



FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHICAGO

125 YEARS OF LOVING, JOYFUL MINISTRY

DECEMBER 8, 1894— DECEMBER 8, 2019

PART NINE — THE NINTH PERIOD, 1995 to 2004

The ninth period of the history of the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago covers the years of 1995 to 2004. In April of 1995, the Oklahoma City bombing took the lives of 168 people, including 8 Federal Marshals and 19 children. Three months later, in July, the Midwest experienced a record heat wave during which at least 739 people died in Chicago alone.

In 1996 Bill Clinton was re-elected and in the following year he barred federal funding for any research on human cloning. Issues abroad in Africa resulted in 224 killed in the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya. Meanwhile, Chicagoans rejoiced locally as the Chicago Bulls won their 6th NBA title in 8 years when they beat the Utah Jazz. This was also Michael Jordan's last game as a Bull, clinching the game in the final seconds.

Air disaster struck in 1999 when EgyptAir Flight 990 crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, killing all 216 on board. Later that year, after considerable speculation regarding the Monica Lewinski incident, President Clinton was acquitted in an impeachment trial by the U.S. Senate.

September 11, 2001 marked a date carved into American memories when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and hijacked Flight 93 in a failed attempt on the White House. In response, the US and its allies invaded Afghanistan in "Operation Enduring Freedom" and successfully drove the Taliban from power. The search began for Osama bin Laden on whom the US blamed the attacks. To date, the War in Afghanistan is the second longest war in US history, after the Vietnam War.

In response to terrorism on American soil, the Depart-

ment of Homeland Security was created in 2002. The U.S. also withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia.

The year 2003 marked the horror of the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster, the second fatal accident in the Space Shuttle program. The invasion of Iraq Operation "Iraqi Freedom" commenced and led to the occupation of Iraq from 2003-2004.

Because the 2004 Atlantic hurricane season had started nearly 2 months late, no one expected the large number of unusual occurrences which would impact U.S. lives and properties. When the last of the 15 storms dissipated on December 3, over 3,200 people were dead and damages were totaled at over 61 billion dollars.

In the Catholic Church during this period of time, two women were honored for their holiness. In



The Franciscan Sisters of Chicago built their new Motherhouse in 2001 as an assisted living facility to accommodate the needs of their retired Sisters and for future residents. The outdoor garden is protected by St. Joseph and the Child Jesus.

1997 St. Therese of Lisieux was made a Doctor of the Church. On April 30, 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina and designated the Sunday after Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday.

The year 1999 marked a special event worldwide — the ending of a century as well as the beginning of a new millennium. The Franciscan Sisters of Chicago held events throughout the year to mark this special time.

For the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago this period contained a bittersweet ministerial moment. Their only high school, Madonna High School in Chicago, had been struggling due to plummeting enrollment and subsequent financial woes. After a decade of substantial annual support from the Sisters, closing the high school seemed the only option. Once again, the spirit of Mother Theresa and her charism of care for the poor inspired the hearts of the Sisters. With the closing of the high school the Sisters made a gift of cash to establish the

Madonna Foundation in 2001. The Foundation made it possible for the last students of Madonna High School to finish their education at another all-girls Catholic high school. In addition, new scholars who demonstrate financial need and the potential for academic achievement would be chosen annually to receive a scholarship to attend an all girls Catholic high school.

The sponsored ministries expanded as three eldercare facilities were added: Addolorata Villa in Wheeling IL, Marian Village in Homer Glen IL, and, as this period ended, University Place in West Lafayette IN .

As the eldercare ministries flourished, the Sisters turned with greater attention to the care of their own elderly Sisters. The Motherhouse in Lemont built in 1963 was no longer viable. It lacked the infrastructure to provide housing, healthcare , and communications in accord with the

standards of the 21st century, and to be energy efficient. Thus the Sisters decided to build a new home on the south side of their Motherhouse campus which would meet the standards of assisted living and also would contain an infirmary for the care of those Sisters requiring extensive nursing services. Sadly, despite the best plans and the excitement of the Sisters to live in their new home, 23 of them died in



Sister Lois Marie Rossi, RN, teaches various courses in nursing at Wright Junior College in Chicago.



The Sisters gathered on the Motherhouse lawn in the summer of 1999 to celebrate a Millennium picnic .

2002, the year of the move.

Meanwhile, the overall ministries continued despite the lack of new vocations and the increased number of deaths. Thus, at the end of this decade the total ministries of the Sisters were: teaching at one junior college and one university; and sponsoring or ministering directly at 14 eldercare facilities, one adult day care service, two home care services, one healthcare clinic, one foundation, and one child care facility.