

*It was at a critical moment in his conversion that Francis of Assisi, kneeling before a crucifix in a crumbling sanctuary, heard Christ's call to "go and rebuild my Church."*

At first, Francis took the request quite literally, and committed himself to restoring physical buildings. Eventually, he came to realize that Christ was asking him to rebuild the community of the Church and to engage its people.



*Like all of our Sisters, Sister Anece Salay welcomes every opportunity to engage with young people in the community.*

**Each day, even in the smallest of ways,** we as Franciscans are committed to the ongoing process of renewing and restoring the Church through our work, our way of life and simple acts of kindness toward those we encounter in ministry and everyday life. Just as Francis' work began with small steps and played out over many years, so too does the work of the School Sisters of St. Francis in this ever-changing world.

## Living Our Charism

*Our community charism is built on serving the poor and otherwise needy and addressing the very real needs and social concerns of the times in which we live. Our vital sponsored ministries are the instruments by which we engage God's people and meet their physical and spiritual needs. Our interior relationship with God and the external support of our friends help us to keep these ministries vital and relevant. With your help, we extend our hearts and hands to those in need. Please consider a donation today to help us continue our good works.*

**St. Francis Center for Renewal**  
Bethlehem, Pa. | 610-867-8890

**Monocacy Farm Project**  
Bethlehem, Pa. | 610-867-8494

**Franciscan Resource Center**  
Pittsburgh, Pa. | 412-761-2855



*The School Sisters of St. Francis*  
U.S. Province

4900 Perry Highway, Suite 201  
Pittsburgh PA 15229

Phone: 412-761-2855

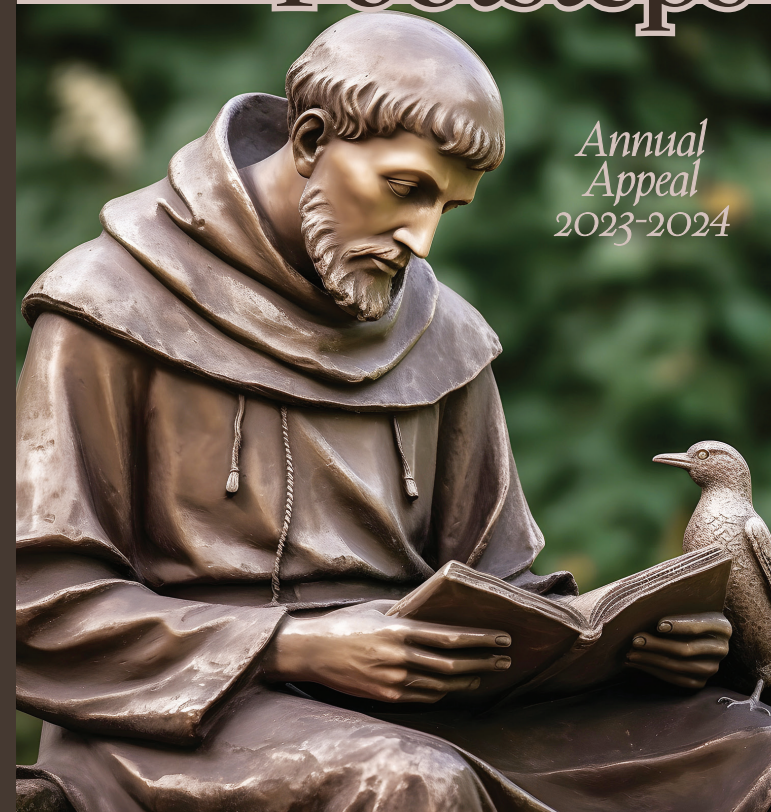
Email: [administrationusa@schoolsistersosf.org](mailto:administrationusa@schoolsistersosf.org)

*Learn more about us or donate at*  
**SchoolSistersOSF.org**



# Following in Francis' Footsteps

*Annual  
Appeal  
2023-2024*



*The School Sisters of St. Francis*  
U.S. Province



Over the course of more than 110 years in the United States, the manifestation of our mission has evolved. We began as teachers called to educate the children of Eastern European immigrants. Over these many decades, our roles have expanded to reach God's people in other ways — providing comfort to those in tangible need, sharing God's word with those in spiritual need, and serving communities in emerging need.



*Sisters Marian Sgriccia, Bernadine Marie Stemnock and Kevin Berdis listen intently during a discussion at the Franciscan Resource Center in Pittsburgh.*

Providing guidance to children in afterschool care ... sharing the good news of the Gospel with the incarcerated ... overcoming language barriers to help immigrants and refugees ... opening the door to those seeking Christ through structured programming and simple conversation ... caring for our common home by living simply and cultivating the earth in sustainable ways ... living deeply prayerful lives fueled by our faith in God ... and still, today, teaching children in the classroom. These are among the many ways that we work to fortify the Church and connect with God's people in ways large and small.



*Sisters Maria Derecola and Marie Therese Sherwood sort and bag fresh produce at Franklin Food Bank in Somerset, N.J.*

### *With Your Support, We Endure*

Your support is reflected in everything we do. You have been our faithful companions in this ongoing journey. We humbly ask that you continue walking beside us with a donation of any size to our 2023-2024 Annual Appeal. Regardless of your ability to donate, we ask you to please join us in ongoing prayer for the Church and for people in need everywhere.



*Sister Jo Goolish and volunteers prepare text books for reuse in San Antonio, Texas.*

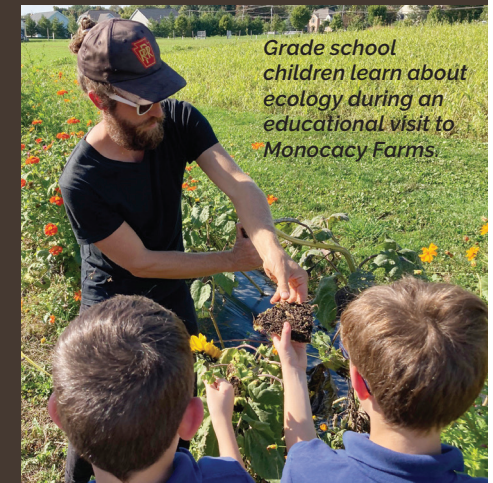
*Our sponsored ministries offer diverse opportunities for people of all faiths to enrich their spirituality and connect with our Sisters. By reaching people where they are, these programs reflect Francis' recognition of the Church as not merely a physical place, but a diverse and far-reaching community of faith.*

#### **ST. FRANCIS CENTER FOR RENEWAL**

St. Francis Center for Renewal hosted many new programs and groups over the last year, welcoming those finding the Center for the first time, while continuing to engage those who have sought peace and prayer there for more than seven decades. With spiritual retreats, weekend encounters, or single-day events, SFCR offers a means by which people of most any background or interest can engage. See upcoming programs and retreat opportunities at [StFrancisCtr.org](http://StFrancisCtr.org).

#### **MONOCACY FARM PROJECT**

In its 10th Anniversary season, Monocacy Farm Project in Bethlehem, Pa., continues its growth with more community gardeners and Pick-Your-Own program members than ever, hosting unique learning opportunities for all ages, and



*Grade school children learn about ecology during an educational visit to Monocacy Farms.*

strengthening partnerships within the local emergency food system. MFP also continues its stewardship of the earth by hosting local beekeepers and protecting the water supply by planting ecologically-important native grasses, wildflowers, trees and shrubs. Included in this effort are fruit and nut trees to provide food security for future generations. Learn about events and educational opportunities on the farm at [MonocacyFarmProject.org](http://MonocacyFarmProject.org).

#### **FRANCISCAN RESOURCE CENTER**

In April 2023, we opened our new Franciscan Resource Center in Pittsburgh, Pa., serving the area as a welcoming place for dialogue, prayer and reflection. All are welcome for reflection days, spiritual direction and open conversation. As it grows, the Center aims to connect with young adults and the Latino community and raise awareness about issues impacting those on the margins of society. Learn more at [FranciscanResourceCenter.org](http://FranciscanResourceCenter.org).



*“Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”*

— Francis of Assisi

