

SEPTEMBER 2026
DAY OF RECOLLECTION
HUMILITY/SERVICE



Earth teach me humility as blossoms are humble with beginning. -Ute Prayer

Our Charism & Its Relation to Our Franciscan Values of Humility/Service (putting others before ourselves):

- Appreciating, respecting all those we serve
- Recognizing that each person's contribution is important
- Seeing all others as "brother" and "sister"
- Teaching more by example than words
- Serving rather than being served

Compare/contrast: How did Jesus do this? Francis? How does our community do this? How do you?

Readings from Ch 5 of our Rule: The Way to Serve and Work pp 9-10

As poor people they should serve and work faithfully and conscientiously. Whatever they have over and above their needs they are to give to the poor. Let the sisters and brothers be gentle, peaceful and unassuming, mild and humble, speaking respectfully to all in accord with their vocation. But they should not be so busy that the spirit of holy prayer and devotion which all earthly goods should foster is extinguished. And let them never want to be over others. Instead, they should be servants and subjects to every human creature for the Lord's sake. (1 Pt. 2:13) Rather, it should be obvious that they are "joyful, good humored, and happy in the Lord as they ought to be." (Phil 4:1) And in greeting others let them say, "The Lord give you peace."

Readings from our Constitution: Ch IV Works of Neighborly Love, p 12

We place our gifts and talents at the service of the community and the Church. Responding to the Spirit and in collaboration with the local Bishop, we continue our works of neighborly love as we remain open to new and creative means of service to God's people. We are sent out to be a joyful, compassionate, enlivening presence of Christ. We go forth as servants trusting that we will be touched by the Christ within those with whom and to whom we minister. We support each other in ministry by our prayers, encouragement and frequent communication.

Readings from our Directives: Ch IV Works of Neighborly Love, pp 6-7

We pray for the people with whom we work and for those whom we serve.

We evaluate our ministries on our ability to:

- Live our values expressed in our vision and mission statements
- Preserve the Franciscan heritage and charism of our Institute
- Live in community and preserve our prayer life
- Collaborate with the local Church and others
- Share values and ministries with others

What strikes you about these quotes?

September 8 is the remembrance of adopting **our Ring** on April 22, 1963, at our Sixteenth General Chapter, which also elected Sr. Timothy Marie Flaherty as our 7th Superior General. **This ring is gold and is received on our perpetual profession day. “DEUS MEUS ET OMNIA” is engraved on the ring to remind us of our single-minded devotion to our God.**

What does this ring mean to you?



September 14, 1964, was the date when four of our Sisters (Sr. M. Camilla Swolek, Sr. M. Dolores Mosher, Sr. M. Luella Polaites and Sr. M. Frances Hoffman), after receiving their mission crosses, traveled to Belem, Brazil, to learn the culture and language of Brazil so they could work in the parish of Santa Terezinha in Jurunas, a suburb of Belem. This was in response to Pope John XXIII's call for missionaries to the South American countries. Mother Timothy Marie Flaherty and Sr. Elizabeth Marie Schwickert had previously gone to Brazil to find a suitable location for our missionary work: Along the Amazon River in the Archdiocese of Belem.

Research by Kathleen Moseley, April 2026

Pictures of Missionary Work in Brazil from p 20, 2001 History FSSH

Missionary Work in Brazil...



Mother Timothy Marie and Sister Elizabeth Marie journeyed to South America in 1963 to find a suitable missionary site in response to Pope John XXIII's call.



Professed Sisters in front of Santa Terezinha - 2001



First Convent in the parish of Santa Terezinha in Belem, Brazil - 1964



Central Convent with housing for formation in Icoaraci on the diocesan grounds of Tabor

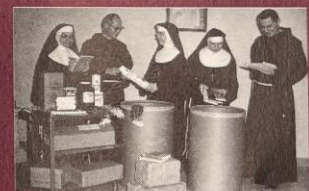
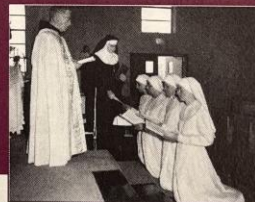


Sisters supervised the Diocese's Retreat House "Tabor"



1968 Blessing of Aspirant House

Four Sisters received Missionary Crosses at St. Mary Church in Mokena...



Packing barrels for Brazil



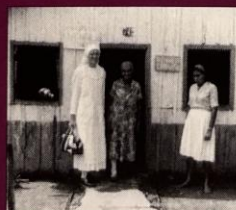
THE PIONEER MISSIONARIES
LEFT TO RIGHT:
Sister M. Camilla Swolek,
Sister M. Dolores Mosher,
Sister M. Luella Polaites and
Sister M. Frances Hoffman



... and departed for Belem, Brazil - located four degrees below the equator.



Receiving barrels from America



Sister Camilla making a house visit



Bishop McNamara blesses the first missionaries and Mother Timothy Marie



Nenita Ortega (Sister Francis Therese) leaves for Brazil in 1965 as a Postulant.

Musings

Looking back...

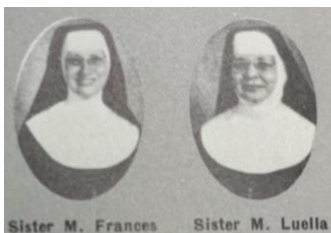
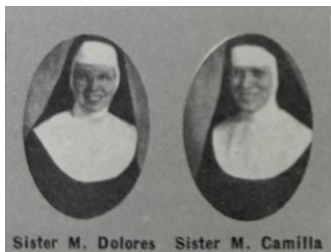
On our February day of recollection, Sister Joyce and I reflected on the risks our four sisters took when they ventured into a foreign land for the first time. In our reflection, I could not help but see their experience from the vantage point of our Mandatum – “With the Word in our heart, we cannot be quiet.”

Our sisters suffered suppression because of the May Laws. A group of them were not content on living their vocation underground. Their passion for service powered by the gospel is enough to move them to pack their belongings and travel to an unknown land. Mother Anastasia was forty-two when she and her companions took the journey.

As I prayed with this. I could not help but wonder what it would take for me to take the risk of venturing into an unknown future? I just turned sixty-six on my last birthday about two weeks ago. I have underlying health challenges – back pain, asthma, and type 2 diabetes, which by God’s grace I have learned to manage and control. What is holding me back? Is my faith in this Word enough for me to prudently plunge into an unknown future? Is this Work in my heart alive and breathing or is it just a fleeting word that comes and goes? How is the Word in my heart making me uncomfortable to not stay quiet and unmoved?

As I sat with this in silence, I was led to look at our past as a congregation and my own faith journey. The God who stirred the hearts of the four sisters who initially decided to travel to the US some 150 years ago is also the same God who walked with me for 66 years guiding every step I took with my limitations then and with limitations now. With this God nothing is impossible then and nothing will be impossible in the unknown future if only I live and breathe *“with the Word in my heart...”* - Sr. Maria Brizuela

How does this reflection fit in with the Sisters who went to Brazil in 1964?



What was surprising to you after reading from Mother Timothy Marie's diary about our earlier days in Brazil?

September 17 – Feast of the Stigmata

Francis of Assisi The Saint, Chapter III, The Vision of a Man Having the Image of a Crucified Seraph, p 263-265

Chapter III

THE VISION OF A MAN HAVING THE IMAGE OF A CRUCIFIED SERAPH

⁹⁴While he was staying in that hermitage called La Verna, after the place where it is located, two years prior to the time that he returned his soul to heaven, he saw *in the vision of God* a man, *having six wings like a Seraph, standing over him, arms extended and feet joined, affixed to a cross. Two of his wings were raised up, two were stretched out over his head as if for flight, and two covered his whole body.* When the blessed servant of the most High saw these things, he was filled with the greatest awe, but could not decide what this vision meant for him. Moreover, he greatly rejoiced and was much delighted by the kind and

Ez 1:1; 8:1

Is 6:2

gracious look that he saw the Seraph gave him.^a The Seraph's beauty was beyond comprehension, but the fact that the Seraph was fixed to the cross and the bitter suffering of that passion thoroughly frightened him. Consequently, he got up both sad and happy as joy and sorrow took their turns in his heart. Concerned over the matter, he kept thinking about what this vision could mean and his *spirit was anxious* to discern a sensible meaning from the vision.

While he was unable to perceive anything clearly understandable from the vision, its newness very much pressed upon his heart. Signs of the nails began to appear on his hands and feet, just as he had seen them a little while earlier on the crucified man hovering over him.

⁹⁵His hands and feet seemed to be pierced through the middle by nails, with the heads of the nails appearing on the inner part of his hands and on the upper part of his feet, and their points protruding on opposite sides. Those marks on the inside of his hands were round, but rather oblong on the outside; and small pieces of flesh were visible like the points of nails, bent over and flattened, extending beyond the flesh around them. On his feet, the marks of nails were stamped in the same way and raised above the surrounding flesh. His right side was marked with an oblong scar, as if pierced with a lance, and this often dripped blood, so that his tunic and undergarments were frequently stained with his holy blood.^b

Sadly, only a few merited seeing the sacred wound in his side during the life of the crucified servant of the crucified Lord. Elias was fortunate and did merit somehow to see the wound in his side.^c Rufino was just as lucky: he *touched it with his own hands*. For one time, when the same brother Rufino put his hand onto the holy man's chest to rub him,

his hand slipped, as often happens, and it chanced that he touched the precious scar in his right side. As soon as he had touched it, the holy one of God felt great pain and pushed Rufino's hand away, crying out *for the Lord to spare him*.

He hid those marks carefully from strangers, and concealed them cautiously from people close to him, so that even the brothers at his side and his most devoted followers for a long time did not know about them.

Although the servant and friend of the Most High saw himself adorned with such magnificent pearls, like *precious stones*, and marvelously decorated *beyond the glory and honor of all others*, still his heart did not grow vain. *He did not seek* to use this to *make himself appealing* to anyone in a desire for vainglory. Rather in every way possible he tried to hide these marks, so that human favor would not *rob him* of the grace *given* him.

⁹⁶He would never or rarely reveal his great secret to anyone. He feared that his special friends would reveal it to show their intimacy with him, as friends often do, and he would then lose some of *the grace given to him*. He always carried in his heart and often had on his lips the saying of the prophet: *"I have hidden your words in my heart to avoid any sin against You."*

Whenever some people of the world approached him and he did not wish to speak with them, he would give this sign to the brothers and sons staying with him: if he recited the verse mentioned above, immediately they would dismiss politely those who had gathered to see him. He had learned through experience that one cannot be a spiritual person unless one's secrets are deeper and more numerous than *what can be seen on the face* and by their appearance can be judged in different ways by different people. For he had met some people who agreed with him outwardly but inwardly disagreed, applauding him to his face but laughing behind his back. These brought *judgment upon themselves* and made honest people seem somewhat suspect to him.

So it is that malice often attempts to smear sincerity
and because of the lies of many,
the truth of the few is not believed.

How does this account show Francis' humility and service?

CLOSING PRAYER

Song: Jesus, Meek and Humble, Breaking Bread, #502

Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud; nor are my eyes haughty.
I do not busy myself with great matters, with things too sublime for me.
Rather, I have stilled my soul, hushed it like a weaned child.
Like a weaned child on its mother's lap, so is my soul within me.
Israel, hope in the Lord, now and forever.

Psalm 150

Praise God in his holy sanctuary; give praise in the mighty dome of heaven.
Give praise for his mighty deeds, praise him for his great majesty.
Give praise with blasts upon the horn, praise him with harp and lyre.
Give praise with tambourines and dance, praise him with flutes and strings.
Give praise with crashing cymbals, praise him with sounding cymbals,
Let everything that has breath give praise to the Lord! Hallelujah!

Mary's Song Luke 1: 46-55

My heart praises the Lord;
my soul is glad because of God my Savior,
for God has remembered me, a lowly servant!
From now on all people will call me happy,
because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me.
God's name is holy; from one generation to another
God shows mercy to those who honor God.
God has stretched out a mighty arm
and scattered the proud with all their plans.
God has brought down mighty rulers from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly.
God has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away with empty hands.
God has kept the promise God made to our ancestors
and has come to the help of God's servant Israel.
God has remembered to show mercy...

Women's Prayer Services, ed. By Iben Gjerling and Katherine Kinnamon, Twenty-Third Publications, Mystic, Connecticut, 1991, p 61.

Litany of Humility

O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, hear me.

First response: Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being esteemed... loved... extolled... honored... praised...
preferred to others... consulted... approved... **Response**

From the fear of being humiliated... despised... rebuked... calumniated... forgotten...
ridiculed... wronged... suspected... **Response**

Second response: Grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be loved more than I...

That others may be esteemed more than I...

That in the opinion of the world, others may increase, and I may decrease...

That others may be chosen and I set aside...

That others may be praised and I unnoticed...

That others may be preferred to me in everything...

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should...

Our Father:

Heavenly Father, holy are you. Your kingdom come. Your will be done here as it is in heaven. Give us this day all we need, Jesus. Forgive us our sins as we forgive others. Lead us not into temptation but keep us close to You. Amen.

Final Prayer

Jesus, as You washed the feet of the apostles at the Last Supper may we humbly serve others and give our lives happily for all those in need. May loving, serving and celebrating be our way of life in imitation of your life. Amen.

Celebrate!