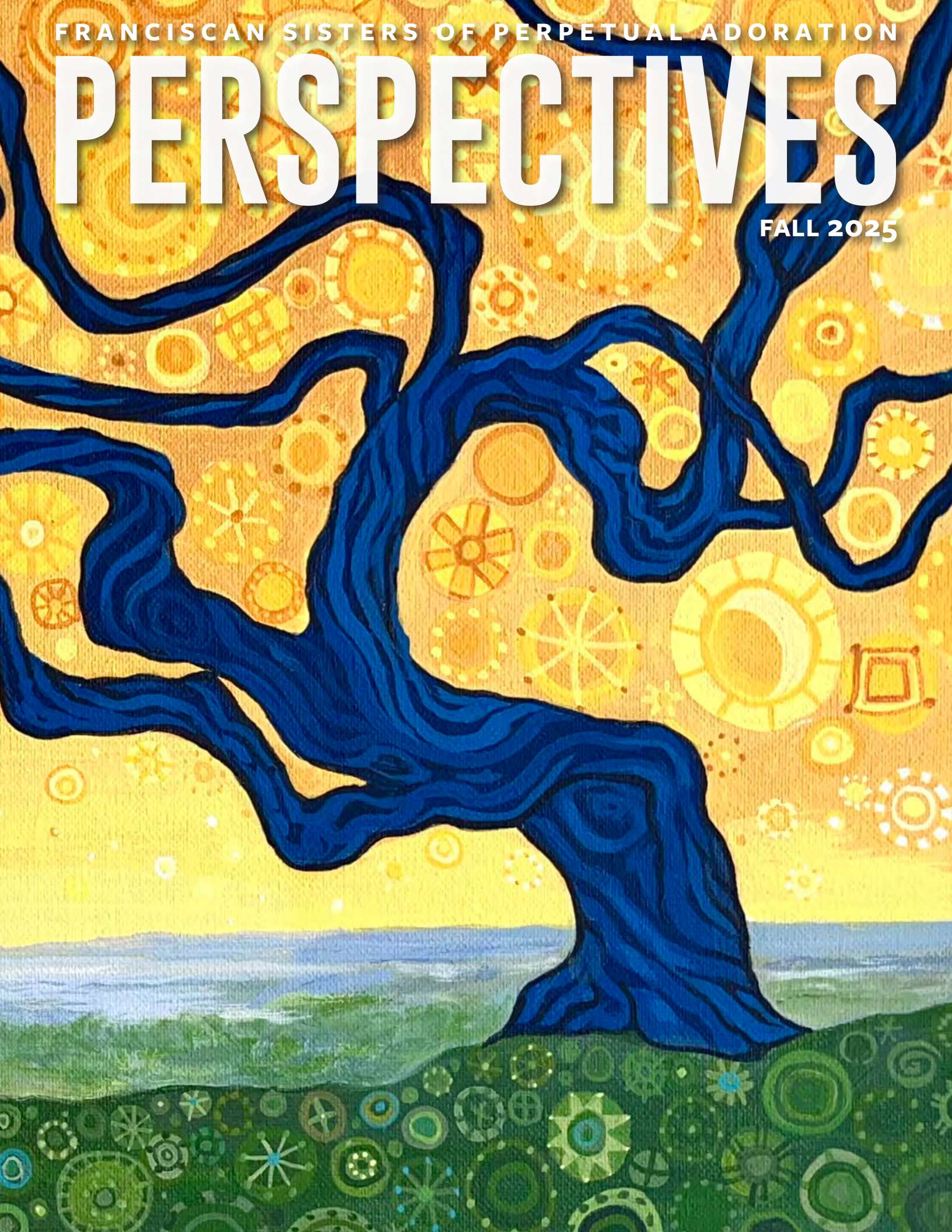


FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION

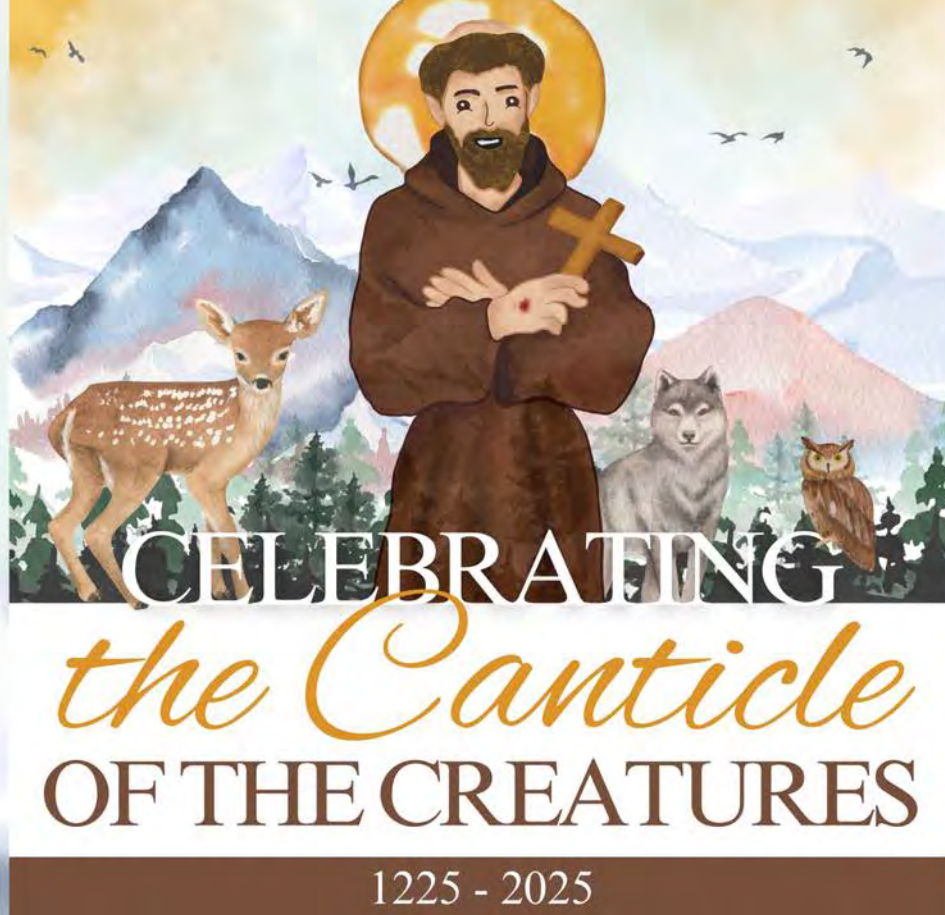
PERSPECTIVES

FALL 2025





In celebration of the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' Cantic of the Creatures, the Franciscan Spirituality Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin, invited all to contribute their artistic talent to this community art project: a Cantic-themed tablecloth.



Franciscan Sisters
of Perpetual Adoration
Modern Lives. Sacred Traditions.

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Perspectives is published by:

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

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On the cover: Rooted and Reaching, acrylic on
stretched canvas, by Kate Bausch, FSPA affiliate

Volume 40 | Number two

For 800 years, we have praised Sir Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brothers Wind and Air, Sister Water, Brother Fire, Sister Mother Earth and Sister Death in words of adoration written by St. Francis of Assisi: The Cantic of the Creatures.

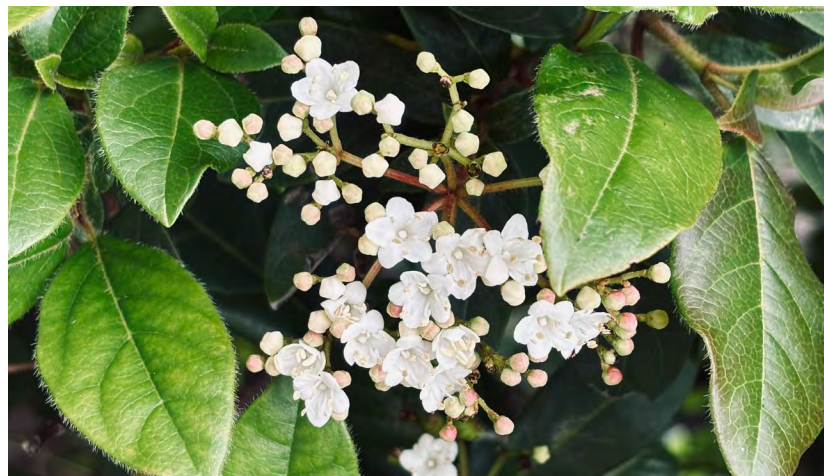
This year we join the world in honoring this prayer, penned with quill and ink in 1225, as St. Francis experienced personal suffering and illness. In the Cantic, he feels beyond infirmity to his deep connection to God through the natural world. His words radiate humility, gratitude and interconnectedness — values that remain at the heart of Franciscan spirituality.

Now, more than ever before, we are called to protect our common home and live in solidarity with these divine elements and all of creation. The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration invite you to celebrate our commitment to the Cosmos in this special issue of Perspectives magazine, a bookazine featuring the glory of the Cantic of the Creatures with intimate reflections and stunning imagery. We hope you enjoy this keepsake, one of radiant joy, for all people in the heavens and on this Earth — our sacred and common home.

Join us in celebrating The Cantic of the Creatures by visiting fspa.org/centenary where you will find resources, reflections and upcoming events.

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Photos by Michael Krueger, FSPA Director of Affiliation

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THE CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES

By St. Francis of Assisi

Most High, all-powerful, all-good Lord,
All praise is Yours, all glory, all honour and all blessings.
To you alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your Name.

Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who is the day through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour,
Of You Most High, he bears the likeness.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
In the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all weather's moods,
by which You cherish all that You have made.

Praised be You my Lord through Sister Water,
So useful, humble, precious and pure.

Praised be You my Lord through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You my Lord through our Sister, Mother Earth
who sustains and governs us,
producing varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.
Praise be You my Lord through those who grant pardon
for love of You and bear sickness and trial.
Blessed are those who endure in peace,
By You Most High, they will be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord through Sister Death,
from whom no-one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Blessed are they She finds doing Your Will.
No second death can do them harm.
Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks,
And serve Him with great humility.

St. Francis and bird, oil, by
Sister Kiliana Burghauser (1891-1984)



GRASPING THE ‘CREATIVE GENIUS OF GOD’



**By Meg Earsley,
Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration**

Saint Francis got it. As I reflect on the wonders of creation, it is clear to me that Francis and I have similar perspectives. We see creation and are enamored with the incredible work of God. The Canticum of the Creatures was written in deep appreciation of all creatures. Each word praises God in their very being.

“Praised be to You my Lord
with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun ...”

I sit quietly with God, watching the sunset on the overlook on FSPA Land – St. Joseph Ridge. I was invited to this time with God, called while on retreat to stay in this space. I find myself wondering what I could be accomplishing, but God gently reminds me that this is what is important.

And so I wait and immerse myself, remembering my createdness. Creatures I have been blessed to witness — living their praise — emerge and visit me in my memories.

It is summer, and a green darner dragonfly perches on a plant stem in a field, waiting for her dinner of a mosquito, wasp or perhaps a butterfly. I would never have noticed her if I hadn’t seen her flying a moment ago. In a month or less, she will begin her migration to Texas or Mexico where she will die after laying eggs. Her children will spend their lives where their mother passed, but their children will return north on their own migratory path to arrive near the birthplace of their grandmother.

In the same native prairie, a monarch dines on delicious purple coneflower nectar. Vivid colors assail my vision as I watch the show from the forest’s edge. He depends on the nectar for his migration. The coneflower is often the most noticeable in the natural prairies of the Midwest, feeding monarch butterflies, sphinx moths, honeybees, bumblebees and other pollinators. It feasts as well,

Photos by
Sister Meg Earsley

stretching its strong, green stem to reach the rays of the sun, part of the miracle that is photosynthesis.

Summer has left and winter is beginning to say goodbye as well. A red squirrel soaks in the early spring sun, chattering to anyone who will listen. She is warning everything living of a suspicious invader — me! Slightly offended by her cranky behavior, I respond. I tell her I am a friend, not a foe. My words are ignored, and her territorial berating continues. I am forced to admit defeat and move on. As I leave, she locates a stash of pine tree seeds she collected last fall when there were more than she could gather. She enjoys what she has harvested from hundreds of pinecones. All her hard work has paid off. She returns a gift, too. She will not consume all the pine seeds she has accumulated. As the sun becomes warmer and the leaves begin to show in the forest, baby pine trees will sprout where she has planted them.

Five thousand miles away, it is autumn. A blue and yellow macaw perches in a Bolivian guava tree, dining on its fruit. From tail to beak, he is an incredibly large bird, almost as tall as me. Like the red squirrel in the forests of Wisconsin, through the elimination of undigested seeds, the macaw sows as well. It seems slightly beneath this fetching bird and undignified for the seed, but the end to the unsavory sowing is wide disbursement and a bit of fertilization. As the macaw flies away, his brilliant yellow feathers catch the sunset. I am fortunate to witness his majesty.

The circles of interspecies dependencies widen in my mind's eye to ecosystems moving into ecotones, transforming into the next ecosystem, and the next ecosystem, and the next. The dragonfly needs green plants for camouflage and water with abundant life to feed her young. The coneflower needs direct sunlight and small birds to eat and distribute its seeds. The red squirrel needs tall grass to build multiple nests in its territory and fresh water for drinking. The blue

and yellow macaw needs palm tree hollows for nesting and pollinators to fertilize the fruit tree's flowers.

I am aware that my human mind can barely comprehend the infinite, complex relationships from the microscopic to the cosmic. This is both humbling and wonderful! My curiosity is transformed into wonder as I immerse myself in this contemplation of vastness. I begin to grasp, in the smallest way, the creative genius of God. I see these creatures praising God in their participation in the spiraling, tangled, connected, expanding and contracting, intimate and heartbreaking, beautiful community that is our world.

"How is this possible?" I ask God in total sincerity. I wait for the answer, and I rest in the mystery. The feather-light response I receive ... is overwhelming love. ■



Photos by
Sister Meg Earsley



CANTICLE OF THE ECLIPSE

By Marci Madary, FSPA affiliate

Brother Sun and Sister Moon hold
court over different skies —
the Sun rules the day;
the Moon governs the night —
until they don't.

The frantic pilgrimage to follow
Sister Moon chasing Brother Sun
required calculated measurement of location
and exact precision of time.

Gazing at the cloudless sky,
until finally ...
considering unexplainable magnificence,
contemplating the cool stillness of totality —

the canticles of radiant Sun
and precious Moon
sang in mystical unison:
feminine and masculine in perfect oneness.

Connected at last, Brother Sun wrapped
his glow around Sister Moon
and kissed her on the top of her head,
illuminating love, like a diamond ring.

All of creation praised the Most High
as they listened
to the song of the universe
in that sacred silence.



Photo by
Ed Siderewicz

ASSISI EXPERIENCE: THE TANGIBLE ESSENCE OF THE CANTICLE

Just as we entered into the celebration of the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' Canticum of the Creatures this January, a group of our sisters, affiliates, partners in mission and guests witnessed the creation — walked the holy ground, gazed upon the horizon, breathed fragrant blooms, sat under lush foliage and enjoyed local wildlife — that inspired his praise and celebration. Some of these Franciscan pilgrims are sharing moments and images of their encounters in Assisi, Italy, that inspired their own Canticum experiences.

Michael Krueger, FSPA Director of Affiliation

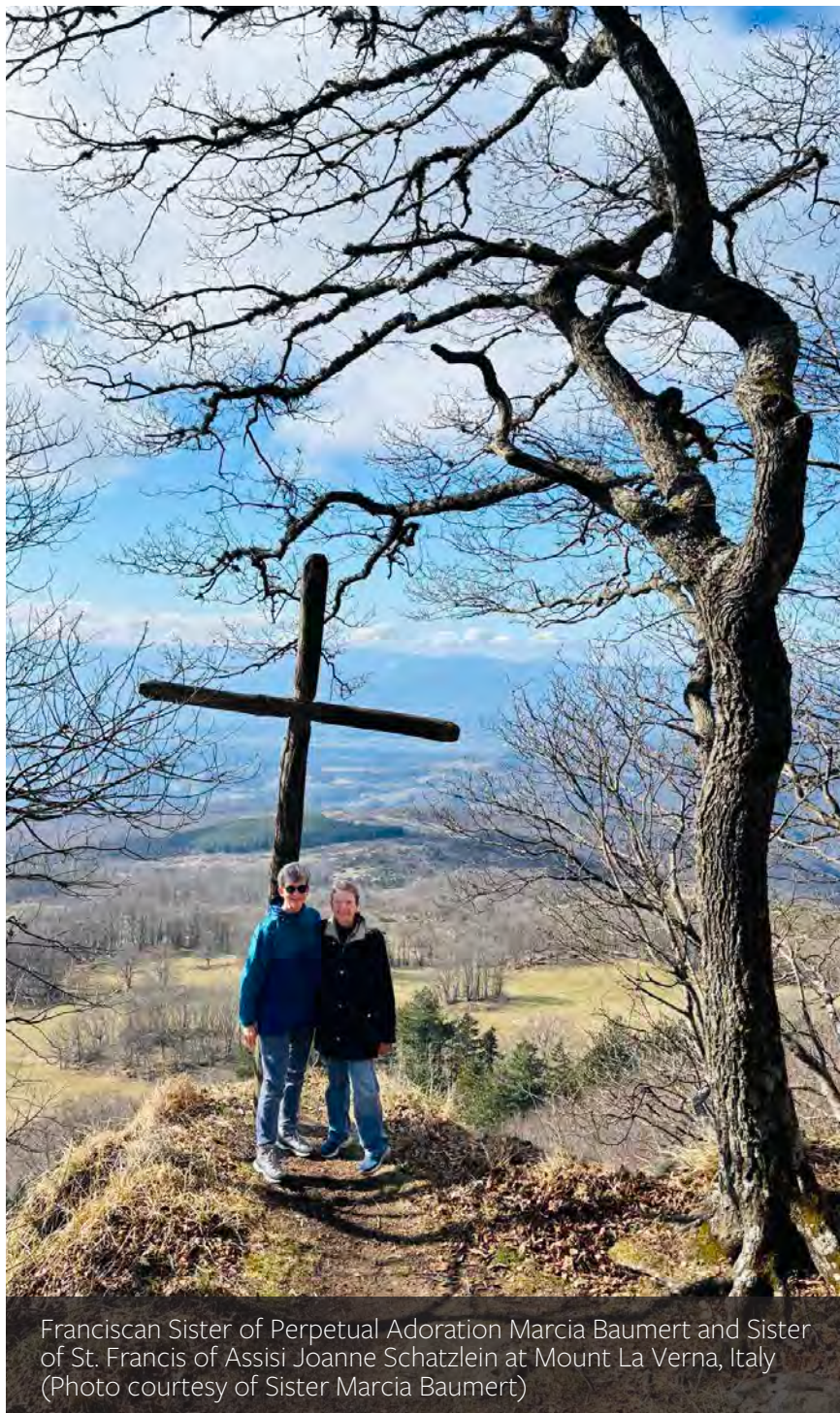
We arrived at San Damiano early in the morning on the third day of our pilgrimage. The monastery, which overlooks the Assisi countryside, is where Saint Francis received his vision to rebuild the church. To arrive at the monastery, we walked along a stone pathway. On one side, Italian cypress trees rose into the overcast sky like narrow sentinels. On the other side, olive trees dotted the landscape. Mist gently rose from the valley below, creating a muted palette of greens and browns. Here, we received our first glimpse of St. Francis. He sat on the edge of a hillside gazing into the distance — perhaps contemplating that initial invitation to rebuild the Church. Or maybe we encountered him toward the end of his life, sitting on this very same hillside, his vision failing and his body painful. For us pilgrims, this was our introduction to Francis, our introduction to “Brother Sun” — the name of this sculpture.

Marcia Baumert, Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration

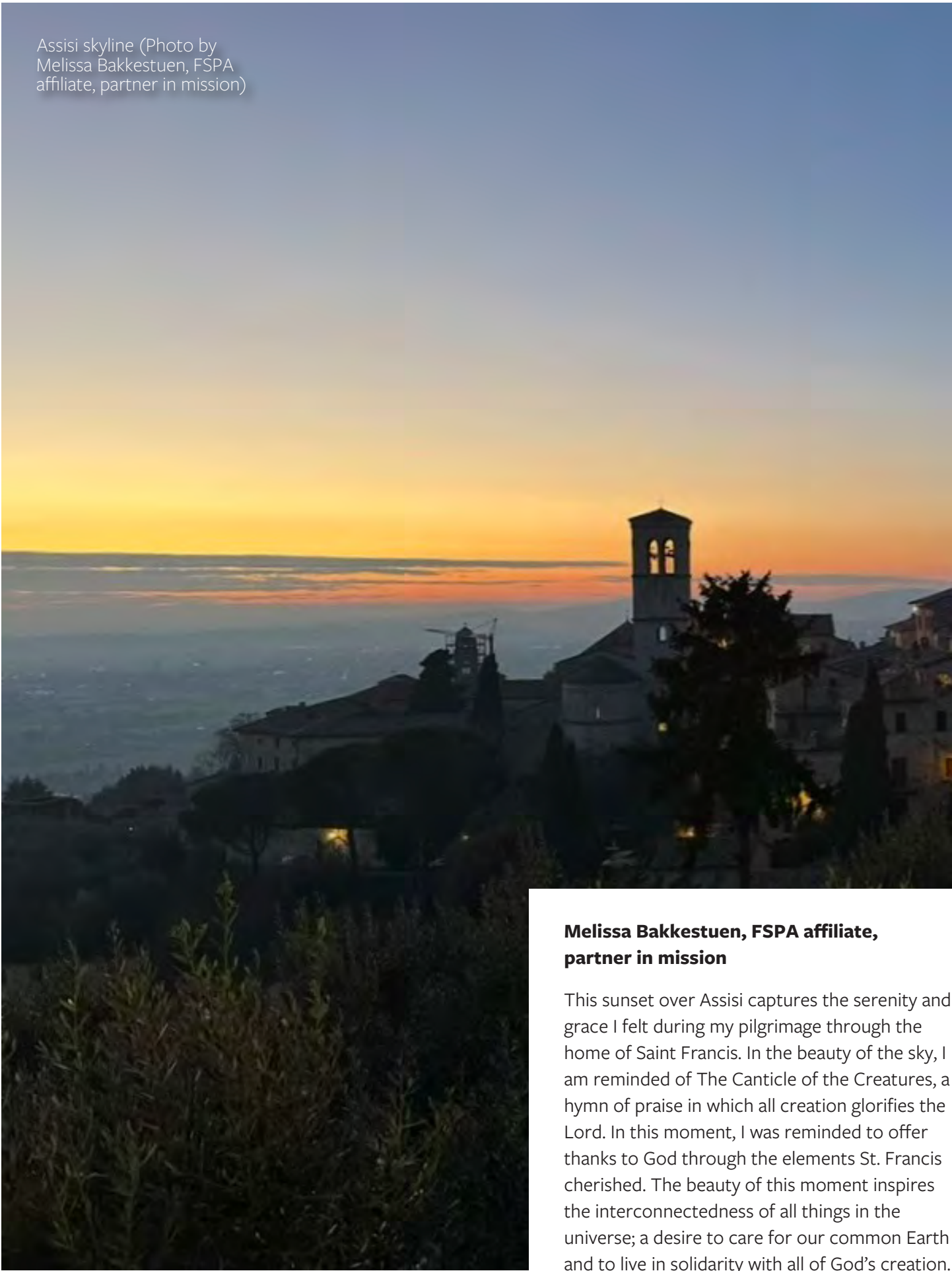
A Franciscan pilgrimage group and I stood on the steps of the Basilica of San Rufino in Assisi, Italy, over 23 years ago. Listening to our leader, we learned of Francis’ revolutionary preaching of God’s presence in all creation. That awareness shattered cultural and religious beliefs for all time.

Again, in 2025, I journeyed with other Franciscan pilgrims to the ancient city of Assisi. We experienced Francis and Clare’s spiritual presence and inspiration during the 800th anniversary of Francis’ composition of the Canticle of the Creatures. Banners of celebration decorated the streets, whispering Francis’ mystical prayer. The stones seemed to echo Francis’ passion for creation. Italian hospitality permeated our learning, dining and leisure. Bright flowers hung from building walls while cats freely roamed the streets. As pilgrims, we honored Francis’ respect and consciousness of divine presence, noticing salutations to our brothers and sisters in all of nature’s elements. Our pilgrim group was invited and challenged to “live the Canticle” while climbing mountains, praying in sacred spaces and breathing in the energy of Francis and Clare.

This invitation and challenge of Francis and Clare remain, calling us to preach God’s presence in all the cosmos and to care for all creation (especially cats).



Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Marcia Baumert and Sister of St. Francis of Assisi Joanne Schatzlein at Mount La Verna, Italy (Photo courtesy of Sister Marcia Baumert)



Assisi skyline (Photo by
Melissa Bakkestuen, FSPA
affiliate, partner in mission)

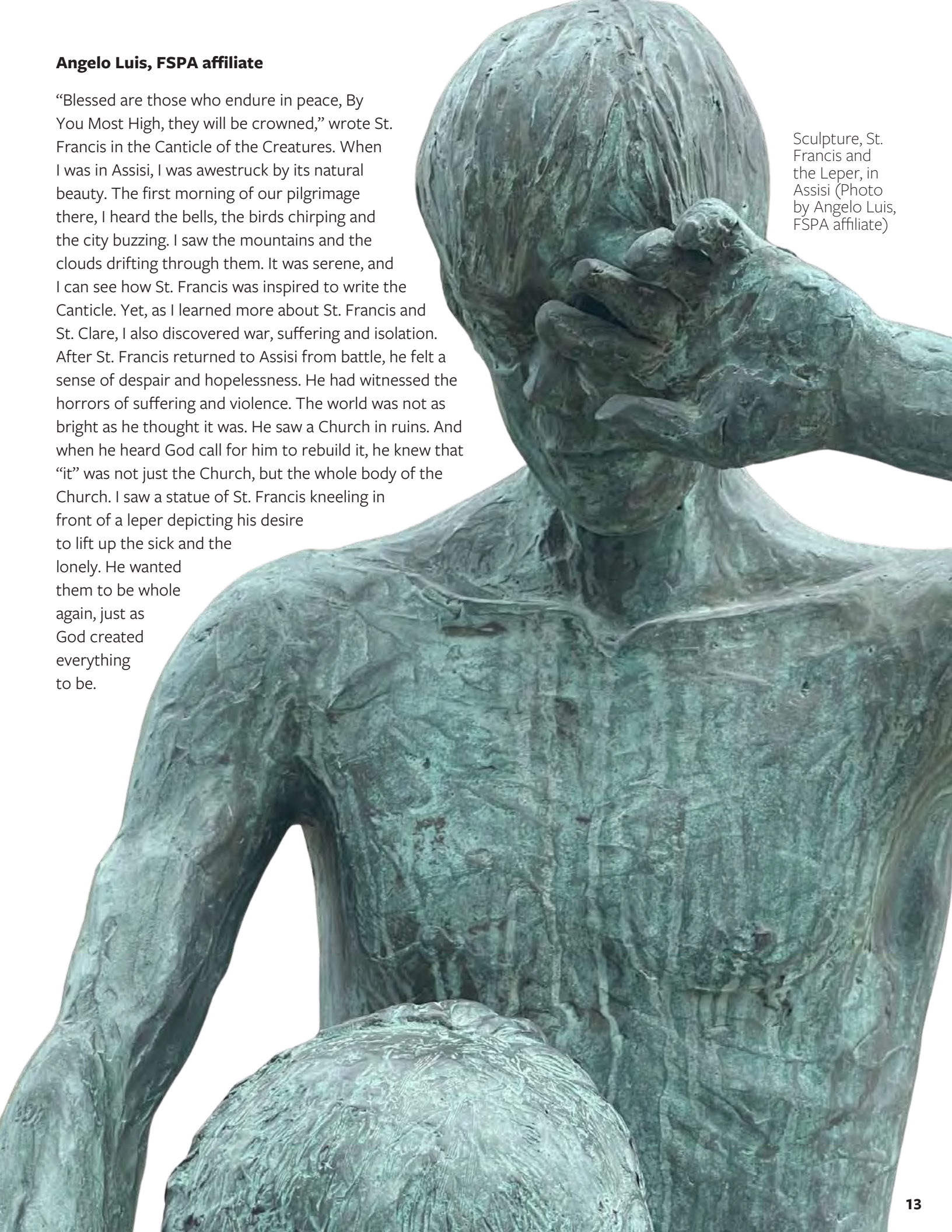
**Melissa Bakkestuen, FSPA affiliate,
partner in mission**

This sunset over Assisi captures the serenity and grace I felt during my pilgrimage through the home of Saint Francis. In the beauty of the sky, I am reminded of The Canticle of the Creatures, a hymn of praise in which all creation glorifies the Lord. In this moment, I was reminded to offer thanks to God through the elements St. Francis cherished. The beauty of this moment inspires the interconnectedness of all things in the universe; a desire to care for our common Earth and to live in solidarity with all of God's creation.

Angelo Luis, FSPA affiliate

“Blessed are those who endure in peace, By You Most High, they will be crowned,” wrote St. Francis in the Canticle of the Creatures. When I was in Assisi, I was awestruck by its natural beauty. The first morning of our pilgrimage there, I heard the bells, the birds chirping and the city buzzing. I saw the mountains and the clouds drifting through them. It was serene, and I can see how St. Francis was inspired to write the Canticle. Yet, as I learned more about St. Francis and St. Clare, I also discovered war, suffering and isolation. After St. Francis returned to Assisi from battle, he felt a sense of despair and hopelessness. He had witnessed the horrors of suffering and violence. The world was not as bright as he thought it was. He saw a Church in ruins. And when he heard God call for him to rebuild it, he knew that “it” was not just the Church, but the whole body of the Church. I saw a statue of St. Francis kneeling in front of a leper depicting his desire to lift up the sick and the lonely. He wanted them to be whole again, just as God created everything to be.

Sculpture, St. Francis and the Leper, in Assisi (Photo by Angelo Luis, FSPA affiliate)



ART, BEAUTY, JOY AND THE CANTICLE

In the history of the FSPA, many sisters and others have praised St. Francis' Canticle of the Creatures, with stunning talent and imagery, in different mediums including embroidery, quilting, painting and photography. It is our privilege to share their incredible gifts with the world.



Embroidery by
Sister Marda Tsai
(1916-2009)

Quilt art by
Sister Joanne Moeller



Watercolor by
Sister Betty Bradley





Watercolor by
Sister Karen Kappell





Photo by
Sister Nina Shephard



Photo courtesy of
Dawn's Place, FSPA
ministry grant partner



Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center,
Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin
(Photo by Sister Arlene Melder)



Photo by
Chandra Sherin

BROTHERS AND SISTERS TO ALL CREATION



Brother Sun. Sister Moon and the Stars. Brothers Wind and Air. Sister Water. Brother Fire. Sister Mother Earth.

Kate Bausch, FSPA affiliate, has answered the call to care for all creation in this season of celebration for the 800th anniversary of St. Francis' Canticle of the Creatures. She has honored the glory of these elements, bestowed by God, in sacred gifts of original art.

Each piece in this series, created by Kate in acrylic on stretched canvas, is bordered by designs that signify the Alpha and the Omega — God as the beginning and the end of all things. The minute details of each image convey a connection to the sacred.





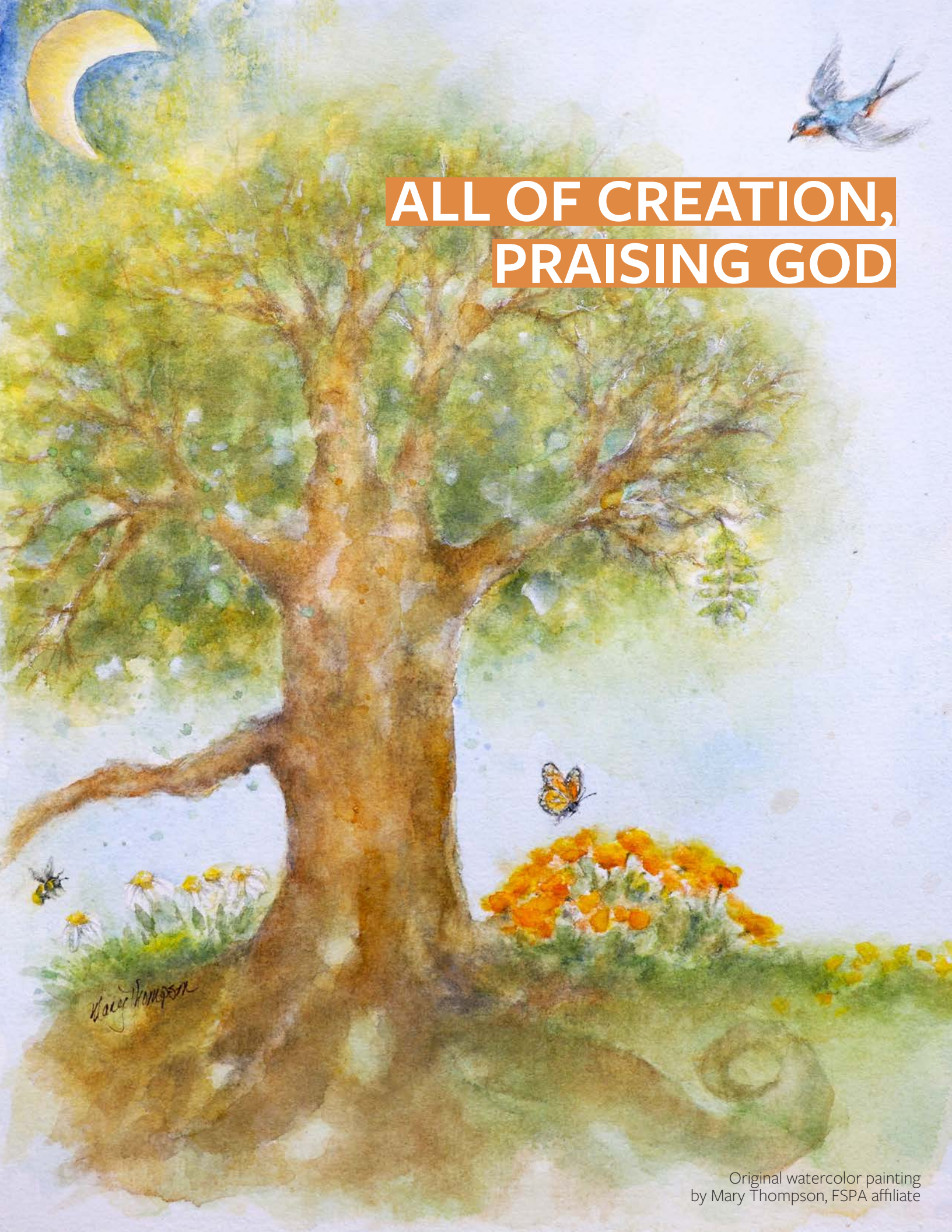
Symbolic of the Alpha and the Omega, the outer border surrounding each of Kate's Brother Sun, Brothers Wind and Air and Brother Fire paintings reflects the exterior brickwork of Mary of the Angels Chapel in La Crosse, Wisconsin.



The curves enclosing the images of Sister Moon and the Stars, Sister Water and Sister Mother Earth are inspired by stained glass surrounding some of the windows in Mary of the Angels Chapel, also symbolically portraying the Alpha and the Omega.







ALL OF CREATION, PRAISING GOD

Original watercolor painting
by Mary Thompson, FSPA affiliate

**By Sarah Hennessey,
Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration**

One afternoon, as a teenager at summer camp, I looked up and saw the sun hitting a single oak leaf that dangled from a sturdy branch. Suddenly the leaf transformed. My vision expanded, and I could see the sun glistening through its green cells. I felt the leaf connected to the tree, to the sky, to the earth and even to the farthest invisible star. I caught my breath. I was filled with warmth. With words I didn't yet have, I sensed the interconnectedness of the cosmos and my interwoven place within it. I felt whole.

St. Francis' Canticle of the Creatures captures our hearts because this prayer-hymn connects to our deepest knowing. This simple song came from Francis' lifelong conversion, struggles and inherent mystical sense of God's goodness within all that exists. For Francis, the Canticle was a living expression of all he had experienced. Written near the end of his life, it is a culmination — not of study — but of the grittiness of life.

Two aspects of the Canticle call forth specific challenges in us: the Italian word “per” and creation as family.

The Italian word “per” can be translated into English as “in,” “for” or “through.” However, “per” is most commonly and perhaps most accurately translated as “through.” This word makes a significant difference. The Canticle is not about the beauty of the sun and moon. As written by St. Francis, it's the beautiful sun, moon, fire, water, wind and Earth praising God with all their might.

For Francis, creation praises God in a way that humanity cannot. He viewed the elements as closer to God without the fall of original sin and the faults of humankind. Creation not only reflects the goodness of God; rather, all that exists praises God the wholeness, God who is good and overflowing love.

Francis sings this song through Brother Sun. Creation is family. Interwoven and deeply relational, the oak leaf that spoke to my heart was my sister. We are all knit together.

In an age of extreme ecological crisis, the Canticle reveals the world to us as it is and as it should be. We cannot pretend to be removed from the family of creation. Our pretense and actions of domination endanger our very lives and our one planet.

Pope Francis spoke to this reality in his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. The title comes from the first words of the Canticle: “Praised be to you my Lord.” Pope Francis looked to St. Francis as a model who “shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace.” When we realize this, we act differently.

Laudato Si' calls us to acknowledge the immensity and urgency of the global climate crisis that we face and to realize the deep interconnectedness of everything and everyone on planet Earth. In my own life, crisis and interconnectedness lead to concrete steps.

I pledged commitment to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, a movement that “equips Catholic institutions and individuals to journey together towards total sustainability in the spirit of the encyclical.” The platform helps me develop a personal plan, guiding me to effective action steps and providing progress-tracking tools. My dedication includes reducing my meat consumption by 80%, using glass containers for storing leftovers and buying laundry detergent sheets instead of liquid soap. Through the platform, I become inspired by the changes people all over the world are making.

Eating a plant-based diet, choosing less air travel, biking or driving electric vehicles and increasing energy efficiency in your home can also make a big difference. And I've learned that personal change without advocacy leaves 90% of the problems facing creation unsolved. We need to raise our voices.

Joining FSPA, as we advocate for closing Line 5 in Wisconsin or uniting with Franciscans International on the global level, are important ways we live the Canticle of the Creatures today.

Ultimately, as a living song, the Canticle requires each of us to write our unique lyrics.

How am I called to praise God with my life? What does the family of creation call forth in me?

St. Francis lived a life of ongoing conversion. His song, written from suffering as well as joy, equips us well for the world today. We are a cosmic family. Through creation we praise God. Through our daily choices and our Franciscan family, we are not alone. We sing praise to the God of love and goodness! ■

CANTICLE UPDATE

By Julia Walsh, Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration

Praised be You, oh Love
through every galaxy, comet, planet, solar flare, sun and moon
for they are genderless, mysterious, spacious and creative

Praised be You, oh Love
through every ecosystem – wild, resilient, alive –
for they are refuge for creatures, weather and terrain
we are in awe of all they are and can contain
forests, seas, streams, sand, snow, fire, hail, rain, wind
bees, baobabs, bamboo, quail
coral, deer, hawks, fireflies, sparrows, squid,
fungi, cacti, redwoods, oak, jasmine, lilacs, penguins,
snails, turtles, clams, sharks, whales, wheat, urchins,
for together all are communion, connection
and biodiversity supporting unity.

Praised be You, oh Love
through each element and design:
hydrogen, oxygen, iron, carbon, cells, atoms, electrons, DNA
for they build this world and reveal Your might and truth.

Praised be You, oh Love
for Your creatures all display
Your glory, goodness and love
And through every creation we learn reciprocity and recovery
and are nourished, sheltered, clothed, quenched and fed

Forgive us our destruction, consumption and greed,
help us heal and restore.

Praised be You, oh Love
may we always give You thanks and serve You
for You are perfect and worthy of love.









FINDING BEAUTY IN LOSS: THE CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES

By Darleen Pryds, Ph.D., FSPA affiliate

For many years, in the interior courtyard of Old Mission Santa Barbara in California, there stood a statue of St. Francis of Assisi. Around 10 feet tall, the figure is carved out of decaying driftwood, weathered by the salty water of the Pacific Ocean and persistent Southern California sun. At first, because of its size, the statue made an impression on me. During a week of residence there, as I studied the figure more closely, my mere academic interest in it as a piece of Franciscan art gave way to a deeper awareness of its poignant encapsulation of living into the spirituality of the saint's Canticle of the Creatures.

One afternoon, during a retreat I was facilitating at the mission, I took the participants out to the statue. As we gazed upon the figure, we took turns reciting lines and stanzas on the Canticle:

“Most high, all-powerful, all-good Lord ... Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures ... especially Sir Brother Sun ... through Sister Moon and the stars ... through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us ...”

As Francis' words wafted over us in our different voices with varying pitches and timbres, some of us closed our eyes to feel the soft ocean breeze mixing with the gentle warmth of the sun. Others turned to the birds gathered to pick up seeds from the ground. A few wandered to smell the short-lived cactus flowers that had blossomed overnight; blooms that would wilt by dusk and wither by morning. My own eyes were fixed upon the figure of the “poor man” from Assisi that loomed over us.

The statue depicted Francis dressed in a habit with a cord, his hair shorn into a tonsure, with the requisite bird on his shoulder. At first, except for the driftwood from which it was carved, the figure seemed to be a typical portrayal of our favorite saint. The weathered wood, mixed with the recitation of the Canticle, jolted me into a deeper understanding of the path we take when we self-identify as “Franciscan.” This was no charming or sentimental depiction of Francis ... it was not the image I was used to seeing.

Instead, during those days, the authenticity of the figure's worn features

opened my ears and heart to hearing the Canticum in a new way. Rather than a light-hearted song of a young “Troubadour of God,” it sounded like the wisdom harvested from a life that had been seeded by struggles and sown by faith; a life that had incrementally cleared its soil of stones and weeds to make room for growth in God.

As is well known, Francis composed the Canticum in increments between 1225 and 1226, the last year or so of his life. The song was the work of his mature faith. But this does not mean the words came suddenly to him at that time. Instead, from a combination of lived experience, scriptural reflection and fervent prayer, the Canticum had stirred in Francis for years. Francis sought not so much to study scripture but to allow scripture to live inside him, especially as he lived his final years full of letting go.

What would happen to any one of us if we heard and prayed the cosmic words from the Book of Daniel, 3:56-78, and let them dwell inside of us?

Such discernment, for Francis, may have surfaced something like this:

As he retired from leadership of the order in 1220 and observed the brotherhood change in ways he may not have chosen, he may have sung, “Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven, praiseworthy and glorious forever.”

He likely reflected upon “Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord ...” as he accepted the papal approbation of the Rule of 1223 that directed his followers in a new, legal direction.

He might have exalted, “Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord, praise and exalt him above all forever,” when, in December of 1223, he sought comfort with the people of Greccio, whom he loved and admired for their faith.

He may have reminded himself, “You heavens, bless the Lord ...” when he felt ill and experienced depression. When it rained and he was cold, he likely sang out to lighten his spirits: “All you waters above the heavens, bless the Lord ...”

When distraught by the constant civic tensions and violence, he may have sighed, “All you powers, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever.”

When making his way to La Verna, where he would receive the wounds of Christ, he would have urged, “Cold and chill, bless the Lord ... Dew and rain, bless the Lord.” And yes, when he accepted the demands of his brothers and sought painful, medical care for his eyes, he may have prayed, “Sun and moon, bless the Lord ... Fire and heat, bless the Lord ...”

These words from scripture had become so much a part of him and his lived experience that by the time he was convalescing at San Damiano, in the care of Clare and the

sisters, all he could do was to sing out these words that had become a living part of him and compose anew. “Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water ... Brother Fire ...” He eventually added, “Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Bodily Death...”

In the last six years of his life, Francis let go of everything. He found his most authentic self by emptying himself to live through the scriptures he had read, prayed and breathed in adulthood. Ultimately, Francis found reason to praise God all around him.

As I began to understand and sense the depth of the Canticum that summer in Santa Barbara, I realized

how the dilapidated statue, scorned as ugly by many, poignantly displayed the real meaning of this spirituality that we share. There, in the heart space of the figure where most of the deterioration occurred, was the only part of the redwood where we could see its authentic color. Similarly, Francis composed the Canticum only after letting go of all the details of life that had interfered with his living fully into his love of God and all that had separated him from sensing God. It was by loosening his attachments that he was able to see, in everything around him, a reason to praise God. There is real beauty in that way of letting go that we, too, can live into when we give ourselves space and time to sense all of creation. ■

**“Ultimately,
Francis found
reason to praise
God all around
him.”**





Candlelight Hike,
FSPA Land - St. Joseph Ridge

CELEBRATING CREATION AS PILGRIMS OF HOPE

“**H**elp us to place ... our very being into your life,” writes Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration Kathy Roberg in her poem, “Prayer for Pilgrimage of Hope.” We are one with all of creation, invited by Pope Francis, in 2025, to travel together as pilgrims of faith during the Jubilee Year of Hope. And we were called by St. Francis, in 1225, to live perpetually, in solidarity, and to protect our common home.

Let us celebrate “all glory, all honour and all blessings,” as the essence of all existence, the joyful journey.



Prayer for Pilgrimage of Hope

**By Kathy Roberg,
Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration**

Oh God, you know our inmost thoughts and intentions as well as our restlessness, doubts and even shades of darkness, where we may stand at the edge of ourselves and wonder where is home.

You know we are called to be companions on the journey and we never walk alone.

You have gifted and called us in this year, time and space to be Pilgrims of Hope, as we journey on together.

Help us to place our feet in your footsteps, our hands, hearts and our very being into your life, as we walk on together, being molded into Beacons of Hope.

Give us the strength, and courage to allow this to really happen.

Let us go forth with trust and faith in knowing we can make a difference when we walk with you as our Greatest Hope.

We are called to be Beacons of Hope.

Amen

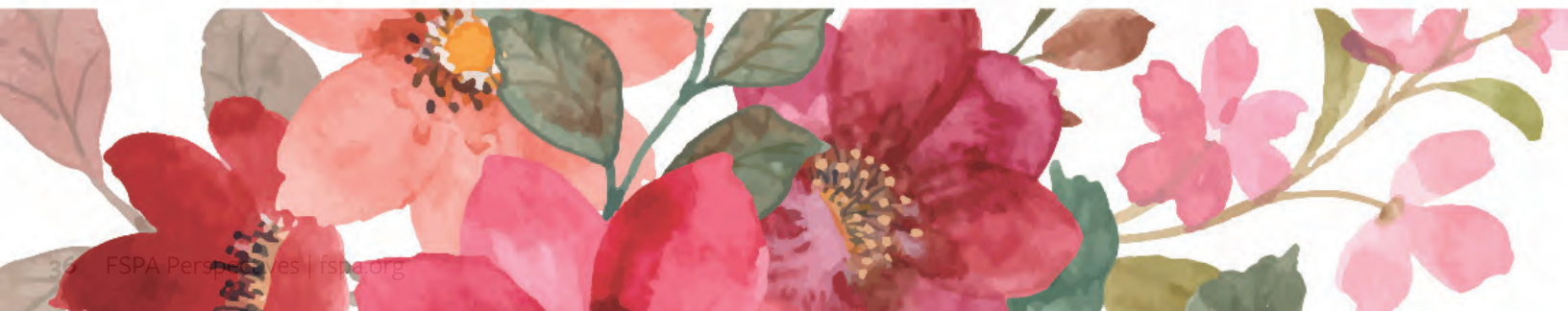




SPREADING LOVE, PEACE AND JUBILEE JOY

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration celebrate our 2025 jubilarians who, together, have spread love, joy and peace to the world for 645 years. Sisters honored include Luanne Durst, 75-year celebrant; Juanita Hytry, Blanche Klein, Rochelle Potaracke and Johanna Seubert, 70-year celebrants; Fran Ferder, Nancy Hoffman, Paulynn Instenes and Carrie Kirsch, 60-year celebrants; and Carol Hanus, 50-year celebrant.

Visit fspa.org/jubilee or scan the QR code to the right to watch a video of our sisters proclaiming personal expressions of jubilee joy and read about what gives them gratitude as they celebrate such joyful milestones as Catholic sisters.



Class of 1950



Class of 1955



Class of 1965



Class of 1965

Class of 1975



Watercolor by
Sister Margaret Ann Schlosser
(1916-2007)



IN LOVING MEMORY



Sister Mary Ann Gaul

Dec. 4, 1931 – Mar. 26, 2025



Sister Mary Ann Gaul, 93, died March 26, 2025, at St. Rose Convent. She was in the seventy-second year of her religious profession. She was born in Luxemburg, Iowa, on Dec. 4, 1931, to Joseph L. and Eleanora (Maiers) Gaul and grew up with two brothers and

three sisters on the family farm. She attended elementary school at Holy Trinity School in Luxemburg and high school at St. Boniface School in New Vienna, Iowa, both staffed by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, and entered St. Rose after graduation. She was received into the novitiate in 1950 and given the name Sister Camilla. She later went back to her baptismal name.

Sister Mary Ann began her ministry as a homemaker at community homes in Wisconsin and Iowa. In 1975 she began housekeeping at Viterbo College. After a month in that position, she was asked to take an administrative role in the copy center. In 1981 Sister Mary Ann entered the business world in Minnesota, first in Bloomington and then in Inver Grove Heights. After several business courses, certifications and degrees, Sister Mary Ann began working for Xerox as a graphic artist and product coordinator. Before leaving Xerox in 1991, she served as shift lead, supervisor and training administrator.

From 1991 to 1997, Sister Mary Ann shared her administrative skills as assistant business and plant manager at St. Rose. After a short sabbatical, Sister Mary Ann returned to the Twin Cities for three years to serve as seamstress and marketing supervisor for Sew What and Retirement Enterprises, as the assistant manager for a 69-unit apartment complex and as a freelance seamstress. From 2000 to 2018, Sister Mary Ann volunteered her skills as a seamstress and plant manager

at Villa St. Joseph in La Crosse. During that time, Sister Mary Ann was also responsible for the FSPA's cottage on Lake Neshonoc in West Salem, Wisconsin. In 2018 she officially retired the Villa but was often called upon for her managerial expertise. Sister Mary Ann moved to St. Rose Convent in 2023.

Family, friends and community members remember Sister Mary Ann as — from fixing furnaces, reading blueprints, sewing, managing buildings and operating copy machines and presses — very knowledgeable. She even earned her bus driver's license to help transport school students. She was detail-oriented and organized, which, at times, was a challenge for her when others were not. One never had to second-guess what Sister Mary Ann's thoughts were, as she said it like it was! When St. Rose was set for renovation at the turn of the century, she organized a major auction sale in the convent yard to clear the attic. Sister Mary Ann was also compassionate and kind, as noted in the many ways she assisted others and lent a listening ear. Her laughter could be heard for miles over a good joke or something she found humorous.

Sister Shirley Wagner

Feb. 23, 1930 – April 1, 2025



Sister Shirley Wagner, 95, died April 1, 2025, at St. Rose Convent. She was in the seventy-fourth year of her religious profession. Shirley Ann Wagner was born in Halder, Wisconsin, to Edward and Celia (Michels) Wagner on Feb. 23, 1930. She attended a rural public school

in the area for her first five years, until her family moved to Marathon, Wisconsin, where she attended St. Mary's School. She started playing in the public high school band in seventh grade. She then returned to public school for a year before entering St. Rose High School in 1945.

Sister Shirley was received into the novitiate on Aug. 12, 1948, and was given the name Sister Theodosia. She later returned to her baptismal name.

After earning a bachelor's degree in music education from Viterbo College and a master's degree in music education from the University of Colorado (with a minor in guidance and counseling), Sister Shirley served as a music teacher in elementary schools in Wisconsin (Wausau and La Crosse) and Iowa (Bellevue) for six years before moving to the high school level. She taught at Aquinas (La Crosse), Kuemper (Carroll, Iowa), Cathedral and Superior Public (Superior, Wisconsin), Newman (Wausau, Wisconsin), Marquette (Bellevue, Wisconsin), St. Mary's (Guttenberg, Iowa) and Mt. Scenario College (Ladysmith, Wisconsin). For 30 years, she taught and conducted high school, college and community symphonies. She even replaced the New York Philharmonic Orchestra conductor, her former instructor, in his absence. After retiring from a life of conducting music, Sister Shirley began a second career as a pastoral minister in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, and Amery, Wisconsin, before moving to Medford, Wisconsin, where she served as pastoral associate at Holy Rosary Parish for 11 years. In 1999 Sister Shirley retired there and became deeply involved in intarsia woodworking. She moved to St. Rose in 2022.

Sister Shirley is remembered by family, community members and friends as a person who cared deeply for others, yet didn't mince words when she had something to say. She loved life and did all she could to live it to the fullest. She encouraged others to do the same through prayer and invited them to join her in whatever activity she decided to tackle. Sister Shirley will be remembered for her beautiful intarsia ministry. She produced more than 700 commissioned works, displayed in five countries, ranging in size from a 20-foot rendition of the Last Supper to minuscule dollhouse accessories.

Sister Patricia Gordon

Sept. 9, 1930 – July 11, 2025



Sister Patricia Gordon, 94, died July 11, 2025, at St. Rose Convent. She was in the seventy-fourth year of her religious profession. Sister Patricia was born to Vincent and Grace (Hartigan) Gordon on Sept. 9, 1930, in Spokane, Washington. She was the eldest of

three children. Her father worked in banking, insurance and real estate in Spokane; her mother was a homemaker and later worked in a business setting. She and her sister, Luan, and brother, Jerry, spent many summers on the farm of their aunt and uncle. Patricia attended St. Anthony Grade School and Marycliff High School, both in Spokane, where she met the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. In 1943 her brother left for the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), and around that time, her own vocational call began to surface. In August 1948, Patricia boarded a train with four companions for the two-day/two-night trip from Spokane to St. Rose Convent. She was received into the novitiate in August 1949 and given the name Sister Sheila Marie, later returning to her baptismal name.

Sister Patricia's FSPA ministry years were spent in the field of education. She began as a second-grade teacher in Edgar, Wisconsin, from 1951 to 1953. From 1953 to 1956, she taught grades five and six in St. Joseph Ridge, Wisconsin. In 1957 she earned a Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in French from Viterbo College in La Crosse, and in 1965, she was awarded a Master of Arts in English from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. She then taught at Marycliff High School in Spokane from 1957 to 1964. From 1964 to 1967, she taught at Serra Catholic High School in Salem, Oregon. In summer months, she taught English at Viterbo. In 1967 Sister Patricia returned to Marycliff as a teacher and vice-principal. Sister Patricia was elected to the newly formed Western province board of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and also assumed the role of formation director. In 1974 she was appointed principal of Marycliff, a position she held until the school closed in 1979.

Sister Patricia's passion for learning and her willingness to serve in diverse ministries led her to other opportunities to serve. Returning to Gonzaga University, she earned Master of Arts in spirituality. She was director of religious education and adult education at St. Xavier Parish in Spokane from 1981 to 1983 before moving to Las Vegas, Nevada, to serve as director of religious education until 1986. In California she served as director of catechetical ministry in Oceanside and Long Beach. She then moved to Huntington Beach, California, where she was director of the RCIA program from 1990 to 1993. At that time, she was elected regional leader for FSPA's Western Region in Spokane, a position she held until 1998. She became

the director of Clare Franciscan Spirituality Center in Spokane until its closure. She presented retreats, provided spiritual direction and served as the spiritual assistant to the Secular Franciscans in Spokane. In 2016 she moved to St. Rose Convent, where she especially enjoyed her ministry of prayer in the Perpetual Adoration Chapel.

Community members, family and friends remember Sister Patricia for her keen mind and broad interest in all aspects of life. She was a faithful Gonzaga University alumna, often gathering anyone she could to watch the “Zags” basketball games on TV. Sister Patricia was an avid reader and English teacher through and through. She was frequently called upon to edit or critique written communications from the congregation. She loved to travel and often talked about her trips as regional leader to Hawaii, Guam, El Salvador, Zimbabwe and Italy. Her gentle smile welcomed everyone.

Sister Laverne Wilichowski

May 17, 1933 – Aug. 6, 2025



Sister Laverne Wilichowski, 92, died Aug. 6, 2025, at St. Rose Convent. She was in the seventy-second year of her religious profession. She was born Loyola Veronica on May 17, 1933, to Francis and Lucy (Koppa) Wilichowski, in the township of Cassel, Wisconsin.

She, her nine brothers and four sisters grew up on the family farm just outside of Marathon, Wisconsin. They enjoyed all the opportunities and challenges of farm life.

Sister Laverne began her education in the local public school. At grade four, she began attending St. Mary's School in Marathon City, Wisconsin. Following graduation from the eighth grade at St. Mary's, she moved to La Crosse where she entered St. Rose High School. Sister Laverne was received into the novitiate of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration on Aug. 12, 1951.

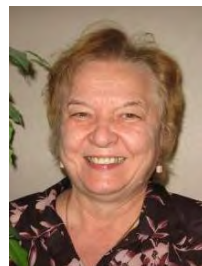
The field of education — as a teacher, a principal and, at times, both — became her lifelong ministry. Sister Laverne began teaching primary grade students, then middle and upper grade students in La Crosse (Holy Trinity School and Blessed Sacrament), Ashland, Lyndon Station, Edgar, Stratford and Prescott in Wisconsin, as well as Spokane (St. Ann) in Washington. Sister Laverne received a Bachelor of Science in Education from Viterbo

College in La Crosse and a Master of Arts in teaching from Siena Heights University in Adrian, Michigan. Later she obtained administrative credits from the University of Dayton in Ohio. Sister Laverne served as teacher and principal at St. Joseph School in Prescott from 1987 until her retirement in 2003, and continued volunteering her service as the librarian for the school. From 2012 to 2017, she also volunteered in scripture ministry in the parish. In 2017 she moved to St. Rose where she began a ministry of prayer and hospitality.

Community members, family, colleagues and students remember Sister Laverne as always caring and interested in each individual she met. Her quiet, gentle manner made everyone she encountered feel very special. When Sister Laverne left Prescott after 30 years of faithful ministry, the parish bulletin stated, “This will be the end of an era here at St. Joseph's ... We are sad to see the sisters leave.” She was one of the ever-so-generous and gracious members of the St. Rose Convent Social Committee — always serving with a smile and a helping hand. On special occasions, she would often provide the sisters with Dairy Queen Dilly Bars from her family. Sister Laverne was an avid Wisconsin sports fan. It didn't matter if it was the Brewers, Bucks or Packers, she could tell you all the details of the game. On one memorable occasion, she received a 50-year jubilee gift of four tickets to a Packers game and enjoyed every minute of it!

Affiliate Mary Flowers

July 1, 1945 - Jan. 29, 2025



Mary Elizabeth Flowers, 79, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, peacefully passed away in the early morning hours of Jan. 29, 2025, at Medilodge of Wyoming in Michigan. Mary was born in Grand Rapids to Andrew and Louise (Brechtling) Flowers. She spent much her life in West Michigan, growing up in Comstock Park.

Mary attended Holy Trinity Catholic School (top of her class) and Marywood Academy (where she was also top of her class and won first place in the Grand Rapids and Kent County science fairs her senior year). She then attended Grand Rapids Junior College, earned a bachelor's degree at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, and achieved a master's degree at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

Mary worked as a certified hospital chaplain in Ohio and in Newman campus ministries in Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin. Mary loved and enjoyed photography and was very good at it. She was creative and enjoyed beadery and other forms of artwork. She also researched personal family histories for both the Flowers/Kwiatkowski and Brechting families.

Her father built a shrine in 1952 at their home on Alpine Avenue to honor Our Lady of Fatima, where many special prayers were answered for visitors. Mary helped move rocks for the grotto from Grandma Flowers' and Great Grandma Sagorski's farms in Sand Lake, Michigan, during its construction. Her dad declared, "This is one of the good things I did in my life." He later donated the shrine to Holy Trinity Catholic Church "for safe-keeping" for people to visit and pray.

Affiliate Mary Ann McDonald

Dec. 5, 1941 - Feb. 10, 2025



Mary Ann Johnston McDonald, 83, passed away on Feb. 10, 2025, in Spokane, Washington. Mary Ann was born to Bernadine Elizabeth Johnston Schell and Byron James Wood Johnston on Dec. 5, 1941, in Spokane, Washington. Mary Ann attended St.

Patrick School in Spokane, where she graduated from Holy Names Catholic High School in 1961. She then attended Our Lady of the Valley Covent in Kettle Falls, Washington.

In 1968 Mary Ann married Raymond Joseph McDonald at St. Aloysius Catholic Church. They moved to Burns, Oregon, where their daughter, Anne, was born in 1969. From Burns, they moved to the Silver Valley area of Idaho. Mary Ann was a Sunday school teacher in Wallace and also worked in the administrative office at Wallace High School during the mid-70s.

Mary Ann returned to Spokane a few years later with her daughter, Anne. There, she worked at a day care business in the West Central Community Center for a couple of years. After working as the switchboard operator at Gonzaga University for 25 years, Mary Ann became so well-known at the university that there was even a story written about her in the Spokesman-Review Newspaper. Many of her students would call her just for friendly advice. She loved working at Gonzaga and was an

extremely loyal Zags fan.

She adored spending time with her family. Just watching a classic Disney movie with her daughter, grandkids, nieces and/or nephews was enough to fill her heart with love. Mary Ann also enjoyed taking her daughters, nieces and nephews (one at a time) on road trips.

Mary Ann was always happy to see you and loved to laugh. She had the knack of turning a bad situation into a funny story. She lived a colorful life — a moving and respectful one — and made an impression wherever she went. Mary Ann was no one famous but not ordinary, and she seemed to make a fearless splash (or impact) wherever she went. Mary Ann was strong, wise, generous and irreplaceable, always helping others in need and loving unconditionally. May Mary Ann rest with the other saints in peace.

Affiliate Kathleen Engelken

Jan. 31, 1948 - July 11, 2025



Kathleen A. "Kathy" Engelken, 77, of New Vienna, Iowa, passed away on July 11, 2025, at Accura HealthCare of Cascade in Cascade, Iowa. She was born on Jan. 31, 1948, in Dubuque, Iowa, the daughter of Clarence and Eileen (Wessels) Engelken. She was the oldest of their five children. She took her role as the oldest to heart and would take care of all of her siblings.

She was a member of the last class to graduate from St. Boniface High School in New Vienna. She earned her Bachelor of Education at the University of Northern Iowa and became an English teacher. She lived in many places while a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration. She later received her master's degree at Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois.

She went on to be a youth minister and a dean of students at several Illinois universities. She served on the board of directors for numerous nonprofits over the years, including New Vienna's Heritage House Museum and Trees Forever. As executive director, she brought the Illinois Campus Compact, a higher education preparation program, to over 30 colleges, writing several grants and providing the opportunity for students to be involved in civic engagement.





Franciscan Sisters

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