



SINSINAWA

DOMINICAN VISION



Sisters Gather
for Giving Voice

On the Cover

Sixty-two Sisters under 50 years old traveled to St. Xavier University, Chicago, for the Giving Voice National Gathering entitled “Being Seeds of Encounter and Communion” in June.

Five Dominican Sisters were present on this joy-filled encounter, including Sinsinawa Sisters Siobhan Burroughs, OP (left), and Christin Tomy, OP (second from left); Sister Angela Thanh (Mission San Jose); Sister Shingai Chigwedere (Peace, right); and Sister Xiomara Méndez Hernández, OP (Adrian, second from right). Sr. Christin shared her reflection on spiritual aspects of gardening and planting. Sr. Siobhan was the preacher for the Saturday vigil liturgy, and Sr. Shingai joined a group of African Sisters during the liturgical dance.

The space was filled with laughter, profound conversations, meaningful prayers and rituals, and much sisterly love. There is so much hope for the present and future of religious life!

Shaping Our Culture

Appreciation for Your Partnership

Have I told you lately how grateful we are for each and every one of you? With your gracious support, the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa—in partnership with each of you—are able to continue our shared mission of preaching and teaching the gospel values of love of neighbor, empathy, kindness, and inclusion with the world. You are helping us shape the culture of our shared future.



Sr. Christina Heltsley

Together, we are influential culture shapers. Margaret Mead once said, “If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each human gift will find a fitting place.” We are tasked with claiming a “fitting place” to ensure that others, including your friends and family, can find and claim theirs as well.

Reflecting on the concept of a “fitting place,” I recall lessons from my family dinner table, where attendance was mandatory, and one had to ask to be excused. These lessons taught us to stay engaged, claim our space, and be aware of who is missing from the table, advocating for their inclusion. Even when discussions were uncomfortable, we had to stay until everyone was finished, teaching us about unity and patience.

The table lessons are applicable to our collective lives. We must stay at the table through difficult conversations, maintaining engagement even when the topics are unpalatable. This persistence leads to a fuller understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives. We aspire to lead a

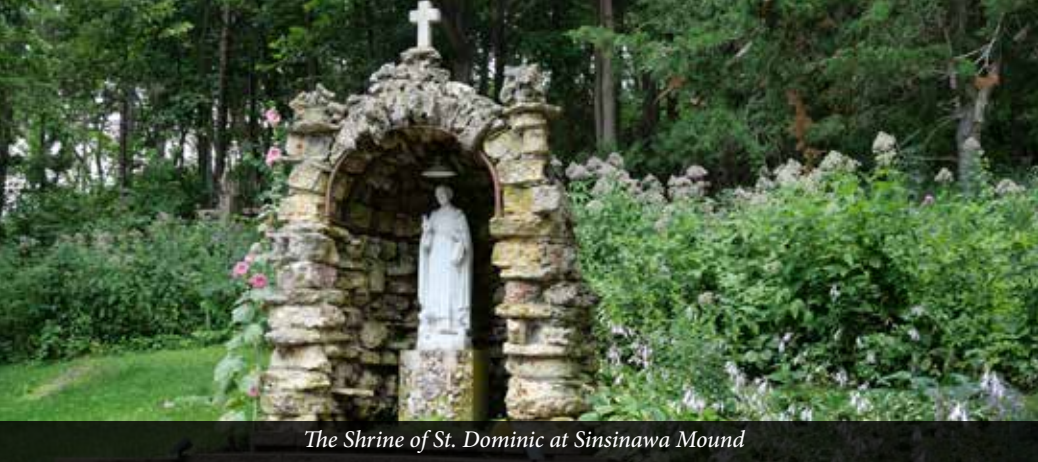


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The Shrine of St. Dominic at Sinsinawa Mound

cultural shift toward inclusivity and thoughtful consideration of who is missing, ensuring everyone is invited to the table.

Drawing from the book *Shaping School Culture* by Terrence Deal and Kent Peterson, daily we make intentional choices that shape the culture around us. There are supportive roles to embrace and toxic ones to avoid:

- **Navigator vs. Free Rider:** Navigators steer institutions away from danger with insightful ideas and uphold the vision and mission. Free Riders avoid responsibility and contribute little.
- **Compass vs. Saboteur:** Compasses guide others towards the institution's deeper purposes and inspire excellence. Saboteurs deliberately undermine new ideas and actions.
- **Spirit Guide vs. Keeper of the Nightmare:** Spirit Guides bring wisdom, peace, and a connection to higher values, grounding everyone. Keepers of the Nightmare focus on past failures and drain the energy needed for progress.

As partners in mission, the roles we choose and model are critical. It is essential that we bring positive energy, attitudes, and presence to the table. Your sacrifices to help us in our work of building a holy and just Church and society are significant, and our mission work should reflect the effort and investment you've made in us.

We know the right actions to take to model gospel values. The challenge lies in finding the strength and moral courage to make those choices daily. For me, loving family and friends, a supportive community, and reliance on God have been crucial. The impact of your efforts to support us in our mission is profound. Thank you for accompanying us as we dream big, work hard, change lives, challenge oppressive systems, and create meaningful change in our world. May our Loving God bless each one of you.

Christina Heltsley, O.P.

Sister Christina Heltsley, OP
Prioress of the Congregation

Heartfelt Gratitude

Warm greetings from Sinsinawa Mound. As we reflect on the abundant blessings and profound impact of your support this past fiscal year,



Barbara Brandt

we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you. Please review our Office of Philanthropy Annual Report on pages 6 and 7. Your generosity has enabled us to continue our mission of preaching and teaching the Gospel, advocating for social justice, and serving those in need.

As the vibrant colors of autumn dress the landscape and we move into the season of harvest and abundance, please know that your continued partnership remains essential as we navigate the challenges and opportunities of the future—a future where justice, compassion, and love prevail.

Please be assured of our prayer for you and your loved ones, and we ask for your prayer as well. We are truly blessed to have you as part of our family.

Barbara Brandt

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P.S. Help us honor our 2024 jubilarians! See pages 8 and 9.



Sr. Priscilla Wood at Antiques Roadshow

Antiques Roadshow Excitement

At Living History Farms outside of Des Moines, IA, Sister Priscilla Wood, OP, experienced *Antiques Roadshow* live! She was one of 3,250 people who received tickets to this June event through a PBS lottery. Her first stop was with a folk art appraiser to show a weather vane from the old show-er house for the St. Clara Academy girls at Sinsinawa, WI—it was valued at \$250 to \$350. Then, she visited a collectibles appraiser with a set of “magic lantern slides” from the Academy. One set was astronomical, the other was illustrations for fairy/folk tales. The appraiser estimated they were from the 1870s and valued each set around \$1,000. The most valuable item appraised was a gift to one of our Sisters. It was a framed, Disney-certified animation cel from a 1937 Donald Duck cartoon estimated at \$3,500! The paintings appraiser valued our John Fery art at \$500 because he felt it was more of a sketch than a finished painting. Our Persian rug was valued at \$2,000 by the rugs and textiles appraiser. “We talked with lots of people from across the United States—Arizona, Kansas, and even East Dubuque, IL,” said Sr. Priscilla. “It was a full day and a great experience!”

Sisters’ Achievements

Beacons of Hope

Sister Julie Schwab, OP, was featured in an article in *National Catholic Reporter* titled “Sinsinawa Dominicans spread mission through collaborative farm programs.” The Sinsinawa Mound Collaborative Farm is four acres of organic land that is rented to local farmers. “We believe the life force that flows through creation, through our land, through the animals, through humanity, is sacred,” said Sr. Julie. “We feel a strong obligation to care for Earth.” The Congregation is also expanding its agricultural outreach plans for a farmer-led learning center on the property, Fields of Sinsinawa. The center is a place for farmers to teach and learn about protecting and nurturing healthy soil, harvesting nutrient-dense food, and cultivating community.



Sister Marilyn (Antonietta) Aiello, OP, was featured on WKRG CBS Channel 5 news in Mobile, AL, in a story titled “The Legacy of Dr. James A. Franklin: ‘It wasn’t about color. It was about health.’” As a doctor, he was threatened by a lynch mob for touching a white woman who received health care from him at the pleading of her husband because she was dying from Spanish flu in 1916. He fled with his family from Evergreen, AL, to Mobile and began practicing medicine there. Sr. Marilyn said, “The black community did not feel welcome in white areas, so it was very difficult, and that’s why Dr. Franklin was so essential and important. He was highly educated and a good doctor, and he never turned anyone away.” He died in 1972. His death left a void in the community that encouraged Sr. Marilyn to become a physician in her mid-30s. She founded Franklin’s Primary Health Center, and the nonprofit continues to operate on a sliding scale based on income.



Sister Christina Heltsley, OP, received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, and delivered the commencement address for the University of San Francisco (USF), CA, School of Education in May. President of USF Rev. Paul J. Fitzgerald, SJ, wrote this about Christina: “Your unwavering dedication to the principles of education, service, and spiritual growth reflects our hoped-for ideals





Fields of Sinsinawa Continues Growth

Farmer-Led Learning Center Makes Strides

“Education will continue to be the hallmark of mission from Sinsinawa Mound outward!” declared Sister Sheila (Brigidan) Fitzgerald, OP, as she shared updates on Fields of Sinsinawa: A Farmer-Led Learning Center. “Much activity is underway. Fields are planted in the well-tended soil with an eye to sharing techniques and new learnings as the year progresses. Contented cows are now moving across the landscape in well-designed smaller paddocks for grazing. This practice is often referred to as rotational or adaptive grazing. These are dairy heifers who are pregnant with the next generation! They seem very happy with the new arrangement.”

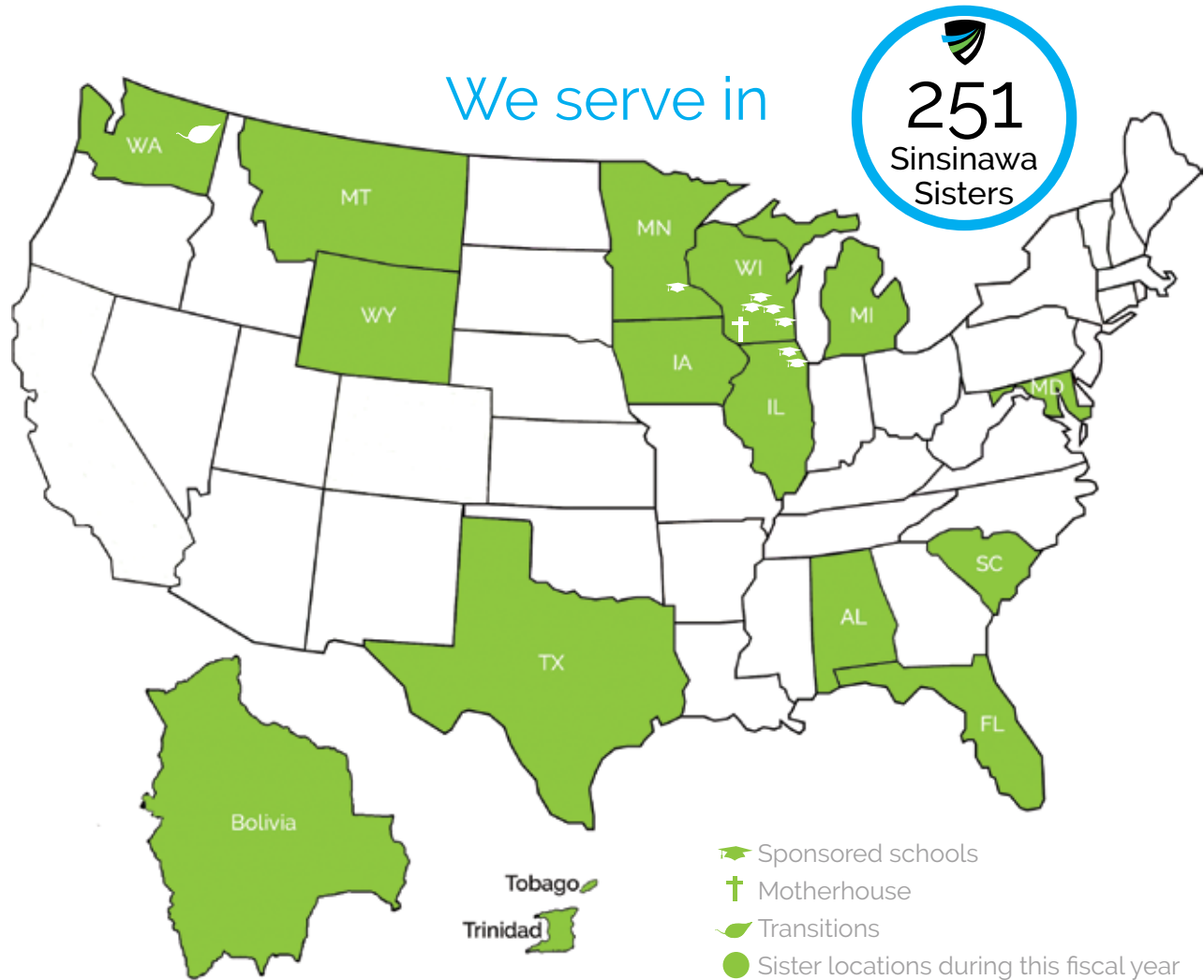


New around Sinsinawa is Rick Bieber, a member of the Fields of Sinsinawa Land Committee. “We call him the ‘soil advisor,’” said Sr. Sheila. “He brings significant knowledge and understanding of how soil functions and

how to let the soil speak for itself.” Rick and members of the land committee have been testing soil and water and observing all varieties of growing things to establish benchmarks for comparison as various practices are introduced. Sr. Sheila said, “What we know so far is that we have been blessed by the Runde and Leibfried families who have tended this precious soil for many years. Their organic practices have kept much of the water flowing through our land free of harmful nitrates as it continues its way downstream and on to the Mississippi River.”

Fields of Sinsinawa connected with partners beyond the Mound and even beyond the tristate area this summer. Ecdysis, known as the 1,000 Farms Initiative, made Sinsinawa a hub this August as it surveyed and assessed regenerative practices on numerous farms in the area. This data will spotlight the impact of regenerative farming. “Fields of Sinsinawa has made gigantic strides in just one year,” said Sr. Sheila. “We Sinsinawa Dominicans are proud to partner with this endeavor.”

of your Jesuit education and resonates deeply with the mission of USF. Your extraordinary work while serving more than 20 years as the executive director of the St. Francis Center in Redwood City (CA) demonstrates your unwavering commitment to fostering compassion, understanding, and social justice and aligns elegantly with the values of your alma mater and the Dominican Order. In your role as Prioress, you bring your spiritual gifts to governance for the good of the Order and all of the people your Sisters serve. . . . You have demonstrated exceptional leadership and vision, particularly in your efforts to promote inclusivity and empower marginalized communities.” Christina’s address can be viewed at youtu.be/G3qqH5R0j-c.



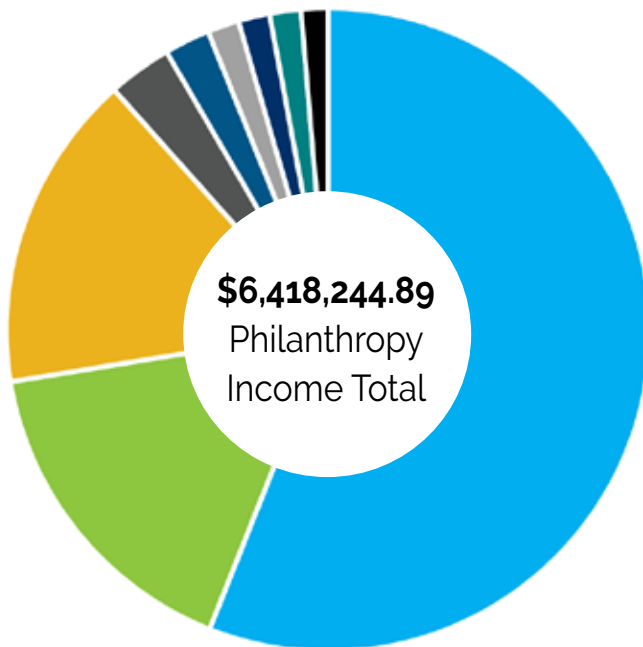
We minister as

administrators
 health care consultants
 social workers
 nurses
 librarians and docents
 teachers and tutors
 gardeners
 artists
 musicians
 development directors
 professors

pastoral caregivers
 religious educators
 spiritual directors
 justice promoters
 writers and poets
 sacristans and liturgists
 community organizers
 principals and presidents
 immigration advocates
 environmental educators
 therapists

executive directors
 archivists
 prayer partners
 facilitators
 organizational consultants
 attorneys
 psychologists
 preachers
 project managers
 treasurers
 historians

Many share in our journey of responding to the needs of the world



- **Estates**
\$3,594,827.53
- **Capital Campaign**
\$1,053,594.26
- **Appeals and *Dominican Vision***
\$1,026,455.39
- **Foundations and Corporate Grants**
\$205,600.00
- **Honors and Memorials**
\$147,165.00
- **Online/Social Media Donations**
\$101,712.41
- **Unsolicited Donations**
\$101,401.51
- **Recurring Donations**
\$100,419.79
- **In-Kind Gifts**
\$87,069.00

Thank you for your support!

Sisters Celebrate Jubilee

A Combined 1,495 Years of Ministry!

Join us in honoring our Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa celebrating 15, 25, 40, 50, 60, 70, and 75 years of religious life in 2024! To read about these Sisters or make a donation in their honor, go to sinsinawa.org/jubilee online or use the enclosed envelope.



70 Years

- 1) Sr. Clara (Ona) Blozis, OP
- 2) Sr. Elizabeth (Marie Maddalena) Fiorite, OP
- 3) Sr. Eleanor (Francesco) Hoffmann, OP
- 4) Sr. Catherine (Catherine Genoa) Houtakker, OP
- 5) Sr. Mary (Pedra) Marie, OP
- 6) Sr. Marilyn (Marie Emilie) Schlosser, OP
- 7) Sr. Shirley (John Gorcum) Schreiber, OP
- 8) Sr. Martha (Dominic Savio) Wiegand, OP
- 9) Sr. Mary Louise (Bernardin) Wieseler, OP



75 Years

Sr. Sigrid Simlik, OP



50 Years

Sr. Judith Jewison, OP



40 Years

Sr. Elayne Hill, OP



25 Years

Sr. Kathleen Smith, OP



15 Years

Sr. Priscilla Torres, OP



Stay Connected with the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa



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[youtube.com/@sinsinawa](https://www.youtube.com/@sinsinawa)



Video streaming sinsinawa.org/live



Email prayer intentions to prayers@sinsinawa.org



60 Years

- 1) Sr. Joan (Marie Herve) Duerst, OP
- 2) Sr. Elizabeth (Mary Denysa) Dunn, OP
- 3) Sr. Kathleen (Mary Joseph) Hayes, OP
- 4) Sr. Elaine (Marie Alice) LaCanne, OP
- 5) Sr. Marie (Doris) Lucek, OP
- 6) Sr. Judith (Lucilla) Mather, OP
- 7) Sr. Maureen (Dolorosa) McDonnell, OP
- 8) Sr. Judith Nilles, OP
- 9) Sr. Mary Catherine (Marie Louis) Rice, OP
- 10) Sr. Elizabeth (Francis Xavier) Rodkewich, OP
- 11) Sr. Marie Stella Storch, OP



Stair Crest Sisters and residents collected over 10 lbs. of containers. Sr. Catherine (Catherine Genoa) Houtakker (left) spearheaded the effort of removing labels and washing, drying, and mailing the containers. Also pictured is Sr. Mary Catherine (Alberto) St. Martin.

The Sinsinawa Dominican Laudato Si' Committee discussed Pope Francis' exhortation *Laudeum Deum*. Sisters at Stair Crest, Muskego, WI, wanted to act in response to his urgent request to change our lifestyle in some way. They decided to collect empty medicine containers and send them to Matthew 25 Ministries in Blue Ash, OH. There, the containers find their way to disaster victims in the United States and around the world and are used to provide several days of medications to those who fled their homes without it.

Enter Sweepstakes!

The Sinsinawa Sweepstakes drawing will be held Oct. 8, 2024, at noon. If you would like to receive entries, please contact the Office of Philanthropy at philanthropy@sinsinawa.org or (608) 748-4411, ext. 292. We count on your support for our ministry and retirement needs by participating in Sinsinawa Sweepstakes 2024!



Make a Donation

If you wish to include the Sisters in your estate plan, our legal name is Sinsinawa Dominicans, Inc., and our federal tax ID number is 39-0816854. To transfer securities, please contact the Office of Philanthropy using the information on p. 3. To donate now, please use the enclosed envelope, visit sinsinawa.org/donate, or scan our Venmo (left) or Sinsinawa (right) QR codes.



Miraculous Mazzuchelli Encounter

Sr. Toni Harris Visits Relative of Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli

“Father Vittorio Mazzucchelli . . . has a strong assumption that he may be a great-great-grand-nephew of your Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP.” With these words, Sister Mary (Maria de Ricci) Paynter OP, then Promoter of the Cause for Fr.



Fr. Don Vittorio and Sr. Toni Harris meet in Italy.

Samuel, was introduced to the story of Fr. Don Vittorio Mazzucchelli. After being involved in a serious automobile accident, Fr. Don Vittorio awakened from his coma that lasted more than a month on the very day after the novena to Fr. Samuel ended, Feb. 24, 2006.

Co-Promoter of the Cause Sr. Toni Harris, OP, visited Fr. Don Vittorio in March at Casa Santa Maria della Pietà, the care facility where he resides in Prato, Italy. Fr. Don Vittorio told her that, in his family, Fr. Samuel was referred to as *Zio Beato* (Blessed Uncle). “He recalled when he was a child and if he misbehaved, his grandfather would say, ‘Your *Zio Beato* would not be pleased with you.’ As he spoke about his family, it was very clear that there was a pervasive sense of relationship with and devotion to Fr. Samuel—especially on the part of his grandfather,” said Sr. Toni. Her summary of Fr. Don Vittorio’s miraculous recovery follows. *While Don Vittorio was comatose, he heard someone calling his name. Then a teenage boy wearing a white medical coat came to him in his hospital bed and urged him to get up and follow him. He helped Don Vittorio remove the bed covers, sit up, and put his slippers on. He said Don Vittorio had to get up because “they” were waiting for him. The boy led him to an elevator, and they took it up to a place where the door opened onto a wide, green, grassy field. Don Vittorio heard bells ringing and saw what looked like three wells,*

but rather than being filled with water, they overflowed with light beaming to the sky. Many people were walking around these wells of light. His grandmother who had died in 1989 approached him and said, “This is not where you belong.” His aunt who had died in 1974 also drew near and said,

“They are waiting for you back there. You don’t belong here.” Finally, he heard a voice which he believes was Fr. Samuel who greeted him and said it was not Don Vittorio’s time to be there. Indicating that he should go back, his Zio Beato said, “Mazzucchellis do not surrender (give up).” Don Vittorio said Fr. Samuel spoke with the same accent that Don Vittorio knew from his grandfather. At this moment, Don Vittorio became aware that the doctor in the hospital was moving his arms and speaking to him. He was in his hospital bed, awakening from the coma.

Sr. Toni said Fr. Don Vittorio was moved to tears as he shared the experience of this vision. She was also moved by the encounter. “He emphasized many times how much affection he has for his ‘cousins,’ the daughters of his uncle, Fr. Samuel’s Sisters,” she said. “He prays for the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters every day at his Mass.”

Co-Promoters of the Cause Sr. Toni and Sr. Judy Schaefer, OP, continue efforts to obtain the necessary medical records documenting the unexpected awakening of Fr. Don Vittorio from his coma. “No matter the outcome, the opportunity to meet Fr. Don Vittorio and to experience his profound relationship with his *Zio Beato* were unforgettable gifts,” said Sr. Toni. “We pray that the fervent love and labors of Fr. Samuel may become more widely known.”

She Is with God

Remembering Our Deceased Sisters

Up-to-date Sister death notices are posted on our website at sinsinawa.org/obits.



Sister Elaine Ann (Bartholomew) Taylor, OP, died April 23, 2024. Professed in 1961, her ministry was dedicated to teaching the

arts. In Minnesota, she was a teacher at Incarnation School in Minneapolis and at Consolidated Catholic Schools and Bethlehem Academy, both Faribault, where she also taught art. In Illinois, she taught art at St. Thomas Apostle School and St. Benedict High School, where she also taught religion, both in Chicago, and at Trinity High School, River Forest. Sr. Elaine also taught at Annunciation School, Green Bay, WI, and she taught art at St. Mary High School, Cheyenne, WY. In Florida, she ministered as a drama teacher at Rosarian Academy, West Palm Beach, and as religion and drama teacher at Sacred Heart School, Pinellas Park, and Academy of the Holy Names School, Tampa. She founded and directed the St. Petersburg Petite Little Theatre. May she rest in peace.



Sister Regine Pawelski, OP, died April 26, 2024. As Rose Pawelski, she worked at Hein Insurance Agency, Stevens Point,

WI, and then earned an RN degree and worked at St. Mary's Hospital, Madison, WI. She then entered the congregation and made her profession in 1962 as Sr. Regine. Her ministry was dedicated to nursing. Sr. Regine served as RN at St. Dominic Villa, Dubuque, IA. In Wisconsin, she served as director of the health center for 11 years and as RN for 24 years at the Dominican Motherhouse, Sinsinawa. She also ministered

at St. Luke Hospital, Milwaukee, and provided family care in Mosinee. May she rest in peace.



Sister Rita Clare Kristoff, OP, died May 11, 2024. Born as Patricia Anne, she first made profession with the School Sisters of St. Francis of Christ the King, Lemont, IL, in 1958. She transferred her vows to the Sinsinawa Dominicans in 1995. Sr. Rita Clare's

ministry was dedicated to elementary education. As a Franciscan Sister, she taught for 30 years working extensively with children with learning disabilities. As a Dominican Sister, Sr. Rita Clare ministered in Illinois and taught at St. Thomas More School and St. Basil School and served as resource person and helped children with special needs at St. Thomas the Apostle School, all Chicago. She also served as catechist at Divine Infant Parish, Westchester. May she rest in peace.



Sister Mary Margaret "Penny" (Marie Albert) Smith, OP, died May 22, 2024. Professed in 1961, her ministry was dedicated to

education. She graduated from Rosary College, River Forest, IL, with a BA in chemistry and received her MA in religious studies from Providence College, RI. Sr. Penny taught at St. John Cathedral High School, Milwaukee, and at Aquin High School, Freeport, IL. She was director of religious education at St. Thomas Villanova Parish, Palatine, IL, and served as associate director of religious education for the Archdiocese of Mobile, AL. Sr. Penny was also cofounder and volunteer at St. John Food Pantry, Ozark, AL. May she rest in peace.



**Dominican Sisters
OF SINSINAWA**

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- Misspelled name
- Wrong address
- Remove my name
- Duplicate copies received
- Addressee deceased



From left: Srs. Mary Ann Nelson, Mary Ann (Marie Richarde) Carroll, Beth Wrenn, Ginny (Marie Florence) Pfluger, Sheila (Johanna) Griffin, Mary Louise (Bernardin) Wieseler, Kathy Flynn, Priscilla Torres, and Julie Schwab prepare to help Srs. Sheila and Mary Louise with their move from Prairie View Manor to Racine.

Big Welcome at Racine

Called to Be Itinerant Preachers

The Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa partnered with the Racine Dominicans to provide a new congregate housing location on the shores of Lake Michigan. Seven Sisters moved in June from Prairie View Manor (PVM), Footville, WI, to the Racine Dominican Motherhouse, Racine, WI. Three more Sisters moved from other locations in Wisconsin. Several Sisters, Associates, and friends helped with the move.

Our Mission

As Sinsinawa Dominican women, we are called to proclaim the Gospel through the ministry of preaching and teaching in order to participate in the building of a holy and just Church and society.

Our Leadership Council

- Prioress Christina Heltsley, OP
- Vicaress Julie Schwab, OP
- Councilor Elizabeth Pawlicki, OP
- Councilor Christine Feagan, OP
- Councilor Judith Schaefer, OP
- Councilor Jeanne Tranel, OP