

In This Issue

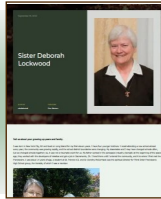
Celebrating 175 years!



Mother Alfred



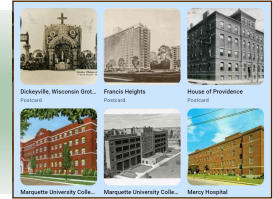
Oral Histories



"Letting Go"



Postcard Collection



**How charism is bringing collections together
ACWR conference session features FCA member panelists**



Forming a charism-based archives repository will be the focus of a Sept. 14 panel presentation at the Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) Triennial Conference. Attendees will hear from four panelists representing the collaborative **Franciscan Central Archive (FCA)**.

Panelists for the afternoon presentation are archivists Veronica Buchanan of the Cincinnati Sisters of Charity, Holly Fiedler and Sister Mary Serbacki, both of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, and Sister Joanne Schatzlein, director of

the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis, Wisconsin.

The vision of the FCA is to carry the Franciscan charism and legacy into the future. Geared to both preserving and providing central records access for research and information availability, the FCA will bring together material on shared histories and ministries, rare books and more. Women's and men's communities are included in this not-for-profit venture.

Guided by their Franciscan spirit, the participating entities make joint decisions regarding the FCA. Each starts out with an archival assessment followed by an onsite visit from the FCA archivist and meeting with community leadership. Each entity's policies and restrictions are respected.

Welcome!

The FCA welcomes its three newest communities to the collaborative:

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
La Crosse, Wisconsin

Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate
Joliet, Illinois

Wheaton Franciscans
Wheaton, Illinois

They join partners:

Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity

- * *Stella Niagara, New York*
- * *Redwood City, California*
- * *Denver, Colorado*

Franciscan Sisters of Allegany *New York*

Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
Rochester, Minnesota

Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
St. Francis, Wisconsin

**A sustainable, charism-based collaborative repository
for the combined archival collections of Franciscan entities across the United States.**

First congregation of vowed Franciscan women established in the United States in 1849

Trinity of communities celebrate 175 years

Three communities united by a common foundation celebrate their 175th anniversary this year. They started with a small band of Third Order Franciscan women and men who traveled to America from Bavaria to teach a growing population of German Catholic immigrants. On May 28, 1849, Milwaukee Archbishop John Martin Henni officially welcomed them to his diocese. The women in the traveling party would become the first vowed community of Franciscan women in the United States.

In their first decade in St. Francis, Wisconsin, the pioneering women endured extreme poverty, loss of their beloved Bavarian priests in a cholera epidemic, and endless workdays at the convent, seminary and orphanage. They had a persistent sense of dismay that they were not fulfilling their true calling and spiritual commitments. The trials eventually caused the discouraged founders to leave the community in 1860. The remaining Sisters lamented but chose not to follow.

In the early 1860s, a new mother superior moved the Motherhouse from St.



On June 23, 2024, Bishop James Schuerman of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee presided at Mass at the Basilica of St. Josaphat. Pictured with him are the leaders from the three congregations (L to R): Sister Sylvia Ann Sheldon, OSF; Mother Miriam Seiferman, FSE; Sister Charlotte Roost, OSF; Sister Joanne Schatzlein, OSF; Sister Sue Ernster, FSPA.

Francis to Jefferson, Wisconsin. Sisters lived and worked at both locations, and expanded their service. Nearly a decade later, the Motherhouse was moved a second time—to the newly established Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin, where the congregation’s spiritual director was named the first bishop.

Some Sisters continued living and working in Jefferson and St.

Francis. After several opted to remain at the original St. Francis convent, even after being summoned to La Crosse, the community separated to form two congregations. These are the **Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi (OSF)** and the **Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA)**. In the 1970s, a third congregation emerged as the **Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist (FSE)** and moved their new community to Meriden, Connecticut.

The three communities remain united by a common foundation, grateful for the ways God has used their divergent paths to bring about ministries that meet the needs of a worldwide community. ☪

See page 3 for a 175th anniversary reflection by Sister Sarah Hennessey, FSPA.



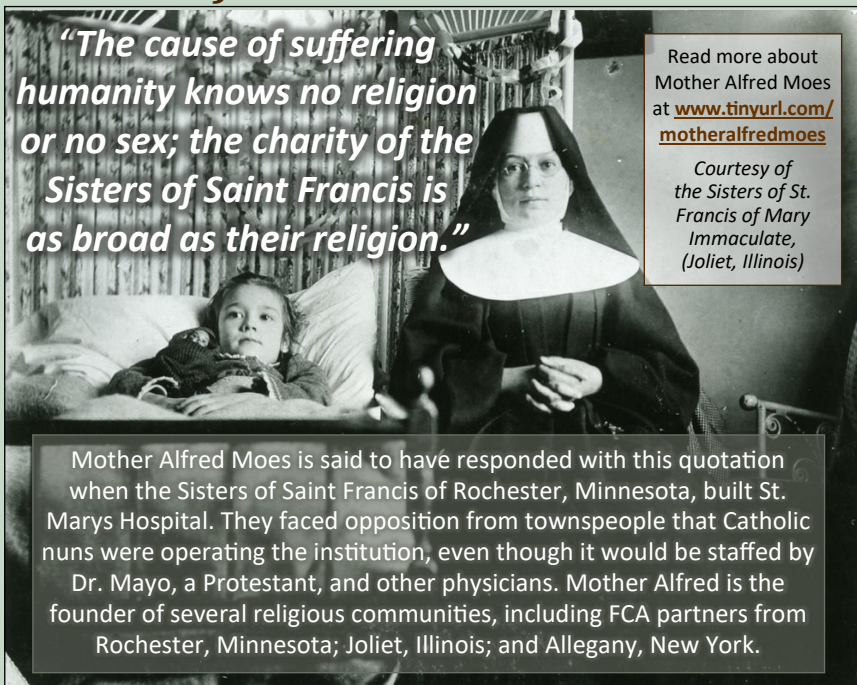
In April 2024, a two-day pilgrimage brought 25 FSPAs and Affiliates from La Crosse to St. Francis and Jefferson to join OSFs in visiting the sites of the original Motherhouse and praying at the gravesites of the founders and other beloved Sisters.

1849-2024



Mother Alfred Moes

Quotation from



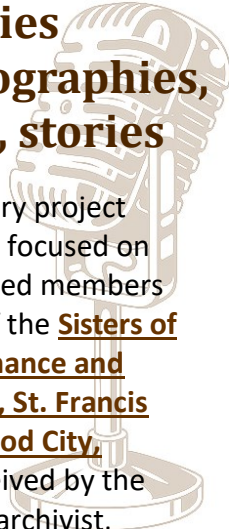
“The cause of suffering humanity knows no religion or no sex; the charity of the Sisters of Saint Francis is as broad as their religion.”

Read more about Mother Alfred Moes at www.tinyurl.com/motheralfredmoes

Courtesy of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate, (Joliet, Illinois)

Mother Alfred Moes is said to have responded with this quotation when the Sisters of Saint Francis of Rochester, Minnesota, built St. Marys Hospital. They faced opposition from townspeople that Catholic nuns were operating the institution, even though it would be staffed by Dr. Mayo, a Protestant, and other physicians. Mother Alfred is the founder of several religious communities, including FCA partners from Rochester, Minnesota; Joliet, Illinois; and Allegany, New York.

Oral histories capture biographies, reflections, stories



An oral history project launched in 2017 focused on interviewing vowed members and associates of the **Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, St. Francis Province, Redwood City, California**. Conceived by the former province archivist, Kathleen O’Connor, the collection captures biographical stories and reflective thoughts about Franciscan values, spirituality and service.

Interviewees shared endearing remembrances of family and how they were called to the Franciscan way of life. The histories were gathered by Kathleen and others in person at community locations; detailed notes were taken. Associates then uploaded the transcripts to webpages and included photographs.

What happens to a dream over 175 years?

by Sister Sarah Hennessey, FSPA *Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (La Crosse, Wisconsin)*



What happens to a dream over 175 years? The Spirit is breathed into the dream and takes on flesh. She wakes up early in the morning to put on her habit and teach children in a one-room schoolhouse. She nurses the sick, sets sail for China, lives through a war in El Salvador and wakes up in the middle of the night to pray before the Blessed Sacrament.

She reads the signs of the times and changes with Vatican II. This dream dances with the Spirit, she works for justice, opens a spirituality center, tends to the Earth and continues to live the radical and prophetic call of religious life.

In 1849, 14 Tertiaries left Bavaria with only a dream and a hope. They faced challenges unimaginable. Opportunities coaxed forth from God’s heart, opened before them.

The Spirit still breathes through us. Challenges and opportunities lie before us in a future unforeseeable. Yet every day our Franciscan story continues to call us to listen deeply to the needs of our world. We are to be a people living this heritage both through modern lives and sacred traditions.

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stfrancisprovince.org/sisters

A reflection by Sister Sue Artone-Fricke, OSF, Provincial Minister/President Sacred Heart Province of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity (Denver, Colorado)

“Letting go” precedes milestone anniversary



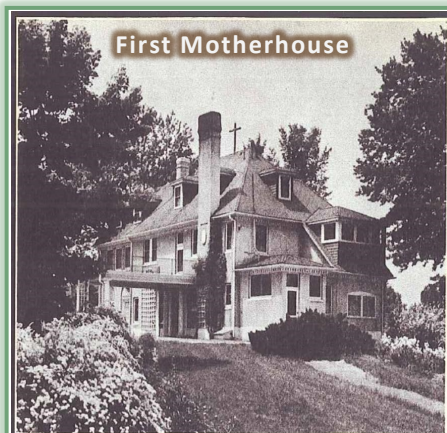
In this 150th anniversary year of our Congregation’s coming to this country, we are a province of 17 Sisters. We no longer sponsor corporate ministries but our properties include Casa Chiara in Denver, a one-acre public permaculture garden called Little Portion and our mountain retreat cabin.

Since 1997, **Sacred Heart Province of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity** has been in long-range planning. We began by divesting of our nursing home and hospitals in three states due in large part to fewer Sisters to staff, manage and govern them. Just two years later we no longer had Sacred Heart Corporation which oversaw the facilities, although we had

recently opened the assisted living center in Denver. By that time, with help from consultants, we began studying our Sisters’ demographics and properties, discovering that the quickly declining membership portended that Marycrest Motherhouse, Denver, and other convents would need to be vacated in the near future.

By 2007, we sold several convents and were under contract to sell the Marycrest property to a developer who shared our mission to serve the poor. This was accomplished by constructing housing for low- to middle-income populations. In the process we demolished the Queen of Peace Convent and built the Casa Chiara Community of eight duplexes to house our Denver headquarters and several Sisters. In 2022, we closed the Marian Residence in Nebraska which provided care for our aged and infirm and transitioned the remaining four Sisters to licensed care homes.

While we have had our share of painfully difficult times together, we attribute the



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS
DENVER, COLORADO



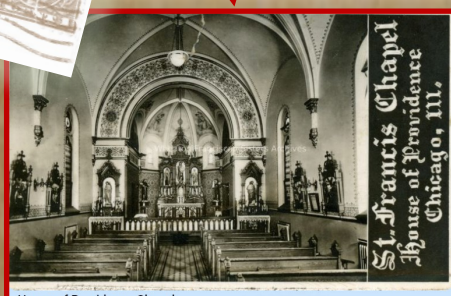
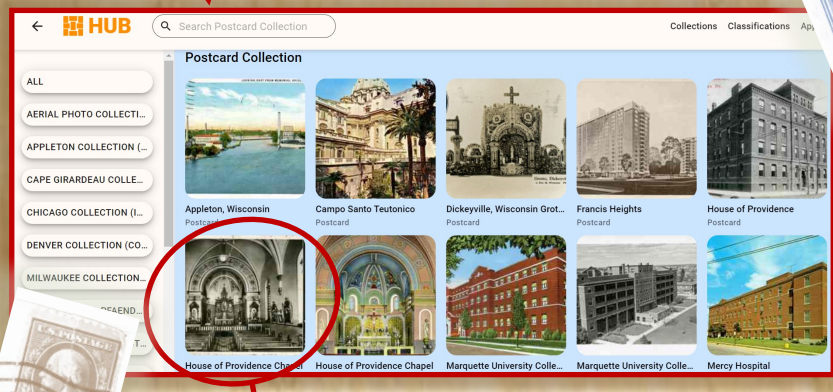
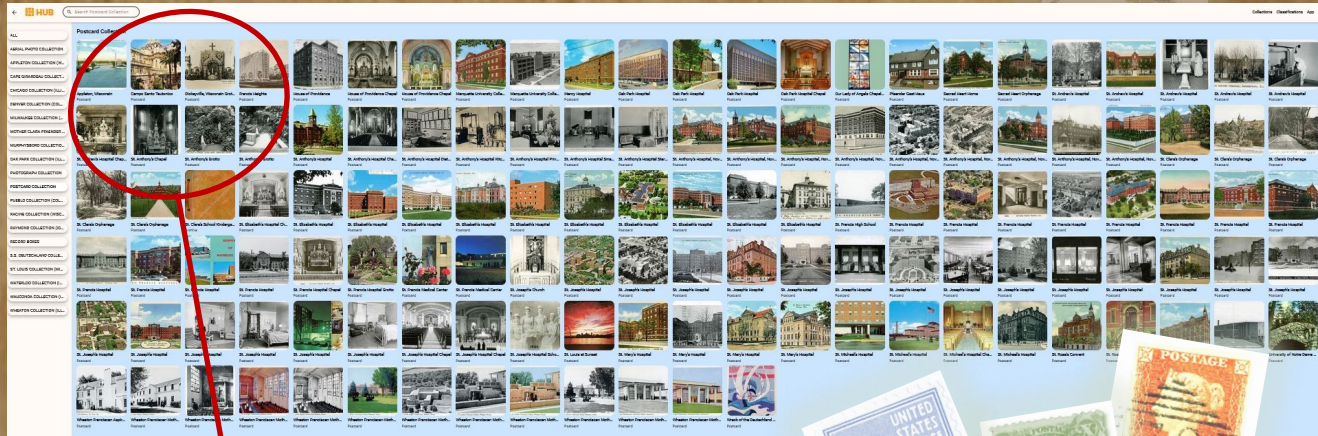
success of our transitions to prayer and contemplation in which God moves us and provides for us in our personal and communal lives. ☪



Mission Statement:
The Franciscan Central Archive (FCA) preserves, protects, and provides access to the records of its Franciscan entities for the purposes of research and knowledge through a collaborative repository that will carry the Franciscan charism and legacy into the future.

Postcards enhance the Wheaton Franciscans' archives

by Kevin Korst, Archivist *Wheaton Franciscans (Wheaton, Illinois)*



House of Providence Chapel
JPEG

House of Providence Chapel Postcard

Wheaton Franciscan Sisters Archives

Description


Postcard of the chapel in the House of Providence located at 1121 North Orleans Street in Chicago, Illinois. Dedicated in 1892, the chapel underwent a number of renovations in the following decades. There is a brief handwritten message on the back.

Opened in September of 1882, the House of Providence was founded as a residence for young working women. Due to an overwhelming number of applicants, the structure was doubled in size a decade later. The successful ministry continued until the building was sold to Daniel O'Brien and renamed Margaret Manor in 1962. Later, the location was home to MADO Healthcare.

The archives of the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters

include numerous postcards of places and people that preserve memories of the community's impact across the United States. During their 150 years in this country, the Sisters built a network of ministries that encompass healthcare, affordable housing, orphanages and more.

Digitizing the postcard collection began two years ago and is still ongoing. To make them accessible and reach a wider audience, Archivist Kevin Korst uses CatalogIt, a

web-based collections software for museums and archives. The postcards, often featuring vibrant colors and beautiful handwritten messages, are available for viewing online. 



www.tinyurl.com/WheatonPostcards



FranciscanCentralArchive.franciscanway.org

Executive Board

President: Holly Fiedler
 Vice President: Sister Celia Struck, OSF
 Secretary: Veronica Buchanan
 Treasurer: Sister Mary Serbacki, OSF

Connect with us!

FCArchive@franciscanway.org
 Holly Fiedler (303) 458-6270 x112

We recognize the **urgency for Franciscan congregations to find permanent repositories** for their archives that will **safeguard the community's charism and legacy** for future generations.

The Franciscan Central Archive will be a physical center, **following national archival standards, with a reading room, exhibition space, lecture hall, and robust virtual presence.**

Researchers will be able to study congregational ministries, shared vocations, and Franciscan charism across the collections. The FCA will be supported by charism-based educational programs and social engagement to ensure its members' legacies are carried into the future:

Participation is open to Franciscan communities and organizations.

FCA

PURPOSE

History & Memory
 Knowledge

GOALS

Preserve
 Inform & Connect
 Foster Collaboration
 Engage & Inspire

VALUES

Responsible Stewardship
 Integrity & Accountability
 Professional Service
 Sustainability



Services and Initiatives

- Guidance and resources concerning archives
- Assist leadership with hiring or contracting archivists
- Needs assessment and strategic planning for members and FCA
- Assist members to prepare their archives for transfer
- Seek grants and donations to assist members and reduce costs
- Enable donor development and gift campaign to support efforts
- Initiate agreements for members
- Facilitate move of members' archives to the FCA
- Promote and increase accessibility to FCA collections, bringing forth the shared Franciscan spirit

Volunteers and Funding

- Funding is dependent upon grants, donations, legacy gifts, and participating member contributions. We need your help to see FCA through next steps and into the future.
- Volunteer assistance is welcome for grant writing, development, fundraising, administrative tasks, and other projects.



Why the name Troubadour? St. Francis of Assisi was known to say,
 "What are the servants of God if not his troubadours,
 who must move people's hearts and lift them up to spiritual joy?"