Founded in 1872, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary is a religious congregation of women within the Roman Catholic Church. Committed to their mission to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, healing Jesus, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary focus the power of their intention on compassionate care of Creation in collaboration with others.

President:
Judith A. Bell, FSM

Councilors:
Kathleen M. Buchheit, FSM
Frances M. Haarmann, FSM

Franciscan Sisters of Mary
3221 McKelvey Road
Suite 107
Bridgeton, MO 63044
www.fsmonline.org

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Editor, Writer:
Sandra A. Ashby
Sentimental journey!

As a congregation, we recently experienced two sentimental journeys, one in May, one in August. The journeys began, however, many years earlier—one 90 years ago, the other 16 years ago.

As a few of us gathered for the opening of our Motherhouse cornerstone and many more of us for the opening of the time capsule celebrating our reunification, the pulse of excitement and anticipation was palpable. The treasures within each vessel held wonderful and unexpected surprises, providing a sense of awe and—definitely—a rich and deep connection to a time special for us to remember.

As I watched the contents of the Motherhouse cornerstone coming to light, I recalled for a fleeting moment St. Matthew’s reminder, “Store up for yourselves ‘treasures’ in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys.” Truly, neither moth nor rust could have touched any of those items within that cornerstone.

Where do you find your treasures? Family pictures? Videos of meaningful events? Gifts from a special person? Unpacking long-forgotten boxes after the death of a loved one? Listening to a meaningful song? The connection: A memory that renews a relationship. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be.

Why not take some time to reflect on the treasures in your life?

In the meantime, enjoy reading about the FSM treasures recently discovered.

Blessings on your treasure hunt!

Judith A. Bell, FSM
President
Franciscan Sisters of Mary
Almost 50 years ago, Jim Croce sang of saving time in a bottle—

> If I could make days last forever,
> If words could make wishes come true,
> I’d save every day like a treasure and then,
> Again, I would spend them with you.

The world may not yet have designed a way to save our cherished moments—or to travel back to a time of grace or forward to a promised future.

But twice this year the Franciscan Sisters of Mary have enjoyed traveling back in time—figuratively at least!—with the opening of two time capsules.

**A Tale of Two Time Capsules**

The first time capsule came as something of a surprise—a half-forgotten treasure.

The congregation’s Chronicles of 1928 did mention the time capsule that would be sealed in the cornerstone of St. Mary of the Angels Convent, listing two documents that would be included—a proclamation detailing who would attend and what was scheduled to occur, and a history of the property of St. Mary’s Hospital and St. Mary of the Angels Convent.
What was actually sealed in the 8-inch-by-8-inch-by-14-inch copper box, however, included far more—a treasure trove for those who opened it almost 90 years later.

On Sunday morning, December 9, 1928, sisters placed items in the capsule. The box was then sealed in the cornerstone laid at 2:30 that afternoon.

Then in 2002, the FSM Leadership Team—Srs. Jacqueline Motzel, Judy Bell, Joanne Klenke, and Sherri Coleman—sealed a small dark-red metal chest about 13 inches by 14 inches by 10 inches containing mementos honoring the fifteenth anniversary of the reunification of the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville, Missouri, and the Sisters of St. Mary as the Franciscan Sisters of Mary (August 2, 1987). The FSM intended to open that box in 2012.

But in 2012 the FSM were deeply involved in planning for a new future. While the time capsule was not forgotten, the sisters postponed its opening.

Finally, on Thursday, August 2, 2018, three members of that 2002 Leadership Team reunited to unseal the capsule at the congregation’s celebration of 31 years as Franciscan Sisters of Mary.
The Congregation’s Cornerstone

In 1888 the sisters left their first convent, adjacent to St. Mary of Victories Church on Third and Gratiot streets. For decades the sisters lived either at St. Mary’s Infirmary or, when it opened in 1924, St. Mary’s Hospital on Clayton Road.

On August 21, 1928, ground was broken on the 18-acre tract behind St. Mary’s Hospital for St. Mary of the Angels Convent. The sisters moved into their new home on Thanksgiving the following year. For the sisters, the motherhouse was “home” and anchor for some 80 years—a haven of the heart, a place for the sisters to live, to gather, to heal, to rest between ministry assignments, to enjoy spiritual renewal, and to celebrate community and sisterhood.

But times changed. By 2009, not only was the venerable building in need of major (and expensive) repairs, it no longer answered the congregation’s needs. The polished terrazzo floors were hazardous. Stairs that posed no problem for postulants, novices, and young sisters became obstacles for aging sisters. Dozens of doorways allowed unsafe access. Many rooms stood empty. As the congregation dwindled, so did the appropriateness of the large convent.
In 2010 and 2011, the FSM bid farewell to the beloved convent and moved residences and offices to their current site in Bridgeton. The sisters sold the convent to SSM St. Mary’s Health Center.

Demolition of the convent moved slowly as the hospital sought new homes for the sacred and valuable items remaining in the convent. But finally, it was time to remove the cornerstone.

On Wednesday, April 18, 2018, Srs. Judy Bell and Fran Haarmann watched as construction workers struggled to maneuver the large, heavy cornerstone from the front wall of St. Mary of the Angels Convent. It took most of the day. And removing the sealed time capsule inside took even longer.
A Grand Opening

On Tuesday, June 8, SSM staff and employees gathered in the lobby of SSM St. Mary’s Health Center with the FSM Leadership Team—Srs. Judy Bell, Fran Haarmann, and Kathy Buchheit—and the FSM/SSM Archives team, Scott Grimwood, Erin Norris, and Blair Motley.

Scott opened the copper box. It was filled to the brim—which had helped ensure that the contents remained in excellent condition. A key item was the 50th Anniversary Edition of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, dated Sunday, December 9, 1928, which contained numerous supplements and ran an astonishing 232 pages. Each section had been carefully folded and inserted—almost certainly the morning of the laying of the cornerstone.

The box included that Sunday’s edition of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* with its complete stock of color comics, including a full-page spread of “Little Orphan Annie.”

The proclamation and history noted in the Chronicles were found, as well as a complete listing of the Sisters of St. Mary.
Our Sunday Visitor offered “Lessons for Cool-Headed Americans” in its article on “Catholics and Their Enemies during the Recent Political Campaign.” The archive team found a complete edition of the October 1928 Hospital Progress, the magazine of the Catholic Health Association USA (now Health Progress). The box held editions of The Watchman, a Catholic newspaper, and the Varsity Breeze of Saint Louis University.

Items more closely connected to the sisters included portraits of Mother Odilia Berger, foundress, and Mother Concordia Puppendahl, mother general at the time, as well as of Mother Seraphia Schloctermeyer and Mother Aloysia Schruefer. An envelope contained holy cards, Golden Hail Mary cards, Miraculous Medals, a St. Christopher medal, coins of every U. S. denomination (silver dollar, half dollar, quarter, dime, nickel, penny) and other small items. Also inside was a charming booklet given to babies born at St. Mary’s around Christmastime, which provided a place to record dates for baptism, First Communion, and the like.

The close packing preserved the integrity of the items in the time capsule, and its placement in the wall well above ground level ensured that dampness was not a major issue. The colors on the printed pieces remained sharp and saturated; the newspapers from almost 90 years earlier were in great shape.

The sisters and archive team spread items out on a long table in the lobby so employees and others could enjoy viewing them. The contents of the convent time capsule will be preserved at the FSM/SSM Archives.
ALL FOR THE GREATEST GLORY OF GOD

In the year of our Lord, 2014, on the 26th day of December,
and the 50th anniversary of the American Catholic Hospital Association,
the Mother of God Assumed into Heaven, First Monday of the Month,
the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Louis, Most Reverend John J. O'Brien, D.D.,
and the Mayor of the City of St. Louis, Honorable Francis Slay,
the Governor of the State of Missouri, Governor Jay Nixon,
and the President of the United States, President Barack Obama,
and the President of the Senate of the United States, Senator Harry Reid,
and the President of the House of Representatives, Speaker John Boehner,
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The Sisters’ Message

How did the sisters who so carefully packed that box choose what to include?

While they included some small religious items—medals, holy cards, a crucifix, some documents and pictures of the congregation—most of the space in the capsule was filled with newspapers, magazines, and documents.

According to Scott, a time capsule shares “what the people who put it together thought was important.” The items in the time capsule tell us that “the sisters felt a close connection to the St. Louis community.” What was going on in their world was important. So the capsule contained both secular and religious newspapers, a professional magazine outlining current health care issues, and other items that give a glimpse of what it was like to live in St. Louis—and the United States—in December 1928.

The newspapers offer a fascinating glimpse of lifestyles, society, and fashion of the day, of political concerns, of the thought and opinions of people like Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh, and others. As nursing sisters, they were clearly interested in healthcare issues and advancements in the medical field—and with religious concerns.

Clearly, Mother Concordia and her team saw the congregation as deeply connected with the world and community, and their choice of artifacts reflected that connection.
Celebrating the Family’s Reunion

For most of the sisters, the reunification of the Sisters of St. Mary and the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville after more than 93 years of separation was like a sigh of relief. Even now sisters mention a pervading curiosity about the congregation on the other side of Missouri (Maryville or St. Louis); a sense of something—or someone—missing. On May 13, 1985, the congregations each voted to reunite, and reunification took place officially on August 2, 1987.

August 2—the feast of Portiuncula, a celebration dear to Franciscans—is still a day of festivity for the FSM as they celebrate once more their decision to be one.

This year’s celebration included an extra bit of anticipation and excitement—the postponed but not forgotten opening of the 15th-anniversary time capsule. Nothing was lost by opening the box on the 31st rather than the 25th anniversary of reunification.

Three members of the 2002 Leadership Team who had packed the box were now present to reveal its contents. Sr. Jacqueline Motzel untwisted the tight wire and lifted the lid of the box. Srs. Sherri Coleman, Jacqueline Motzel, and Judy Bell lifted out one item at a time so all the sisters could observe.

As with the cornerstone capsule some 90 years ago, the contents revealed what was important to the sisters who chose the items to place inside.
Inside were:

- Informational brochures on many of the ministries led and sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Mary—Holy Family Birthing Services in Weslaco, Texas; Woman’s Place; Almost Home; Prism (Therapeutic Massage); The Spiritual Connection (bodywork and spiritual direction)—and on the congregation itself

- A folder of information on The Sarah Community (where many sisters now live)

- Two issues of *Network*, a publication of SSM Health Care, which was also an FSM-sponsored ministry

- A folder filled with information on “Our Mission” from SSM Health Care

- The video *Our Mission & Values*, produced by SSM Health Care

- A “Continue Courageously!” bookmark and the reflection booklet from the August 2–3, 2002, FSM Days

- The 2000 FSM Identity and Mission card

- The August 2002 issue of *Unity*, the FSM newsletter, highlighting Sr. Teresa Marie Schmitz in convent executive director Marillyn Webb’s 1973 Corvette

- The spring 2002 issue of *FSM Magazine*

- A copy of the FSM Five-Year Plan from the 2001 FSM Chapter

- A copy of the July 2002 FSM Congregational Directory

- The August 2, 2002, issue of *National Catholic Reporter* with the headline “Keep the Faith, Change the Church”

- The complete *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for Saturday, August 3, 2002, which proclaimed that the weekend would be Hot! Hot! Hot! and that the Braves had beaten the Cardinals 11 to 5 (about 88 pages, tabloid format)

- *Time Magazine*, dated August 5, 2002, with Bruce Springsteen on the cover and a story about his reaching out to 9/11 survivors
And what might these items reveal about the sisters and the congregation?

Their commitment to ministry to others, especially to the poor and marginalized. Their deep connection to SSM Health Care through their shared mission and values. Their joy in sisterhood and in the heritage, identity, mission, and future of the congregation, shown in their five-year plan and their resolve to “continue courageously.” Their involvement in the issues of the time, the area, and the Catholic community, as evidenced by the newspapers and magazines they included.

Much has changed in the sixteen years since that time capsule was sealed. When the sisters put together the time capsule in 2002, “completion” was only a glimmer of a thought on the horizon.

Now, more than a hundred of the sisters in that 2002 congregational directory have passed away; only fifty-nine remain, and only three live outside the St. Louis area. They have sold the motherhouse and moved to Bridgeton. They have worked out a plan for Collaborative Governance and stand ready to put it into practice within the next five years.

The FSM have released sponsorship of almost all their ministries, putting them into the hands of capable laypeople who cherish the sisters’ vision for ministry. And while they continue to have sisters on the SSM Health Board, the congregation established SSM Health Ministries to serve as liaison for SSM Health with the Vatican to maintain SSM’s Catholic identity after the sisters can no longer serve.

How the FSM live out their Mission and Focus looks a bit different; through impact investing and directed philanthropy the sisters are using their resources to support individuals and organizations who further compassionate care for creation through efforts for sustainable energy and agriculture, clean water and air, and healing the earth and its environment.

What has not changed is the sisters’ deep commitment to one another, to spirituality and prayer, to their mission and focus, to those in need, and to the courage to move forward—to “continue courageously for the love of God,” as Mother Odilia encouraged them to do.
A Future Time Capsule?

If the Franciscan Sisters of Mary were to assemble another time capsule, what kinds of items might they include for a future audience?

Suggestions have included:

- pictures of all the living sisters and FSM staff
- the FSM pin
- the organizational chart for Collaborative Governance
- the *National Catholic Reporter*’s article on shared governance
- a signed copy of *Transformed into a New Way of Being* (an account of the FSM transition as written by the 2011–2015 Leadership Team)
- the 2015 Mission and Focus card
- the San Damiano cross (a strong Franciscan image)
- the FSM Birth and Death Anniversary booklet (includes almost every sister from the beginning of the congregation)
- recent Jubilee programs
- information about FSM impact investing and philanthropy partners and efforts
- significant Scripture passages (Behold, I am doing something new!” or “I know well the plans I have for you”)
- reflections on FSM life by individual sisters

A time capsule is a little like a photograph, a moment in time preserved for a future yet unknown.

While it’s fascinating to imagine what a time capsule to be opened in five—or twenty—years might contain, some values remain constant throughout the changing times and fashions. For the FSM, those values include:

Their Mission: to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, healing Jesus

Their Focus: compassionate care of creation in collaboration with others

Their Vision: “Continue courageously for the love of God!”
Sr. Victoria Ewers traveled to the Diocese of Coari in Brazil as part of the 30th Anniversary celebration of the Pastoral da Crianca August 10 to 12. Invited by Bishop Marcos Piatek, CSSR, Sr. Vicki provided the history of the Pastoral da Crianca (Children’s Pastoral Program), which she, along with the late Srs. Jovita and Mary Stenger, began in all seven parishes of the Prelacy (now Diocese) of Coari. The program helps combat childhood malnutrition in the Amazon, working especially with infants, young children, and pregnant women. Sr. Vicki was the first coordinator of the program and remained involved until returning to the United States in 2004.

Sr. Thelma Mitchell received the 2018 Harriet Tubman Award August 1 at the 50th anniversary conference of the National Black Sisters’ Conference (NBSC), held with the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, the National Association of Black Catholic Deacons, and the National Black Catholic Seminarians Association in New Orleans, Louisiana. The NBSC Harriet Tubman Award is presented to individuals for outstanding spiritual leadership. The article that appeared in National Catholic Reporter’s Global Sisters Report highlighted Sr. Thelma’s ministry in health care and congregational leadership, as well as her volunteer service at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center and with Nia Kuumba, a spirituality center for African Americans.

Sr. Mary Jean Ryan received the Catholic Health Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award at its assembly June 11 in San Diego, California. The award is presented each year to an acknowledged healthcare leader who has inspired and mentored many and whose leadership extends beyond health care, influencing the local community and others. She was featured in an article, “Sr. Mary Jean Ryan led the health industry in continuous quality improvement,” in the July 1, 2018, issue of Catholic Health World. One of SSM Health’s finest achievements under her leadership was receiving the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 2002, the first healthcare organization to attain that level of excellence and improvement. In accepting the CHA award, Sr. Mary Jean noted that she was being recognized “for doing something I loved, and with the certain knowledge that I didn’t do it alone.”
Congratulations to Our 2018 Jubilarians

70 Years in religious life

CARNELIAN

Rosanna Marie Carter, FSM
Jeanne Marie Meurer, FSM
Jane L. Rombach, FSM

60 Years in religious life

DIAMOND

Rose Mary Dowling, FSM
Agnes Elizabeth Stottmann was born April 10, 1924, in Sterling, Oklahoma, the fourth child of eight (five girls, three boys) born to Herman Martin and Ida Mary (Schulte) Stottmann. When Agnes was 9, a tornado destroyed their farm; they moved to Anadarko, Oklahoma. Agnes graduated from high school in 1941, the year after her mother’s death from typhoid. On September 3, 1941, she entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville, Missouri (OSF). She received the name Sr. Mary Seraphia, and she professed final vows May 6, 1947.

She attended St. Anthony School of Nursing in Oklahoma City, becoming a registered nurse in 1949. She was supervisor of the Emergency Room and Annex, then night supervisor for all of St. Anthony Hospital. She headed surgery until 1964. She completed her bachelor’s degree through Benedictine Heights College (1964).

The OSF congregation contracted to administer Benedictine Heights Hospital in Guthrie, Oklahoma, changing the name to Alverno Heights, and Sr. Agnes supervised surgery there for several months before returning to St. Anthony’s Hospital as supervisor of surgery and clinical instructor for surgery (1964–1967). She supervised surgery at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Hannibal, Missouri, for almost a year. She served briefly in OSF leadership in 1970.

After completing her master’s in Medical/Surgical Nursing through Saint Louis University (1971), she taught Medical/Surgical Nursing at St. Anthony’s School of Nursing (1972–1976). From 1977 to 1987 she served at Mount Alverno Convent in Maryville, working in the library and housekeeping, and in the apostleship of prayer.

When the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville and the Sisters of St. Mary reunited in 1987 as Franciscan Sisters of Mary, Sr. Agnes moved to St. Mary of the Angels Convent in St. Louis. Her ministries included children’s daycare, physical therapy and activities for the elder and infirm sisters, and accompanying sisters for doctors’ appointments, etc. She moved to The Sarah Community in May 2010.

Sr. Agnes deeply enjoyed the beauty of creation and living out her Franciscan charism.

Late Tuesday night, May 1, 2018, Sr. Agnes left this earth for heaven.
Mary Josephine Kahl was born June 24, 1939, in Madison, Wisconsin, one of five children born to Bernard George and Grace Margaret (Hartel) Kahl. She entered the Sisters of St. Mary August 10, 1955; she received the name Sr. Mary Ann Grace, and she professed final vows February 11, 1964.

She earned her bachelor’s in Dietetics (1965), her master’s in Education (1974), her BS in Nursing (1985), and her MS in Nursing (1989), all through Saint Louis University. She was certified as a Gerontological Certified Nurse Specialist in 1991.

She was director of Dietetics at St. Joseph Hospital in St. Charles (1967–1975) and at St. Mary’s Health Center in St. Louis (1975–1982). She served as a nurse at the Veteran’s Administration Hospital in St. Louis (1985–1990), and then in Madison, Wisconsin. She served at Elder Care—Dane County in Madison (1991–1994), then at St. Mary’s Care Center in Madison (1994–1996).

She was a nurse at St. Mary’s Hospital in Madison, as well as a dietitian and nurse at St. Ben’s Clinic for the Homeless (1997–1999). She became a nurse case manager for SET Ministry (Service, Empowerment, Transformation), working in Milwaukee’s public housing to help clients—the poor, the elderly, the mentally ill—live independently. She also helped refugee Somali Bantu families find a home in Milwaukee.

In 2009 Sr. Mary Jo was honored by the U. S. Postal Service in the “Women Putting Their Stamp on Metro Milwaukee” celebration. Honoring her for her humanitarianism in her SET Ministry work, the Post Office produced stamps with her image. In 2012 she received one of the Milwaukee Archbishop’s annual Vatican II Awards for Service to the Church and Society.

She was involved with St. Vincent de Paul ministry, prison ministry at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Milwaukee, and Common Ground of Southeastern Wisconsin, helping renovate foreclosed homes.

She was also involved in restorative justice, working with the assailant who violently carjacked her car to help him take responsibility and make life changes.

She moved to The Sarah Community in April 2018.

Early Sunday morning, August 5, 2018, Sr. Mary Jo completed her race, hearing her Lord’s praise: “Well done, good and faithful servant.”
Helen Margaret Elmendorf was born August 7, 1933, in St. Charles, Missouri, to Ralph J. and Frances (Knoblauch) Elmendorf. Her sister Mary entered the Sisters of St. Mary in 1944. Helen entered January 23, 1952; she received the name Sr. Jacinta Marie, and she professed final vows September 8, 1960.

She earned her BSN from Saint Louis University (1958), a master’s in Nursing Service Administration from the University of Iowa in Iowa City (1972), and a master’s in Counseling from Santa Clara University, California (1986).

She served at St. Mary’s Hospital, St. Louis, until 1960, then at St. Francis Hospital, Blue Island, Illinois (1960–1962); at St. Mary’s Hospital, Jefferson City, Missouri, for a year; at St. Mary’s Hospital, Madison, Wisconsin (1963–1966); and at St. Mary’s Hospital, Kansas City (1966–1971).

She was director of nursing and assistant executive director at St. Clare’s Hospital, Baraboo, Wisconsin (1972–1977), establishing its first Intensive Care Unit, a new emergency department, and a Code Blue Team, greatly improving quality of care.


After retiring, she volunteered at SSM St. Joseph Hospital in Kirkwood and SSM St. Joseph’s Health Center. She moved to The Sarah Community in August 2011.

Sr. Jacinta loved learning and challenge. She enjoyed traveling, reading, playing cards and board games, watching Cardinals baseball, visiting with family and friends, photography, and cooking. Especially challenging—but also bringing joy and satisfaction—were her ministries serving the poor and marginalized at St. Louis City Hospital and the impoverished teen mothers at Almost Home.

Late Monday evening, August 27, 2018, Sr. Jacinta answered the call to new life.
Gifts given in memory of:

In loving memory of Mary Doris Ashcraft, FSM
Ana and Dr. José Manglano

In memory of Betty Brucker, FSM
Ms. Betty J. Moore
The Moore Family

In memory of Madeline Mary Coens, FSM
Dolores A. Weekly

In memory of Mary Antona Ebo, FSM,
two engraved bricks were placed in St. Mary’s
Hospital Courtyard Garden,
Madison, Wisconsin
Dr. Frank and Cindy Byrne

In memory of Rosina Higgs, FSM
Janet G. McCubbin

In memory of Mary Johnetta Hoffmann, FSM
James and Ann Hoffmann

In memory of Florence Mary Imhoff, FSM
My aunt
Robert J. Baker

In memory of Josephine Imhoff, FSM
My aunt
Robert J. Baker

In memory of Agnes Reinkemeyer, FSM
Our dear sister
Alex and Margaret Reinkemeyer

In memory of Agnes Reinkemeyer, FSM
Carolyn and Peter Rummel

In memory of Agnes Stottmann, FSM
My sister
Lydia B. Foote

Gifts given in honor of:

In honor of Mary Jean Ryan, FSM
Dr. Robert J. Atkenson

In thanksgiving,
Laura S. Kaiser

Donors:
Kathleen S. Belding
David and Mary Ann Dansart
Edmund J. Heiman
Sean Hogan
Pastor John E. Murrell
St. Clare Hospital and Health Services, Baraboo, Wisconsin

Planned Giving:
The Peter Dimo Gark Estate
The estate of Edwin M. Finney

SEND US YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS
You can e-mail requests for prayer by clicking on the tab “Submit a prayer request” on our website (www.fsmonline.org) and filling out and submitting the form.
You can call us with your prayer requests:
St. Louisans can reach us at (314) 768-1748;
people outside the metropolitan area can call us toll-free at 1-877-768-1299.
Or mail us:
FSM Prayer Ministry
3221 McKelvey Road, Suite 107
Bridgeton, MO 63044
Mission and Focus of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary

The Mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary is to be the presence of the loving, serving, compassionate, healing Jesus. Flowing from our Mission, we focus the power of our intention on compassionate care of Creation in collaboration with others.

The 2015 Chapter affirms our Focus and calls us to widen, deepen and emphasize its collaborative aspects.