A watercolor illustration of a dreamcatcher. The central element is a circular web with a spiral pattern, surrounded by a ring of small white beads. From the bottom of the web, several long, dark feathers hang down. The background is a soft, ethereal wash of colors, including light blue, pink, and yellow, with faint, overlapping patterns that suggest a larger, more complex web or structure. The overall style is delicate and artistic.

F.S.P.A. PERSPECTIVES

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NUMBER ONE

In this issue

“While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart.”

St. Francis

As Father John Dear, S.J., says in his book, *You Will Be My Witness*, “Francis embodies the Gospel journey from violence to nonviolence, wealth to poverty, power to powerlessness, selfishness to selfless service, pride to humility, indifference to love, cruelty to compassion, vengeance to forgiveness, revenge to reconciliation, war to peace, killing enemies to loving enemies.”

In this issue of *Perspectives*, we look at the peace and justice efforts FSPA and our partners in ministry are making today. We look at the lasting effect Father John’s presentation had on a group of people in La Crosse, Wis., who started a Pax Christi group (pg. 7). We examine a region of Colombia where the people experience a displacement from their lands (pg. 4) and the FSPA connection with the 8th Day Center for Justice that makes work in Colombia and on so many other efforts possible (pg. 11). We also visit Cameroon, West Africa, where we hear from an FSPA about the complexity of justice issues she’s experienced in her work with the Cameroonian people (pg. 5).

We also celebrate! 2009 marks the 160th anniversary of FSPA’s founding and the 10th anniversary of the Franciscan Common Venture. The congregations will celebrate at *Together, Creating a Culture of Peace*, a conference intended to spread the message of peace today (pg. 3).

“I have done my part,” Francis said to the friars around him as he died. “May Christ teach you to do yours.” FSPA is guided by a Direction Statement which highlights what is theirs to do: *Intensify our efforts to effect just treatment of all, especially women, in church and society*. And as Father John says, “May we all do our part, like Francis, and become instruments of Christ’s peace.”

Cover art by Stella DeVenuta, OSF

Healing Incantation

Watercolor Construction

Prints available by contacting artist

stellaosf@lakeosfs.org www.stellalunaart.com

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Healing Incantation was created for *Together, Creating a Culture of Peace* conference in La Crosse, Wis.



***Perspectives* represents the spirit and values shared by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.**

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Photo above: Kathleen, left, and Magdalene, Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis, Cameroon, West Africa, demonstrate Cameroonian dance to the sisters at St. Rose Convent.

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Conference highlights congregations' peacemaking efforts

Ten years ago a group of Catholic sisters in the United States and Cameroon started to build bridges for a more peaceful world. The sisters view their coinciding work as a sign of grace. Today, the sisters—the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist and the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis—Cameroon—are celebrating the 10th year of their global collaboration with a peace conference scheduled for Aug. 1, 2009, in La Crosse, Wis.

The collaboration began in 1999 when the U.S.-based congregations were celebrating the 150th anniversary of their common founding. “Compelled by the Spirit’s promptings that emerged from the band of Bavarian Franciscan Tertiaries on Dec. 8, 1848, and through the three congregations of FSPA, OSF and FSE gathered on Dec. 8, 1995, a commitment was made,” says Marla Lang, FSPA. “At that time, we committed ourselves to celebrating 150 years of common heritage and to incarnate the Franciscan charism in new ways.” This statement of commitment is the mission of the Franciscan Common Venture.

This vision sparked a companion relationship with the Cameroon Province of the TSSF. United through diverse cultural expressions, they now move toward peacemaking in today’s world.

The conference, *Together, Creating a Culture of Peace*, celebrates peacemaking in today’s world. It features internationally renowned presenters, including: Mae Chee Sansanee Sthirasuta, a spiritual leader from the Thai Buddhist



The Dancing Francis statue is featured on the peace conference brochure. To download a brochure visit www.franciscancommonventure.org.

tradition who is known around the world as a peace messenger; Janaan Hashim, a Chicago attorney and Muslim who serves as an ardent advocate for Muslims’ civil rights; and Ilia Delio, OSF, professor and chair of spirituality studies at Washington Theological Union in Washington, D.C., who has written and presented extensively in Franciscan theology.

Dr. Robert Zuber, director of the project for a United Nations Emergency Peace Service and Global Action to Prevent War, will join the speakers in a panel discussion moderated by Father John Heagle. Ordained a Catholic priest for the Diocese of La Crosse, Wis., in 1965, Father Heagle has had more than 44 years of pastoral experience, including college teaching, campus ministry, and justice and peace leadership. He is the author of seven books on spirituality and human relationships.

According to Dr. Zuber, “The ‘culture of peace’ is both an urgent local mandate and a growing global movement,

bringing diverse citizens, organizations and governments together to prevent and address poverty, environmental decay, street violence, chronic health crisis, and other threats to the stability, equity and harmony of our communities.” In this panel, Dr. Zuber will describe some of the major ‘culture of peace’ activities currently being adopted or proposed by the U.N. and will discuss ways that religious congregations and other citizens groups worldwide can support, inform and impact those global priorities.

In addition to presenters and panel discussion, conference attendees have a chance to view the Peace Women Across the Globe exhibit. The exhibition first opened in October 2005 in Zurich, Switzerland, and soon after began touring the world.

Peace Women Across the Globe started in 2003 as a movement to recognize the work of peace women throughout the world. PWAG set up a coordination team to collect data on women at the grassroots, national and international levels who were working to promote and to maintain peace. The idea behind the venture was simple: first, women’s work for peace is often invisible or not highly regarded, and second, there are lessons to be learned from examining

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Franciscan Common Venture Mission Statement

The Franciscan Common Venture Mission Statement invites its congregations into a mutual relationship

- that fosters a deeper understanding of becoming Franciscan in the 21st century
- that deepens the experience of Global Church
- that opens new understanding and experiences of equi-cultural relationships
- that supports and encourages mutual efforts to effect systemic change

Grassroots commission responds to lack of justice

by Liz Deligio, Justice and Peace coordinator for FSPA

On the way to Curvarado, Colombia, you drive through endless lengths of green fields, neatly edged with trees and segmented by small towns. As you get closer to the north the heat builds and the air grows heavy as you edge into the thick growth of the rainforests. Along the way, marring the landscape, blocking the roads, spilling out of the towns are the military—in groups, at checkpoints, with guns, with jeeps. They fill the lush landscape draining it of much of its warmth—replacing the vibrancy with a still sense of dread, of pressure and of fear.

A different presence fills the space of the humanitarian zones constructed to give refuge to the displaced. These zones are part of the heartbeat of resistance that resonates throughout Colombia. In the Curvarado Humanitarian Zone are people from throughout the northern region of Colombia—Afro-Colombians, indigenous and *campesinos*. Coming from a variety of backgrounds, all share in common the experience of displacement from their lands. The people of Curvarado were displaced to make way for an African palm plantation. African palm is a plant harvested to provide biofuels as alternatives to gasoline.

The African palm plantation near Curvarado, Urapalma, is owned and operated by the paramilitary group the *Aguilas Negras*, or Black Eagles. Between the military, paramilitary and police of this region, the people of Curvarado have been unable to return,

to seek justice. They live as strangers in their territory without access to clean water and food. This creates a struggle with hunger, as families lose access to both food and a source of income. Attempts to seek justice through the state have led to intimidation, disappearances and murders.

Justicia y Paz and The Movement of Victims of Crimes of the State developed the Ethics Commission in response to



This child, a member of an indigenous Colombian community forcibly displaced by deforestation from her home, holds a picture of a member of her community who was killed. The photo was taken at a march in Bogota led by victims of violence. Photo courtesy of Liz Deligio

the lack of justice. The Ethics Commission is a grassroots commission made up of representatives from 25 different human rights organizations from throughout the world as well as leaders and community members within Colombia. The purpose of the commission is to provide a space for communities, like Curvarado, to name what has happened to them and their terms of reparation. This honors the collective memory of the people as well as placing into the annals of history the truth of what

has happened. The ability to tell the *historia* from the collective memory of the community is essential for healing today and the prevention of human rights violations tomorrow.

The notions of *historia* and collective memory should not be mistaken as only a call for an accurate account. These concepts speak of the connections between identity, dignity and full peace with justice. When a people's history is erased, minimized or dismissed, they are erased, minimized and dismissed. It is no accident that the Colombian government utilizes silence as a weapon against its people. Silence is a potent force that prevents the realization of justice and deepens the trauma of victims; for now they are not only fighting to heal, they are fighting to exist. As Alicia Portnoy writes in *On Being Shorter: How Our Testimonial Texts Defy the Academy*, "through the act of testifying, through the creation of the *historia*, the survivors of horrendous abuses are empowered. They are no longer tortured bodies to be pitied or patronized; they become the central force in a process that makes a difference in their own personal lives and also helps to further a just political agenda."

This then becomes not just the work of the courts or human rights organizations but the work of the heart, of the imagination, and of the soul to craft a place where the truth is not shaped by power but acknowledged as its own power. When we can face what we have done, then we can create a future without hunger, displacement and violence. ■

Author's note: I have been honored to serve as a member of the Ethics Commission since its inception in 2006. My work in Colombia would not be possible without the support, influence and guidance of the FSPA community and the 8th Day Center for Justice.

Cameroon

FSPA nurse missions for health and humanity in Africa

From her perspective—a teaching and administrative post at the Catholic Private School of Nursing, Midwifery and Lab Technology in the Northwest Province of Cameroon, West Africa—“health care is about human rights, not an industry to be fixed.” A nurse, she lives and works among a population devastated by political corruption, poverty, malnutrition and disease, and the “billions of dollars” she sees being “thrown” at such problems have the same, lasting effect as an ill-placed bandage on a gaping wound. She is Theresa Keller, FSPA, and the story of how she came to Cameroon, the social injustices that shape her situation there and her hope to see “health as a human right,” not a commodity, is reflected here.

A Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration for 30 years, Sister Theresa earned a bachelor’s degree from Viterbo University, La Crosse, Wis., a doctorate in nursing from Rush University, Chicago, Ill., and a master’s in public affairs with a concentration in leadership and international health from the H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs on the University of Minnesota’s Minneapolis campus.

Since 1992, “my professional practice has been with the medically underserved in Iowa, Missouri and Minnesota,” says Sister Theresa. After attending the Maryknoll Language Institute in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and returning to the U.S. in December 2007, she was recuperating from surgery, working part-time as an urgent care nurse practitioner and discerning what seemed to be a call to practice on foreign soil. That spring, she

received a letter from FSPA President Marlene Weisenbeck requesting nurses to teach at the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis School of Nursing in Shisong as part of the Franciscan Common Venture. Sister Theresa was teaching there by August; she also began working as TSSF administrative assistant to the school’s director, Sister Rosemary Nkfunji.

For sisters of American congregations, the Franciscan Common Venture affords, among other things, opportunity to “personally discover the challenges of life in another culture.” Sister Theresa’s Cameroonian immersion has taught her much about human existence in the developing country. Located in the “armpit” of West Africa, she says it has “a population of about 17 million; the median age is 15 years old.” She also says that Cameroon, founded only 50 years ago, has “one of the top 10 most corrupt governments in the world.”

The country has not been immune to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, yet has fared better than South Africa. While many Cameroonians have survived by the bounties of small farms or “gardens,” hunger is still wreaking havoc on the populace. “I have seen children die from malnutrition,” she says.

As a teacher there, Sister Theresa faces nine-hour days of nursing classes as large as 46 pupils. She endures challenges like language barriers (multiple dialects), nonexistent course provisions (no syllabus, learning objectives, handouts or testing and didactic materials) and students who are displaced from home

and are hungry all the time. As the student supervisor for the hospital’s pediatric ward, Sister Theresa experiences the insurmountable tasks of providing health care to patients with preventable diseases like measles, mumps and polio, without the aid of “computers, IV pumps and blood pressure cuffs,” amidst shortages of referrals, medicine, water and electricity. The hospital’s mortality rate is staggering; 19 percent of deaths are HIV-related, 15 percent respiratory, 13 percent cardiovascular, 11 percent unknown, eight percent malaria and six percent general infection.

While the complexity of the social injustices confronting the African people is difficult to comprehend from the pages of a publication, Sister Theresa has found insight in her time there. “I have in conversations with Cameroonians and other missionaries asked, ‘if you could make one change, what would it be?’” Often, she says, the answers are not about “fixing things” but about “creating and sustaining healthy relationships. It would be fairly easy just to provide the medicines,

Continued on page 10



Sister Theresa Keller receives frequent visits from Cameroonian children—her “younger friends.” She takes the time to practice reading and writing with them; on this day she supplied materials to the girls for making Christmas cards.

Photos for this article courtesy of Genny Morrissey, FSPA

Ministry Fund

FSPA ministry grant helps sustain community meal program

“If we each do something,” says Brother Dave Schwab, Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, “our collective energy and effort will gradually make a difference in our world.” Brother Dave’s ministry—St. Benedict the Moor Parish and Meal (St. Ben’s), a Capuchin Franciscan ministry in Milwaukee, Wis.—was established over 100 years ago to affect change for the better in the lives of the growing African American population in the area. Still striving to assist the community’s underserved today, St. Ben’s pools the resources of hundreds of volunteers to carry out its four core ministries—its parish, tending spiritual and educational needs; a clinic, providing quality health care; jail chaplaincy, aiding Milwaukee County inmates; and community meal, serving food and a whole lot more.



Each August Sister Bernadette Prochaska (not pictured), and the Community Building Committee host the Back to School Event which provides school supplies and reading books to almost 200 inner city children. Brother Dave Schwab is shown at far right.

Photo courtesy of Brother Dave Schwab

With the support of 75 local church and civic group sponsors that provide food and financial assistance, St. Ben’s Community Meal began serving supper Sunday through Friday to those in need in 1966. “We serve meals to an average of 335 people per night—102,000 individuals in 2008,” says Brother Dave. “About 70 percent of our population is African American. Two-thirds are homeless, living on the streets or in nearby shelters, and the rest are the ‘working poor,’ those who have jobs and apartments but come to St. Ben’s to meet their need for food,” he says. Brother Dave reports a slight increase in guests over the past four months and forecasts prolonged growth as the country’s recession continues. “Unfortunately,” he says, “our income may also be affected adversely with so many people and businesses facing decline.”

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration have helped to sustain St. Ben’s Community Meal since 2005 with the aid of ministry grants and Sister Bernadette Prochaska. She serves both the Building Community Committee and the program’s guests at mealtime each month. Sister Bernadette says she has found St. Ben’s to be not only “a happy place,” but a space for spiritual growth as well. “There is a familial exchange between those who are serving and those who are eating. Gratitude,” she says, “is certainly present.”

Guests of St. Ben’s most assuredly feel grateful for not only the food



Bernadette Prochaska, FSPA

they are given, but also for the help available to them outside the dining room. The ID Assistance Program “is one of our major efforts,” says Brother Dave, who reports that in 2008, \$18,000 was spent to provide IDs for almost 1,000 people. Essential for entry into homeless shelters and application for medical benefits and jobs, “a Wisconsin state identification card is the passport to many

services for the homeless who are really hurting without it,” he says. St. Ben’s also purchases bus tickets for clients in need of emergency transportation, offers financial and tutoring assistance to those seeking GEDs and assures that many other needs, like emergency clothing and personal hygiene products, are met for their clients each day.

Brother Dave has witnessed the cycle of social injustice that keeps St. Ben’s Community Meal program busy. “A high percentage of our guests are here frequently, and the fact that we have been ‘in business’ for 38 years means that a lot of them are stuck in the system.” He sees many clients become homeless by way of poverty, joblessness, addiction, “and certainly due to mental illness or a history of incarceration.” Brother Dave says that St. Ben’s is currently weighing the idea of providing affordable housing. “There is strong evidence across the country that if we are to really help folks move out of homelessness, providing housing is critical.”

As its causes evolve, St. Ben’s will continue to rely on the help of supporters like Sister Bernadette and the FSPA. “I can see the FSPA community commitment to fighting injustice on many levels—prayerful and financial,” says Brother Dave.

Sister Bernadette’s godson Billy

Continued on page 7

Pax Christi group 'puts passion for justice into action'

It was the peaceful challenge posed by Father John Dear, S.J., who spoke of the nonviolent Jesus at the Franciscan Spirituality Center in the summer of 2008, that led to the inception of the Pax Christi group in La Crosse, Wis. Facilitated by FSC Director Vince Hatt and attended by about 20 Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration members and affiliates and La Crosse area residents, the group meets monthly to understand the history and spirit of the goals of Pax Christi—Peace of Christ—and to give witness to nonviolent activity as a means to a more just society.

Pax Christi USA is the American faction of the international Catholic peace movement that began as a collective prayer for peace and restoration in Germany during the Second World War. Over 60 countries worldwide host groups that act according to four priorities: spirituality of nonviolence and peacemaking; disarmament, demilitarization and reconciliation with justice; economic and interracial justice in the United States; and human rights and global restoration.

“One of the purposes of studying nonviolence is for all of us to consider taking the vow of nonviolence,” says Vince. “It’s easy to commit to in your mind’s eye, but when the rubber hits the road it’s a pledge to live nonviolently in all your relationships. We want to be nonviolent personally—to own it.

If we do, we will impact our own circles of influence.”

Rita Feeney, FSPA, and former justice coordinator for the congregation, is a Pax Christi member who says that for her, the focus on nonviolence is a strong personal goal, one that she has always tried to impart to others around her. She recalls a trip to El Salvador—a tough time to uphold that private pledge. “In the moment of violence it is so hard to hang on to nonviolence. You have to lay claim to your own self-worth,” she says, “yet, how do you accept the oppression that is happening and not get caught up?” The focus, as she sees it, is always political action. “Changing policy—that for me is where it happens. Take a political stance by writing letters, demonstrating, letting your voices be heard.” Pax Christi members can put their “passion for justice into action,” according to Sister Rita, by standing in solidarity with the Hispanic community in La Crosse and the surrounding area.

In December of 2008 Pax Christi discerned the call to voice their support for two projects, the first of which is meeting weekly during Lent for Soup and Nonviolent Study. “Each Wednesday during Lent, we fast throughout the day and then study nonviolence for an hour



From left, Pax Christi facilitator Vince Hatt, Joel House and FSPA affiliate Sharon Chavolla consider how nonviolent actions have shaped historical and personal experiences and what peaceable goals the group will aspire to.

at night,” says Vince.

The second project supports the people in the Postville, Iowa, area. Donations from FSPA’s Lenten appeal will be directed there, and the group hopes to raise additional funds as well. “The raid on immigrants there has left the town suffering humanitarian and economic disaster,” says Vince. “Pax Christi wants to show our support personally and financially.”

If you are interested in supporting or joining Pax Christi, contact Vince Hatt, 608-791-5298 or fscenter@fspa.org. ■

Spirit of Ministry

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the very issues of justice that attend the need for service. Now, later in my life, my involvement with AMOS and FSPA Justice, Peace and Integration with Creation Committee provides me with the opportunity to focus on the justice side of the issues that find people in the social service and criminal justice system. AMOS provides a new way for me to meet and carry out my commitment as an FSPA affiliate. ■

Ministry Grant continued

continued from page 6

Wright gives good example of what such outreach—food, a home, an identity and a family—can do. “When he lost his job, St. Ben’s was paying his rent,” recalls Sister Bernadette. His mental challenges and poor eyesight were contributing issues; St. Ben’s had his eyes tested and went to court with him to secure disability benefits. Billy has since been a supporter of St. Ben’s Community Meal, washing dishes there for the past 30 years. “St. Ben’s is part of his identity,” she says, “and for that he is a happy fellow.” ■

Spokane, Washington

My Perspective: FSPA uses the Web as a 'power tool' for social change

by Kathy Roberg, FSPA

For many years I have had a small paper taped above my computer on the wall which reads the following quote from Robert Muller: "Decide to network. Use every letter you write, every conversation you have, every meeting you attend to express your beliefs and dreams. Affirm to others the vision of the world you want." This positive message runs through my blood as I sit at the computer and begin to network. Charged with energy to make even a slight change was the motivating factor that got me started and continues to generate my system today.

Network, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby in Washington, D.C., was my earliest memory of clicking to take action on the Web. It was a network in which I felt secure, as I knew it had a faith base. From then on my connections have spiraled and webbed out, picking up momentum as power tools for hopeful change. The areas for action touch into almost all facets of life where change needs to happen. Systems such as the economy, health, equality issues, the environment and justice concerns seem to be the key focal points. My life has definitely been touched by this reality—enfleshed in the people I see, verifying the validity of these concerns. War veterans, the mentally handicapped, the unemployed, abused women and children, the poor and marginalized of society, the homeless and the hungry, people who seem to have no hope or perhaps had hope, but it has died out, possibly, as a result of systems that are collapsing. These are a large part of my



Sister Kathy Roberg uses her home computer to network for change.

Photo courtesy of Kathy Roberg, FSPA

world. However, there are many more concerns out there. The peace and justice web seems to have countless tentacles that stretch into cyberspace. My connections with my peace and justice friends have opened up links of which I was unaware, thus broadening the avenues we have to speak out for change. To me, the marvel of this web has a global rippling effect. One click on "take action" sets off energy as I pass this same action on to others, whom I know have let their consciences be pricked by a need for bettering others' lives. This is a piece of action we all have the power and capability to do. What a difference we can make with just the click of a button. Margaret Mead said it best; "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

It takes some dedicated time to discern which issues are of priority. Issues I rank as priority may be totally valued differently in another person's eyes and heart, as we each follow our own conscience. I believe wisdom and discernment fit hand in hand. "Wisdom is a reflection of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the

working of God and an image of God's goodness," (Wisdom 7:26). When so many connected Web sites enter into my computer, I sit, read and ponder as to which actions would reflect an action of God. I try to keep informed and updated so as not to lose sight of God's presence and activity in this world. Staying up-to-date opens my eyes, mind and heart to the heartbeat of others. Then I take action.

During this entire past year of presidential campaigning and Barack Obama's proposed appointments, I have been clicking daily on a presidential prayer link. The spirit of truth moves in modern times through cyberspace.

Our bones may be creaking, our ages may be progressing, but we still have Franciscan hearts that yearn for peace and a better world. Again, I quote Robert Muller, "All that is needed to bring about peace and happiness on the planet is to work systematically and enthusiastically on the removal of all negative factors and on the development of all positive ones. Every single human being can get involved in this task."

No matter what our age or stage of health we may be in, we can make a difference and have an influence for good in our nation and the world. Let's do some clicking! ■

Sister Kathy's favorite sites

TrueMajority.org
MoveOn.org
Fcnl.org, Friends Committee on
National Legislation
Networklobby.org
Ufw.org, Farm Workers Association
Patientsactionnetwork.com
Earthjustice.org
Amnesty.org
Thewsc.org, Washington Catholic
Conference

Spirit of Ministry: Call to 'help provide peace and justice' leads affiliate to interfaith group

Recently organized to rally faith communities to act for social justice in the La Crosse area, AMOS is supported by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. George Meirick, FSPA covenant affiliate, has taken on a leading role as FSPA's AMOS representative and chair of the organization's Restorative Justice Task Force. When asked about the history of AMOS, the goals set for the task force and how guiding the group supports his personal faith life objectives, George amply affirms his call to help provide peace and justice for God's people.

Perspectives: Tell us about AMOS, how it came to be in the La Crosse area, and its partnership with the FSPA Justice, Peace and Integration with Creation Committee.

George: The organization AMOS (Advocating, Mobilizing, Organizing in Solidarity) is an interfaith, congregation-based coalition working for justice in Wisconsin's Seven Rivers Region. It began a little over one year ago, FSPA being one of the initial ten dues-paying congregations. Two more congregations have since joined AMOS, and others are exploring the opportunity.

The mission of AMOS is to create a coalition of faith communities working to deepen relationships within and among congregations and empower people to act together to build a more just and healthy society. AMOS is committed to carrying its concerns for the marginalized to the next step by seeking to address the underlying causes of poverty and inequity, utilizing educational

forums and advocacy to promote its values.

Each AMOS member congregation appoints a representative to serve on the AMOS leadership board and mobilizes a core team to serve as its communication conduit. FSPA has assigned a subcommittee of the JPICC, sisters and affiliates to that role. AMOS provides a vehicle for sisters and affiliates to be involved in the justice issues relevant to the La Crosse area.

Perspectives: AMOS has established task forces to address four core social justice concerns affecting the area—hunger, health care, Hmong issues and restorative justice/treatment instead of prison. How were these concerns identified, and how did you come to chair the Restorative Justice Task Force?

George: During the spring of 2008, each AMOS congregation conducted one-on-one interviews with some of its members to identify justice issues of concern. AMOS then held an issues assembly, during which time the items brought forth were prioritized. For each of the top four issues (hunger, health care, Hmong issues and restorative justice), a task force would be established only if someone stepped forward to lead each group. I watched people volunteer to chair each issue task force except for restorative justice. Unwilling to let the issue drop, I volunteered for the position.

Perspectives: What activities has AMOS engaged in, and what goals have been set for the Restorative Justice Task Force?

George: Each task force has been busy gathering information about how



George Meirick, FSPA
affiliate

these particular issues have impacted the people of the La Crosse area, and have developed initial strategies for implementation. The Health Care Task Force has held a public information forum; the other groups are planning similar activities.

The task force includes members of AMOS congregations as well as professionals working directly within the La Crosse County Criminal Justice System and those interested in offender treatment alternatives. The goal of the task force is to mobilize our congregations to advocate for legislative reform for more effective, personal and cost-effective treatment of persons who have become a part of the criminal justice system in our state, county and local cities.

Over the past several months the task force has focused its efforts in two areas: first, developing and planning for the implementation of Circles of Support. Proven successful in facilitating positive post-release adjustment and recidivism reduction in other communities, Circles of Support calls for small groups to meet regularly with released inmates, providing support for maximum readjustment to work, home and society.

The second focus is planning an informational public forum on the concept of using treatment instead of punishment; less jail time plus supportive services upon release, or alternatives to jail.

Perspectives: How does your involvement in AMOS support your personal purpose as an FSPA affiliate?

George: I spent my entire professional career in social service, working almost 30 years for Catholic Charities. I have learned that while providing direct service, one should never lose sight of

Continued on page 7

FSPA and Affiliate Jubilarians 2009

75 Years

Sisters

Mynette Gross
Margaret Hassel
Romaine Kleinheinz
Immacula Lynch
Frances Claire Mezera
Rose Frances Phalin
Muriel Stork

70 Years

Sisters

LaVonne Abts
Josara Bielefeld
Jamesetta Dowd
Marie Leon LaCroix
Alice McMullin

60 Years

Sisters

Clarone Brill
Edna Bube
Rita Mae Fischer
Patricia Keating

Julia Anne Maus
Laura Schreck
Donna Schwager
Dorothy Wenzel

50 Years

Sisters

Marian Bauer
Marlene Bauer
Celesta Day
Janet Fischer
Mary Kathryn Fogarty
Delmarie Gibney
Jolyce Greteman

Joan Hageman
Mary Eve Hytry
Maris Kerwin
Joyce Miller
Fran Morrissey
Karen Neuser

25 Years

Sister Donna Snyder

Affiliates

Rose Robacker
Monica Schary

Peace conference

continued from page 3

how women approach peace-building.

According to www.1000peacewomen.org, the exhibition is a tribute to the 1,000 women who were nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize by PWAG. The exhibition consists of 1,000 postcards in 10 different colors according to thematic areas of work: reconciliation and reconstruction; women's rights—human rights on the way to gender democracy; the struggle for survival: minorities and indigenous peoples; economic rights and livelihood; justice and peace; stopping the hidden war against women: women, health and peace; a thousand ways to educate for a global culture of peace; women's efforts for environmental justice and ecological security; a cultural conception of peace, politics and governance.

One of the women nominated for the Peace Prize was Hedwig Vinyou, Tertiary Sister of St. Francis, Cameroon, West Africa. "Her work and determination in human rights and prisons is yielding positive impact both at policy and practice level," according to biographical information at www.1000peacewomen.org. "She is now busy building networks with other sisters in African countries to bring humanity and justice to the most marginalized communities. Her courage and determination have served as an inspiration to religious and non-religious people."

The Peace Women exhibition and displays created by each of the four congregations will be displayed throughout Viterbo University's campus.

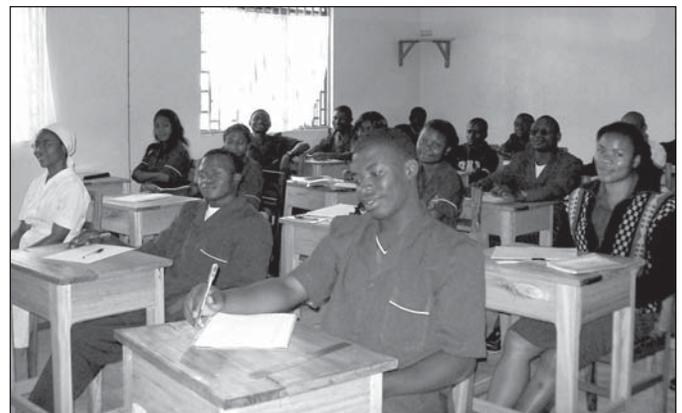
For an online brochure and registration information, visit www.franciscancommonventure.org or call 608-791-5287 or rhophan@fspa.org to request a brochure be mailed to you. Registration is open to the public through July 15, 2009. ■

Cameroon

continued from page 5

the equipment and the funding for many of the problems faced by the Cameroonians." In some cases, she admits, that is the only thing to do. "But if we cannot develop and sustain healthy relationships with each other and with the people of Cameroon, then we are part of the problem."

Sister Theresa aims to, in her limited time in Africa, be part of the solution. "As a community of religious women we practice an advanced level of social responsibility. I believe that as we continue to work toward social justice in Cameroon, we work for the human rights of all peoples. If all the nurses practicing in Cameroon would form a 'wave of support' for the idea that health is a human right, I think that might just cause a nonviolent revolution in this country." ■



A class of second-year students receives intensive care nursing instruction from Sister Theresa Keller in their Cameroonian classroom.

8th Day Center for Justice acts as a prophetic voice for FSPA

Impelled by the belief that all creation is sacred and interrelated, the 8th Day Center for Justice is a coalition of Catholic, religious congregations committed to acting as a critical alternative voice to oppressive systems. The 8th Day Center actively works to change those systems. The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration partnered with the 8th Day Center in 1999 and FSPA Justice, Peace and Integration with Creation coordinator, Liz Deligio, works out of the center's main office in Chicago, Ill. FSPA is one of 45 religious congregations and two parishes sponsoring the 8th Day Center.

"This unique relationship allows FSPA to have a bridge to work in solidarity for systemic change with other congregations," explains Linda Mershon, FSPA mission councilor and liaison to JPICC. "Seventeen staff members address a broad range of justice issues. Liz's presence and leadership within this consensus model allows FSPA to have an equally broad range of influence, nationally and internationally. Our collaboration with AMOS, a La Crosse area interfaith coalition, spreads our justice outreach into the local community."

According to its Web site, www.8thdaycenter.org, the center was founded in 1974 as a joint effort by six Roman Catholic religious congregations to actualize the Scriptural mandate to work for justice. The name 8th Day was chosen to acknowledge that creation is still in progress.

"The 8th Day Center's vision calls the staff to envision a world of right relationships in which all creation is

seen as sacred and interconnected," explains Liz. "In such a world all people are equal and free from oppression, have a right to a just distribution of resources, and to live in harmony with the cosmos." According to Liz, the center's annual program, the Urban Plunge, invites participants to embark on an immersion experience. Participants visit organizations that deal with issues such as affordable and public housing, the prison system, health care, police brutality, predatory lending, racial profiling and homelessness. "It's our way of inviting participants to see firsthand that we have a lot of work to do ensuring a just distribution of resources."

Recognizing the current failures of the immigration system in the United States, the 8th Day Center for Justice recently declared itself a New Sanctuary Organization. The New Sanctuary Movement is a diverse coalition of families and faith communities from various faith traditions. When a faith community signs the Sanctuary Pledge, its members commit themselves to work towards an immigration system that respects human dignity and family unity. "We're calling for the promotion of just economic policies, the decriminalization of migrants and the removal of punitive legislation and procedures," says Liz. The center created an educational tool it posts on its Web site. The educational tool highlights the economic roots of migration, human migration as a global phenomenon, detention abuses and due process violations, and the pathway



8th Day Center for Justice Good Friday March participants present the 10th station called Hope Rising. The annual Good Friday march is a walk for justice utilizing the traditional Stations of the Cross.

Photo courtesy of Liz Deligio

to citizenship and economic barriers. According to the center's tool, "In the United States the debate on immigration policies has been significantly focused on one ethnic group. This limited scope continues to ignore the global perspective necessary to address the multitude of issues surrounding human migration and immigration policies."

There are several ways to get to know the 8th Day Center for Justice and how it is an integral part of advancing the FSPA Direction Statement to "intensify our efforts to effect just treatment of all, especially women, in church and society." For starters, subscribe to the FSPA for Justice and Peace blog at www.fspa.org. For information on specific projects and actions, listen to 8th Day radio program Web casts and subscribe to e-bulletins at www.8thdaycenter.org. ■

In Memoriam

Rejoice, you who are alive in Christ

Rose (Rosannita) Menke, FSPA
Sept. 24, 1929–Nov. 9, 2008

Born in West Point, Iowa, Sister Rose ministered for 48 years in schools in Iowa and Wisconsin, including six years in Carroll and 29 years in West Point, Iowa. She also cared for her mother during part of that time. In 2000 Sister Rose retired at West Point and in 2007 moved to St. Rose Convent in La Crosse.

She had been residing at Villa St. Joseph since September.



Grace (Justille) McDonald, FSPA
Nov. 26, 1917–Nov. 16, 2008

Sister Grace was born in Spokane, Wash.

She began her ministry as an elementary and secondary teacher in schools in Iowa and Wisconsin and then taught at Viterbo College. Sister Grace was named president of Viterbo in 1960 and served in this capacity until her election as FSPA president in 1970. After eight years she moved to Spokane where she was provincial of the FSPA Western Province from 1978-1982. Sister Grace served as archivist for the Western Province, FSPA congregational secretary and FSPA archivist. From 1992 until the time of her death, she was the FSPA historian.

Sister Grace retired at St. Rose Convent in 2004 and to the Villa in 2008.



Mary Aquin Geisler, FSPA
July 20, 1913–Dec. 1, 2008

Sister Mary Aquin was born in Belleville, Wis., and was baptized Alvina Marie.

After teaching elementary school for two years, Sister Mary Aquin served as a surgical nurse at St. Francis Hospital, La Crosse, and then as assistant director of nursing education at St. Francis School of Nursing for 10 years. From 1964-1989 Sister Mary Aquin ministered at St. Mary's Hospital, Sparta, as a nurse and then as administrator. Before retiring at St. Rose Convent in 1993, she was a part-time nurse in the health center there.

Sister Mary Aquin moved to Villa St. Joseph in 1995.

Marie (Anastasia) Thomes, FSPA
May 26, 1916–Dec. 29, 2008

Sister Marie was born on a farm near St. Martin, Minn.

She ministered as a homemaker at West Point, Carroll and Bellevue in Iowa, Arco Hospital, Idaho, and Holy Trinity Parish and St. Joseph Nursing Home in La Crosse. Sister Marie worked in the kitchen at St. Rose Convent for 16 years, serving as food service manager for nine years. She was dietary purchasing agent at St. Francis Hospital, La Crosse, from 1970-1988. Sister Marie served in the sewing room and as assistant sacristan at St. Rose Convent for eight years before formally retiring in 1997.

She made the Villa her home in 2008.



Mary Luca Wertalka, FSPA
Jan. 28, 1916–Feb. 4, 2009

Sister Mary Luca was born in Chicago, Ill., and given the name Veronica.

Sister Mary Luca chose homemaking as her ministry and served in convent homes for 34 years in Iowa and Wisconsin, including 17 years at Villa St. Joseph. From 1978-1992 Sister Mary Luca provided home care at Bethany-on-Cass in La Crosse.

She retired at St. Rose Convent in 1992 and made the Villa her home in 2007.

Therese Marie Pedretti, FSPA
Nov. 2, 1929–Feb. 7, 2009

Sister Therese Marie was born on a farm near Genoa, Wis., and named Marie Helen.

Following five years of teaching in elementary schools, Sister Therese Marie served for 17 years as a medical lab technician in hospitals in Sparta and La Crosse, Wis.; Idaho Falls, Idaho; Carroll, Iowa; and Vietnam. From 1973 to 1978 she served her FSPA community as a vocation director for the healthcare province and on the formation team. Next she ministered at Visitation Parish in St. Louis. In 1981 she became chaplain at Nicollet Nursing Home in Minneapolis and then served as chaplain at St. Joseph's Community Health Services, Hillsboro, Wis. She was a member of the Core Group of Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center in Hiawatha, Iowa.

Sister Therese Marie retired in 2003.



She continued to volunteer and give spiritual direction until the time of her death.

Geneva Kneer, FSPA
Sept. 26, 1913–Feb. 13, 2009

Sister Geneva was born in Wibaux, Mont., and was baptized with the name Gertrude.



Entering the teaching profession, Sister Geneva served for 13 years in elementary education and 44 years on the secondary level, 30 of which were at Aquinas High School in La Crosse. Her assignments took her to Iowa, Washington and Wisconsin. Sister Geneva retired at St. Rose Convent in 1991.

On Feb. 9, 2009, Sister Geneva became a resident of the Villa.

Marian (Valeria) Grossbier, FSPA
May 31, 1925–March 24, 2009

Sister Marian was born in Auburndale, Wis. She was given the name Mary Helen at her baptism.



Sister Marian served her sisters as a homemaker in convent homes for five years before earning a degree in education. She ministered as a teacher in elementary schools in Wisconsin for 26 years including 15 years in Wisconsin Rapids. Sister Marian completed her active ministry as a housekeeper until her retirement to the Villa in 2003.

Kathleen Johnson, FSPA
Oct. 16, 1949–March 25, 2009

Sister Kathleen was born on a farm

near West Point, Neb.

She was an elementary teacher for 16 years and principal for three years in schools in Arizona, California, Michigan and Wisconsin. From 1972-1989 she taught at Silver Lake College in Manitowoc, Wis., then served as associate professor of elementary and early childhood education from 1989-1994. Sister Kathleen was director of religious education and principal at St. Theodora Parish, Albert Lea, Minn.; educational consultant in Roseville, Minn.; and assistant professor at Viterbo University. She also worked at Bemidji State University in Minnesota. She served as computer software technician for the FSPA community until retiring in 2008.



Affiliate Deaths

Frances Wolowick
Sept. 12, 1912–Sept. 16, 2008

Frances was born on a farm near Berlin, Wis.

She is survived by two daughters, three grandchildren and four great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband and son.

Frances and her husband William had cheese factories in the Wisconsin communities of Beaver Dam, Halder, Cadott and Thorp for over 25 years. She also worked at Our Lady of Victory Hospital in Stanley and at the Northern Colony. She taught CCD and was a eucharistic minister and lector at Notre Dame Church. Frances cherished ministry, community, prayer and social justice.



Agnes Flottmeier
Dec. 16, 1906–Dec. 7, 2008

A La Crosse native, Agnes married John Flottmeier. She is survived by four children, 13 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and 17 great-great-grandchildren. Agnes was preceded in death by her husband, a son, a grandson and a great-grandson.



Agnes was an example of faith, fidelity, love, commitment and challenge. She had a heart for prayer and enjoyed a close spiritual connection with Mother Mary. It became her mission to pray for the ministries of the FSPA and affiliates.

Helen Rupiper
Dec. 14, 1918–Dec. 24, 2008

Helen was born in Roselle, Iowa. She and her husband Victor raised nine children on a farm near Templeton, Iowa. Victor and two of her young adult children preceded her



in death. Helen moved to Carroll, Iowa, in 1986, then to Council Bluffs in 2006.

Helen volunteered at the Hope Village bargain store, the Carroll hospital and nursing home. She had a sensitive heart for the lonely and handicapped. She was known for her compassionate presence and patient listening skills.

Erma Schmidt
Sept. 8, 1916–Feb. 12, 2009

Erma was raised on a family farm in Wisconsin. Her husband Carl preceded her in death. Erma was a mother of five

Continued on page 15

Addenda

Franciscan Common Venture awarded Conrad Hilton Foundation grant

The Conrad Hilton Fund for Sisters and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has allocated \$125,000 to the Franciscan Common Venture for providing post-secondary education to English-speaking women religious in Cameroon, West Africa.

Shisong, Cameroon, is located immediately north of the equator on the Atlantic coast of West Africa. The majority of its people are very poor. Their homes are made of mud and local woods with metal roofing and no toilets. Many people move from place to place on foot, although some taxi and bus transportation is available in the larger cities. Public schools offer primary and secondary education in the most minimal conditions. Projected adult literacy rate for the year 2000 was at approximately 25 percent. There are six universities with various faculties.

“Through this project, the sisters will be educated for leadership roles in the primary and secondary schools of Cameroon and as health care professionals for their hospitals and outpost clinics,” says Euphrasia Yuh, Tertiary Sisters of St Francis and the sister in charge of this project. “The university education will provide the necessary preparation to meet the government credentialing requirements in these public services.” Specifically, the sisters will earn university degrees so that they can be credentialed as teachers in the schools and as health care professionals in the hospitals and clinics which they staff.

Since October 2008, the Conrad Hilton Foundation grants have allowed 17 sisters to begin school in African universities. Nine beneficiaries are enrolled

in health care studies: nursing, laboratory technology, anesthesia and pharmacy. The rest are enrolled in education, law, business management and accounting.

About the Hilton Foundation

Based in Los Angeles, the Hilton Foundation was created in 1944 by the late hotel entrepreneur and business leader, Conrad N. Hilton, who left his fortune to the foundation when he died in 1979 with instructions to help the most disadvantaged and vulnerable throughout the world without regard to religion, ethnicity or geography.

Community celebrates 125 years of FSPA presence

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration came to Ashland, Wis., in 1884 to accept the administration and teaching positions at St. Agnes grade school, now Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School. On Feb. 1, 2009, the parish honored the sisters’ 125 years of service by naming Margaret Ann Mason, FSPA, and the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration 2009 Distinguished Advocates.

Sister Margaret Ann began her ministry in Ashland, Wis., in 1961. Through the years, she taught junior high at

St. Mary’s and St. Agnes, served as principal and taught junior high at Holy Family and taught 3rd through 5th grades at St. Agnes-Our Lady of the Lake. In 1998, Sister Margaret Ann retired from teaching. Today she continues to be involved in Our Lady of the Lake Parish and school through volunteer work.

In the 125 years since FSPA began their involvement in the Ashland Catholic community, 681 sisters have offered their service. “Amazement was the word used to describe Jesus and his teaching ministry in our Gospel today,” said Father Henry Willenborg in his homily during the Sunday Liturgy concluding Catholic Schools Week. “. . . amazement fills my heart along with other words like gratitude and awe and humility and appreciation. And I would suspect that similar words fill your hearts as you think of how we can begin to speak of the 125 years of seamless service to this community that has been given to us by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.”

Accepting the recognition were FSPA who ministered in Ashland: Sisters Bernyne Stark, Geralyn Misura, Helen Castner, Rose Heil and Margaret Ann Mason, along with Sister Karen Neuser, FSPA mission councilor.



From left, Sisters Bernyne Stark, Roselyn Heil, Helen Castner, Karen Neuser, Rev. Henry Willenborg, Sisters Geralyn Misura and Margaret Ann Mason holding the award.

Heartland Hospice awards Sister Ruth Berra

“Initiative is the light that leads and the strength that lifts people to excellence.” Those words are imprinted on the award presented to Ruth Berra, FSPA, by Heartland Hospice.

Rochelle Salinas, Heartland Hospice administrator, presented the award to Sister Ruth on Jan. 26, 2009. “I’m pleased to present this year’s Region 7, Chaplain Star Performer award to Sister Ruth Berra,” began Rochelle. “She has been with

Heartland Hospice for two and a half years and has quietly impacted our agency and patients ever since. She has a gracious nature that is soothing to families, patients, referral sources and staff.”



Ruth Berra, FSPA

Heartland Hospice provides a compassionate approach to caring for those who are faced with a life-limiting illness. Its promise is to provide care that is comforting and compassionate. According to Rochelle, Sister Ruth is a provider of this compassionate care. “Sister Ruth’s ability to listen without interruption displays her kind heart and awareness of others. On many occasions, she is specifically mentioned in our thank you cards, memorial donations and satisfaction surveys. Further, she is always upbeat and positive even during times of change and stress.”

Sister Ruth serves Heartland Hospice in the Appleton, Wis., area.

Mary Mother of the Church honors FSPA

During its parish patronal feast day celebration held Nov. 16, 2008, Mary Mother of the Church, La Crosse, Wis., honored Kathy Stuttgen, FSPA, as Woman of the Year. Parishioners were asked to nominate individuals who go “above and beyond” in service to others in the parish. Sister Kathy was nominated for her ministry to the elderly and widows/widowers group.

According to Therese van Oss, director of religious education and funeral coordinator at Mary Mother of the Church, “Sister Kathy is quick and resourceful in the assistance she offers the elder parishioners. Just mentioning Sister Kathy’s name brings a smile to their faces, and always words of gratitude.” Therese adds that



Kathy Stuttgen, FSPA

Photo by Rochelle Potaracke, FSPA

Sister Kathy’s help in preparing Advance Directives, activities planning and tending to the parish shut-ins are just a few examples of what Sister Kathy does for the parish.

Citing “a few patterns where Sister Kathy brings the light of Christ and gives beyond and beyond,” Therese adds that Sister Kathy helps the elderly prepare to move out of their homes; visits those

bound to their homes and determines need for food and supplies; arranges transportation for those who need it; and connects generations by collaborating with the parish religious education classes to create gifts, cards and cookies, made by the children to give to the elderly. “Sister Kathy’s lighthearted and joyful presence is loved by all,” says Therese. ■

Obituaries

continued from page 13

with 11 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Erma volunteered for many years in the pastoral care department at St. Joseph Nursing Home in Arcadia, Wis. Centered in the Eucharist and in Scripture, Erma was a strong woman with a most generous heart. She had a special compassion for the elderly and sick.

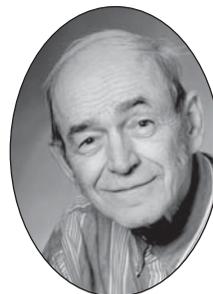


Michael Bonacci

Dec. 31, 1926–Feb. 25, 2009

Mike, a Wisconsin native, and his wife Arlene lived in Pittsville, Wis., where they raised two children. In addition, Mike and Arlene opened their home to 17 foster children and three foreign exchange students.

Working in the field of education, Mike was a teacher, a principal and finally a guidance counselor. Mike was a man of prayer. He treasured his faith, his religion and his affiliation with FSPA.



Anne Martin

Nov. 11, 1947–March 15, 2009

Anne, an affiliate in process, was born Maureen McNerny in Jamaica, N.Y. She is survived by her brother.

Anne had been a social worker for many years prior to moving to Coralville, Iowa. She volunteered for many community organizations both in Cedar Rapids and Coralville. Anne first got to know FSPA at Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center in Hiawatha, Iowa, where she became a regular volunteer. ■

FSPA Web site

Read the complete obituaries at
www.fspa.org/news/obituaries.html

**FSPA
Congregational
Direction Statement
(2005–2009)**

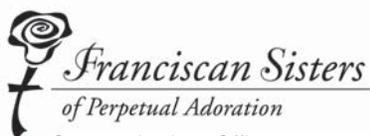
As Franciscans rooted in Eucharist and in communion with all of God's creation, we commit ourselves to:

Nurture cosmic awareness, develop right relationships with all creation, and promote sustainability of Mother Earth.

Deepen our understanding of the Franciscan heritage, and live authentically as Franciscans in the 21st century.

Intensify our efforts to effect just treatment of all, especially women, in Church and society.

Invite and support new members, affiliates, and partners to join us on our Franciscan journey.



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New book honors Sister Thea Bowman

Thea Bowman: *In My Own Words*, compiled and edited by Maurice J. Nutt, C.Ss.R., is a welcome addition to the robust collection of books written about Thea Bowman, FSPA, since her death in 1990 of cancer. Father Nutt invites readers to "explore the thoughts, memories and reflections of Sister Thea." Drawing on such sources as her preaching, national addresses, professional writings, personal correspondence and a CBS *60 Minutes* interview, he has compiled her insightful reflections into themes that include *The Wisdom of the 'Old Folks,' The Giftedness of Children, On Being Black and Catholic, Hope*, and *The Power of Prayer*.

In his introduction, Father Nutt says,

"Sister Thea Bowman was many things to many people: one of the 'old folks'; a devoted Franciscan religious woman; an advocate for all cultures, while maintaining love for 'her own black self'; a proud maiden of Mississippi; a persuasive preacher; a tenacious teacher; a soul-stirring singer; a bold 'true truth' teller; an instrument of peace, love and joy; a lover of the church; a faithful friend and spiritual mother to many."

In Sister Thea's words, and a sampler from the book, "I think the difference between me and some other people is that I am content to do my little bit. Sometimes people think they have to do big things in order to make change. If each one of us would light the candle, we've got a tremendous light."

Thea Bowman: In My Own Words is available for purchase in the online gift shop at www.fspa.org. ■

