

Companions IN PRAYER



Sisters of St. Clare
Saginaw, MI

20 Years Ago

Looking back on our past twenty years brings us joy and thanksgiving for God's blessings.

Twenty years ago, four of us moved from our traditional Poor Clare Monastery in Minneapolis to the rural diocese of Saginaw, Michigan. We had a dream to live our Poor Clare life in a different way. We wanted to create an environment with less structure, less formality, and less separation from the wider community.

Our dream began to become reality when a friend introduced us to the late Bishop Ken Untener who wanted to have a contemplative community in his Saginaw diocese. He shared our dream of creating something new and invited us to move to Saginaw.

Our first step toward a new adventure was our choice of a small home. Traditionally our monasteries are built for large groups. They have clear boundaries for public and private areas. The small family house that we chose had more relaxed boundaries between areas. The center of our home is our chapel, our place of prayer, the heart of our lives. From this center, the other areas of the house provide spaces for community life, work, and sleep. Our simple adjustments in living space produced a profound change in our relationships to each other.



Living this closely in community brought us together emotionally and spiritually in ways that we had not known before.

Something new was added in the way we celebrated Liturgy. In our traditional monasteries, a priest is assigned for daily Mass. However, we have been richly blessed by attending Mass in the parishes. People came to know us and trust us. People told us their deepest concerns and asked for our prayers. We

realized that we had become **Companions in Prayer** with them. This realization confirmed our Poor Clare vocation in new and more personal ways.

Another new experience was our need to provide financial support for ourselves. We created and sold our "Fragrant Blessing Oil" and our greeting cards that offer spiritual support. However, it is only with the

support and donations of people that we were able to meet our expenses. We were reminded that we cannot live without God's help.

And so it is that as we look back over the last twenty years our hearts are filled with gratitude to God.

- For turning our simple dream of wanting to try something different, into an adventure where we discovered our vocations anew.

continued on back

- For leading us to our small home that brought us closer together in community as sisters and friends.
- For guiding us to worship with people in the parishes who called us to be Companions in Prayer.
- For reminding us that financially we depend on the gifts of those around us, and in them we see the face of God.

We will celebrate our 20th anniversary in the Diocese of Saginaw on Thursday August 11 (the feast of St. Clare), at 7p.m. at St. John Vianney Church (6400 McCarty Rd.) in Saginaw Township with an evening prayer service. Bishop Cistone will give a reflection, and Mary Sellars Malloy will lead us in song. Refreshments will follow. All are invited. Please come and celebrate with us.

***“The love I have for you glows in my heart.
I’ve inscribed in my soul the happy memory
of your love.”***

St. Clare of Assisi
(Fourth Letter paraphrase)

800 Years of History

This year marks 800 years since St. Clare heard St. Francis preaching in the streets of Assisi and left

her family to join him in his mission to follow in the footprints of Jesus.

As St. Clare’s followers, we admire her in many ways. However, we especially cherish her courage and determination to follow her call.

After leaving her family, Clare first tried living in the local Benedictine community. She soon recognized that she did not want the security of the traditional religious life of her time.

She had been inspired by Francis telling of his new religious community of men called “Friars,” who relied solely on alms or begging for their needs. She also wanted to experience a less secure life with no regular form of income. Like the early Christians, she did not want to possess anything of her own. She believed that all things were for the good of the community. What Clare wanted was to dedicate her life to prayer and to trust God to provide for her needs.

As a result of her convictions, she eventually founded the religious community now known as the “Poor Clares” or “Sisters of Clare.”

As Clare’s followers, we continue her practices today. We share what we have in community with each other, we believe that God will provide for us, and we dedicate ourselves to prayer.

Sisters of St. Clare
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 WE ARE PRAYING WITH AND FOR YOU.