



# The Canticle

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Voice of  
The Community  
of St. Francis,  
Province of  
The Americas

## Life and Death with Each Other in Community



***Blowing in the British Wind! The First Order Sisters of the Society of St. Francis. From Left: Sr. Sue (Minister Provincial European Province), Sr. Maureen (General Secretary), Sr. Maggie (American Province), Sr. Pamela Clare (Minister Provincial American Province), Sr. Jemma (Korea), Sr. Helen Julian (Minister General), Sr. Beverley (European Province), Sr. Christine James (European Province).***

Every three years representatives of the Sisters and Brothers of the First Order of the Society of St. Francis get together to conduct business and renew our corporate life as an international community. The most recent meeting of this First Order Chapter was in September in England, just north of London. Srs. Pamela Clare and Maggie represented CSF Province of the Americas.

International meetings like these help us to strengthen the bonds we have with each other as Franciscan Brothers and Sisters as we accompany each other on our common journey. We celebrate together new ministries, new members, new visions. We mourn

with each other the deaths of our Brothers and Sisters and the losses we experience as individuals and as a community. We recommit to our vocations and to an ever clearer and renewed vision of what God is calling us to be and to do. It is all part of our commitment to BE THERE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

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Earlier in the summer Sr. Jean and Sr. Pamela Clare joined the SSF Third Order in Cincinnati to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Third Order in the American Province. We wish our TSSF Brothers and Sisters every blessing in their second century.



## Sr. Cecilia CSF

On November 18, Sr. Cecilia, aged 97, died in the 50th year of her Profession of Vows as a Franciscan Sister in CSF.

Cecilia was the leader of the group of CSF Sisters who came

from England in 1974 to found an American Province of CSF. She served as Minister Provincial here in America, and later as Minister General of CSF worldwide. She spent several years as the Visitor to the SSF Third Order and also as Secretary for Associates/Companions. Over her years in San Francisco she engaged in a number of ministries, including office assistant for the Chaplain at St. Luke’s Hospital, organist for Holy Innocents Church, volunteer receptionist at Haight Ashbury Alcohol Treatment Services, a classroom volunteer for developmentally handicapped elementary school children, and a volunteer at Martin de Porres House of Hospitality where she helped make soup for the hungry and homeless. She also led retreats, participated in preaching and teaching missions and acted as a spiritual director.

Before becoming a Franciscan Sister, Cecilia worked as a school music teacher and a church organist. Her love of music and her talents as poet and composer were great gifts to the community.

For her sisters, Cecilia was a model in prayer, in trust, in faith, and in servanthood. Cecilia was always first to lend a hand at the “dirty work.” She could often be found on her hands and knees scrubbing those stubborn stains on the kitchen floor or wiping up after some other sister. She put out the garbage bins and did the household laundry until she was 94.

Even after she retired from community leadership, she lent her talents for efficient organization and discipline to our office admin work. Many of you will have received one of her hand-written thank you notes.

When some of the rest of us found our busy life interfering with our time of prayer, we could always be sure that Cecilia would be in the chapel at prayer time. Cecilia had a great devotion to the Trinitarian God—a fact made clear in her hymns—and was a faithful ex-Baptist follower of Christ in the Way of St. Francis.

With a face which was often dominated by a daunting frown, the real Sr. Cecilia was sometimes not apparent. The frown lines between her eyes, it should be noted, were an hereditary trait, rather than an indication of her personality. Her sense of humor continually surprised people. She was notorious for making up witty rhymes about people and even doing funny imitations of them at public events! Her flair for dramatics came out at charades and other community drama efforts (usually instigated by her). She was also known to kick up her heels when given the chance to dance, memorably several years running with Bishop William Swing on the steps of Grace Cathedral after the Easter Jazz Evensong.

Cecilia miraculously survived a diagnosis of inoperable malignant melanoma in her 70s, but dementia gradually took her away from us over the past 2 1/2 years. Her last real day of significant lucidity was shortly after Easter 2015. She spent the day pouring over her score of Faure’s Requiem, which her deafness made her unable to hear anymore, but which she could still enjoy in her head.

On that day in April 2015, she also methodically went through her collection of photos of friends and family. Connections were important for her. She was the one who always remembered birthdays and anniversaries



*Sr. Cecilia at her 95th birthday party.*



and was the first to suggest that we needed to invite someone to dinner or have an open house.

Join us if you can for a celebration of her life on January 19 at 7:30 pm at Holy Innocents Church. Memorial gifts may be given to the Holy Innocents Columbarium Fund or to Martins de Porres House of Hospitality.



**Sr. Cecilia dancing at the wedding of Pamela Lee Cranston. Michael Haines is dancing with her. (Photo by Lance Woodruff)**

*Cecilia,  
our companion in faith and sister in Christ,  
we entrust you to God.  
Go forth from this world:  
in the love of God who created you;  
in the mercy of Jesus Christ who died for you;  
in the power of the Holy Spirit who strengthens you,  
at one with all the faithful, living and departed.  
May you rest in peace and rise in the glory  
of your eternal home,  
where grief and misery are banished,  
and light and joy abide. Amen.*

**Enriching Our Worship 3: Burial Rites for Adults.**

## A WORD FROM THE MINISTER PROVINCIAL

The Life Profession service for the Community of St. Francis includes the following words:

***As you have bound yourself to us for life,  
so we bind ourselves to you for life  
to strengthen and support you In our common vocation.  
This we do, confident in the mercy and grace of God.***

These words articulate the commitment to BE THERE FOR ONE ANOTHER that is part of being a Life Professed religious community. It is exciting and hopeful to admit new people into CSF and challenging to work at integrating them as we create a new community together. But that's not where we have been for the last three years. Our big task in the past years has been to accompany one of our members on her journey into the wider communion of God. This was challenging, emotionally draining, time-consuming, and just plain difficult. This is another moment in our corporate life which could end with the affirmation, "I will, with God's help!" (The words we use in our profession of vows). We are very grateful to all those who have aided us in the journey with Cecilia. We are now through those three years, and open to the newness struggling to be born in each of us and in our community as a whole.



**Sr. Maggie with the 10 foot tall rose bush in our garden—which serves as a symbol of our faith in God's abundant future.**

When Cecilia was finally admitted to hospice care three days before her death, the hospice nurse said to us that we were midwives to Cecilia in her dying process. Midwives help in birthing, and for us as Christians, death is another form of birthing, so what the nurse said was helpful in empowering us to live out our faith.

Pamela Clare, CSF

# *The Canticle*

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*The Canticle*  
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order for women in the  
Franciscan tradition in  
the Episcopal Church.

*The Canticle—digital version*  
Send us your e-mail address!

## *Life & Death in Community*

### **COMPANIONS IN FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY 2018**

Ten Day Residential Immersion Programs in Franciscan Spirituality offered for women over 18. The program includes studying Franciscan spirituality and living out that spirituality by sharing in our community life, worship and ministry in the church and wider community.

**Holy Week/Easter March 23-April 3**

**Summer Aug. 10-20**

**St. Francistide Sept. 28-Oct. 7**

(Limit 2 women for each Immersion)

**Contact us for more information.**



**Emmanuel  
God  
With  
Us**

**Merry  
Christmas  
And a  
Blessed  
2018**

### **Contact Information**

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*And for the most up-to-date and more informal contact, check out our  
Facebook page: Community of St. Francis, American Province*