

Community of Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal

Winter, 2011

*"I have done what was mine to do;
may Christ teach you what you are to do."
-St. Francis of Assisi*

Dearest Friends,

May the Lord give you His peace!

A few years ago at a Mass of Religious Profession, I was struck by a story told by Archbishop Chaput in his homily. He spoke of a little Indian boy who came upon a sparrow in the forest. The little bird was lying on his back with his feet straight up in the air. When the young boy asked him what he was doing, the sparrow replied, "I'm trying to keep the sky from falling." The boy flatly told him that this would not work! The sparrow replied, "One does what one can!"

This lesson struck home! Isn't that what Saint Francis meant for us to do in his parting words to his followers before going to heaven? Each of us is called to do our best, to do our part, to do what we can.

Thousands were fed by Jesus when one little boy "did his part" by offering all that he had, his meager fare of loaves and fishes. We CFR Sisters are trying our best to live Francis' simple love of God with great trust in His desire to work miracles with our humble offerings...feeding the poor, visiting the sick, working with our youth, living the Gospel, proclaiming the Gospel - our lives totally consecrated to Him, we lovingly "do what we can" and rely on our good God to carry out His providential plan for our world.

May we join together each day in asking God "what is ours to do" and, in so doing, may God amaze us by what He can do with it all!

Prayerfully United in Jesus and Mary,
Sr. Lucille and All Your Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal



(above) The church's document on fraternal life calls community a "Schola Amoris" - a School of Love. "A school in which we all learn to love God, to love the brothers and sisters with whom [we] live, and to love humanity." We joined our friars at Holy Apostles Seminary at the end of their General Chapter in June for a blessed fraternal time. Such times of reunion are becoming ever more precious as both our communities continue to grow and go forth! Common prayer is the cement to keep us united - this photo captures our communities at Evening Prayer.



On September 17, 2011, the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, Sr. Guadalupe Magdalena de la Santa Cruz (l) and Sr. Kelly Francis of the Humble Heart of Jesus (r) made their first profession of vows with obvious joy and clear resolve. The sisters at Our Lady Queen of Angels in Harlem were delighted that both of our newly professed sisters have been assigned there. Sr. Guadalupe and Sr. Kelly Francis are pictured here with Sr. Agnes who lovingly guided them through their two years of novitiate.

While there are many significant milestones along the journey of following a call, nothing can compare to crossing the threshold of the convent on the first day. Our 3 new candidates, Meredith Brennan from MI, Alexis Schuler from WI, and Angelina Corso from TX, are leaving behind all the world has to offer, the bad and the good... even the very good, for the "one thing neces-



sary," which is Christ Jesus our Lord. They are pictured here on their first day. They received their Tau Cross on September 23 and have begun their candidacy at Our Lady of Guadalupe Convent in the Bronx.



A religious sister is never without children! What a wonderful privilege it is to "mother" a world of children through our prayers and sacrifices. There can be no such thing as an unwanted child in the world as long as there are sisters. Sr. Miriam is pictured here with one of the many children who come to the youth programs at Our Lady Queen of Angels Convent.

(left) The time of novitiate (which is 2 years of formation prior to first vows) is sometimes described as a "honeymoon before the wedding." This is because novitiate is a time of more intensive prayer and study, and of falling more and more in love with The Divine Bridegroom. Our novices (l-r) Sr. Karol, Sr. Fiat, Sr. Colette, Sr. Giovanna, Sr. Maria Grace, and Sr. Bethany are pictured here at the end of a day at the beach!

Heaven in Her Heart

We never know who's going to come and we could never guess what they're going to share; and, we surely never know what God has in store for us at our Thursday morning Bible Prayer Group. It is an opportunity to experience the Word of God magnified and illuminated through the poor.

We use the upcoming Sunday Gospel and we pray in a classic Lectio Divina format, with 5 to 7 minutes of silence between each reading, and a chance to share what was received in prayer at the end.

This Thursday one of our regulars, Simone (a lovely Baptist woman who comes every week), ended her sharing with the simple statement, "I want to grow old in God." I have been thinking about those words ever since: To grow old in God; to grow like God. The word of God promises to change us, if we'll allow it, to conform us to the Word made Flesh. "I remind all Christians," says Pope Benedict in his document *The Word of the Lord*, "that our personal and communal relationship with God depends on our growing familiarity with the word of God." Saint Jerome famously said, "Ignorance of Sacred Scripture is ignorance of Christ."

Another time after Lectio a lady commented with tears in her eyes, "Being here in the silence makes me feel like a child again." I wonder if she meant what Saint Ambrose meant when he wrote, "Taking up the Sacred Scripture we walk once more in the Garden."

John, an Indian neighbor who comes only occasionally, shared last Easter after a Lectio on the resurrection his insight that Mary Magdalene had "Heaven already in her heart" at her encounter in the garden with the Risen Lord. And now, thinking on these images all together, the desire is stirred in me

to be made a child,
to walk in the Garden with the Father,
to encounter and to know Christ,
to grow old in Him and
to possess, even now,
Heaven in my heart
through the Living Word of God.

May the Word be made Flesh again, in each and every one of us!
Sr. Clare, CFR



"Like our Lady and Saint Joseph we must go and search for the child. When Jesus was lost they went and searched. They did not sit and wait. They did not rest until they found him. We must bring the child back, make the child feel wanted. Without the child there is no hope." - Blessed Teresa of Calcutta
Children long for someone to accept them, love them, praise them, be proud of them... or even just listen to them. Sr. Maria Teresa is pictured with a teenager in the South Bronx, just listening.



To be in Madrid, Spain August 2011 with our Holy Father and close to 2 million young people was an opportunity of a lifetime for 8 of our sisters! The Holy Father called the young religious to testify with their lives to the transforming encounter with Christ which has nourished their consecration. He said "In a world

of relativism and mediocrity, we need that radicalism to which your consecration... bears witness." Pictured here are: Sr. John Paul, Sr. Monica, Sr. Joseph, and Sr. Chiara.



When Our Lady of Fatima is out on the street there is no mistaking the profound peace that comes over all! Since the first Saturday of March when we began praying the Rosary with our neighbors during the soup kitchen hours it's hard to tell which is more popular: the hot meal or the spiritual nourishment outside! Singing favorite Spanish hymns and praying in both Spanish and English - everyone is very welcome and no one wants to leave! Sr. Maria Teresa and Sr. Chiara are pictured here with some of our Saturday morning regulars.



The BBC recently aired a documentary entitled "Young Nuns" which follows two young women pursuing a call to religious life. Three religious communities were featured including our very own "missionary sisters"! The Lord opens doors for spreading the Good News and we just have to walk through them! (see our website for more on the documentary: www.franciscansisterscfr.com). Our sisters recently moved to a new convent, still within the diocese of Leeds, England. Pictured here in front of St. Clare Convent are (l-r): Sr. John Paul, Sr. Cecilia Francis, Sr. Jacinta, Sr. Catherine, & Sr. Veronica.

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