

Welcome  
December 1, 2007

My name is Sr. Sheila Kinsey, OSF, I am the Leader of the JPIC Office of the Wheaton Franciscans and co-chair of DGAAN. It is my privilege to welcome you on behalf of the Wheaton Franciscans to our chapel. In the spirit of St. Francis, the Wheaton Franciscans have been involved with HIV/AIDS ministry since 1992. Our HIV and AIDS Prayer Service is hosted both by Canticle Ministries, an organization sponsored by the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters, and the DuPage Global AIDS Action Network, an ecumenical advocacy group, facilitated by a variety of faith representatives, including the Wheaton Franciscans and associates from Wheaton College; together, they stand in ecumenical unity to actively and effectively provide leadership to DGAAN. Both organizations have served as leaders in the local and global community, contributing 16 years of combined service.

This is a special time to remember those persons who have died and who are living with HIV/AIDS. In our commemoration of World AIDS DAY 2007, we recall with faithful commitment the more than 27 million brothers and sisters, young and old who have died since HIV and AIDS was recognized in 1981. We recognize the dignity, love of life and the contributions these loved ones have made in our lives. We also remember the deep pain they suffered because of this dreaded disease. Each day in 2007, more than 6,800 people—more women than men, more youth than elderly—were newly infected.

As we take the lead in the struggle against HIV and AIDS let us remember that AIDS Day is more than just a day—it is an invitation to undertake a new vision of hope for humanity when new infections will be eradicated and people living with HIV will be cared for in ways that inspire dignity, unleash compassion, restore humanity and meet the challenges of justice. I would also like to remember the leadership of Rep. Hyde who recently passed away and with whom many of us had personal contact, a champion legislation to combat HIV and AIDS. As persons of faith we too, do have a moral responsibility to join others in the fight against HIV and AIDS and to demonstrate in our prayers and actions that we are in solidarity with all living with or affected by HIV and AIDS.

I would now like to introduce Eric Hadland, the President of the Student Global AIDS Campaign of Wheaton College.