



SINSINAWA

DOMINICAN VISION



Celebrating
Sisterhood

New Year Blessings!



As we begin this new year, please know of our gratitude for your past generous support. Also, know that we can't do this

work alone. Your continued partnership will allow us to further our mission, enable our Sisters to continue their ministry work with those most in need, and support the everyday needs of our retired Sisters who have given years of service with others. Please use the envelope in the center of this newsletter, contact me using the information below, or visit sinsinawa.org/donate online to support our Sisters' needs. For more information or to support our renovation projects happening here at Sinsinawa Mound, visit sinsinawa.org/missionforward. Be assured that we value our relationship with you. May God bless you and your loved ones in 2024.



Barbara Brandt
Director of Philanthropy
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Exciting Endeavors

Establishing a Farmer-Led Learning Center

As a member of our Sinsinawa Leadership Council, I am delighted to write about exciting planning for the future at Sinsinawa Mound. We recently had a conference at Sinsinawa with over 200 farmers who came together to discuss possibilities for a farmer-led learning center at Sinsinawa. The possibilities for this learning center are endless.



Our own farm is certified organic, but the learning center will be a place for all farmers to teach and learn and host workshops and conferences with the following goals: cultivating community, protecting and nurturing healthy soil, harvesting nutrient-dense food, and collaborating with strategies that will increase profitability. We are exploring the best and highest use of our farm buildings for this endeavor. Also, the renovation of our heritage buildings will include a conference center that will be able to host a variety of events, including gatherings for the farmer-led learning center. Our Sisters who are living at the Mound and others who will be relocating to the Mound will be able to host and engage in activities waiting to begin. You will be hearing more about these exciting endeavors as they unfold.



Sister Julie Schwab, OP
Vicaress of the Congregation



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Sisters in attendance for the transfer of sponsorship ceremony at Bethlehem Academy included Marian (Catherine de Ricci) DeGroot, Mary Margaret (Marie Antoine) Murphy, Kathleen (Mary Joseph) Hayes, Kathleen (Fernanda) Theis, Theresa (Scholastica) Thomas, Julie Schwab, and Colleen Settles.

Dominican Veritas Ministries Begins

Forming Community at New Crossroads

by Kristin Melley, Executive Director of DVM

Sept. 1, 2023, marked the beginning of the Dominican Veritas Ministries (DVM) as the canonical sponsor of nine Dominican schools in the United States—Bethlehem Academy, Faribault, MN; Dominican High School, Whitefish Bay, WI; Edgewood Campus School, Madison, WI; Edgewood High School, Madison, WI; Regina Dominican High School, Wilmette, IL; Rosarian Academy, West Palm Beach, FL; St. Agnes Academy, Houston, TX; St. Pius X High School, Houston, TX; and Trinity High School, River Forest, IL.

It was a momentous day—the fruit of a vision, a hope, a promise, a labor, and much prayer. It is the next chapter and continuation of the inspiring story and witness of five congregations of Dominican

Sisters (including the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa) and the schools they founded. We celebrate the establishment of this new community as a *Pontifical Public Juridic Person (PJP)*, created to nurture and sustain the vibrant Catholic, Dominican identity alive in these schools. This accomplishment is extraordinary, bold, and groundbreaking, embracing a new innovative model of shared leadership within the Church.

The Dominican Sisters have come to a new crossroads, preparing the way for students; teachers; staff; head administrators; boards of directors; and DVM, Inc., trustees to become a new community in the Dominican Family. This new community takes on the privilege and task to *embody the preaching and teaching mission of Jesus and St. Dominic*.

On the Cover

Over 130 Dominican Sisters, including 15 from Sinsinawa, gathered in Columbus, OH, June 27–30, 2023, to explore new ways of engaging their future together as the Dominican Sisters Conference (DSC). This included Sisters from 17 different United States-based congregations whose members are from the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States. All were under 70 years of age, and they ranged from women beginning their novitiate to those who have been vowed members of their congregations for decades. *Sinsinawa Sisters who attended the DSC Futuring gathering included (from left) Srs. Lystra Long, Quincy Howard, Peggy Ryan, Julia Mohr, Siobhan Burroughs, Christina Heltsley, Pam Mitchell, Evie Storto, Julie Schwab, Betsy Pawlicki, Priscilla Torres, Christin Tomy, and Julie Rambin.*

News from Congregate Communities

Sisters Stay Active in Retirement

The following is an update from our three main congregate housing communities where retired Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa now live.

St. Elizabeth Manor News

by Sister Kathy Flynn, OP



Sr. Virginia (Christophe) Geniesse holds a goat.

We've got goats! One of the med techs working at St. Elizabeth Manor (SEM), Dorothy, recently brought her baby goats in to visit! They were adorable and a huge hit among Sisters and staff alike! Plus, we're on the road again! Yes, SEM

Sisters will be enjoying various outings as the accessible minibus formerly used at Sinsinawa Mound has a new home at SEM! We are excited to be able to take up to 14 Sisters (including two who use wheelchairs) on outings to various locations in the area!

St. Dominic Villa News

by Sister Deb Bomyea, OP



From left: Srs. Karen (John Ribera) Krall and Mary Catherine (Alberto) St. Martin.

Warm greetings from St. Dominic Villa at Sinsinawa. We are keeping busy. Besides all the fun activities coordinated by our activities director, Sisters have had some of their very own. Sisters had the opportunity to enjoy a fun ride through Eagle Point Park with a stop at Dairy Queen for a shake. Many of the Sisters commented they learned so much more about Dubuque,

IA, through the trip. We have community gatherings every other week where we have had great discussions around the booklet *Peaceful, Prepared, Together*. We had some good laughs as we shared responses to such questions as, "What is a funny thing that has happened to you?" "If you were given \$5,000, what would you do with it?" Of course, everyone said, "Give it to the community!"

Stair Crest News

by Sister Marcia Holthaus, OP

When our Sisters gather to pray and sing, we make a joyful sound. We value liturgy done well and put our energies, whatever they may be at this time in our lives, at the service of our prayer together. Personal prayer and small group prayer happen around the complex. And we've been able to carve out a prayer time in the busy Stair Crest daily calendar for all of us to come together at least once a day. That common prayer came together when we established a flexible structure that used the gifts of any willing Sisters and residents.



Sisters at Stair Crest raise their voices in song.

Sisters Making a Difference

Beacons of Hope

Sister Colleen Settles, OP, received the Edgewood College 2023 Dominican Mission Award in September. “This year’s honorees join an already remarkable group of alumni building a just and compassionate world through their lives,” said Edgewood College President Andrew Manion.



for Italian Americans in the Chicago area. An article titled “Valentino’s Magazine Thrives on Positive News” recognized Tina Valentino for her founding of *Neighbors* magazine. Tina is a graduate of Rosary College, now Dominican University, River Forest, IL. A cause close to her heart is the canonization of Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP. She said the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters who taught her were “some of the most brilliant women in academia.”



Sister Sheila (Brigidan) Fitzgerald, OP, and **Julie Schwab, OP**, were interviewed in September on



the Farm Green podcast with Rick Clark where he discussed health and regenerative farming. “When Father Samuel Mazzuchelli first saw Sinsinawa Mound, he saw it as a place for God and science,” said Sr. Sheila.

Sister Peggy Ryan, OP, was pictured in the Chicago suburbs’ *Daily Herald* in August in an article titled “Palatine approves housing for victims of sex trafficking.” Sr. Peggy spoke at a meeting in favor of building a temporary housing facility in the town for young victims of human trafficking. The building will include a study hall, and all students will receive schooling as well as counseling.



In July, **Sister Anita (Corona) Smisek, OP**, and **Sister Joeann (Gratiana) Daley, OP**, were awarded



25th anniversary pins from the Dominican Institute for the Arts (DIA) at a ceremony during the DIA’s 25th gathering titled “Silver Weavings from Gifted Hands” in Florissant, MO.

Sister Doris (Friedrich) Rauenhorst, OP, was featured in an article on the Catholic Eldercare website that honors the legacy of Sister Ruth (Estavan) Roland, OP (1922–2013), as the organization celebrates 40 years of service to the community. Sr. Doris de-



scribed Ruth as a kind, loving person with an entrepreneurial spirit and a deep commitment to creating and supporting community. “She was energetic, creative, and busy. She worked hard to build Catholic Eldercare and made sure the design included areas for people to gather—places for creating community.”

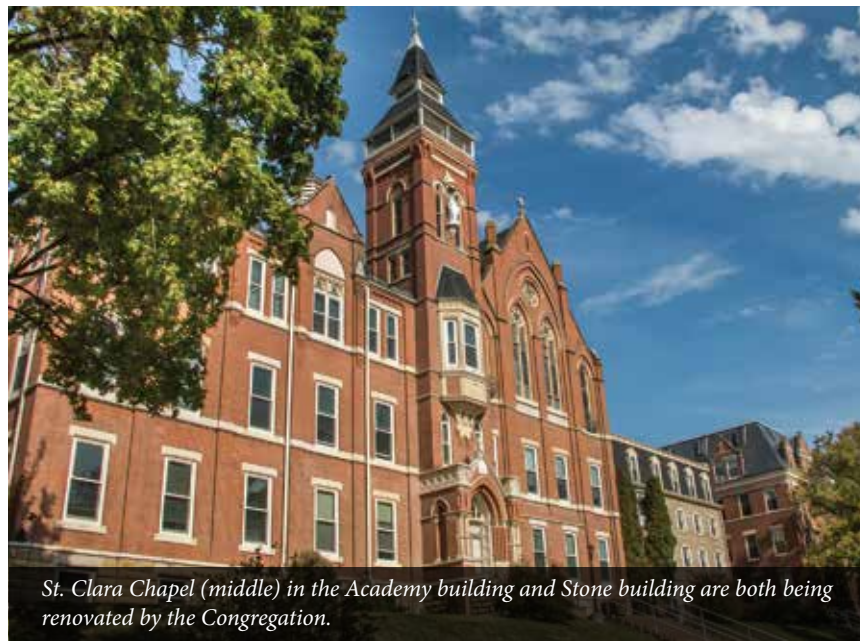
The **Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa** were mentioned in the October issue of *Fra Noi* magazine, a publication

Restructuring Space at Sinsinawa

Mound Center Events Paused, Bakery Negotiations Taking Shape

Major changes are taking shape at Sinsinawa Mound. The Congregation is updating and real-locating space in the Stone and Convent buildings for future use by Sinsinawa Sisters as negotiations continue with Tricon Construction Group on their possible renovations of the 1964 buildings as a senior living community and event center. The Stone and Convent building renovation will include installation of geothermal heating and cooling systems to align with our commitment to the ecological and economic responsibility of Pope Francis' call to care for Earth through his *Laudato Si'* encyclical.

Sinsinawa Book & Gift Gallery will remain open for business at its current location and offers products from Sinsinawa Bakery both online and in the store Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The storefront will serve as the entrance to Sinsinawa Mound Center for a time while renovations in the Stone and Convent buildings are underway. The Congregation is negotiating an agreement with Roux and Lucia—a new deli and bakery in Dubuque, IA, set to open in the spring of 2024—that would allow our Congregation to continue offering Sinsinawa Bakery items at Roux and Lucia in the new year, after bakery operations cease at Sinsinawa. This potential partnership is significant to us as Roux is a great-niece of our Sisters Macrina (1915–2006) and Melita (Marie



St. Clara Chapel (middle) in the Academy building and Stone building are both being renovated by the Congregation.

Richard, 1917–2005) Conlon, OP. Sinsinawa Mound Center temporarily discontinued its retreat and event offerings to the public in November 2023 until 2025. Queen of the Rosary Chapel, Sinsinawa Art Gallery, and exhibit areas are no longer available to the public as the Congregation continues negotiations

with Tricon. The Congregation is renovating St. Clara Chapel in the Academy building for use as a worship and gathering space for future groups. The renovation also includes relocation and expansion to the original Stone building of the Father Samuel Mazzuchelli and Sisters' heritage exhibits. The Stone building was constructed by Fr. Mazzuchelli in 1844.

“We are excited about the future possibilities to partner with others to share in our legacy of responding to the needs of the area,” said Sister Christina Heltsley, OP, Prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa. “Change can be challenging but also provides an opportunity for improvement and growth. We will be taking better care of our Earth by installing geothermal in our renovated buildings and continuing to provide our beloved bakery products to our friends and neighbors through a more sustainable business model.”

Donations toward the renovation project can be made to the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa at sinsinawa.org/donate online or by using the envelope provided.



The winning entries for Sinsinawa Sweepstakes 2023 were drawn by Sr. Kathy (Karel) Komarek (center) while Director of Philanthropy Barbara Brandt announced the winners and Database Specialist Michael Ricke looked on.

Sinsinawa Sweepstakes Winners Announced

Sinsinawa Sweepstakes winners were announced Oct. 10, 2023, as the winning entries were drawn. Sisters were present for the drawing and happy to know many of the winners. They hail from Florida, Tennessee, Connecticut, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The lucky winners are Elizabeth Dreyer Bennett

(\$5,000), Theresa Riniker (\$4,000), Maureen Keane (\$3,000), Alice Harper (\$2,000), and John Vaile (\$1,000). We are grateful for your support of our Sisters' retirement and ministry needs through your donations for Sinsinawa Sweepstake entries.

Hearing from people across the United States demonstrates how far and wide relationships have been formed with our Sisters. This year's winners include alumni of our schools, a former neighbor, and friends. Thank you for your participation in Sinsinawa Sweepstakes 2023!

Thank you for participating!

St. Mary Visit

In September, Sister Joan (Ernan) Murray, OP, and Associate Kay Malone visited St. Mary Parish, Evanston, IL. Sr. Joan said, "I asked to see the refurbished convent since I had lived there while in grad school at Loyola. I was struck by the plaque on the wall of the chapel and wondered if our Congregation was aware of the 2018 dedication that read, 'This chapel (pictured) is dedicated in memory and in grateful recognition of the many Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters who taught at the parish school from the 1870s until the 1980s and whose selfless service remains a model of Christian life.' It brought back memories of our summers when Sisters came from all over to study at Northwestern, Mundelien, Loyola, DePaul, and other places. So many Sisters lived there while in summer school, so many friendships formed there, and a love of study was fostered there."



Make a Donation

To include the Sisters in your estate plan, our legal name is Sinsinawa Dominicans, Inc., and our federal tax ID number is 39-0816854. To transfer securities, please contact the Office of Philanthropy using the information on p. 2. To donate now, please use the enclosed envelope, visit sinsinawa.org/donate, or scan our Venmo (left) or Sinsinawa (right) QR codes.





Sr. Mary Leads Prayer Service

In September, Sister Mary (Maria de Ricci) Paynter, OP, presented an ecumenical prayer service in St. Joseph Chapel at Chapel Garden, Milwaukee, titled “Rooted in Trust.” Presenters from various faith traditions are invited to speak there every three months. Pictured are Sr. Bernadette Luecker, SSSF (left); Sr. Mary (center); and Sr. Mary Jane Wagner, SSSF (right). Sr. Mary Jane is the director of this ecumenical prayer service and Sr. Bernadette is her assistant. Sr. Mary Jane is a cousin of Sinsinawa Dominican Sr. Mary Roman Wagner, OP (1932–2009).

May We Pray for Your Intentions?

Submit your prayers

- in the envelope provided;
- to prayers@sinsinawa.org;
- at sinsinawa.org/prayers;
- by calling (608) 748-4411.

Planning Together

We Invite You to Consider an Estate Gift

If you don't already have an estate plan, chances are you have thought about it. If you are in the planning stage or want to add to or change your estate plan, please consider including the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa. A bequest, whether a fixed sum or a percentage, will ensure our mission of preaching and teaching the Gospel and helping those most in need will continue long into the future. The information you may need to get started is in the blue box on p. 7, and our contact info is on p. 2. Please consult your financial advisor for tax advantages and legal advice. Thank you to those who have already included the Sisters in your estate plan and are now members of our Sinsinawa Legacy Circle—and thank you to those considering becoming a member.

Important Message from Office of Philanthropy

If you are a donor who transfers gifts directly to our broker or bank, please include your name along with the gift. We have recently received many gifts that have not included the donor's name. Without knowing who the donor is, we are unable to send a thank you letter of receipt for tax purposes. Please contact us if you have recently sent the Sisters a gift and have not received an acknowledgment letter/tax receipt. We are humbled by your generosity and want to acknowledge you!



River Trip

In October, Sisters from St. Elizabeth Manor visited Big Hill Park, Beloit, to enjoy views of the Rock River in Wisconsin. Pictured are (from left) Srs. Kathy Flynn, Mary Therese (Ivana) Mahony, Marie Celeste Gatti, Claire (Marie Edward) McCaslin, Virginia Geniesse, Mary Louise (Bernardin) Wieseler, Elaine (Marie Alice) LaCanne, Lauretana Gorman, and Bianca Madden.



AIDS Orphan Sewing Project Thrives

Program Celebrates 20 Years

Question: What is better than being rescued from traffickers?

Answer: Not being trafficked in the first place.

There may be only one program that keeps orphans from being trafficked for sexual exploitation, and that is the AIDS Orphan Sewing Project of the St. Maria Goretti Organization in Bukoba, Tanzania, operated by the Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Sister Marie Stella Storch, OP, founded and has supported the AIDS Orphan Sewing Project for 20 years.

For three years, girls are taught to sew, use computers, decorate with fabric, speak English, and solve basic math. They also learn how to cook and garden. They learn about morals and ethics. All of this helps them become self-reliant and self-assured, which is the most important piece of their education. These young women will not be duped when traffickers seek out victims for sexual exploitation. Since its inception, more than 500 young women have completed the program and are now earning a living for themselves, their siblings, and their families. They receive their own treadle sewing machine at graduation. Many are independent seamstresses; others work for schools where they sew and mend school uniforms.

Laudato Si' Action Platform Review

Endings, beginnings, and transformations. These words summarize where the Sinsinawa Dominican *Laudato Si'* committee finds itself right now. This year's highlights include our discussions of *The Letter*, which were profound and inspirational; the writing of our 2023–2028 Direction Statement at Chapter in April; our commemoration of *Laudato Si'* week in May viewing food through the lens of integral ecology by reflecting on it through the goals of *Laudato Si'* (cry of Earth; cry of the poor; ecological economics, spirituality, and education; adoption of simple lifestyles; and community engagement and action); the Season of Creation prayer service Oct. 1; and the weekly reflections of our Justice and Peace committees during the Season of Creation. As the committee looks forward to year three, its goal is to more fully participate in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. We live in challenging times, but we are the ones who have been chosen to live in them—to make the difference. Change starts at the grass roots level.



She Is with God

Remembering Our Deceased Sisters

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



Sister Rosalinda Soria, OP, died Aug. 29, 2023. Professed in 1968, she served as a licensed practical nurse at St. Dominic Villa, Dubuque, IA; the Motherhouse, Sinsinawa, WI; Valley Nursing Home, Billings, MT; and St. Francis Home, Hoboken, NJ, where

she was also a counselor. Sr. Rosalinda was a counselor and administrator at Good Counsel-Paraclete, Staten Island, NY; a nurse, counselor, and administrator at Holy Family Service, Weslaco, TX; and a counselor at Casa San Jose Catholic Charities, Grants, NM. She was a kind person and especially empathetic with those who suffered from long-term pain and chronic illness. May she rest in peace.



St. Mary, Champaign, IL; St. Jarlath, Chicago; St. Mary, Dixon, IL; St. Gall, Milwaukee; St. Thomas Aquinas, Milwaukee; St. Basil, Chicago; and St. Robert, Shorewood, WI. Sr. Dorothy was principal at Sacred Heart, Washington, DC, and recorded the convent annals in Whitefish Bay, WI. She lived her life helping where she saw a need, sharing her jovial spirit and dry sense of humor. May she rest in peace.



teaching and supporting community. She taught in the following schools: St. Philip Benizi, Chicago; St. Mary, East Dubuque, IL;



Sister Emeric Bauch, OP, died Sept. 21, 2023. Professed in 1950, she served as culinary artist at the following convents:

St. Clara, Sinsinawa, WI; St. Matthew, Milwaukee; Bethlehem, Faribault, MN; St. Mary, Cheyenne, WY; St. Vincent Ferrer, River Forest, IL; St. Cecilia, Omaha, NE; Edgewood, Madison, WI; and Visitation, Chicago. She served as a nurse aide at St. Dominic Villa, Dubuque, IA, and as a licensed practical nurse there and at Providence Hospital, Columbia, SC. Sr. Emeric volunteered in the Columbia area; Atlanta, GA; and the Motherhouse, Sinsinawa. She was a gentle, warm, faithful, and loving presence to all. May she rest in peace.



Sister Dorothy (Rita Cascia) Victor, OP, died Oct. 28, 2023. Professed in 1950, she taught for 36 years and was principal for nine years. Sr. Dorothy spent seven years as a missionary in Cochabamba, Bolivia,



was a teaching assistant for three years. Sr. Frances Consuelo served as pastoral minister for two years at St. Dominic Villa, Dubuque, IA, and as a family caregiver for one year in Honolulu, HI. She taught in the following schools: Incarnation, Minneapolis; St. John Vianney, Spokane, WA; St. Thomas the Apostle, Chicago; St. Matthew, Milwaukee; St. Rose, Milwaukee; St. Anthony Zuni Indian School, Zuni, NM; and Blessed Trinity, Milwaukee. Sr. Frances Consuelo served as teaching assistant at Messmer Preparatory Catholic School, Milwaukee. In true Dominican style, she learned daily about her faith and the world, sharing the fruits of her contemplation and concerns for the welfare of Earth and those who inhabit it. May she rest in peace.



Sister Frances Consuelo (Maria Consuelo) Ibarley, OP, died Oct. 28, 2023. Professed in 1962, she taught for 34 years and



Sister Mary Ellen (Marie Matthias) Werner, OP, died Nov. 5, 2023. Professed in 1948, she taught in the following schools: Annunciation, Minneapolis; Rosary, Oklahoma City, OK; and Resurrection, Minneapolis. She served as librarian and teacher at Central Catholic High School, Anaconda, MT; Freeport Aquin High School, Freeport, IL; and O’Gorman High School, Sioux Falls, SD. Sr. Mary Ellen ministered as parish visitor at St. Agnes Parish, Vermillion, SD, and St. Joseph Parish, Sioux Falls, SD; as pastoral associate at St. Albert the Great Parish, Minneapolis, and St. Mary Parish, Appleton, WI; and in pastoral care at St. Nicholas Hospital, Sheboygan, WI. Also in Sheboygan, she served in family care and volunteered in the library at Holy Family School. Sr. Mary Ellen was known for her gracious hospitality, her wit, and her faithful and tenderhearted ways. May she rest in peace.



Sister Debra Mika, OP, died Nov. 6, 2023. Professed in 1973, she dedicated her ministries to health care and pastoral ministry. Sr. Debra served at St. Dominic Villa, Dubuque, IA, as a nurse, assistant head nurse, and member of the nurse management team. She was a pastoral minister at the Motherhouse, Sinsinawa, WI, where she also volunteered in the library. Her faithful ways to the Gospel were clear. May she rest in peace.



Remember Our Sisters with Memorials

Memorials for our deceased Sisters can be made by using the center envelope or by visiting our website at sinsinawa.org/donate.



Sr. Julie Schwab and Associate Candy Krepel

Cornerstones Awardee

The 2023 Sinsinawa Cornerstones awardee truly exemplifies the qualities of hope, courage, commitment, and faith in the providence of God. She is Candy Krepel, a champion for Mother Earth, children with hearing challenges, and social justice issues. Candy became an Associate of the Sinsinawa Dominicans in 2005 and chose to become a lifetime Associate in 2013. Stumbling onto the Sinsinawa Dominicans’ website, Candy immediately connected with its mission and explored opportunities to deepen her understanding of the Dominican charism through study, discernment, companionship with vowed Sisters, and participation with a community of peacemakers and justice seekers. The community is deeply grateful for Candy’s service and is delighted that she was the 2023 Cornerstones awardee.

Stay Connected with the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa



sinsinawa.org



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Video streaming sinsinawa.org/live



Email prayer intentions to prayers@sinsinawa.org



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

Vocation Corner Fun Facts



3,500



New Members

In the past 15 years
200+ professed members
per year



Obtained a Bachelor's Degree

or more
before entering religious life

71%

66%



Invited

to consider the possibilities
of a call to religious life



Have a Parent Born Outside the USA

33%

73%



Attended Catholic Schools

These "Fun Facts" are being shared courtesy of the National Religious Vocation Conference. Learn more at nrvc.net.

Please consider **promoting** and **inviting** single women between the ages of 18 to 45 to our online opportunity **Discernment: What's It All About** on the second Sunday of the month at 7 p.m. (Central). Single women can join Sisters and learn about religious life and how to discern God's call for them. For more information, contact Michelle Horton at mhorton@sinsinawa.org.

Our Mission

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

Our Leadership Council

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