

Companions IN PRAYER



Sisters of St. Clare
Saginaw, MI

Summer 2008

Over the years you, our friends, have been Companions with us as we respond to God's call to be a contemplative community. Our intent with this newsletter is to share with you, as friends do, a bit of our lives.

We are home.

When did it happen? When did we feel at home with each other?

Last week? Last year? Many years ago? Or just recently?

In 1991, we left our familiar monastery in Minneapolis where we had lived 10, 20, 25 years together, to start a new Poor Clare life in Saginaw, Michigan.

The home we left behind was large -- more than 40 bedrooms for 17 sisters. In Saginaw, we were four women living in a five bedroom house. Although we had known each other, in many ways, we really didn't. We felt awkward with each other, living this closely together and in much smaller surroundings. Our usual patterns were abruptly altered. The familiar became unfamiliar. The usual and familiar ways of interacting did not seem to work as well as before. Because we were so few, we were much more aware of each other, and much more protective. In the beginning we wouldn't even tell one another when we were hurt by a comment.

Once we moved to Saginaw, unpacking boxes

was the immediate task, setting up the kitchen and bedrooms and chapel for everyday use. As we found places for things, we began our practice of daily prayer as we were used to doing back in Minnesota. The familiar prayers back there now become our prayers in Saginaw. We even prayed at the same times as we did before.



Srs. Dianne Doughty, Laurene Burns,
Bernardone Reining and Laura Hammel

This daily practice of prayer became our comfort and cornerstone. It helped us find a rhythm with each other as we moved through the challenges of locating grocery stores, hardware supplies, and a parish where we could attend Mass.

With the familiar and unfamiliar all mixed together, our settling in was sometimes slow and cautious. But by attending Mass at the local parishes, we came to know and become friends with people in the Diocese of Saginaw. We cherished celebrating liturgy with them every week. Our first liturgical season in Saginaw was Advent. We joined our fellow

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parishioners in waiting for the Lord's coming and enjoyed the magic of Christmas, especially through the eyes of the children of the parish. Soon came Lent and together we participated in the solemn Triduum to the resurrection and the great 50 days. We all read the "Little Books" for each season authored by Bishop Ken Untener, the Saginaw bishop who had invited us. These familiar days and holidays helped us create a bridge from our past to our new future.

Slowly and carefully we have learned how to talk honestly to each other. An interesting thing happened – humor poked its way into our interactions. We could laugh at and with each other as naturally as we laugh at our pet bunny when he dances and leaps in the air. Nearly two decades later, we still have rough moments we work through, but now we can tease as well.

We are home.

Birthdays

Thanks to all those who helped us celebrate Sr. Bernardone and Sr. Laurene's birthdays with so much joy. Both birthdays were shared by a multitude of family and friends. We were literally bursting at the seams.

Our small community has never hosted such large parties, but so many of you were there to help with the many details that it made it all possible and fun. Sr. Bernardone and Sr. Laurene truly enjoyed the celebration of their birthdays.

Our deepest appreciation to all who made the

parties possible. I don't think we could have done it without you. Our prayers are with you all. We are indeed blessed.

Feast of St. Clare August 11

Somewhere near the end of July and the beginning of August, there is a faint sound of crickets singing during the day and early evening. For us, that is the first signal that the feast of St. Clare is coming. August 11 is the day we remember the gift of her call and our vocation. Each of us might have many different reasons for choosing to be a Poor Clare or Sister of St. Clare, but we agree that one reason we all share is a preference for the contemplative life. The contemplative life is a choice for prayer and community that differs from being a teacher or parish worker.

Our contemplative life is lived in a domestic dwelling. We dedicate ourselves to pray together five times a day as well as to pray in solitude. Of course, we also need to do the daily activities of sustaining life. We work in the kitchen, tend the garden, and do computer work to supplement the financial donations we receive and to help support ourselves.

We invite you to send us your prayer request through our web site or email address: **prayer@srsclare.com** so that we can pray with and for you. As the feast of St. Clare comes closer and the cricket songs get louder, we continue to thank God for your presence in our lives. Please remember us in your prayers.

Sr. Laura and Sisters

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Please remember us in your charitable giving.

You are not alone
WE ARE PRAYING WITH AND FOR YOU.