

# Companions IN PRAYER



Sisters of St. Clare  
Saginaw, MI

## *My Christmas Gift*

Even as our side of the earth grows colder and darker, the nights grow quieter and the sun spends less time with us each day. The year drifts into its own sleep before our eyes to make way for a New Year to awaken.

We celebrate the outgoing year of our life with family and friends, stories and food, trees and lights, gifts and our faith. Beginning at Thanksgiving, we gather together to renew our gratitude for each other. December is busy with many activities. We send cards to tell family and friends our stories of the past year. We bring an evergreen tree into our homes to remind us of life and growth when all else around us has gone dormant and is covered with snow. We decorate our trees with ornaments that carry memories of past Christmases. We string lights around our homes and trees to fill the night with light and to balance off the darkness of our sleeping earth. When we are most cold, we invite friends in and share our favorite foods. We choose the warmth of companionship over the bitter cold. We give gifts to each other, an image of something new to start the year. It is our communities of faith that have built these festivals and holidays, Hanukkah, Advent, Kwanzaa and Solstice celebrations.

However, not all people share these joys during this time of year. Many within our communities find this season difficult because they have experienced the loss of a loved one, or they struggle to navigate the complexities of family relationships, or they may be

grappling with economic hardship or illness.

For me, it is our songs that bring back happy memories and that renew my strength to meet the challenges of our times. When I am with family and friends at a Christmas concert, a group party, or at Church, it is the songs of this time of year that capture my joy and gratitude. And it is the songs that bring back those warm memories of Christmases past and our continued desire for peace. It is those memories that fill the corner of my eyes with tears. I remember sitting with my mother during her last Christmas Eve night after the family had gone to their own homes. The room was dark except for the tree lights and the reflection of the light on



the patio windows. No words were needed between us, only silence, and warm memories.

During this darkest season we sing our songs and share our joy, faith, and gratitude for each other. We cherish the uniqueness of each of us in this world. Let's take the last moments of this year to remember that we all share the wondrous experience of being human. We share the gift of life that we all have – to freely give love away, to find love, to lose love, and to receive another's love.

For this gift, I am grateful.

(We are interested in your thoughts. Let us know at: <http://srsclare.com/about-us/companions-in-prayer-newsletter>)

*Sr. Laura and Sisters*