

North American Lay Fraternities

Perez, the Communications Officer for the region and the “glue” of the Lay Fraternities at Transfiguration Parish in Brooklyn, shares with us his visit to a newly-formed fraternity:

Among the newest fraternity in Transfiguration Parish was a genuine assurance. After many years of participation, we finally had an English-speaking fraternity to enrich our community. Currently, the fraternity is composed of members, all of whom were former members of English-speaking fraternities. (At present there are nine Spanish-speaking fraternities in the

arest Friends, aging. It brings to mind a terrible experience. Thank God it only happened once. I had to get a new passport, which means a new photo. When I looked at the old passports and the new picture, it was a terrible shock to see my frailty.

There are many pictures of Charles de Foucauld. They rarely show the aging of once handsome, strong, young man. The photos of us are used to showing a beautiful face with intense eyes, isn't it really fair to him. Everyone loves their baby pictures, but we cannot do it for our driver's license. The physical aging process for Charles Foucauld was drastic. We need to juxtapose the 1916 picture, which is most familiar to us, with the last 1916 photo. Here I can see an old man who is really 58. If you know the life of St. Charles, you can see in the last photo, in his face and body, his years of

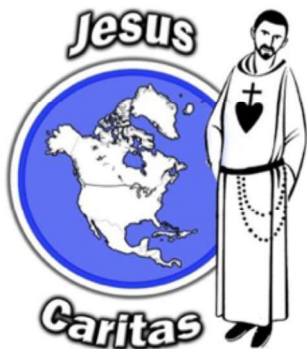
desert travel and the extreme penance he took upon himself. At 50 he described himself as old and toothless. Aging was not kind to St. Charles, but as we could observe from our perspective, he never took care of himself. Brother Charles was a turned-out old man at 58, drained of strength and beauty for the One he loved to the point of death.

Historical photos depict

St. Charles as a young military cadet who became an old bent-over vessel of grace. I wish I could show him the two photos, young next to the old, and note his reaction. Would he even recognize himself and be happy with the photographer who took the 1916 picture?

As I age, I try to forgive myself for all the stupid mistakes I have made in

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Aging



Editor's Desk

At times this senior citizen experiences old memories popping up out of the blue. Recently I was squirting whipped cream into my hot chocolate when a commercial jingle from my childhood rang in my ears. My thoughts went like this..."A Little Dab'll Do Ya!"...Eww, that's from a Brylcreem commercial!

On a more serious note, let us pray for and advocate for the aged who are experiencing elder abuse and neglect in our communities and around the world. All fifty states have an elder abuse hotline that you can call to report elder abuse, which will be investigated by Adult Protective Services and law enforcement.

This issue of the NALF Newsletter for the first time has contributors (not counting *Ciro Piccirillo*) from other countries in the North American Region. Our new Responsible for the North American Region Fraternities, *Heriberto Calderon Möller*, submitted an article on the reality of aging in Mexico. There is also an article written by *Alain Blanchette*, a member of the Montreal Fraternity, who participated in many of the events at the International General Assembly this past summer. (A report from the assembly is also included in this issue.)

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Fr. Lenny Concluded

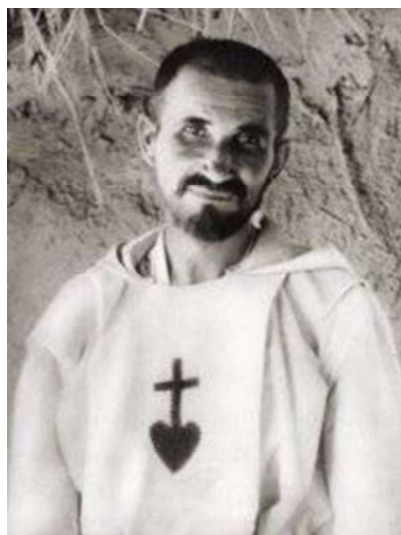
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my life. I try to be grateful for all the wonderful places I have seen on the planet and for each person who decorated my life and challenged me to become the person I am today - maybe not the person I thought I would be.

So, our dear blessed Charles, my dear old friend of many years now, walk with me (with the middle-aged Jesus of Nazareth) that I may grow old as you did, pouring my life out like water, in loving and serving humanity until I join you, Charles de Foucauld, sitting next to you and enjoying the view of Jesus and the community of my own saints.

You know I love and pray for each of you as your birthdays fly by. I join my prayers with you for our terribly troubled world.

Yes, you are loved, each of you, Fr Lenny (age 77 and not enjoying all of it!)

**Shunammite Hermitage Garden Update by Arlene Moeller**

Since a fire broke out and damaged much of the property on May 25, 2024, owner John Hoffman from Arizona has been residing in a different section of Phoenix. He feels blessed by the fact that his friends are allowing him to stay in their vacant home for up to a year as he waits for his to be reconstructed and the property cleaned up.

John continues to live his solitary life in the spirit of Charles de Foucauld. He does take his dog to the dog park every Saturday and Sunday morning, which is in his old neighborhood. This gives John an opportunity to check-in with the homeless people he was previously assisting. John is hoping that all of the permits for reconstruction will be processed by this December. In the meantime, John is undergoing a time of discernment to find out where the Holy Spirit is leading him next. Please continue to keep John in your prayers.

*Editor's Desk Concluded**Continued from page 2*

Readers will definitely enjoy the article written by Little Sister Jo, age 79, who made a solo retreat for a month in the Arizona desert this past Spring. Her living arrangement was definitely not a hotel bed and breakfast!

The theme for our next issue (December 2024) is "Saints." The deadline for submission of articles is November 20th. Now get out there and do some hiking! ☺

NEWS FROM LAY FRATERNITIES CONCLUDED*Continued from page 1*

parish.) The majority of the members are retired, bringing a wealth of experience and dedication to the group. This new fraternity represents a promising addition to our parish, uniting individuals who have long sought to maintain their faith in a familiar linguistic and cultural context.

During my visit I had the opportunity to meet Angie, who has taken on the role of unofficial coordinator. Passionate and ambitious in her mission to unify English-speaking fraternities, Angie is effectively guiding the group until a more formal leadership structure is established. The fraternity meets every Sunday after the 12:30 p.m. English Mass. Although the structure of their gatherings is still evolving, their current format includes praying ten decades of the Rosary and reading the Scriptures for the upcoming Sunday, followed by a reflection. At this stage they have yet to implement a Review of Life, but their dedication and enthusiasm signal a bright future for their community. Please keep them in your prayers.



Transfiguration Parish English Fraternity
(Angie is second from the left)

Saints

Please submit your articles for the December 2024 issue by November 20, 2024 to nalf@moeller2001.com.



**11th International General Assembly
of the Charles de Foucauld Secular Fraternities
Montréal, Canada
(July 20-29, 2024)**

Final Message of the Assembly

The International General Assembly took place from July 20 -29, 2024 at the beautiful Manoir d'Youville site, located on Île Saint-Bernard in Châteauguay (20 minutes from Montréal) on the banks of the St. Lawrence River and adjacent to the Mohawk reserve of Kahnawá:ke, a First Nation in Canada. Manoir d'Youville is committed to community development and takes its name from Saint Marguerite d'Youville, the founder of the Sisters of Charity in Montreal, commonly known as the "Grey Nuns." This congregation has existed since 1737 and continues to exercise its mission of love, respect and compassion towards the poor and needy. Following in her footsteps, thousands of Grey Nuns have given their lives to the enormous task of bringing care and comfort to as many people as possible following their founder, the first saint born in Canada. The Grey Nuns shaped the social and religious history of Montreal and Canada.

The number of participants was 35 from five continents (Africa, Arab World, Asia-Pacific, Europe and America) despite the refusal of visas to some delegates or members of the International Teams (outgoing and incoming) coming from Egypt, Venezuela, Pakistan, Congo, Benin and Burkina Faso.

The new International Team that was elected during the Assembly and brings together representatives from the continents:

For Africa: Adeline Nagalo (Burkina Faso) and Celestin Comlan (Benin)

For the Arab World: Antoinette Boutros (Lebanon) and Edouard Abadir (Egypt)

For Asia-Pacific: Sunita Hameed (Pakistan) and John Paolo Casal (Philippines)

For Europe: Birgit Opielka (Germany) and Silke Arnold (Germany)

For the Americas: Marcia Sanches (Brazil) and Ciro Piccirillo (Canada). The latter is elected coordinator responsible for the Team.

During the General Assembly, the delegates ratified the following:

- The candidacy of the members of the incoming International Team.
- The report on the activities undertaken by the members of the outgoing International Team (2018-2024).
- The financial report from 2018 to 2024.
- The reduction of the term of office of the members of the International Team from 6 to 5 years following the direction of the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life at the Vatican.
- The agreement to draft a general code of ethics and professional conduct at the service of the fraternities without, however, replacing the specific regulations applied in each country for the protection, respect, and promotion of the human person.

Delegates from different continents shared the life and journey of the basic fraternities in their countries in the light of their reflections on the theme chosen for the Assembly: “Sharing our House of Nazareth: Family, Creation, Fraternity.” They experienced together times of prayer, adoration, desert, sharing in small groups, reviewing life, listening to each other in the face of the realities that surround them and were nourished by the mystery of the Eucharist through daily Mass. They also shared moments of joy through songs and dances in the simplicity of fraternal encounter.

Enriched by the reflections and experiences of the invited speakers Gilles Routhier, Ellen Roderick, Sandra Côté, Tom Dearhouse and Jimmy Bonnici, they were called to open themselves to the Holy Spirit who walks with them. Being disciples of Christ with burning and thirsty hearts, following in the footsteps of the Saint "Brother" Charles de Foucauld, they showed themselves ready to broaden their view of the world and embrace the gaze of their unique model: Jesus of Nazareth.

Our Common Home appears devastated, torn apart by violence, division, injustice, fear of others and ravaged by the destructive force of a hyper-consumerist society. Faced with this stark observation, we are called to change our perspectives, to think differently, and to commit ourselves to becoming responsible and missionary. The members of the world's fraternities in their different social contexts are invited to walk together and work for a new world with:

- *Having a more compassionate look at the world:* discern the signs of the times and reform what needs to be reformed instead of deploring the era we live in and condemning ideas and viewpoints.
- *A desire to act in a new way:* following the example of the Good Samaritan, to become hopeful agents of change in the face of climate fatigue, information fatigue, by fighting against indifference, passivity, disengagement and demoralization.
- *A humble heart, following the example of the monks of Tibhirine, by adopting a low position:* choosing to bury oneself in reality, today's Nazareth, like travelers on Earth who go to meet others like brothers and sisters. Brother Charles taught us to go towards the other and be

enriched by our encounter with them. Hence, let us open our hearts to welcome God present in other people and to receive the welcome given by them.

- *An open heart to welcome the Mystery of God in the other and to receive the welcome given by others:* following the example of our Brother Charles, go towards the other to be enriched by an encounter, to give and receive. We are never the only bearers of the truth. Let us choose a path towards reconciliation and universal fraternity.
- *A heart ready to give itself:* accept the invitation to become martyrs in everyday life, martyrs of love. A life given, delivered out of love.
- *An attentive look at the suffering of others through the eyes of the Good Shepherd, who is full of mercy:* a contemplative look that observes, listens and hopes. A closeness without judgment, domination or superiority but with an exchange of hope through work, friendships...
- *A desire to respectfully approach the complex realities of families:* listen, notice, accompany, share simple joys and support the small steps towards a better life. Recharging oneself by reading the apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia: On Love in the Family*.
- *A renewed look at creation:* the destruction of our Common Home will lead to our own destruction. Recognizing the gift of God in every creature and the relational dimension of creation that invites us to inhabit our Earth differently. Instead of dominating to exploit, live the Sabbath by glorifying God and rejoicing in recognizing him as Creator and Father.
- *A new impetus to rediscover the dignity of human work as a contribution to the incessant work of the great Potter:* realizing the contradiction in our actions between the fight against destruction and the pursuit of a lifestyle imprisoned by consumption.

Some action plans moving forward:

- Study Pope Francis' *Gaudete et Exsultate* and cultivate a life of prayer centered on the desert, contemplation, and prayer. These exercises can help us look at life with God's eyes.
- Recognize the lessons of the past so not to repeat the tragedies that fell upon our human family. We must create spaces where we can learn from the experience of our elders as well as indigenous cultures.
- Become good and responsible stewards of God's creation. This can be done by our simple acts of charity such as not wasting resources, sorting our wastes, and rejecting consumerism that plunders the earth's riches.
- To build links between our fraternities and with other groups. We are called to recognize and affirm the giftedness of others.

We are living witnesses of Brother Charles' prophetic message for the Church and the world. With him we are called to live and promote Fraternity: "I want to accustom all the inhabitants: Christians, Muslims, Jews, and others, to look at me as their brother, the universal brother."

Montréal, Québec, Canada

August 2024

Thoughts on the International General Assembly by Alain Blanchette

Kwe, Bonjour, Hello!

To be completely honest, I must say that at first I did not really believe in it. Our fraternities are scarce and, for the most part, relatively old, their dispersion over a vast territory, not to mention the precariousness of our financial situation and the challenges related to international travel. The obstacles seemed significant and difficult to overcome. But *Ciro* - "*our national* *Ciro*" - believed in it, and he knew how to mobilize us - all of us - to make this International General Assembly an event that we will not soon forget.

What should we remember from everything we experienced there? My favorites were numerous and, as I write these lines, I still feel carried by the breath that animated and nourished us throughout the week of July 21- 28, 2024.

First, the site. The meeting was held on a magnificent island at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and the Chateauguay Rivers, just a few kilometers from downtown Montreal. This island, Île St-Bernard, was for decades the property of the community of the Sisters of Charity, known as the Grey Sisters, founded in Montreal in 1737. During all these years, the nuns made it their refuge during the holiday season and cultivated the land to feed the staff and beneficiaries of their charitable works. Transferred a few years ago to a non-profit organization, it now offers resort services at very affordable prices: hotel, restaurant, boating activities, and a protected wildlife reserve. During the week we spent there, the weather temperature was ideal.

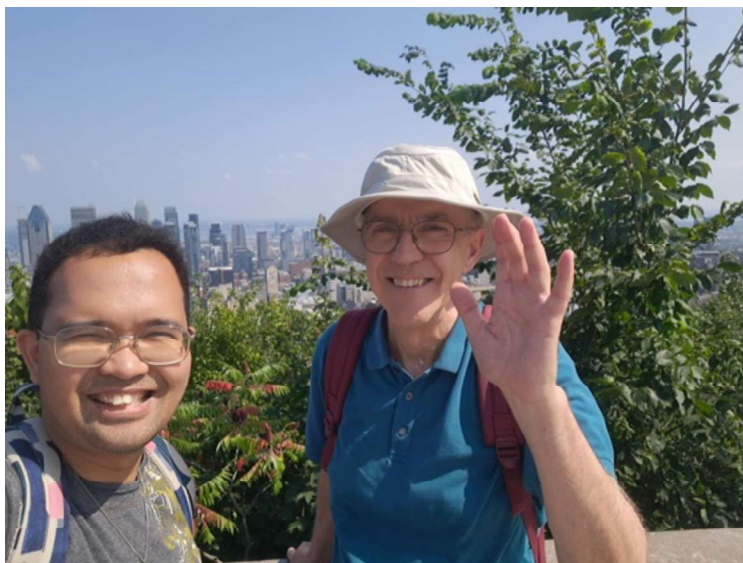
Our daily community meetings began at 7:00 a.m. with Eucharist celebrated in the three languages used for our exchanges (French, English and Spanish) and with a moment of prayer prepared by one or other of the continental delegations.

After breakfast we met at 9:00 a.m. for the day's conference. The speakers who followed one another from Tuesday to Friday each developed for an hour one aspect or another of the theme chosen for the assembly: Our House of Nazareth: Family, Creation, Fraternity. A simultaneous translation service probably made things easier, even if everything was obviously not perfect. Our brother Hernan from Colombia for his part provided a digital and virtual component. He thus allowed those who could not be physically present, wherever they were, to join us. Gracias, Hernan! Saturday morning, Fr. Jimmy Bonnici, our accompanying priest, masterfully summarized all this content and offered us ideas for the years to come.

All the conferences were interesting, but I was particularly touched by the testimony of Tom Dearhouse, a member of the Mohawk community of Kahnawaké, a community of about 9,000 indigenous people located in the immediate vicinity of St. Bernard Island. An "elder" and advisor dedicated to transmitting the ancestral values of his people, Tom agreed to come and share his experiences with us as part of the day dedicated to brotherhood. In my language sharing group, we unanimously recognized that his "being" was a powerful message. He spoke to us with great frankness but also with an open, peaceful and generous heart. At a time when the issue of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is a major issue in Canada, it was great to be able to spend some time in his company, especially since relations between Quebecers of French origin and the Mohawk people have never been easy. This people, one of the five

nations of the Iroquois Federation, made an alliance with the English at the beginning of the colonization period. This obviously had many repercussions during the centuries that followed. Tom finally generously agreed to come back to meet us in the evening during the campfire. He had us dancing to the sound of the drum and traditional Mohawk songs - a magical moment!

Not being an official delegate of this general assembly, I did not participate in the scheduled discussions for the members of the various delegations and for those of the incoming and outgoing international teams. On the other hand, I took full advantage of the meal period, outings, and festivities. I shared a room with John Paolo from the Philippines, which helped me to build relationships and experience the universal brotherhood so dear to Brother Charles. There were many opportunities to learn more about the joys, sorrows and challenges of the brothers and sisters of the continents represented: A campfire evening, a walk in the wildlife reserve, a visit to Old Montreal, a Sunday celebration with several of Brother Charles's Quebec friends, and a last meal and evening of folk dances prepared by Louise-Marie Lemire.



Alain and John on top of Mount Royal



Tom Dearhouse visiting during the campfire evening.

The meeting is now over. The various delegations have returned to their countries of origin. Some facing more difficulties than others. I am thinking of our sisters in Lebanon who cannot ignore the tense climate that their region is currently experiencing. I am thinking a lot about them.

As for us here in Quebec, it seems to me that our participation in this international assembly has allowed us to feel that, despite the geographical distance, we are deeply connected to this great family of Brother Charles who, in so many countries, try to bear witness to the Gospel and not remain silent in the face of the injustices and suffering of which so many people and peoples are victims. I also believe that welcoming this assembly into our home has given us the opportunity to get to know each other better here in Quebec. We will draw from it the energy necessary to create opportunities to meet and celebrate despite sometimes the hundreds of kilometers that separate us. Our Church in Quebec has become very fragile and

poor today. But is this not how the Spirit finally manages to transform us because it is "in our weakness that he deploys all his strength" (see 2 Corinthians 12:9) ?

Thank you once again for allowing us to experience this exceptional moment. Thank you to all those who prepared it. From now on my prayer will be nourished by all these faces, all these names, and all these shared experiences. I understand it even better today. God is with us; God is in us; God is through us; at the heart of the world and for the world. Is this not the very essence of what we seek to experience?

Editor's Note: Alain Blanchette was introduced to Charles de Foucauld by the Little Sisters of Jesus when he was an 18-year-old college student. Since that time St. Charles has been an important part of his life. At age 22 Alain joined The Little Brothers of the Gospel and was a member for 15 years. After returning to secular life, Alain joined the Montreal Lay Fraternity about 20 years ago. Alain is 70 years old, returned, and resides in a huge non-profit housing project of 800 apartments in downtown Montreal where he strives to bear witness to the Good News of Jesus.

Aging in Mexico by Heriberto Calderon

The aging population in our region of Mexico is characterized by the coexistence of chronic degenerative diseases, communicable illnesses, and malnutrition. This mix of health conditions presents unknown risks for the population that survives to advanced age as well as for the health systems that will face the burden associated with this triple challenge. The lack of social protection in which the Mexican aged population lives is a determining factor in the impoverishment of the family, on which the responsibility of caring for the elderly frequently falls.

The situation of the elderly in Mexico is characterized by the intersection between health problems associated with old age, gender, and poverty in a context of little institutional protection and deep social inequalities that are observed in both rural and urban environments. In addition, the accelerated growth of the elderly population represents a problem for the different government agencies because the necessary infrastructure has not been developed to guarantee their well-being by professionally meeting their very diverse needs.

Editor's Note: Heriberto Calderon is our new coordinator for North America as of July, 2024. Heriberto is a teacher and resides in the City of Guadalupe Zacatecas. He is very active in church ministries as well as in the Lay Fraternities of Mexico.

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Do you have news or information to share? Please send an email to the editor.

Reflecting on Aging in the Sonoran Desert by Little Sister Jo

Editor's Note: Little Sister Jo is a member of the Little Sisters of Jesus who recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of her first (temporary) vows by making a solo retreat in the Arizona desert from April 8th to May 8th. Below are some excerpts from "Sonoran Desert Wildlands – a Reflection," which was written during this time period, as well as a description of her sojourn experience.

I asked some ants beneath my doorstep, "Teach me about old age," and the ants said:

*"Keep busy when it's time to be busy and rest when it is time to rest.
And stay in community as long as you can. Life is easier when there are many hands.
If a horny toad comes near, so big you think it's just another rock, and suddenly you realize that
some of your company are missing, swallowed up by death, try to remember them –
for love is stronger than death, even stronger than life."*

I asked the jackrabbit, "Teach me about old age," and the jackrabbit said:

*"On earth we have no true home, just favorite resting places on the journey.
We are nomads on the earth, life a pilgrimage.
Avoid conflict, avoid violence. Sometimes just remaining silent and hidden works,
Sometimes it's best to flee...
and sometimes love will tell you to stay and perhaps protect another.
But always keep a merciful and forgiving heart.
As long as you have ears, listen – listen attentively.
As long as you have eyes to see,
don't forget to look deeply for the beauty in each of God's creatures."*

And I asked the ground, "Teach me about old age," and the ground said:

*"It's a holy thing to hold others up, even if you may get crushed in doing so. But I say to myself,
'Self, be holy ground, and choose to be so joyfully and without resentment
and you will be blessed with a meaningful life.'
So, you, too, be holy ground for others. It becomes more meaningful with age.
And let yourself be shaped and moved by wind and storm.
You may be carried to places yet unknown, but they, too, can become holy ground."*

I fell in love with this corner of the Sonoran Desert about 20 years ago when I sojourned there for 40 days during a "sabbatical year." That time I stayed in a platform tent protected by a ramada made out of branches. It was a bit more primitive and much closer to "camping" than the facilities this time. The weather over the years did a job on the tent and also on a "strawbale" hermitage I stayed in once for a shorter visit. Just recently the stewards of the property, the Cascabel Conservation Association, built a very solid and durable wheelless "caravan" that will withstand the weather quite well for years. It has almost all the comforts of home except electricity, sewer, and water. There was a little two-burner propane stove, a "sun-oven," a big rain catchment tank, about 8 jerry cans of drinking water, a compost toilet 3 or 4 minutes away, and a "honey bucket" for the night.

As this year is my 50th anniversary of first vows, I was really desiring another longer time of solitude...time to listen to my heart and the Lord's and deepen the mystery of whatever it is between us. As the Lord said in Hosea:

"I am going to lead her out into the wilderness
and speak to her heart....
There she will respond to me
as she did when she was a youth."
Hosea 2:14-15

And so, it was a matter of the heart that led me there.

During each of my sojourns in the Sonoran Desert, I've hidden my watch and simply lived to the rhythm of nature: a lovely "dance" in which sunrises and sunsets, the moon and stars, light and shadows, winds and stillness, rocks and flowers, body and soul took the lead and I simply followed.

These Sonoran Desert wildlands are in southeastern Arizona, about 25 miles north of the town of Benson. The Hermitage Program of the Cascabel Conservation Association encompasses over 600 acres that are reserved for solo sojourns! Small groups are occasionally welcomed in a camping space just outside the reserved area. The program was developed from a belief in creation as the primary source of revelation, in the sacredness of the earth, in the importance of our relationship to it, and in the desire to save this extraordinary piece of land and a major portion of the lands surrounding it from life-threatening development. Some members of the Association live nearby and are trying to make the surrounding land more self-sustaining with community gardens and orchards.

The 600-acre sojourn site "is for those of any faith, artists, writers, or contemplatives of any persuasion," but there is just one person at a time so as not to destroy the nature. The "stewards" of the program are committed to a donation model (no fee), which fosters stewardship of the earth and makes sojourns available to anyone. Many sojourners since its inception in the late 90's have been persons involved in peace and justice movements. I'm so grateful to a friend in Tucson who told me about Cascabel years ago when I was searching for a place to go. I feel blessed that I could go one last time – and I am very thankful that I didn't fall and break a bone, twist an ankle on the rocky terrain or meet more than one rattlesnake. I knew it was kind of crazy to go at 79, but the pull to return there one more time won out.



Editor's Postscript: Lsr Jo (Mary Jo Byrne/Lsr Joel of Jesus) entered the Little Sisters of Jesus in Washington, D.C. in October, 1971. During her early years in the community, she lived for a couple years in both Boston (doing factory work) and Alaska (washing dishes in a Woolworths). She then traveled with five different circuses throughout the United States and Canada for over 30 years with a couple other little sisters, doing a variety of jobs alongside the other workers and performers – and, on the side, baking all of them birthday cakes!

Since 2015 Lsr Jo has been living in Gallitzin, a small town in western Pennsylvania, where her community has been residing for about 50 years. She is the "English Secretariat" for her order, responsible for seeing that all of the community's correspondence gets translated from French into English, doing much of the translating herself.

Desert Ramblings by Arlene Moeller

At age 71 I am definitely qualified to write about aging! I must admit that sometimes I do “dumb” stuff, but then I remind myself that I have been doing “dumb” stuff my whole life! A slower-paced life has allowed me to “connect the dots”/experience revelations about myself or the world in general. For instance, it was only recently that I realized that “bucket list” and “kick the bucket” are related. I do find that I think about death and heaven more often. For example, while I was showering one morning I found myself thinking about my husband’s future obituary – mind you, he is perfectly healthy LOL! At times I try to imagine what my initial encounters will be like when I meet my deceased loved ones in heaven. I also wonder if I will still be wearing my glasses. (After wearing them since age six, that is just going to be weird not having glasses on my nose!) Sometimes a natural or man-made object will teach me about aging. For instance, a few years ago I noticed that the last serving from the bottom of a can of whipped cream was very rich and flavorful. Ah, that is the kind of senior citizen I want to be! Last month I was blessed to be able to hike many trails in the state of Washington. On one particular day, I observed a Western Redcedar tree near our path. It was huge, tall, and majestic with fern-like foliage at the top, but the interior of the trunk had been burned away from a wildfire. The tree reminded me of many elderly – although they have suffered much in their life, they are still able to stand tall and be productive.

Presently the detached chapel at our church is closed due to the installment of a stained-glass window in the sanctuary. The size of this building is perfect for parishioners who would like to arrange a wedding or a funeral for a smaller crowd of guests. It is also the chapel where I go for my weekly hour of adoration. Thankfully, the parish has opened the old chapel in the back of the main church as an alternative. When I walked in, it felt very strange because I had not been in the room for almost twenty years.

While praying the third decade of the Glorious Mysteries (Acts 2:1-4), I noticed the Holy Spirit near the top of the stained-glass window behind the Blessed Sacrament. I paused and studied the dove for a minute. I observed that the white bird was holding in its mouth a small branch with three green leaves, which I suspected was the traditional olive branch. Then it hit me! Yes, as I age I should be filled with the Holy Spirit just as the apostles and our Blessed Mother were on Pentecost and at the same time be a peacemaker.

