Franciscan Family & Friends,

What a summer this has been! For Clinton Franciscans, the days have been filled with gatherings, meetings, celebrations, retreats. These are important days of planning for the future, while living out our mission of active nonviolence and peacemaking.

We began in June with a silent preached retreat titled, Contemplation in Our Lives. The retreat was led by Father Donald Goergen, a Dominican priest, professor and author. He reminded us that, “the fruit of our contemplation is a diminished self-centeredness or self-preoccupation.”

Sister Bertha Zeiser, who shared life with us for 87 years, passed away on June 14 at the age of 105. Sister Bertha was a high school math and religion teacher, serving also as principal. She taught at Mount St. Clare Academy for 33 years. She also taught grade school at St. Francis de Paula, Chicago, Illinois, and high school at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Fonda, Iowa; St. John, Victor, Iowa; and St. Ann, Lexington, Nebraska. Her last mission was in Reedley, California, where she served as receptionist at St. Anthony Parish.

Our Chapter week in July was an exciting and blessed time for the Clinton Franciscan Family. Day after day we talked in small and large groups, formally and informally, about the direction of the Congregation for the next four years and the type of leadership we needed for this time. At Chapter, we affirmed our charism of ongoing conversion and rededicated ourselves to living and promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking. Through shared leadership, we will focus our efforts to co-create a world where all creation is held sacred. We reaffirmed our corporate stands of:

- ending the death penalty
- supporting nuclear disarmament
- supporting comprehensive immigration reform
- opposing all forms of human trafficking

A new leadership team was elected for 2016-2020 by the Sisters of St. Francis during Chapter week. An installation ceremony was held September 3 at The Canticle. Those elected to the leadership team are Sisters Jan Cebula (President), Marilyn Huegerich (Vice President) and Kathleen Holland (Second Councilor).
Sister Jan Cebula will leave her position as U.S. Liaison for Global Sisters Report, a project of the National Catholic Reporter, at the end of September and move to Clinton. Sister Marilyn Huegerich will relocate to Clinton after her replacement as principal and teacher at St. Mary School in Alexandria, Indiana is found. Sister Kathleen Holland is currently in Clinton working at the Sister’s administrative office.

Also in July, we rejoiced with Sisters and Associates celebrating their 75, 70, 60 and 25 year jubilees. Among the celebrants were Sisters Pauline Logsdon, Beatrice Griffin, Marilyn Barry, Marilyn Shea, Martinelle Bonnell and Associates Cindy Barnhart and Sandra Jacobs.

We concluded our July gatherings with an outing to a Clinton Lumberkings baseball game. Sister Phyllis Morris threw out the first pitch. The game was a city-wide celebration of our 150th Anniversary year. We donated a peace pole to the City of Clinton, inscribed on four sides with the words written in English and other languages, “May peace prevail on earth.”

We said goodbye to Sister Marie de Lourdes Davenport in August. We were blessed to have Sister Marie de Lourdes as part of our Clinton Franciscan Family for close to 68 years. She ministered in the health care field for 28 years. In Clinton, she served at the former Mount Alverno Home for the Aged in 1951-1952. For fifteen years, she was a general duty nurse in health care facilities then owned and staffed by the Clinton Franciscan congregation: St. Francis Hospital, Grinnell, Iowa; Mercy Hospital, Burlington, Iowa; and St. Francis Hospital, Macomb, Illinois. In 1967, she was assigned to Freeport, Grand Bahama in the Bahama Islands where she served in public health nursing until retiring from active nursing duty in 1979. During her retirement years, she greeted people and answered the telephone in the reception office. In her spare time she enjoyed reading, playing games, and putting together jigsaw puzzles.

To expand our Franciscan mission of active nonviolence and peacemaking, prayerfully consider a gift to the Sisters of St. Francis. Your generosity enables us to serve where the need is greatest and where our talents are best used.

You may also contribute to the Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa Endowment. The Endowment will be used to help alleviate homelessness and will financially assist organizations that currently work with those living in poverty or at the risk of being homeless. All gifts to the Endowment by Iowa taxpayers qualify for an Endow Iowa tax credit of 25% of the value of the gift. This credit is in addition to other charitable tax deductions.

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