



VOL. LIV • No. 8
Fall/Winter 2023

Peacemaking... Our Journey

Catching the Treasure – Our Spiritual Legacy

Sr. Kathryn King, FSP and Sr. Pat McDermott, FSP



Sister Kathryn King, FSP



Sister Pat McDermott, FSP

“We have this treasure in clay jars so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We know that the one who raised Jesus will raise us also with Jesus...so that grace as it extends to more and more people may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God.” 2Cor.4:7, 14-15.

This is the perspective we (Kathryn and Pat) held in exploring our spiritual legacy aided by Midge Miles (Story Catcher) and our videographers Kevin Jackson and Deniz Demirer.

This project could not have happened without the inspiration of Sr. Helen Wacker and the Council and the amazing support of every sister according to her ability.

It is with much gratitude and joy that we announce the launch of “Catching the Treasure – Our Spiritual Legacy.” Using a contemplative process in our planning, process, and presentation, this video brings forward the many layered Presences of Peace both in the personal reflections of the sisters and the communion we experienced as we “caught” each other’s stories in the taping. This communion both among us and among the people, held in the clay jars of human life we share, frames a visual that primarily intends to proclaim the marvelous love and goodness of God at work.

**To access this video which we are privileged to share with you,
follow the directions below:**

1. Go to our website fspnet.org. Be certain you are on the home page.
2. Tap the drop-down menu on the upper left side.
3. Go to Our Mission and click on. The video is ready to play.

The project is completed but our mission continues in catching the treasure and committing to pass it forward as long as we live.

Inside...

The Harvest: A Lifetime Commitment.....	2
Celebrating St. Francis	2
Franciscan Sisters Leave Elmwood Park, NJ	4
Ladycliff Reunion	4-5
Ladycliff Academy - A Bit of History	6
Grateful for the Blessings	6

Partners in Ministry	7
Health, Happiness and Harmony	7
Fall Sweepstakes Winners	7
Franciscan Joy	8
Prayer Enrollments.....	8
We Remember	8

The Harvest: A Lifetime Commitment



Sister Helen Wacker, FSP

The *joy* of autumn is the *joy* of the harvest! Throughout the Bible, the harvest carries a spiritual significance. It appears in parables and as a metaphor for spiritual growth and has always been a beautiful and significant part of life on earth. Furthermore, it puts me in mind of the *Harvest Principle*, which states “You reap what you sow”. *True* as this principle may be, it is important to keep in mind that the mercy and love of God can conquer all things! The basic idea of this *principle*, however, is if conditions are right, namely, proper soil, rain, sun and nutrients, a *seed* will eventually produce *rewards*. It serves as a reminder that the *kind* of *fruit*, the *rewards* produced, are directly linked to the seeds planted. That is, *today’s* decisions, words and actions, or lack thereof, will make an impact in the future if not on us, then on those who follow. The *Harvest Principle*, not only applies to individuals, but families, businesses, communities and nations as well. Surely, the *Harvest Principle* can be incredibly frustrating at times because it demands patience. Seeds take time to grow. No one plants a seed in the morning and expects a harvest by noon or the next day!

Unlike the annual harvest that occurs in the fall, I am also reminded that we need to have a *lifetime* commitment to the harvest, which *plays out* in everyday life. Like the farmer, there are things that pop up in our *growing* season that are not helpful, and we have to *dig deeper* our spiritual roots in order to face the difficult times with peace and trust. Initially, if hardened and rocky, our soil must be broken up and turned, a *painful* process, but necessary to be better able to receive God’s *seeds* and yield a rich harvest. God plants seeds of *spiritual fruit* that must be watered, tended, nourished, and patiently cared for to come to fruition. To bear fruit, we must be docile to God’s word. This *spiritual* harvest is the result of God’s work and requires our faithfulness to sow the seed, help the plants to grow or reap the harvest, which constitutes a *long process*, one that the Bible indicates that the *Sower, the tender and the reaper* are likely to be different people at different times! (John 4:35-38; 1Corinthians 3:6-9) How do I respond to all that God has called me without growing weary, especially when the *harvest* appears at times so far in the future? Needless to say, all this involves *intentionality* and *work* on my part and asks the question: What kind of *harvest* do I want to *produce*? Hopefully, the *seeds we plant*, with God’s help, result in a rich harvest for ourselves, others around us and for generations to come!

In Peace,

Sister Helen Wacker

Sister Helen Wacker, FSP

Celebrating St. Francis

“It’s the beauty within us that makes it possible for us to recognize the beauty around us.” — Joan D. Chittister.

Our beloved Saint Francis of Assisi is known to believers of all faiths for his love and respect of all God’s creation. If ever a saint’s view were needed today, it is surely that of St. Francis. He had such a great reverence for all life and all God’s creations. He lived his life close to nature and reached out to others in a most joyful spirit. Taking time to enjoy God’s beauty around us is a gift we should give ourselves as often as possible. One part of that gift is experiencing a sense of oneness with nature and with everyone else who is outdoors with us. We Franciscan Sisters celebrated the feast of St. Francis on October 4th. St. Francis praised all seasons as a time of new life and hope. Through his words, in the Cantic of the Creatures, we recognize the beauty that surrounds us. Each season brings new life in the flowers, trees, snow and

new life to us through exciting seasonal activities. We tend to spend more time with family and friends, as the seasons change. In his Cantic of the Creatures, St. Francis shares, “Praised be You, my Lord, for 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 splendor, and bears the likeness of You, Most High One.” *Thank you for the many ways you make the love of and for God a reality in our world.* Your support and encouragement are great blessings to us. May the light of Brother Sun brighten all your days.



Ladycliff Academy – A Bit of History

Sister Constance Gaynor, FSP

When the Franciscan Sisters were still “pioneers” in the U.S. they staffed a school begun by the Franciscan Friars on West 31st street in New York City. Other faculty members were lay women residing in the area. After a few years some of these women expressed the desire to enter religious life. Soon space was needed for a Novitiate. With assistance from the Friars, enough money was raised to purchase a property suitable for this purpose. An estate was for sale in Peekskill, NY. It was about 45 miles from the city and on a beautiful area on the Hudson River. After the purchase in 1869 it was named “Mount Saint Francis.”

To support themselves and the novitiate, the Sisters opened a Day School called “Our Lady of Angels Academy for Girls”. Students enrolled from the Peekskill area. The School and Novitiate were gradually opened.

After only 10 years however, a new and unexpected ministry evolved. In 1879 the Bishop of New York requested each Congregation of Sisters with convents outside New York City to help care for a large number of homeless children in the city. Many of these children had been orphaned by the death of their parents. It was the fall-out from large immigration from European countries and conditions on ships bringing them to the port of New York City. Many were Catholic families and the Church was trying to care for them.

The Franciscan Sisters responded to the Bishop’s request. So many children were admitted at Peekskill that a separate entity from the Day School was established as “St. Joseph’s Home for Children”.

By 1897, it was decided that the Academy should move to a different location. In 1900 a suitable property was found on the opposite side of the Hudson River and the move was made to the property adjacent to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

The newly established school was named “Ladycliff Academy for Girls” located in the town of Highland Falls, NY. The name “Ladycliff” reflected the beautiful location looking down on the Hudson River. There was a very large building that had been known as the Cranston Hotel in excellent condition and had been in use mainly during summer months as a vacation spot. The large balconies at the river-end of each floor made it very desirable for such use.

After the purchase, classes were offered at both grammar and high school levels. It was mainly for boarding students but some day students also came from the local area.

Over the years a 2-story wing was built on property behind the existing building. The first floor was a large auditorium with a stage for plays and musicals. The second floor held a large and beautiful Chapel for sisters

and students. Both floors were connected to the main hall of the front building as well as to the balconies. There was already a wing behind the main building containing the convent for the Sisters and dining rooms. The kitchen and food preparation areas were on the ground floor.

The students were divided into three groups: Grades 1-4 were called “Minims” Grades 5 through 8 were “Juniors” and High School students were “Seniors” A building for classrooms and a gym was built as a wing on the front of the building. Each group had its own study Hall and recreation area. Outdoor activities were based on age but included field hockey, softball, tennis and sleigh riding. Sister Maria Margaret was in charge. Two of the Sisters gave piano lessons: Sisters Marie Therese and Sister Theofila gave private lessons to students who requested them.

Once weekly Professor Pinto traveled to the school to form a small orchestra. Miss Gertrude Walsh came from New York City for classes in speech and elocution.

All students wore uniforms at all times. On regular days these were one-piece navy-blue dresses with white detachable collars. On Sundays the dress was light blue with white collars and cuffs. A Boy’s department was opened after a few years with uniforms modelled on those worn by the cadets at West Point. An officer from West Point was hired for a once a week class teaching the boys how to march and do other military maneuvers.

By the 1920’s the State Department of Education enforced new regulations for teacher qualifications. The Franciscan Sisters consulted with persons in higher education and it was decided to provide college level classes for their members, and so Ladycliff College was born!

Lay students were enrolled and a large building was built on campus for classes and other activities on a college level. Saturday classes were mainly for Sisters while week days were for lay students. The first college graduation was held in 1936. The College and Academy programs continued to share the same campus until 1960. The State Department of Education had a new regulation that in the future this must be discontinued.

A new location was again sought for the Academy. In 1961 the school was moved to a campus in Mohegan Lake, New York. It was to be a day program, renamed Franciscan High School and became a co-ed program instituted in 1972. And so Ladycliff Academy quietly went out of existence!



Sister Constance Gaynor, FSP

Ladycliff Reunion – June 2023

We were delighted to see many familiar faces and some new ones at the Reunion on June 10, 2023 at the Thayer Hotel on the grounds of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY. There was a wonderful exchange of photos and memories. Bonds between many of the former students and Sisters have formed over the years, thus making us truly one big family. The Franciscan Missionary Sisters in Peekskill, NY and the Franciscan Sisters of Peace in Haverstraw, NY were each given a very generous donation to help support the retired and infirm Sisters. Everyone is welcome to next year's reunion. The Alumnae Association does maintain a mailing address at P.O. Box 104 Highland Falls, NY 10928 or webmaster@Ladycliff.org. "Oh, Alma Mater, Ladycliff, we pledge our love to thee..."



Franciscan Sisters Leave Elmwood Park, New Jersey

Sister Clare Kelleher, FSP

The Franciscan Sisters have faithfully served the community of St. Leo's Church and School since 1913, (110 years). Alumni of St. Leo's School will remember the Sisters serving as Principals, Teachers, Librarians, Directors of Religious Education and involved with all Sacramental Preparation Programs. They have enriched thousands of Children's lives with faith, education and compassion in good times and in bad.

After much prayer and soul searching these Sisters realized that they needed to begin a new chapter in their lives, especially due to age and health issues.

I quote what these Sisters have shared with me: *"We are leaving a parish we love and where we have received so many blessings. Although the Franciscan Sisters will no longer be physically present in the parish, St. Leo's will forever live in our hearts and in our prayers. It has been our honor and privilege to be in this wonderful parish. May the Lord bless you and keep you safe. May He let His light shine upon you and give you His peace."*

Grateful for our Blessings

Sister Eileen Marie Cullen, FSP



Sister Eileen Marie Cullen, FSP

It was in 1963 when I completed my novitiate and made my first Vows, that I was assigned as a teacher in St. Leo's Parish School in Elmwood Park, NJ. Little did I know it would also be my last place of assignment.

When I first went to St. Leo's Parish, I lived in the old convent which was next to the school and Church. When I returned years later, the Sisters had moved to a new convent at a different location.

I was assigned to St. Leo's Parish four times, in the 60's, 70's 80's and 1919. Each time I was teaching a different grade and while teaching one year, I was also the Director of the Religious Education Program (CCD). At that time, I was privileged to instruct the children preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. I can honestly say that I enjoyed my many years of teaching the children and working with the parents at St. Leo's Parish.

For me, St. Leo's Parish is loaded with memories, with events when we gathered together as a community, to share stories, laughter and even, at times, tears. I offer innumerable thanks for the blessings and graces freely and generously given to me. I am more than well aware of all that I have received. Although I may no longer be living in St. Leo's Convent, I will always carry the memories I made during my many years there.

After 60 years of teaching, I knew it was time to retire. Still, I wanted to continue being active in some way. My moving to Marian Woods, in Hartsdale, NY, has provided me the opportunity of obtaining my goal. At this time in my life I feel my gifts, talents and being with others will give me the opportunity to offer myself in an even more diversified way. By reaching out to others, I feel that I will be able to live out my retirement in joy, peace, and fulfillment.

Marian Woods is more than a building; it is a place of gratitude and blessings made possible by donors like you. I have found a "crown jewel" in Marian Woods. That is the collaboration among several communities of women religious.

We Sisters are so blessed to have such a caring, dedicated staff to assist us each day. I am edified by the commitment shown to ensuring that the Sisters are well cared for and are living in a healthy environment. Marian Woods is a blessing where I can spend more time with my God, interact with other sisters from different congregations and live the rest of my life in love, and peace as a Franciscan Sister of Peace.

Partners in Ministry

Sister Alice Francis, FSP



Sister Alice Francis, FSP

I was born in East Paterson, NJ and baptized in St. Leo's original Church. A new church was built in 1949, with the old church becoming the school building. I received my First Communion and Confirmation in the new Church. The rectory was moved down Market Street in the 1950's and put next to the Church.

In 1960 a new school was built, and I was in the first graduating class of 1960. Four years later I entered the Franciscan Sisters Novitiate. After Profession of Vows, I was assigned to Butler, NJ and then to Totowa, NJ for a total of 12 years. I then returned to East Paterson, which had a new name, Elmwood Park. There, in my home parish, I was assigned to teach in St. Leo's School. I also taught in the Faith Formation Program, preparing the 2nd graders for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Communion. Serving as Eucharistic Minister as well as Spiritual Director for the Rosary Society was another privilege and joy for me. My diverse ministries and community experiences have helped me to grow over the years, giving me spiritual gifts and deepening my commitment to the vows I have taken as a young Sister.

After forty years serving the parish, I realized it was time for a change in my life. I decided to retire to our residence in Marian Woods, Hartsdale, NY. Even though it was difficult to leave the people I worked with and grew to love, I knew it was time to move on. I especially look forward to having more time for prayer and reflection.

The things that I think are my own, my time and my energy, my life story, my knowledge, the insights and reflections I get in my time with prayer, I realize that they re not given to me just for my own sake. They are given to me for building up the body of Christ.

I believe God has me where He wants me to be at this time in my life. As I grow older, (and wiser), I realize that I would like my remaining days to be even more meaningful and joy-filled. After having met the residents and staff, receiving their warm welcome and offer of helping me to adjust to my new life style, I feel certain that Marian Woods is the place where I can accomplish much more.

I am incredibly grateful for the support of all of the residents of Elmwood Park, NJ. How blessed I was all these years to have them in my life, working and praying alongside of me to build God's Kingdom. I will never be too far to stay connected with them in God's love and the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. God is good all the time – All the time God is good!

Health, Happiness and Harmony

Sister Mary Elaine Sullivan, FSP



Sister Mary Elaine Sullivan, FSP

When I left Butler, NJ, I promised myself I would never stay that long in one place again because it is so difficult to leave a parish and the wonderful people with whom you have become such good friends and acquaintance over the years. Yet, I remained in St. Leo's Parish for 19 years while offering my services as Principal of St. Leo's Elementary School. I was blessed with a wonderful, fun-loving faculty who made it very obvious, by their words and actions, that they did not consider teaching a job but rather a dedicated ministry.

In 1968, the old St. Leo's convent was torn down and the rectory was built there. Nine Sisters moved to the present two-family house. It became necessary to convert the living room and the dining room into two bedrooms. Most of my time at St. Leo's the Parish was served by the Franciscan Friars. Since there were nine Sisters and only one car, the daily transportation to Church, back to the convent for breakfast, and then out to school made it very difficult timewise each morning. The Friars generously then offered to say Mass in the convent on a daily basis. In turn, this enabled the Sisters to get to school in ample time. In 2005 the Friars left the Parish and the Archdiocese took over. By then we had more than one car and could manage our transportation.

Unfortunately, over the years my vision has deteriorated and other health issues surfaced. I am a people person and would not like to live alone. Since I do enjoy reading stories, I have begun listening to audiobooks.

I knew it was time to retire and move into assisted living of some sort. I felt I needed more interaction and stimulus in my life. Our community is blessed to be able to share such a place at Marian Woods, in Hartsdale, NY with several other communities of sisters, Franciscans, Dominicans, Mercy, Sacramentines, Holy Child and Ursuline totaling 50 residents. These Sisters have a wealth of experience in various ministries, ex. Nurses, teachers, social workers, administrators or missionaries. When we share stories it certainly makes for interesting conversations. All the staff who are responsible for the cleaning and cooking are just wonderful and so patient. They are most attentive to everyone's needs. Although I do miss St. Leo's parish, I am grateful for the many extra spiritual exercises offered here at Marian Woods, ex. daily Liturgy when possible, more time for the rosary, Holy Hour, private prayer time, faith sharing, etc. In addition, there are a variety of social activities, boat rides, visiting different restaurants, day trips, movies, etc. Everything is optional. Each day I thank God for the many blessings I have received over the years. There are few tasks greater for peace of mind than to accept the changes of our life wisely and confidently. **Change does bring new life. I am now enjoying a little bit of Heaven!**



Director of Development

Sister Clare Kelleher, FSP

Fall Sweepstakes Winners–2023

Just as the seasons change, so does our congregation end one season of accomplishments while moving into another season of new directions. Our sisters are so thankful for your great generosity throughout the year. We have just finalized our Franciscan Fall Sweepstakes with the general drawing on October 4, 2023. Our Early Bird special was drawn on August 9, 2023 and that winner of \$500.00 was **Therese McElory** of Ridgefield Park, NJ. The winners drawn for October 4, 2023 are as follows:



Sister Clare Kelleher, FSP

WINNER	STATE	AMOUNT
William Barrett	Elmwood Park, NJ	\$500.00
Sr. Dolores Doyle, PBVM	New Windsor, NY	\$500.00
Theresa Obert	Danbury, CT	\$500.00
Barbara & Paul Schuckalo	Kinnelon, NJ	\$500.00
Donald Moclair	Bloomfield, NJ	\$500.00
Thomas Dunne	Flushing, NY	\$500.00
Jane Connors	Whiting, NJ	\$500.00
Maureen McSweeney	Putnam Valley, NY	\$500.00
Deborah Di Mauro	Hasbrouck Hgts., NJ	\$500.00

Congratulations to all of our winners!

At this writing, our gross revenue from the combined Franciscan Spring and Fall Raffles is \$43,505 minus \$14,404. for prizes, printing tickets, envelopes, letters, inserts and postage. In addition, we received \$9,255 in donations. All of the proceeds go to the support of our sisters who are in ministries, the care of our senior sisters and those in Cabrini Nursing Home, operating costs and maintenance of our Congregation Center. We are truly *very grateful to each of you* for your continued support of our community. We are very happy to continue remembering all of your intentions in our daily Mass and prayers. We wish you and your loved ones continued well-being and a very blessed Thanksgiving. May God bless each of you.

Franciscan Joy

Sister Dorothy DeYoung, FSP

Celebrating the Feast of St. Francis on October 4th each year has been a long-time tradition for Franciscans worldwide. Francis, who was known for a life of poverty and love for all of God's creatures, has become one of the most venerated saints.

St. Cabrini Nursing Home in Dobbs Ferry gathered all the Franciscan residents, Sisters, Brothers and Third Order Secular Franciscans for a special Mass honoring them for their years of ministerial service and inviting them to renew their lifetime commitment as Franciscan women and men. As residents of Cabrini, they now minister to one another and to the other residents with whom they live, as well as to staff, spreading joy and peace.

The members of the Franciscan Sisters of Peace Leadership Team were delighted to participate in the liturgy and luncheon that followed, providing the opportunity to spend the day with our sisters Mary Daniel Bauer, Georgeanne Farrell, Constance Gaynor, Cecelia Hall, Francine Kavanah, and Ann Smith. May they be blessed with a life of gratitude for all that has been and for all that is yet to come!



We Remember – In Loving Memory

Those we love don't go away,
they walk beside us every day;
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
they are always in our hearts, so dear.

Sister Rose Marie Broadbent, FSP

Elaine Frawley – Sister of Sister Mary Elaine Sullivan, FSP

Larry Byrnes – brother of Sister Ellen Byrnes, FSP

**May their souls and the souls of all the
faithful departed rest in peace.**

BE REMEMBERED FOREVER...

By naming the Sisters of St. Francis of Peace in your Will.

For further information, contact:

Director of Development
Sisters of St. Francis of Peace
20 Ridge St., Haverstraw, NY 10927
(845) 942-2527, Ext. 107

The Sisters thank you for your continued support of their ministries.

Please indicate on the enclosed envelope if you will name the Sisters of St. Francis of Peace in your will or already have named them in your will.



Peacemaking...Our Journey

is a newsletter published by the
Sisters of St. Francis of Peace

20 Ridge Street, Haverstraw, NY 10927-1198

Tel: (845) 942-2527 x107 • Fax: (845) 429-8141

Website: www.fspnet.org • E-mail: dirdev@fspnet.org

*The Sisters of St. Francis of Peace do not sell or share any
names, addresses, or other information with anyone else.*

We invite you to use our **Prayer Enrollment Cards**.
Thank you for your use of our special occasion
prayers cards: get well, deceased, and special
intentions. We thank you for your donations to the
congregation particularly for our sick and retired
sisters. All are appreciated.