



FRANCISCAN Prints



Sisters of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception • *"A Caring, Praying Presence"* • West Peoria, Illinois

Immaculate Conception Convent: 309-674-6168

NOVEMBER 2025

Reflections

Signs of autumn are all around us lately - trees and bushes in a variety of colors, fallen leaves everywhere, the abundance of pumpkins from the fall harvest, and heavier jackets and gloves being worn. These are external signs of other changes as nature transitions from autumn to the winter season. Inner changes for trees include letting go of leaves, moving nutrients to trunk and roots, settling down for a dormancy period, getting ready for the cold and snow before beginning again to send out new shoots in the spring.

There are also external signs of inner changes we humans undergo in the course of our lives. I am presently finding myself dealing with many of these inner changes. I moved from Frankfort, Illinois in September, letting go of a blessed ten-year ministry at the Portiuncula Center for Prayer to return to our Motherhouse in West Peoria. The external changes of the 150 miles distance, physical changes of the aging process, packing and moving personal and office materials, unpacking and settling into a different room and office, and the inner changes because of those - lacking energy, experiencing a variety of emotions - tell me that, along with nature, I am in transition.

William Bridges, in his book, *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, tells us that "Change is external: something that happens to us, or something that we choose that affects our outward behavior. Transition is what happens to us psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually as we

undergo a major change." We all experience transition multiple times in our lives that take place with a change - the loss of a loved one or a job/ministry, a move, a change in a relationship, an accident or illness, etc. How we negotiate the endings, the middle ground (dormancy), and the new beginnings will be individual and can take varying amounts of time.



Sister Janice

What I have discovered is that it's important to give yourself time to adjust, to mourn losses, to just feel tired or listless, to be patient, patient, patient, and to move forward step by step gently into newness. There is often some resistance, even if you choose the change, e.g., you have to find a new dentist/doctor/chiropractor or change of voting place/return address labels/schedule. Even with the frustrations and inconveniences, I've also found that a time of transition is a wonderful time to take stock of the blessings of my past, the experiences I've had, the lessons I've learned, and most especially, the people God has put in my path in both the former and the present places. It can be a graced time when you find yourself talking to God more, thanking God, perhaps asking God questions, or letting God know you're ready to move on and maybe God could move more quickly to show you the next step. Prayer can become more real and intimate.

I have some plans already - to continue offering spiritual direction and reflection days for various groups, and being part of community - prayer, committees, and activities, and connecting more with family and friends close by. God may, of course, have other plans that will be revealed to me over time. I can trust in his words in Jeremiah 29:11-12, "I know the plans I have for you. Plans for your welfare and not for woe; plans to give you a future full of hope." Whatever transitions you might be experiencing, large or small, I encourage you to give yourself permission to mourn, to be, to be patient with yourself and others, and to be grateful and hopeful. Our God, Emmanuel, will be with you through it all.



Celebrating the 30th Jubilee of Sister Holly Marie Schultz — Sister Betty Jean Haverback, Sister Holly Marie Schultz, Sister Kathleen Ann Mourisse, Sister Irene Marie Fritch.



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Sister Holly Marie Schultz celebrating her 30th Jubilee.



Father William Miller and Sister Holly Marie Schultz at her 30th Jubilee celebration.



Bishop Louis Tylka and Father Robert Lampitt celebrating Mass for West Peoria friends at our Motherhouse.



Celebrating West Peoria Mass



*Please join us for Advent Lessons and Carols
on November 30th at 4pm at our Motherhouse.*