

Community of Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal

Summer, 2013

"Today...amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others...to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love..." - Pope Francis

Dear Friends,

May the Lord give you His peace! Our new Holy Father Pope Francis has invited us at the beginning of his pontificate to be people who bring hope into our world that is in such great need. This hope, he suggests, is found in a look of tenderness and love. This is the look of Jesus. His gaze upon each one of us is the same gaze as the one upon the Rich Young Man in the Gospels: Jesus looked at him and loved him. This is the look that gives us hope.

Almost 25 years ago our community of Sisters began in the South Bronx, telling the children in the streets about a God Who loves them, visiting the sick, caring for the homeless, giving food to those in need - desiring that each person would come in contact with this look of love, this gaze of Jesus Who is our Hope.

Today we have four convents - three in New York, one in England and we hope to begin one in Ireland this summer on the Feast of the Assumption - at the blessed invitation of Cardinal Dolan and Bishop Smith of the Diocese of Meath. God continues to call, to look on His people with great love...and, we do our best to follow. May He accomplish in us His holy designs.

We thank you for your friendship and ask your kind prayers. How blessed we all are to be united in His Love! Let us continue to "pass it on" in any way we can!

With deep gratitude in Jesus and Mary,
Sr. Lucille and All Your Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal



Whether in East Harlem or in Haiti, children are always a special reflection of the face of God. Imagine our joy at every opportunity to serve the children God brings into our lives! Sr. Ann Kateri and Sr. Felicity were overjoyed to be asked to participate in a recent mission trip to Haiti. They are pictured here distributing the "Miraculous Medal" to each of the children during a school visit.



"Go forth to all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole of creation." (Mark 15:16) Sr. Catherine is pictured here at a Youth 2000 Retreat, doing just that! Part of our charism, which we received from Saint Francis himself (who traveled the Italian countryside and with words and tears exhorted his brothers and sisters to love God who loves us so very much) is to travel and proclaim the simple Gospel as our Lord commanded us - and what a privilege it is!



Life! A precious gift. Always beautiful. Always sacred. Our annual pilgrimage to the Capitol for the March for Life is only one of our many "pro-life" endeavors through the year. Our Sisters in England too take every opportunity to proclaim the good news about the beauty of LIFE! Join us in sharing with others about the sanctity of every human life. Sometimes one thoughtful conversation is enough to help someone Choose Life. (to the right is Sr. Jacinta with Alice and little Matthew Bird at the 2nd Annual Pro-Life March in Birmingham, England. Below are our Sisters at the March for Life in Washington D.C.)



Our friend, Bishop Dennis Sullivan, is greatly missed in the Archdiocese of New York! But, how happy we are for the good fortune of our brothers and sisters of the Diocese of Camden, NJ where Bishop Sullivan was joyously installed on Feb. 11, 2013. Lucky for us, we know the way to New Jersey!



Sr. Chiara, Sr. Veronica, and Sr. Mary Pieta are pictured here leading us in long awaited "Alleluias" on Easter Sunday morning. May our outward praise be an expression of our inward love. Or, as Saint Augustine put it, "If you desire to praise Him, then live what you express. Live good lives, and you yourself will be His praise."



Pray hard! Work hard! Play hard! - A prescription for a healthy, happy Sister! After 8 hours in the car an "Ultimate Frisbee" game has great appeal! The Sisters were so grateful to have the wide open spaces of Franciscan University of Steubenville campus to play on during a recent pilgrimage to Chicago for the IRL Conference.



When Cardinal Dolan invited us to consider opening a convent in Drogheda we were thrilled to give a resounding "Yes!" because we had already experienced a call to Ireland in our hearts knowing full well all that the Church in Ireland has done for our country. This photo was taken when Cardinal Dolan delighted us by dropping by our Novitiate for tea with Sr. Rosario and Sr. Laurentia, two Religious Sisters of Mercy, originally from Drogheda, who taught our Cardinal as a boy. Sr. Lucille, our Community Servant, is to the left of the Cardinal and Sr. Monica, one of the four blessed to be going to Ireland, is to his right.



"...He heard my cry!" (Psalm 40)

When a classmate one day had the nerve to put on a CD with Christian music, I didn't think that was cool at all. So I told her, "A song about God? Who believes in God anyway?" I was 16 years old and I felt lost, without any direction or hope. I grew up in the Netherlands, in a culture that is thoroughly secularized and this poor girl was my first contact with a Christian ready to express her faith. I made her "pay for it" then, but I believe that she actually saved my life by her simple act of faith.

When I went up to my room that night, I still felt annoyed about the event. And as I was milling it over in my mind, something welled up from much deeper in my heart. Something that cried out, "Ok, uh, God, if you exist, then help me...because I am a mess!" That was my first prayer and, although life seemed to go on as normal, now I can see how the Lord completely transformed my life in a matter of months.

It began with an invitation to go to a boarding school in France run by Dominican Sisters. In boarding school we had Mass, started all our classes with a prayer and had Night Prayer together every night and also lots of religion classes. Thankfully, I didn't speak enough French to complain about it! I was, however, deeply impressed by the Sisters - they were so very kind and patient with me, helping me learn French and always ready to listen when I needed to talk.

A few months into my time there we had Eucharistic Adoration. I was in the chapel trying to blend in, kneeling and looking at the altar like all the other girls. I had absolutely no idea what was going on. During that time of Adoration, the Lord gave me a powerful grace: a real awareness of His Presence on the altar in the Blessed Sacrament and of His profound love for me. It was a deeply healing experience. When I came out of the chapel, my life had changed: my thinking, my attitude...everything! I knew this meant I should become a Catholic (even though I had sworn this would never happen!), so I asked for Baptism. The chaplain told me to wait a year, to read the Scriptures, study the Catechism, and learn about the Saints. The more I learned, the more my longing to receive Him increased and you can imagine my joy on the day of my Baptism, first Holy Communion and Confirmation - I thought I was in Heaven!

Now as a CFR Sister I have the privilege to share about our faith a lot, both to happy parishioners and to tough high-schoolers. And when at times I get a difficult reaction or an edgy comment, I can smile and ask the Lord what He is going to do in their heart tonight.

Let us not be afraid to share the great gift of faith we have been given!

- Sr. Joseph van Munster, CFR

◀ *Sr. Clare, our Postulant Jocelynn, and Zydan (our neighbor) joyfully pose for a picture during our "Pater Noster" food give out. Behind them you can see the line of people stretching all the way down Bainbridge Avenue almost to the intersection of Gun Hill Road. By the loving Providence of our good and faithful Father, every single person went home with as much food as they could carry!*

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