



CROSSROADS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHICAGO



ISSUE 37 - WINTER 2021



FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHICAGO

Celebrating 127 Years of Compassionate Service to Those in Need

11500 Theresa Drive, Lemont, IL 60439
Phone (630) 243-3600 • Fax (630) 243-3576

**ROOTED IN THE GOSPEL, UNITED IN PRAYER AND COMMUNITY,
WE SHARE FRANCISCAN JOY AND SERVE GENEROUSLY.**

--- Mission Statement of the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, December 8, 2010

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION LEADERSHIP TEAM

Sister M. Bernadette Bajuscik, General Minister
Sister Jeanne Marie Toriskie, General Vicar
Sister M. Helene Galuszka, General Councilor/General Secretary

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On the Cover: Statue of Mary located on the balcony in the Sacred Heart Chapel of Our Lady of Victory Convent

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DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Timothy McLaughlin
Communications Coordinator

Vicki Olsen
Administrative Assistant

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Buffy Adams, *St. Jude House*

Betsy Garbrecht, *Madonna Foundation*

Sister M. Bernadette Bajuscik

PROOFREADING

Jill Kachin

Sister Kathleen Melia

Sister Jeanne Marie Toriskie

Visit our websites & Facebook page

www.chicagofranciscans.org, www.mothertheresadudzik.com

Facebook.com/franciscansistersofchicago

SWINGING FOR THE SISTERS 11TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

The Franciscan Sisters of Chicago held their 11th annual Swinging for the Sisters Golf Outing on June 23, at Cog Hill Golf and Country Club in Lemont. There was a wonderful turnout this year as over a hundred golfers attended.

The golfers began the day with breakfast prepared by the staff at Cog Hill. They then lined up in their golf carts to get ready to go to their assigned starting hole. Sister M. Bernadette Bajuscik, General Minister of the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, thanked the golfers for participating in the event and then wished them good luck.

After a long day of golf, the golfers were served a barbecue lunch. There was also a prize raffle and a split the pot prize after lunch. All donations received will help support the Sisters and their ministries.



Golfers drive out to their starting holes at the beginning of the event.



(Above) The event was held at Cog Hill Golf and Country Club in Lemont. (Below) A golfer tees off to start his round of golf.





(Above) The golfers lined up to get ready to go to their starting holes. (Below) Sr. M. Helene Galuszka, Sr. M. Bernadette Bajuscik, and Sr. M. Francis Clare Radke welcome the golfers.



Sr. Jeanne Marie Toriskie, Betsy Garbrecht from Madonna Foundation, Sr. Doloria Kosiek, and Sr. Emilie Marie Lesniak



The Sisters thank all who participated, volunteered, and the following generous sponsors and donors:

Wintrust Bank - Dedicated Sponsorship

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The Flooring Guys - Underwriter of the Golf Balls

SERVPRO of Joliet - Morning Drink Bar Sponsor



(Left) Sr. Emilie Marie Lesniak, FSC Associate Mary Mosser, Belinda Alicea with Franciscan Ministries, and Sr. Jeanne Marie Toriskie. (Center) Sr. Cindy Drozd participated in the 'Beat the Nun' challenge (pictured here with Tom Mason). (Right) The golfers get ready for lunch after the outing.

Also thank you to the following Hole Sponsors & Donors: Nissan North America, Bell Litho, Birk Plumbing Inc., Assurance Agency, Henry Bros Co., John Grele, Anchor Capital, Meany Inc., Nania Energy Advisors, Franciscan Ministries Finance & IT Departments, Perkins Eastman Architects, The Flooring Guys, Lockport Strike N Spare II, LSV Asset, Kenwood Liquors, Callahan Plumbing, Huntington National Bank, Health Care Service Corp, and Markiewicz Funeral Home.



Team Flooring Guys

Thank you to all who donated raffle prizes: 3 Corners Bar & Grill, Car Quest Auto Parts, Denise Boudreau, Cog Hill Golf & Country Club, Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, Elizabeth Garbrecht, Glen Eagles Country Club, 4 Star Liqueur, Mary Mosser, David Nelson Exquisite Jewelry, Vicki Olsen, Old Oak Golf & Country Club, Carol Oprondek, Susan Parker, Pete's Fresh Market, St. Jude House, The Tap House, United Cleaners, and Christine Zielke.



Team Unidine

Thank you to all who golfed with us, provided foursomes, or sponsored foursomes!



(Left) Team Storecom won the best round challenge. (Right) Ryan Elinkowski (St. Jude House), Tracy Shearer (Franciscan Ministries), and Buffy Adams (St. Jude House).



Team Henry Bros.

LAUDATO SI' ACTION PLATFORM

On Care for Our Common Home

In 2015, Pope Francis issued his second encyclical to the world, entitled *Laudato Si', on care for our common home*. This encyclical is a direct appeal to citizens of Earth to begin a discussion about the future of our planet. The title is an Umbrian phrase which translates to "Praise be to you." It is taken from St. Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of the Sun*, a prayer the famous saint wrote in which he praises God for all of his creations and earthly aspects such as Brother Sun and Sister Moon and then reaffirms his ideology of rejecting materialism. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis writes on the urgency to face environmental challenges and urges everyone to embark on a new path with him; one that shows care for the planet and for fellow humans. He states, "Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection to brother sun, sister moon, brother river, and mother earth." He concludes, "The earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone." The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform is a multi-year plan to make communities around the world sustainable in the spirit of the integral ecology. There are seven initiatives of *Laudato Si'*: response to the cry of the earth, response to the cry of the poor, ecological economics, adoption of sustainable lifestyles, ecological education, ecological spirituality, community engagement, and participatory action.



Pope Francis

In response to Pope Francis' call, the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago have reviewed the initiative, and then responded to the Pope's challenge. Here is their official statement on the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform: "Our Foundress, Venerable Mary Theresa Dudzik, reflected on what she saw in the streets and alleys of Chicago on a record cold winter day in the 1890s: 'I felt the misery and suffering of others, and it seemed to me that I could not love Jesus, or even expect heaven, if I were only concerned about myself... Consequently I was constantly occupied with the thought of how I could be of service to the needy and the poor.' We, her daughters, together with our Franciscan Associates, continue to hear the cry of the needy and poor, and of our anguishing Mother Earth. Therefore we commit ourselves to walk the seven-year journey towards integral ecology called for by Pope Francis in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. We pledge our time, energy, resources, and creativity to educate, advocate, and act on behalf of our suffering Mother Earth and on behalf of all of our sisters and brothers who live together with us in her embrace."

In this article, we will focus on the first two initiatives: response to the cry of the earth and response to the cry of the poor, and the work the Sisters have done in addressing these initiatives.

Response to the cry of the earth

The response to the cry of the earth is a call to protect the environment for the well-being of all. Pope Francis pushes for action on the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability. The Franciscan Sisters of Chicago have long focused on improving the environment and protecting biodiversity around Our Lady of Victory Convent and Franciscan Ministries in Lemont. Native trees such as redbud and red maple trees were planted around the border between the houses and Franciscan Village. A butterfly garden that grows purple coneflowers was planted behind the FSC Administration building. These flowers are native to northeastern Illinois. Also around the grounds of the convent, there are lots of flowers, trees, bushes and other beautiful pieces of landscape that have always been well maintained by the excellent plant operations team that works for the Sisters. They have also instituted regular litter removal around the grounds of OLV Convent.



Environmental scenes around OLV Convent show the butterfly garden behind the FSC Administration building, the pond near the Sisters' cemetery, and the a line of trees along the path from the Franciscan grotto to the Stations of the Cross area.

Response to the cry of the poor

The Sisters have always responded to the cry of the poor. Their foundress, the Venerable Mary Theresa Dudzik, started the congregation in Chicago during an economic downturn and came to the aid of the aged, poor, abandoned, and orphaned in the city. She developed the building blocks of compassion, love and support that the Sisters have provided to so many poor and suffering people in need. Over the years, the Sisters have responded to the cry of the poor through many ways including:

- Sharing monetary resources through the FSC ministry grant program
- Participating in multiple immigrant advocacy groups and direct services
- Assisting African Outreach by providing education services to Upendo Village and providing monetary grant resources to the 'Friends of Imiliwaha' and the African Sisters Education Collaborative
- Participating in social services, counseling, and parish outreach through the Quinn Center and Coalition for Spiritual and Public Leadership

- Helping the homeless through the Southwest Chicago Homeless Center and through Franciscan Outreach
- Sponsoring of St. Jude House, a family violence prevention center, and working with domestic abuse agencies
- Participating in the Native American Ministry with the St. Kateri Center and De La Salle Blackfeet School
- Assisting in youth programs such as the Juvenile Protection Agency and the Padua Center
- Establishing the Theresa Dudzik Innovation Grant and sharing monetary resources

In the next issue of Crossroads the other initiatives of *Laudato Si'* will be covered, how the Sisters have been addressing these initiatives, and their future plans to heed the call of Pope Francis.



(Left) The Sisters offer the Theresa Dudzik Innovation Grant award annually to their participating sponsored communities.

(Center) The Sisters often work with the immigration advocacy group, Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants.

(Right) Supporters of St. Jude House from FSC and Franciscan Ministries.

A Christian prayer in union with creation by Pope Francis

+ Father, we praise you with all your creatures. They came forth from your all-powerful hand; they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love. + Praise be to you! Son of God, Jesus, through you all things were made. You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, you became part of this earth, and you gazed upon this world with human eyes. Today you are alive in every creature in your risen glory. + Praise be to you! Holy Spirit, by your light you guide this world towards the Father's love and accompany creation as it groans in travail. You also dwell in our hearts and you inspire us to do what is good. + Praise be to you! Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is. + God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. + Praise be to you! Amen.



This statue of Jesus is at the Stations of the Cross at OLV Convent.



100%

Employee

VACCINATION



Franciscan Ministries and Franciscan Advisory Services announced that its Home Office and senior living communities have achieved a 100 percent vaccination rate among associates. “This is truly a testament to the commitment and dedication of each and every one of our associates to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our residents,” said Franciscan Ministries CEO and President Judy Amiano.

Since the pandemic began, Franciscan Ministries has implemented a number of measures to keep residents and associates safe, from on-site vaccination and booster shot clinics to the announcement this summer that all employees must be vaccinated. Ministry leadership has recognized the unique role that senior living providers have in fighting COVID-19 and protecting older adults from the virus. Achieving 100 percent vaccination among associates is an important milestone in the journey to post-pandemic recovery, and Franciscan Ministries remains

committed to putting the health and safety of our residents and associates first. Over the past year, the Ministry has received an outpouring of support from residents and family members who have taken the time to offer much-needed words of encouragement, wisdom, and hope. “Our Franciscan Family has given us the strength and courage we need to brave this storm and look for the light in everything we do,” Amiano said, expressing gratitude for those who have come together during the pandemic.

Franciscan Ministries, which operates long-term communities throughout the Midwest, joined a growing list of healthcare organizations, associations and senior living operators mandating COVID-19 vaccinations among associates. The Ministry reached its 100 percent vaccination goal ahead of the national mandate that will require all long-term care employees to be vaccinated to protect seniors who have been devastated by the virus.

I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH HIM WHO STRENGTHENS ME

Sister M. Bernadette Bajuscik Shares her Story!



Sister M. Bernadette Bajuscik

In 2021, Sister M. Bernadette Bajuscik, General Minister of the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, celebrated her 61st year in religious life. Recently, Sister reflected on her life and wrote down some of her memories. The first part featured here in this issue of Crossroads will focus on her childhood, being the oldest child in a large family of nine children and her aspirations to become a religious. Many thanks to Sister M. Bernadette for sharing her story!

Sister M. Bernadette Bajuscik was born on September 15, 1942, in St. Mary's Hospital in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, and was the first child born to John and Helen Bajuscik. She was named Elizabeth Marie



Sister M. Bernadette as a one year old.

after her two grandmothers and baptized in the Byzantine Rite. At this time, her family lived in Glassport, Pennsylvania. "My father John was an immigrant from Ostrov, Slovakia, and he came to America with his mother and siblings when he was just four years of age. They came to join my grandfather who had already migrated to America a year earlier. My mother Helen was born in Duquesne, Pennsylvania, and was of Hungarian ethnicity."

Sister Bernadette's father John went to work as a milkman at the age of twelve. He learned how to drive a milk truck, as he would often sneak behind the wheel when the deliveryman wasn't looking and drive to the next house for deliveries. Later he would work at the Copperweld Steel Company first as a laborer and then on a blast furnace. John also learned the gunsmith trade from a book and designed wooden stocks for rifles. Developing a love of woodworking and carpentry, he often made furniture, picture frames, and grandfather clocks as well. Sister Bernadette's mother was a stay-at-home mom at first and an excellent cook, seamstress, and homemaker. "My mother was a natural mother. She just loved children – her own and others. The house was always full of her children and their friends. She also had a natural inclination to cure and comfort. Some years later, at the age of 52, my mom became a nurse and worked at McKeesport Hospital. She enjoyed this position for ten years until an accident made her take early retirement."

John and Helen soon had more children with the birth of Judith Ann in 1943. "Even though Judy and I squabbled as youngsters, I always thought of Judy as "my first sister, my first friend," Sister said. The family grew larger with the birth of Georgeann (Georgia) Ernestine (1945), John (Jack) Nicholas (1948), Peggy Lee (1950), Francis



Sister M. Bernadette and her sister Judy

(Mike) Michael (1954), twins William (Bill) Joseph and Dolores (Dee) Jean (1955), and Timothy (Tim) Lawrence (1956). "Just before my 6th birthday we moved to nearby Port Vue. The house was not completely built when we moved. Until I was 14, we lived in the basement of this house. It was a bright and cheery place. During this time, my parents saved money until they were able to build the first and second floors of this house - the house of their dreams."

Sister Bernadette was enrolled in first grade at Romine Avenue School in Port Vue. Her house was only a mile away from her school, but her new neighborhood streets weren't paved yet, thus the streets were often muddy. This made walking to her new school a bit of a challenge as Sister Bernadette recalls, "My mother thought we had moved to the wilderness because none of the streets were paved. There was mud everywhere and we soon learned that my mother did not like mud! Since she was five months pregnant and with two other children at home, I had to learn how to get to and from school on my own. Going downhill was easy, but the hike up was more challenging! Finally, even though I was very shy, I made friends and the journey to and from school became more pleasant."

Being the oldest in a large family, Sister Bernadette soon took on the role of "big sister" as she recollects: "Because the then eight children slept all in the same room, I would make up stories to tell my siblings until they were able to fall asleep. Many times I would sing songs and insert the names of my siblings into the songs in order to entertain them. I loved caring for my brothers and sisters and I was like a second mother to them." Eventually the family moved upstairs in the house as more room was needed and then eventually a second floor was added which let Sister Bernadette and her sister Judy finally have their own rooms.



Sister M. Bernadette with her family in 1960

As a child, Sister developed a love of music. "From an early age, I would sit with my father and listen to music for hours on end. Sometimes my sister Judy and I would dance to the music. Later I took piano lessons, but since I didn't have a piano at home, I would practice on a cardboard piano. I only heard the music once a week when I went for lessons. My maternal grandfather, Nicholas Ellis, gave me his player piano a couple years later." Sister also developed a love of sewing from her maternal grandmother and also from her mother who was an accomplished seamstress. "I became very good at sewing, so much so that when I enrolled in home economics classes in middle school, I became the unofficial teacher assistant. My mother also taught me how to crochet and

I decorated many pillow cases and doilies. Now I continue to crochet, but instead of decorating pillow cases and doilies, I crochet beautiful afghans and doilies.”

Sister was inspired to join the convent at age twelve. After CCD classes, she would often help the Daughters of the Divine Redeemer clean their convent. Her parents were against the idea of her joining the convent. “My parents told me that I could not go to the convent. They felt I was way too young. However, if I wanted to go after finishing high school, they would support that decision. At first I was very disappointed, but only a year later, I was happy that I didn’t go to the convent. I was enjoying my family, even all the chores, my friends, going to school and having a good life. I liked being with my brothers and sisters and helping my mother care for them. Later, my mother asked me if I wanted to read a book that she had when she was a young girl. It was called *The Song of Bernadette*. I said that I wasn’t interested and my mother let it pass.” Little did Sister Bernadette know at the time, this book would be influential to her in the near future.

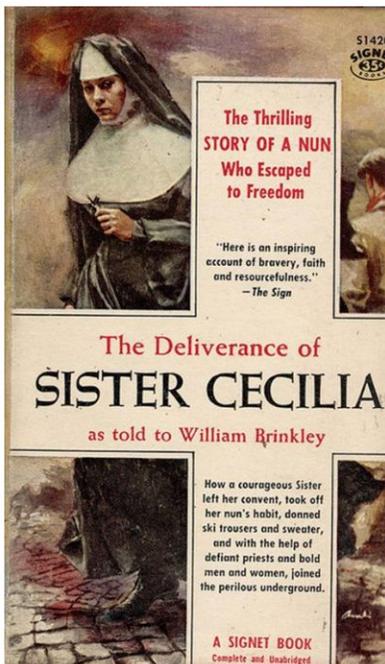


Sister M. Bernadette as a child on a family visit to Fort Necessity in Pennsylvania.

Sister has wonderful memories of her childhood. Her family would often go to the nearby cherry farm and pick cherries and they would use converted coffee cans as pails. “I often thought that the owner of the farm should have weighed us when we came and before we left because many of the cherries went into our mouths and not the pails! When we got home, we would pit the cherries and my mother would make delicious cherry pies and cherry jam.” Sister and her family would also go to Jefferson Beach near her home to swim in the river. “My father was an excellent swimmer and taught us how to swim, dive, and stand on our hands underwater. When we were with him, we were never afraid. My mother would pack a delicious lunch of potato salad, watermelon, and hot dogs for us to roast. We also roasted marshmallows as my dad would build a fire on the beach and prepare sticks from tree branches, so we could roast our hot dogs and marshmallows on them.” In the springtime, Sister and

her siblings would go into the nearby forest to collect wild flowers for May altars. “We had a statue of Mary on top of a dresser and we would decorate it all during the month of May. Many times I took my brothers and sisters to church for various devotions or events.”

At the end of ninth grade, Sister Bernadette had to choose which high school to attend. She chose to go to nearby Glassport High School in Glassport, Pennsylvania. “With our class split between the two schools I had to make new friends. During these high school years the Scripture quote, *‘I can do all things through Him who strengthens me’ (Philippians 4:13)*, became my anchor. I was very shy in my younger years and whenever anything seemed too scary, difficult or something new, I’d repeat this scriptural phrase for comfort and support. It has remained to this day the backbone for all my decisions.” Sister began to think about religious life again when she was 15 years old and a sophomore in high school. “I can best describe it as a yearning, a feeling in my heart that God might be calling me



The Deliverance of Sister Cecilia
by William Brinkley

again. I remembered the book, *The Song of Bernadette* (by Franz Werfel), that my mother had asked me to read years ago. Suddenly, it seemed like something that I would be interested in reading, so I asked my mother for her copy and that was the beginning of my journey to religious life.”

While a junior in high school Sister Bernadette came across the book, *The Deliverance of Sister Cecilia*, by William Brinkley. Sister Cecilia Kondrc was born in Brestovany, Slovakia, in 1911. She joined the congregation of the Daughters of Most Holy Savior in Bratislava in 1928, and became a kindergarten teacher. In 1948, her country (now Czechoslovakia) began going through major political turmoil as communists took over the country’s government and began persecuting political activists and religious leaders. Soon the government forbade all nuns from teaching and forced them to take other jobs. This forced Sister Cecilia to work in a hospital. She soon joined an underground movement that helped struggling people by giving them food, clothing, and medicine. She also helped them hide from the communist secret police and eventually escaped the country to gain their freedom. Sister Cecilia herself was almost arrested because

of her work in the underground movement, but she managed to sneak away and then later escape to Germany and eventually to Canada and the United States. While in Canada, Sister Cecilia stayed with her relatives who had come to Canada earlier. An article about her miraculous escape from communism was written in *Life* magazine in 1954, and her story was developed into a television episode on the program, *Circle Theater*, and then soon after a book was written. Eventually Sister Cecilia went to live with the Vincentian Sisters in Homestead, Pennsylvania, and taught kindergarten. Homestead was close to where Sister Bernadette lived. When Sister Cecilia became a US citizen, her photo was published in the local newspaper and Sister Bernadette saw it. “On a lark, but with my parents’ permission, I wrote a letter to Sister Cecilia and invited her to dinner with my family. My mother figured that Sister wouldn’t even bother to answer the letter let alone come to dinner. Surprise of all surprises, she not only answered my letter, but she did come for dinner. Sister Cecilia’s community, the Daughters of the Most Holy Saviour (DMHS), had the practice of going to their families for visits and staying overnight. They also visited the homes of their students. This was in the late 50s and this practice was unheard of in America at that time. Sister Cecilia said later, that for some reason she felt urged to accept my invitation whereas in the past, she would decline such offers because the Vincentian Sisters did not go home and she didn’t want to be different while living with them. I do remember the hustle and bustle that went on in the house while getting ready for Sister’s visit. My mom was beside herself with preparations. My dad and I went to get Sister and bring her to dinner. It was a lovely event and it led to many more visits over the next two years.”

Sister Bernadette had met with the Felician Sisters and visited their motherhouse near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She met some of the girls who were to join the community and filled out her entrance paperwork to join them. After discussing her decision to join the Felicians with Sister Cecilia, Sister Bernadette discovered the congregation rarely went home to visit their families. “After the visit, I went to our local Felician convent to visit with the Sisters

and to ask if they went home for visits. I learned that they only went home for a grave illness or the death of someone in the immediate family. With sadness, I said good-bye and didn't send in my papers. The local superior, whom I had become friendly with, tried to talk me into joining anyway, but I was too tied to my family to make that choice and so I didn't join the Felician Sisters as planned."

Sister Bernadette continued to visit with Sister Cecilia who made frequent trips to see her and her family. "During one visit with Sister Cecilia while in my senior year of high school, I asked her if she would start her congregation here in America and that I would join her. Thus a new adventure began. At first Sister was not open to this idea. She would take me to visit other communities. I went along as a companion, not realizing that she wanted me to join one of these communities. Finally, she agreed to start her community here in America." Sister Cecilia began inquiring with several bishops on the best approach to start her community. "We had to smuggle a letter with this idea to the Sisters in Slovakia who were living in concentration convents. They had very little freedom and were suppressed by the communists."



Sister M. Bernadette as a senior in high school

During this time, Sister Bernadette continued to work at the local bingo parlor, a job she held since she was 16. She graduated from high school in 1960, and continued to wait for news on starting the community. In December of 1960, Sister Cecilia received a Christmas card from a group of Sisters in Oakland, California. "We learned that they had been given permission from Rome to have a novitiate. At the same time we got permission from the Bishop in Hamilton, Canada, to come to his diocese and the Ursuline Sisters there would train me. Now I had a decision to make: California or Canada. I talked it over with my family and we thought it best to be with the sisters of

the community I was joining and to stay in the States, even though it meant going further away from home." Thus, Sister Cecilia and Sister Bernadette boarded a train from Pittsburgh bound for Oakland. "It was a very tearful time. I didn't want to leave my family, but I knew that it was what I was being called to do. I had a great childhood with loving parents. To me, they were the best. I loved my siblings dearly and I knew I would miss my family tremendously. Leaving my family was one of the greatest sacrifices that I ever made in my life. However, my Scripture passage that I have always tried to live by 'I can do all things in Him who strengthens me' gave me the strength to continue on." Thank you to Sister Bernadette for sharing her wonderful memories. We will continue her story in part two, which will appear in a later edition of Crossroads.



Sister Cecilia Kondrc with Sister M. Bernadette



MADONNA FOUNDATION

*Franciscan Ministries sponsored by
the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago*

The Madonna Foundation, established in 2001 and sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, continues a tradition that the Sisters began at Madonna High School in 1949. The Foundation has provided more than 1,400 awards totaling \$3.4 million in scholarship funding, along with dynamic college readiness programming. Many thanks to all the supporters and donors who, through the Madonna Foundation, assist the next generation of accomplished and compassionate leaders.

Our 2021 Graduates

All 14 Madonna seniors graduated this spring and will attend college in the fall. Their hard work and dedication resulted in multiple acceptances and scholarship offers from colleges and universities coast to coast. The aggregate total of scholarship offers was more than \$4,720,000. Congratulations to all graduates as they begin the next stage of their educational journey.



Five seniors received exemplary awards for their dedication and service all four years as a Madonna Scholar. Pictured left to right: Ryan C., Hannah A., Alexis H., Jennifer R., and Priscilla B.

Madonna Scholars 2021

Jessica O.

University of Michigan

Priscilla B.

University of Notre Dame

Martina P.

DePaul University

Ryan C.

*University of Wisconsin –
Whitewater*

Hannah A.

Illinois Wesleyan University

Maria V.

St. Xavier University

Nabiha A.

Oakton Community College

Kayla V.

Hope College

Crystin M.

Western Illinois University

Alexis H.

Columbia College - Chicago

Jennifer R.

Arrupe College

Xitlali P.

Loras College

Nairobi D.

Concordia University

Maddie F.

College of Southern Nevada



(Left) Betsy Garbrecht of Madonna Foundation holds a banner with employees of Franciscan Ministries and Madonna Scholars during the Madonna Mile at OLV convent. (Right) Madonna Scholars and family members stand in front of the famous Chicago Bean sculpture.

Madonna Mile 2021 - August 2021

This year's Madonna Mile fundraising walk was held in August with over 100 people participating in the event throughout the month. Many participants joined together as a group and supported the Madonna Foundation wearing Madonna Mile t-shirts and carrying supportive banners and messages. Some of the Madonna Scholars and their family members walked the mile through the city of Chicago and posed for photos in front of the famous Chicago Bean sculpture. Another group from Franciscan Ministries also made the walk along the trails in the beautiful grotto area at Our Lady of Victory Convent in Lemont. The Madonna Foundation thanks the following sponsors: Automated Business Designs, Symbria Inc., Dino's Pizza, Franciscan Ministries, Franciscan Advisory Services, MHS Alumnae, Running for Kicks, and Marathon Sportswear.

Trivia Night - October 2021

The Madonna Foundation held its annual Trivia Night fundraiser on October 1 at Resurrection College Prep High School in Chicago. There was a great turnout this year with over 15 teams. Many came to enjoy trivia and friendship while supporting the Madonna Scholars. Congratulations to *Team - Life is a Highway* for winning the event! Special thanks to the Madonna Foundation event committee for making it a huge success.



There was a wonderful turnout for this year's Trivia Night as Madonna High School Alumnae, families of Madonna Scholars, and other supporters came to the event.

Madonna Advisory Council

To further the work of the Madonna Foundation, the Madonna Advisory Council was formed in 2018 to bring together a group of professional women deeply committed to our mission. Well-established in their careers and communities, they work with the foundation to build mission awareness, expand networks, guide strategies, broaden our base of support, and personally support the foundation through giving at the leadership level. Meet three members of the Madonna Advisory Council who share their perspective:



"I am on the Advisory Council of the Madonna Foundation because I believe that a Catholic education should be available to students regardless of income, and I believe the personal support and sisterhood that the Madonna scholars enjoy because of the Foundation will help to nurture intelligent, thoughtful women who are true assets to their families and to their communities." – *Mary Slowik*



"I serve on the Advisory Council because I want to help the young girl who aspires to be something great and just needs a little help to get there." – *Andrea Urban*



"I work on behalf of the Madonna Foundation on the advisory council because I believe In Catholic education and to be able to help girls receive an excellent and supportive education makes me smile." – *Barbara Sipe*

Madonna Foundation and Madonna High School Alumnae Association Join Forces!

The Madonna Foundation is happy to announce that it has teamed up with the Madonna High School Alumnae Association. Are you a MHS Alumna? Please visit madonnahsalumnae.org and update your contact information. If you would like to volunteer, join a committee, or help in any way, you can visit the alumnae website for more details.

If you would like to support the Madonna Foundation, you can make a donation online at madonnascholars.org or contact Betsy Garbrecht at (331) 318-5170.

The Madonna Foundation thanks all who continue to help, and show their support, carry on the tradition of Madonna High School. It is because of you that the Sisters' legacy of educating and empowering teen girls continues. You may also follow them on facebook at [Facebook.com/madonnianpride](https://www.facebook.com/madonnianpride) and Instagram [@MadonnaScholars](https://www.instagram.com/MadonnaScholars).

A SURVIVOR CELEBRATION

St. Jude House Holds Event for Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month. St. Jude House, a family violence prevention center sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago, officially recognized the month with its 'Survivor Celebration Sing-A-long' event. This special event was held on Thursday, October 7, in Bulldog Park in Crown Point, Indiana, and was presented by First Midwest Bank. The event was a huge success and one of the largest St. Jude House events ever. Nearly 500 community members joined together in the park to honor all the victims and survivors of domestic violence. The celebration featured music and dueling pianos as well as a raffle, food trucks, and guest speakers. There was also an Awareness March where people walked to pay tribute to the victims and survivors of domestic abuse.



Indiana Congressman Frank J. Mrvan

Indiana Congressman Frank J. Mrvan was the featured keynote speaker. The first-term congressman spoke to the crowd and stressed the importance of lifting the stigma that's attached to domestic violence victims. He told an emotional story from his time serving as a trustee for North Township in Lake County, Indiana. A few years ago during the Thanksgiving holidays, Congressman Mrvan received a phone call from a concerned East Chicago pastor who was looking for help for a domestic violence victim who had contacted the pastor for assistance. Congressman Mrvan then called Ryan Elinkowski, Executive Director at St. Jude House, who then provided shelter for the woman and her four children at St. Jude House. Congressman Mrvan said, "I reference that

story because it's all about caring, and it's all about making sure you know your resources. Very often when hope is lost, people do not know there are resources to help them. Let today be a beginning...the beginning of being ambassadors for those vulnerable populations that need to know where to turn when they need help."

Another speaker at the event was domestic violence survivor, Amy McCarthy. As a survivor, McCarthy said she was often asked why she didn't tell people about the abuse she received or why she didn't just leave the relationship. "I look back and I say: 'What would I tell myself five, ten, or twenty years ago? What would I say?' I would say this, 'You are beautiful. You are strong. You are smart. You are special. You are important. You can do anything. You can do it. You can get out, and you can break free. You are brave, you are courageous, and you are not alone' – and that's what we need to say. Those are the words we all need to say." McCarthy offered words of encouragement to women who suffered like she did and held a flashlight out, "I am going to be right beside them. When they can't seem to find their path, I am going to light the way for them, and I encourage you to do it with me."



Attendees participated in a Domestic Awareness March to Bulldog Park in Crown Point, Indiana.

Designed t-shirts from the Clothesline Project, a national campaign which raises awareness for survivors of assault and abuse, hung on display throughout Bulldog Park. They served as an impactful visual display of domestic violence statistics. Each shirt was designed by a former client living at St. Jude House. St. Jude House Executive Director Ryan Elinkowski addressed the crowd stating that, "Our collective goal should be to turn domestic violence awareness into domestic violence action."

During the event, St. Jude House honored Madisyn Wimple for her fundraising efforts and presented her with the inaugural 'Young Philanthropist of the Year' award. This is a new award that highlights young people in the surrounding communities who are working to change the future for the better. Madisyn has been fundraising for St. Jude House for the past 7 years with her 'Spread the Love' project. When Madisyn was just six years old, she asked her friends to donate much needed household necessities for St. Jude House to her birthday party in lieu of birthday gifts. Her efforts have grown so much over the years that she needed a U-Haul trailer to deliver all the items that her friends, family, and neighborhood raised for St. Jude House. Her 'Spread the Love' project has truly been inspirational.



Madisyn Wimple



The staff at St. Jude House recently participated in team building exercises at Living Hope Church in Merrillville, Indiana.

Community Partners Honored

St Jude House honored their community partners, LGS Plumbing and Americlean, for their recent innovative fundraising campaigns. LGS Plumbing donated one percent of every service invoice to St Jude House and Americlean donated five percent of any services rendered when the customer mentioned St Jude House. AmeriClean owner, Anthony Eriks, also issued a surprise \$5,000 fundraising match challenge in October. Every dollar donated during the month was matched and over \$10,000 was raised. Many thanks to AmeriClean and LSG Plumbing for all their help!

St. Jude House Wish List

For more information about donating to St. Jude House call (219) 662-7066 or visit stjudehouse.org.

Follow them at [Facebook.com/stjudehouse](https://www.facebook.com/stjudehouse)

Gift Cards

Gas cards
Amazon, Walgreens
Target, Walmart, Kohls

Household Items

Disinfectant wipes
Trash bags, paper towels
Toilet paper, air fresheners
New pots and pans
Drinking glasses, dish sets
Coffee pots, toasters
Silverware, serving utensils

Children's Needs

Baby monitors, slippers, robes
Children's toys

Clothing Needs

Women's pajamas
Slippers, robes
Women's leggings
Women's underwear: Size 5-8
Purses
Women's gym shoes
Women's winter coats

Pantry Needs

Bottled water
Snacks such as potato chips
Fruit snacks, granola bars, cookies
Juice, pop, lemonade

Use Amazon Smile to shop and select St. Jude House-Crown Point, IN. Amazon will automatically donate a portion of your shopping proceeds to St. Jude House, at no cost to you.

EULOGY



Eulogies are prepared by Sister M. Bernadette Bajuscik, General Minister. A memorial has been established for each Sister in the Legacy Fund and gifts can be made in their memory at any time. Often those close to our Sisters remember their deaths and death anniversaries with a memorial gift. When a Legacy Fund gift is received soon after a Sister dies, we respond with a personal note of thanks and enclose the Sister's prayer card that includes her picture. All gifts are promptly acknowledged. Please join us in prayer for our departed Sisters and for all those who loved them.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF SISTER MARY CLARE BRUNKALA

Birth date: January 28, 1927

Entered Religious Life: September 30, 1952

Born Into Eternal Life: November 14, 2021

"Let the sisters and brothers be gentle, peaceful and unassuming, mild and humble, speaking respectfully to all in accord with their vocation."

(The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order

Regular of St. Francis of Assisi)



Dorothy Cecilia Brunkala was born in Chicago, Illinois, on January 28, 1927, and was baptized a couple of weeks later on the 13th of February at St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr Church. Dorothy was the youngest of six children of Anthony and Catherine Brunkala, both of whom were from Poland. Dorothy had two brothers and three sisters. Years later at the age of ten, Dorothy made her confirmation on October 31, 1937.

Dorothy felt called to the nursing profession and began her nurse's training in 1950. During this time she heard God's call and entered the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago on September 30, 1952.

On February 2, 1953, Dorothy became a postulant and later that year on August 12th she entered the novitiate and received the name of Sister Mary Clare. Two years later, Sister made her First Profession of Vows on August 12, 1955 and her Final Profession on August 12, 1960.

Even though Sister Mary Clare had two years of nurse's training, she was sent as a postulant to teach kindergarten and first grade at St. Joseph School in Calumet, Indiana. As a second-year novice, Sister taught the second grade at Five Holy Martyrs School in Chicago, Illinois, and the following year she taught the first and second grades at St. John the Baptist School in Campbell, Ohio.

In 1956, Sister Mary Clare was sent to Huron, South Dakota, to complete her nurse's training at St. John School of Nursing. Sister graduated on June 11, 1957. For the next 28 years Sister Mary Clare ministered as a registered nurse at various places. She was at Atkinson Memorial Hospital, Atkinson, Nebraska, St. Anthony Hospital in Martin, South Dakota, St. John Hospital in Huron, South Dakota, St. Anthony Home in Crown Point, Indiana, Mother Theresa Home in Lemont, Illinois, the infirmary at Our Lady of Victory Convent in Lemont, Illinois, St. Joseph Home in Chicago, Illinois, and Mount Alverna Home in Parma, Ohio. At St. Anthony Home, Sister also served as a chauffeur. While at Mother Theresa Home, Sister was Director of Nursing and when Sister served at St. Joseph Home and Mount Alverna Home, besides her nursing duties Sister served as the sacristan.

In 1985, Sister Mary Clare came to live at Our Lady of Victory Convent in Lemont, Illinois, and until 1999 Sister served as a registered nurse in the infirmary and chauffeur and shopper for the sick sisters. She was also the local secretary for three years and assistant superior for another three years. In 1999, Sister became the sacristan for the Motherhouse chapel. She served in this capacity until 2017 when she retired completely and dedicated her time to prayer.

In 2012 Sister Mary Clare was the recipient of the Franciscan Weaver Award. This award is to honor a Franciscan Sister of Chicago who embodies the Franciscan charism and shows Franciscan joy in her daily life. The recipient of this award is a Sister who serves others generously and whose very being is rooted in the Gospel message. She is someone who allows the grace of God to shine through her as she shows the face of God to everyone she encounters. All of this, Sister Mary Clare did exceptionally well.

In the 69th year of religious life and at the age of 94, Sister Mary Clare peacefully entered into eternal life at 1:45 A.M. on Sunday, November 14, 2021, to be with Jesus whom she loved and served with all her heart.



VENERABLE MARY THERESA DUDZIK LEAGUE/GUILD

MEMBERS AND DONORS

Gifts sent to the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago for the Beatification Cause are sent immediately to this Fund. Gifts received through the League of Venerable Mary Theresa Dudzik are used to cover the cost of operating the League Office and at least once a year money from the League is transferred to the Beatification Fund. Thanks to everyone who has helped build the Beatification Fund. Every step in the process requires fees and the Beatification Fund must continue to grow so that funds are there when needed.

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Join the League/Guild of Venerable Mary Theresa Dudzik

The League/Guild of the Venerable Mary Theresa Dudzik, under the coordination of Sister Mary Venantia Rec, was formed in 1962 to promote the Beatification Cause of Mother Mary Theresa. Membership in the League/Guild helps the Beatification Cause. Members are remembered daily in the prayers of the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago. Membership is \$10. Call 630-243-3556 for More Information. Please make your check payable to the: Franciscan Sisters of Chicago and mail to: 11500 Theresa Drive, Lemont, IL 60439. A membership card and receipt will be mailed to you promptly upon receipt of your dues payment.



"The Miracle Hunter" on EWTN Radio

Will Venerable Mary Theresa Dudzik be our next American saint? Listen to an interview between Sister Jeanne Marie Toriskie, OSF, and host Michael O'Neill about the holy life, ministry, and Cause of the Foundress of the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago.

The interview is now available to download on the Sisters website!

chicagofranciscans.org/downloads/Mother-Theresa-Dudzik-Beatification-Interview.mp3

HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

MAY 27, 2021 - DECEMBER 10, 2021

The Franciscan Sisters of Chicago thank their donors and friends for partnering with them. The Sisters offer their gratitude and sincere appreciation for their donors' generosity, which has allowed them to continue the ministry started by Venerable Mary Theresa Dudzik.

These donations have helped the ministries of the Sisters in a profound way. Their sponsored ministries include affordable housing for seniors, a shelter for victims of domestic abuse, senior retirement communities, and scholarships for all-girls Catholic high school tuition.

The donor list in this issue is recorded from **May 27, 2021 - December 10, 2021**. The Sisters make every effort to keep accurate records and each gift is acknowledged promptly. Should something be amiss, however, the Sisters ask the donors to call them at once. Inquiries should be directed to Vicki Olsen at (630) 243-3556 or email: volsen@chicagofranciscans.com.



RESTRICTED GIFTS

Restricted Gifts enable the Sisters to purchase the items that donors specifically request their donations be used for. The explicit designation by the benefactor allows the donor to become an integral part of the ministries of the Sisters.

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

The Unrestricted Fund is important because it allows flexibility for the Sisters' use. Gifts are directed to where the need is greatest. The Sisters are able to use unrestricted gifts immediately or to allow them to accumulate until a significant need arises. The thoughtfulness of unrestricted gifts is greatly appreciated.

John & Sandra Albee

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Frank Swiderski

Sylvia Ulicny

Carl R. Winger

Sophie Wolniakowski

VENERABLE MARY THERESA DUDZIK BEATIFICATION FUND

Gifts sent to the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago for the Beatification Cause are sent immediately to this Fund. Gifts received through the League of Mother Theresa are used to cover the cost of operating the League Office and once a year (or more often) money from the League is transferred to the Beatification Fund. Thanks to everyone who has helped build the Beatification Fund. Every step in the process requires

fees and the Beatification Fund must continue to grow so that funds are there when needed.

Therese G. Nawara

NON-CASH

The Sisters are restricted by law and policy as to the kinds of non-cash gifts they can accept. Among those items are medications and some used items or partially used items. Some changes in legislation also affect the donor. In fact, Congress passed new rules for deducting household goods, clothing and other items. Unless the item is in good used condition or better or was donated before August 18, 2006, donors will not get the tax deduction. Congress wanted to stop people from using charitable organizations to dump unwanted items in order to write off a donation of minimal or no value. It is always best to call the Development Office at 630-243-3556 before giving a non-cash gift. Dropping off something the Sisters cannot legally accept often requires the Sisters to pay for the disposal of these items, which

assuredly was not the donor's intent.

3 Corners Bar & Grill

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Car Quest

Cog Hill Golf Club

Costco

Elizabeth Garbrecht

Glen Eagles Golf Club

Jimmy Johns

David Nelson Exquisite Jewelry

Old Oak Golf Club

Vicki Olsen

Carol Oprondek

Pete's Fresh Market

Quik Impressions Group

Starbucks

St. Jude House

Tap House Bar & Grill

Christine Zielke

RETIREMENT FUND

Gifts to the Retirement Fund are very important to us as they provide support in the care of the retired and infirm members of our Community. The rising cost of health care and medicine are as serious an issue for us as they are

with the general public. We're grateful for your gifts.

Lois D. Dohra

Mr. Casimir Trocewicz

LEGACY FUND

Using the envelope included with this issue of Crossroads is the easiest way to contribute to any of the Sisters' funds and it makes it especially easy to direct a gift to the Legacy Fund. There are several categories to which a Legacy gift can be directed — the two most popular are Memorials (for deceased loved ones) and Tributes (in honor of living individuals or groups). Some donors make regular gifts to this fund on anniversaries as in the case of memorials, birthdays, marriages, and our Jubilarians. General, undesignated gifts may be made to this fund as well as donations for one's own special intention. The Legacy Fund is the Sisters' Endowment, which they continue to grow by reinvesting the income from the fund. A gift to the Legacy Fund also continues to grow in perpetuity.

TRIBUTES

In Honor of

Sister Emilie Marie Lesniak's

60th Jubilee

Mary Ann Grever

In Honor of

the Nawara Families

Teresa Nawara

In Honor of

Teresa Nawara

Teresa Nawara

In Honor of

Sister M. Francis Clare Radke's

60th Jubilee

Mary Ann Grever

MEMORIALS

In Memory of

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Elizabeth Pienta

In Memory of

Sister M. Petronia Budzinski

Ed & Kathy Florence

Mrs. Marie Kedzior

Reverend Gerald Riva

In Memory of

Helen Ganiec

Ed & Kathy Florence

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In Memory of

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Therese Nawara

In Memory of

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Eugene Obora

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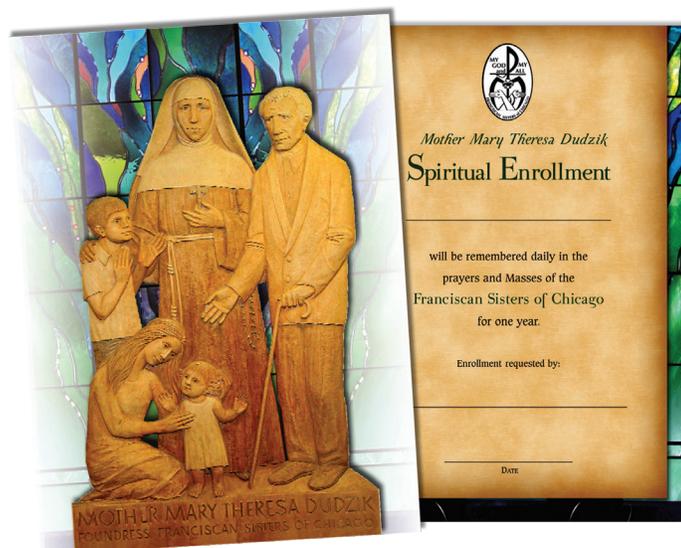
Sister Helen Marie Zasadzinski

Rita M. Waters

MOTHER MARY THERESA DUDZIK SPIRITUAL ENROLLMENT

May 27, 2021 - December 10, 2021

The Mother Mary Theresa Dudzik Spiritual Enrollment Program provides an opportunity for the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago to share their prayer with others in a special way. A monthly Mass is celebrated for all those enrolled, living or deceased. The Franciscan Sisters of Chicago remember everyone who is enrolled in their prayers. The Spiritual Enrollment card with a matching mailing envelope is exquisitely designed and easy to use. It may be used to celebrate any occasion or to remember a loved one. Please be sure to complete the section requesting the donor's name and address so that the Spiritual Enrollment Book has the donor's name as well as the name of the person being enrolled. A one-year enrollment is \$15. To obtain the enrollment packet, please contact Vicki Olsen at (630) 243-3556.



SPIRITUAL ENROLLMENT - LIVING

In Honor of

Sister M. Bernadette Bajuscik's 60th Jubilee

Enrolled by Our Lady of Victory Convent Sisters

Dan, Jodi & Danny Diorio

Enrolled by Tom & Jolene Mastramico

Jeanine Duckett

Enrolled by Franciscan Sisters of Chicago

Thomas Kiehn

Enrolled by Shirlee Kiehn

In Honor of

Sister Anne Marie Knawa's 70th Jubilee

Enrolled by Anonymous

Our Lady of Victory Convent Sisters

In Honor of

Sister M. Colette Kwieczka's 70th Jubilee

Enrolled by Our Lady of Victory Convent Sisters

In Honor of

Sister Emilie Lesniak's 60th Jubilee

Enrolled by Our Lady of Victory Convent Sisters

Mary Lockwood

Enrolled by Shirlee Kiehn

Chief Marc Maton

Enrolled by Franciscan Sisters of Chicago

In Honor of

Sister M. Francis Clare Radke's 60th Jubilee

Enrolled by Our Lady of Victory Convent Sisters

Nancy Santry

Enrolled by Pat & Joe Budzyn

In Honor of

Sister Jeanne Marie Toriskie's 60th Jubilee

Enrolled by Our Lady of Victory Convent Sisters

SPIRITUAL ENROLLMENT - DECEASED

Elia Agurrie

Enrolled by
Franciscan Sisters of Chicago

Ernie Airgood III

Enrolled by Marea J. Gonska

Angela Andersen

Enrolled by
Chuck & Judy McMahan

Joseph & Bernice Bedus

Enrolled by Barbara Bedus

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Enrolled by Lauren Fixel

Jeff Belski

Enrolled by Lauren Fixel

Carlos Bonaminio

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And a Happy and Healthy New Year!