a piece of wood in her

hands, look at it closely, and imagine what it could be after she placed it on the lathe. The artist in her would let the wood speak to her as she reflected on how best to bring out the wood’s hidden



Sister Margaret Therese Hebert’s hand-turned wooden bowls.

beauty.

I imagine this is the way God deals with us. Our God tenderly holds this worn, insecure, fragile lump of goods—us—and sees the true reality at the heart of us. Our creative God calls us into a secure, ever faithful, covenant relationship as we are transformed, recreated, and gradually shaped by our experiences in life into what we are meant to be.

Just as you could see the delight in Sister Margaret Therese’s face as she shared her work with others, I can imagine God’s joy seeing what is hidden in the depths

of each of us. Perhaps, then, rather than carrying a rock in our pocket, we might carry in our memory the thought of God looking on us and our unique human worth, seeing what is hidden in the depths of us.

Could that be the firm ground on which to stand as all our world swirls around us? Our prayer, our contemplation, our time spent nurturing our relationship with God is time well spent, the value of which cannot be taken from us.

In October of 2021, Pope Francis convened the whole Church in synod with a “Consultation of the People of God.” From the beginning he meant this to be a spiritual event—not a parliamentary style gathering. Priorities that surfaced from this consultation are included in what the synod assembly will address in October of 2023. A second session will follow in October 2024 as we continue to explore how to be a synodal Church. Pope Francis’ call to the world-wide Church to walk in synodality further steadies us as we experience the joy of our walking together with other Christians who turn to the Spirit to inspire us all to become disciples.



The experience of synodality, old as our Church itself, involves dynamic, constructive, respectful, and prayerful speaking, listening, and dialogue. Just as on the road to Emmaus, Jesus revealed himself to the disciples, so, too, for us. By our listening to and sharing with one another, we encounter the Lord in our midst and are gradually transformed by the Spirit.

Our goal in speaking, listening, and in dialogue is to align ourselves with the Divine Movement within—within each of us. Although we evolve one by one, we also evolve together! If we cultivate a shared, common awareness of contemplative deepening, we grow together. This only happens when everyone at the table participates and contributes. We come to our best solutions—our best awarenesses—when all voices have been heard. Often the real value of one person’s contribution comes from the tangent that

emerges from a different person after hearing the first contribution at the table. Both contributions are needed immensely. If one voice is missing we are poorer for it!

In our search for solid ground on which to stand and a center in which to come home, we come face-to-face with the healthy restlessness of incompleteness. Both can co-exist. There are always many things whose weight we are not able to carry. This feeling of incompleteness is a gift to be cultivated; a part of the Mystery of God.

In the first global synod session, participants will be cautioned not to rush to offer immediate solutions. The working document says “As we accept our own vulnerabilities, it becomes the space for the action of the Spirit, who invites us to recognize the sign of his [sic] presence as we listen attentively to each other’s lived experiences, we grow in mutual respect, and begin to discern the movements of God’s spirit in the lives of others and in our own.” (#31)

As we experience the pandemonium of our present time, might we recognize the chaos as a space for the action of the Spirit? Might we ask ourselves, “What



Sister Margaret Therese’s interpretation of Dominican life and mission, in glass and wood.

is God trying to teach us through this experience?” Might we share our insights and experiences of God with others as they share theirs with us? May God’s view of what is hidden in the depth of each of us be the security rock we carry in our pocket?

*Sister Phyllis is a subprioress at Sacred Heart Convent, a longtime pastoral leader, and a spiritual director.*

# “La Sana Inquietud de lo Incompleto”

## Fundamentos parece on Futuro Sinodal

Por Hermana Phyllis Schenk  
Regresar a Casa y la Sana Inquietud de lo Incompleto: Fundamentos para un Futuro Sinodal

Nos encontramos en una época de malestar generalizado. Hay grandes divisiones en nuestro mundo, violencia e inflación; pandemia e inmigración; visiones políticas y religiosas polarizadas. Las cosas que nos daban certeza en el pasado ahora parecen inciertas. Hay mucho miedo e inseguridad. Todos nuestros esfuerzos avanzan a un ritmo muy rápido. ¿Dónde está el terreno firme en el cual podemos sentirnos arraigados y centrados? En un punto de su vida, el paleontólogo y teólogo jesuita Teilhard de Chardin se hizo estas mismas preguntas. Cuando nada parecía seguro o firme, llevaba una piedra en el bolsillo – lo más inmutable que se le ocurrió – para tener algo seguro a qué aferrarse. Cuando murió en 1955, su trabajo era considerado sospechoso, pero hoy los teólogos que examinan su trabajo encuentran allí lo que necesitan para reconciliar religión y ciencia, evolución y fe. Recuerdo a una de nuestras hermanas que trabajaba en madera. La hermana Margaret Therese podía sostener un trozo de madera en sus manos, mirarlo de cerca e imaginar qué podría

ser después de colocarlo en el torno. La artista que había en ella dejaba que la madera le hablara mientras reflexionaba sobre la mejor manera de resaltar la belleza oculta en la madera. Imagino que así es como Dios nos trata. Con ternura, nuestro Dios sostiene el conjunto desgastado, inseguro y frágil que somos y ve la verdadera realidad de nuestro corazón. Nuestro Dios creativo nos llama a una relación segura y siempre fiel de alianza mientras somos transformados, recreados y gradualmente moldeados en lo que estamos llamados a ser por nuestras experiencias de vida. Tal como se veía el deleite en el rostro de la hermana Margaret Therese mientras compartía su trabajo con otras personas, puedo imaginar el gozo de Dios al ver lo que está oculto en lo más profundo de cada persona. Quizás entonces, en lugar de llevar una piedra en el bolsillo, llevaríamos en la memoria la imagen de Dios mirándonos y viendo nuestro

valor humano único, viendo lo que se esconde en lo más profundo de nuestro ser. ¿Podría ser este el terreno firme sobre el cual permanecer mientras todo el mundo gira a nuestro alrededor? Nuestra oración, contemplación, el tiempo que dedicamos a alimentar nuestra relación con Dios es tiempo bien aprovechado, cuyo valor no se nos puede quitar. En octubre de 2021, el Papa Francisco convocó a toda la Iglesia a un sínodo con una “Consulta del Pueblo de Dios”. Desde el principio quiso que éste fuera un evento espiritual, no una reunión de estilo parlamentario. Las prioridades que surgieron de esta consulta se incluyeron en un documento de trabajo y se abordarán en la primera sesión de la Asamblea sinodal en octubre de 2023. Seguirá una segunda sesión en octubre de 2024 para continuar explorando cómo ser una Iglesia sinodal. El llamado del Papa Francisco a la Iglesia mundial a caminar en sinodalidad nos arraiga aún más mientras experimentamos la alegría de caminar junto a otros cristianos que recurren al Espíritu para inspirarnos a ser discípulos. La experiencia de la sinodalidad, tan antigua como nuestra Iglesia,

continúa en la página 6







### En la Iglesia, todos somos fieles

En la Iglesia, todos los fieles forman un solo pueblo de Dios:



Forman un grupo en el que hay igualdad de derechos y deberes. Cada miembro está al servicio de los demás.

Los Pastores y los demás fieles están vinculados entre sí por la necesidad mutua y la complementariedad.

Para obtener más información haga clic en el código QR.



implica hablar, escuchar y dialogar de manera dinámica, constructiva, respetuosa y orante. Así como en el camino a Emaús Jesús se reveló en medio de los discípulos, así también lo hace con nosotros. Al escucharnos y compartir mutuamente, encontramos al Señor entre nosotros y somos transformados gradualmente por el Espíritu. Nuestro objetivo al hablar, escuchar y dialogar es sintonizar con el Movimiento Divino dentro de nuestro ser. Aunque evolucionamos individualmente, ¡también evolucionamos juntos! Si cultivamos un sentido comunitario y compartido de profundización contemplativa, creceremos juntos. Esto sólo sucede cuando todos en la mesa

participan y aportan. Llegamos a nuestras mejores soluciones, a una mejor toma de conciencia, cuando todas las voces son escuchadas. A menudo, el valor real de la contribución de una persona proviene de la idea que surge de otra persona después de escuchar la primera contribución en la mesa. Ambas contribuciones son inmensamente necesarias. ¡Si falta una voz, nos empobrecemos! En la búsqueda de una base sólida sobre la que apoyarnos y un centro en el cual sentirnos en casa, nos topamos cara a cara con la sana inquietud de lo incompleto. Ambos pueden coexistir. Siempre habrá cosas cuyo peso no somos capaces de

llevar. Este sentimiento de incompletitud es un don que debe cultivarse; una parte del Misterio de Dios. En la primera sesión del sínodo global se advertirá a los participantes que no se apresuren a ofrecer soluciones inmediatas. “A medida que aceptamos nuestras propias vulnerabilidades, llegamos a dar espacio a la acción del Espíritu, quien nos invita a reconocer el signo de su presencia mientras escuchamos atentamente las experiencias vividas de unos y otros, crecemos en el respeto mutuo y comenzamos a discernir los movimientos del espíritu de Dios en la vida de los demás y en la nuestra”.

Al experimentar el caos de nuestro tiempo presente, ¿Somos capaces de reconocer allí un espacio para la acción del Espíritu? Podríamos preguntarnos: “¿Qué está tratando Dios de enseñarnos a través de esta experiencia?” ¿Compartimos nuestras ideas y experiencias de Dios con otros mientras ellos comparten las suyas con nosotros? ¿Puede ser que la visión de Dios de lo escondido en el fondo de nuestro ser sea la piedra de seguridad que llevemos en el bolsillo?

*Sister Phyllis is a subprioress at Sacred Heart Convent, a longtime pastoral leader, and a spiritual director.*

## A Light for My Path: Witnesses to the Spirit-Led Life

*Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
a light for my path.  
I make a solemn vow  
to observe your righteous judgments.  
I am very much afflicted, LORD;  
give me life in accord with your word.*

Psalm 119: 105-107

Is Sister Phyllis, right? Is the chaos of our age a privileged place to witness the action of the Spirit? To put her theory to the test, we invited seven *JUST Words* readers to share their wisdom for living balanced, meaningful, spiritual lives.

Each shares a different, simple, humble path that might help you, too, as you seek a more balanced and spiritually grounded life.

If you are you challenged to maintain your equilibrium and find yourself floundering, you could do worse than draw on these practices as inspiration for your own spiritual journey.

Our gratitude to these wise persons, who say, in so many words: Pause. Do what you can do. Put your day in God’s hands. Serve others. Pay attention. Be consistent with the small things. Count on family. See all people as Jesus. Trust Jesus’ promises. May their wisdom be light for your own path.

Photo by Casey Horner on Unsplash

## Pause, and do what you can do: The wisdom of Matt Pryer

By Dave Sanders

Matt Pryer is wise beyond his 36 years. Since December 2021 he has worked on the maintenance team at Sacred Heart Convent, arriving there already in sync with many of the values the sisters live by. A mechanic and metal artist who values work, patience, the beauty of art and nature, Matt sums up his overriding approach to just about everything with five words: “Do what you can do.”

He credits two older, recently deceased men—his friend Fred, and Dave, his first boss—with helping him develop his skills and teaching him to approach work and life with a calm patience. They also introduced him to welding, which sparked his creative side and led him to become a builder of off-road vehicles and a creator of metal art.

Matt’s sanctuary is a shop near Riverton, Ill., where he creates his art. When Matt is

there he does not approach his creations as a job. Rather, he finds them a catalyst for the all-important pause that allows him to look inward and unleash feeling and mood. There are no deadlines, he says, and creating art brings balance to his life.

Matt also journals to clear his mind which keeps him from “chewing the same bite over and over,” he says. His wife Angela journals too, and they encourage each other to use this tool to stay focused and positive.

*Dave is a Dominican Associate since 2019 and serves on the JUST Words editorial board.*



Matt Pryer





## A Summer Full of Celebrations

Enjoy this peek into some of our summer celebrations in 2023.

*Clockwise from upper left of facing page:* Sister Edith Vila Alania dances in the gifts of Eucharistic bread and wine during the 150th anniversary Mass on August 19; Sister Rebecca Ann Gemma, Prioress General, welcomes guests to the liturgy; Sisters Elyse Marie Ramirez and Mila Díaz Solano lead the responsorial psalm; Sister Bernice Juip offers the universal prayer.

*Below:* These eleven sisters celebrated their 75th, 60th, 50th and 25th

profession anniversaries. *In front:* Sisters Alberta Lawless and

Edwina Finnegan. *Behind:* Sisters Judine Hilbing, Judith Pfile,

Mary Lou Owens, Theodora Stremlau, Karen

Freund, Kathleen Kenny, Sharon Zayac

and Mila Díaz Solano. *Bottom left:*

Students from St. Malachy Parish,

Rantoul, Ill., enjoy Faith Camp. The

group visited Jubilee Farm before

coming to the motherhouse

to visit with the sisters. Above

them: Sister Phyllis Schenk leads

the recessional at the 150th

Anniversary Mass.



## Jubilarians 2023



Dominican Faith Camp  
Celebrating 150 years



## “Serving God Gives Me Joy” “Servir a Dios me da alegría”

By Sister Mila Díaz Solano

Norma Cardenas is a Springfield Dominican Associate and is a maintenance worker at a public school in Buffalo, Ill.

This is what Norma said when asked what helps her live with hope in the midst of the chaos and difficulties that surrounds us.



Norma Cardenas

Norma Cardenas es asociada de las Hermanas Dominicanas de Springfield desde hace 3 años. Ella trabaja en la limpieza en una escuela pública en Buffalo, Ill.

Al preguntarle qué es lo que le ayuda a vivir con esperanza en medio del caos y las dificultades que nos circunda, Norma respondió.

“I love the kids. Serving God gives me joy. I do everything for the glory of God. My job is a blessing. So is my volunteer ministry through my parish community with families from Guatemala. Prayer helps me to live with hope at work and in my parish ministry.

“I do not plan my day, but commend it to God. Every day Jesus gives me an opportunity to be a better daughter of God. Every new day I say to God ‘Thank you for this new day. Today I’m going to work. But, if you have something else for me, I will do it with all my love. If you also need me somewhere else, I’ll go there.’ I pray to the Virgin Mary on the way to school. I pray the *Angelus* in the morning over the phone with my mom, and at noon I pray the *Angelus* again with my husband, when possible.

“In difficult times, when I feel that my faith is weakening, looking at the crucified—what he lived and suffered, what he did for us—this changes my perspective. I find myself so small before all the blessings that I receive. I feel He is alive! That allows me to pray for all the people who need prayers.”

“Yo amo a los niños. Llevo trabajando 18 años en la escuela. Servir a Dios me da alegría y todo lo hago para gloria de Dios. Mi trabajo es una bendición. Tengo también contacto con otros niños pues como miembro de la parroquia apoyo a varias familias de Guatemala. La oración es lo que a mí me ayuda a vivir con esperanza, tanto en mi trabajo como en mi ministerio.

Yo no planeo mi día. Más bien, encomiendo mi día a Dios. Jesús me regala cada día la oportunidad para ser mejor hija de Dios. Cada nuevo día le digo a Dios ‘Gracias por este nuevo día. Hoy voy a trabajar. Pero si me muestras qué otra cosa tienes para mí, lo haré con todo mi amor. Si me necesitas además en otro lugar, allí iré’. Yo rezo en camino a la escuela a la Virgen María, rezo el ángelus por la mañana a través del teléfono con mi mamá y al mediodía rezo otra vez el ángelus con mi esposo, cuando es posible.

Mirar al crucificado, lo que vivió y sufrió, lo que hizo por nosotros tiende a cambiar mi perspectiva en momentos difíciles y cuando siento que mi fe se debilita. Me siento tan pequeña ante todas las bendiciones que yo recibo. ¡Lo siento vivo! Eso me permite rezar por todas las personas que necesitan oraciones.”

*Sister Mila Díaz Solano is a member of the Dominican Sisters leadership team.*

## Turning it Over to God makes Life Fun

By Sister Beth Murphy and Mike Goldasich

When Kevin Breheny was 34 years old, a lunch conversation with an agnostic client led him to question his faith. After a year without answers from God he “balled God out” while on retreat. “I said ‘God, If I’m not going to get any help then I’m giving up,’” he recalls. “Maybe it’s all just a bunch of nonsense.”

Until it suddenly wasn’t. That bitter cold day, after

spending his prayer time yelling at God, he returned to his senses and turned again to prayer. “I’m sorry,” he said to God.

“I don’t know what’s wrong with me. Who am I to say that to you? If that is the way you want it to be then it’s the way you are going to have it, I apologize. I don’t know what’s gotten in to me.”

A series of “coincidences” later that day convinced Kevin of God’s presence and



Sue and Kevin Breheny

care, and brought home to him the reality of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those attentive to that Presence. The “God moments” of that day continue to fuel his faith. Every day since, Kevin says, he prays asking God, “What do you want me to do?” Then he just tries to pay attention. “It’s so much fun,” he insists. “After that (retreat experience) I didn’t have to figure out my life. I turned it over, gradually, to God.”

*Kevin Breheny, husband of Sue, lifelong Catholic, and a parishioner at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Decatur, Ill., is past president of First Mid Insurance Group.*

## Be Consistent in Small Things: A Key to a Grounded Life

By Betsy Vogt

When I was asked to write about my faith and prayer life within the everyday chaos of my life I thought, well, I have the chaos part down, but the faith and prayer? As I looked around at my family of six, though, I realized it didn’t have to be grand or spectacular. Being consistent in the small things, especially in the chaos, is what helps to have a faith-centered life.

God is in the small things for me: in prayers stuck to mirrors; mealtime and bed-

time prayers; Christian radio, the rosary on my phone, and—at the end of the day—as I breathe deeply in “Jesus,” and out “I trust in you.” I keep a few rote prayers ready for when I need something and nothing comes to mind. The *Memorare* always help me recenter amidst the chaos.

I was taught as a child to recite a *Hail Mary* when I heard sirens. This is something I have taught my

four boys. The lives of the saints help me in my faith journey as I have people to relate to in times of despair.

The biggest thing I have come to learn about staying grounded in the chaos is the necessity of community, whether that is through the Dominican Associates, helping with RCIA, or other families with whom I can share my faith. I’ve learned the importance of having others to lean on. Jesus, I trust in you.

*Betsy has been a Dominican associate since 2020. She lives in Sherman with her husband and four boys.*



The Vogt family



Faith Comes from Family Tradition

By Jean Ann Miller

Sister Edwina Finnegan credits her family for keeping her grounded in faith. “We would say the Rosary every day around the dinner table and I knew I wanted to be a sister while getting my Catholic K-12 education,” said Sister Edwina. Since professing her vows in 1948 she has taught elementary education in 18 different locations and has enjoyed the experience that each one offered. “Religious life is rich with adventure and relationships.



Sister Edwina Finnegan

One year I had 72 students in a second-grade classroom and I had no problems with the students or their parents,” she said reflecting on the past. “One year I had five different Michael’s in my classroom, so I put each one of them in different rows,” she chuckled. This year she celebrated her 75th profession anniversary and was proud of the support she received from her family. “There were 42 relatives

here; 19 of them were from 10 different states. It is something I will cherish,” she continued. She says the key to her 95-year-old life is a daily regiment of exercises but has some concerns about the future while aging gracefully. “I can see, and hear, and prayer comes easily because I have my mind. We have everything here from books, daily Mass and the companionship of other sisters,” she said. “We are truly blessed.”

Jean Ann is the Communication/Advancement Specialist for the Dominican Sisters.

Hold on to Wisdom: Josh Becker’s Toolbox

By Cynthia Callan

Josh Becker, a Springfield Dominican associate and parishioner at St. Agnes, Springfield, Ill., says he stays grounded in contemplation in his daily life seeing all people as Jesus. This reminds him daily of his faith and helps him walk intentionally with the people he serves as a licensed clinical social worker and therapist. Today Josh says his middle-school self was always searching for truth. He questioned religion, and the answers he was receiving contradicted the spiritual answers he was seeking. A shift in his thinking occurred in high school when challenged by his teacher, Sister Theodora

Stremlau, OP. Then, in 1989, Josh attended a healing service at the Marian shrine in Medjugorje which he said opened his eyes to see what God wanted, and not what he wanted. After his father died in 2015, Josh experienced another shift, which helped him to realize what is important in life, the importance of meaningful conversation, and the necessity of giving his clients the validation they need to help them move forward. Josh also says he has learned to hold on to wisdom from



Josh Becker

experiences which make an impact in his life. He appreciates being in a faith community that feeds him, being able to look at past challenging experiences, and being attentive to those times which have helped life fall into place, including meeting his wife. He believes there are no coincidences and “anytime is a good time for prayer.” Though he said he did not really have a “toolbox” of spiritual practices to recommend to others, he clearly has one for himself!

Cynthia has been a Dominican associate since 2005. She lives in Springfield with her husband Bill.

“Help me to know you in other people’s faces”

By Sister Denise Glazik

Claudia Arevalo is one of the pillars of St. Malachy Parish in Rantoul. She helps care for the altar and altar linens, and on Friday’s brings Holy Communion to the elderly of the parish unable to leave their homes. “Something I will not give up for money or any reason,” she says about this volunteer parish ministry. But you wouldn’t have been able to guess this would be the trajectory of her life by looking at her origins as a child in Mexico. “Like a lot of people, I’ve had difficult times,” she explains. “My mom wasn’t one to go to church.” Claudia only made

it to Mass regularly during the summers she spent with her grandparents, whom she calls the foundation of her faith. Her adult faith is rooted in the experience of Cursillo, a formative retreat for adults she and her husband Ivan both value. Claudia’s secret to staying grounded in chaos is very simple and yet profound. She prays unfailingly for 15 minutes every morning and every evening. She serves God by serving the people she encounters every day and feels God present in and through them, and, she says, she believes in His promise.

“That is what wakes me up every morning. The promise that I will be with Him one day. Being able to serve Him who feels me entirely makes me happy. I ask him ‘Hold me tight don’t let me escape, help me to be more like you. Help me to know you in other peoples’ faces.”



Claudia Arevalo

Sister Denise is the Vocation Director for the Dominican Sisters.

CONGRATULATIONS

Sister Mila invited to provide Spanish version of lectors’ manual

Sister Mila Díaz Solano contributed to Liturgy Training Publications’ 2024 lectors’ manual, Spanish edition. She was invited by the publication’s editor, Ricardo Lopez, to prepare the reflections for each of the Sundays of Lent and Holy Week.



Sister Mila Díaz Solano

Sister Lori plays to honor former instructor

Sister Lori Kirchman was a featured organist for the Zuiderveld Memorial Concert at First Presbyterian Church in Springfield on August 25. She and 10 other musicians honored their former teacher and colleague, Dr. Rudolf “Rudy” Zuiderveld, with performances on the church’s world-class Brombaugh Opus 35 pipe organ which Zuiderveld was largely responsible for guiding to completion. “Rudy was a wonderful human being and a phenomenal teacher,” Sister Lori said.



Former students of Dr. Rudolf “Rudy” Zuiderveld recently gathered to honor their former instructor.



# CONGRATULATIONS (cont.)

## Dominican Literacy Center honored by Library of Congress

The Dominican Literacy Center in Aurora, Ill., was recently selected as a 2023 Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program Successful Practices Honoree. The center will receive a \$5,000 award and be honored at the Successful Practices Conference at the Library of Congress on October 18. The award recognizes the successful practices of building one-on-one relationships and grassroots organizing that keeps humanity at the heart of literacy experiences.

The award is sponsored through the generosity of David M. Rubenstein, and administered by the

Professional Learning and Outreach Initiatives Office in the Center for Learning, Literacy and Engagement at the Library of Congress. The Literacy Awards Program

honors organizations that have made outstanding contributions to increasing literacy in the United States or abroad.



Pictured from left are: Alison Brzezinski, ESL tutoring coordinator, Sister Jane Ann Beckman, citizenship program coordinator, and Sister Kathleen Ryan, founder and administrator.

# PARTNERS IN MISSION

## Sustaining Partnerships Keep Our Mission Alive

By Sister Kathleen Anne Tait, OP  
Director of Mission Advancement

This past August, we celebrated our 150th anniversary of service “for the Life of the World.” The Latin translation of that phrase—*Pro Mundi Vita*—is beneath the Cross on the mosaic which captures your attention when you enter our chapel.

It’s a reminder to all baptized Christians that we are called to bring God’s healing love to the needs of today and to provide life-giving hope in a world of division. Through the years many generous people have sustained our efforts. With your help, as Partners in Mission, we are poised to do that for the next 150 years.

Des Moines residents Celeste and Jim Egger participate in our mission as monthly donors. Celeste says they began giving in appreciation for the sisters who helped “raise” her at St. Frances Cabrini School in Springfield, Ill. As she and Jim have grown in their faith, their giving has become an expression of their desire to participate in our mission.

Jim says he sees our sisters doing what others can’t or won’t do to respond to current social needs. He and Celeste witness our sisters



Jim and Celeste Egger

carefully discerning and actively engaging in efforts for the good of all, he says, ticking off a running list: instilling values and practices to promote the health of Earth; dismantling racism;

understanding the bridges needing to be built between the Church and the LGBTQ community; advocating for economic policies that serve the common good.

The Eggers also have a deep appreciation for our synodality—our walking together—with the broader community. Whether this is the witness of the laity who serve on governing boards in the high schools, or the sisters’ cooperation with the leadership in various health care institutions; advisory boards at Jubilee Farm and the literacy centers, or collaborative efforts like Cor Unum and the Collaborative

Dominican Novitiate, the consistent way our sisters work alongside others is the core of the Church community, they say.

We are deeply grateful to the Eggers and to our many Partners in Mission who give regularly in support of this mission. The Eggers plan for a monthly donation. Others choose to make quarterly or annual gifts.

To become a regular donor, visit [springfieldop.org](https://springfieldop.org) and click the red donate button at the top of the page. Select reoccurring donation to choose your preferred frequency.

Thank you! It’s the sustained giving of our Partners in Mission that fuels our efforts “for the life of the world!” We are truly grateful to each of you!



Sister Kathleen Anne is the director of mission advancement for the Dominican Sisters.

## IN MEMORIAM

Please pray for the repose of the souls of these sisters and associates who have died in the peace of Christ.

*Sister Carole Dittrich, OP, July 25, 2023*

*Bernadette Nevsimal, associate, August 2, 2023*

*Sister Marianne Nolan, OP, August 12, 2023*

*Sister M. Angelita Nickele, OP, August 27, 2023*

*Louise Snyder, prayer associate, August 28, 2023*

*Jo Powers, associate, September 3, 2023*

Visit <https://springfieldop.org/donate> to make a gift in memory of a sister or associate who has died.





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OF SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

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About the cover art: The recessional was a glorious conclusion to a beautiful liturgy in celebration of the congregation's 150th anniversary, August 19.



## Dominican Sources

*"The voice of the Word of God is not an alien message beamed down from outer space. It's the voice of the One who is closer to me than I am to myself. It's the voice that summons me to flourish."*

~ Timothy Radcliffe, OP, Easter Sunday Homily, April 30, 2023, Blackfriars, Oxford.

## DATEBOOK

October	6-7	SDART, antiracism team meeting
	Respect Life Month	15-16 General Chapter Preparation meetings*
		24-25 General Chapter Preparation meetings*
		28 Eucharistic Congress, Diocese of Springfield
November		28-29 Peruvian Independence Days
	1	All Saints Day
	2	All Souls Day
	4	General Chapter preparation meeting, Chicago Heights*
	10-12	In Person Come & See, Springfield+
	18	General Chapter preparation meeting, Springfield*
December	23	Thanksgiving, U.S.
	8	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
	12	Solemnity of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Advent & Christmas		

\*As always, we appreciate your prayer as we prepare for General Chapter in April, 2024.

+ Visit [springfieldop.org/comesee](http://springfieldop.org/comesee) for details.