



Companions on the journey



Fall 2007

Mount Saint Francis, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Volume 9, Number 4

Mission:

We, Companions of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, are people called to live our baptismal promises by sharing in the mission and vision of the Sisters of Saint Francis. We live our Christian commitment according to our gifts and circumstances in life.

Vision:

Companions will be open and respond to immediate needs.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Companions,

What a blessing we will be to the people of Uganda. Our project "A Gift from the Companions" was truly a success. With the generosity of many individuals we have reached our goal of \$500. A second blessing is that our Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

Commission has matched the \$500 from our Franciscan Foundation Ministry Fund. Therefore, as of November 29, 2007 we have a total of \$1,000.00 to send to Cross International for the water project for Wisdom Training Centre Water in Ibanda, Uganda which will contribute to the total project in providing clean drinking water for physically disabled children and people living and working in the immediate area. Imagine having access to good water. Hopefully this will also help clear up some of the health issues in regard to unclean water.

Sister Michelle Micek, OSF



Advent About the Advent Wreath

The origins of the Advent wreath are found in the folk practices of the pre-Christian Germanic peoples who, during the cold December darkness of Eastern Europe, gathered wreaths of evergreen and lighted fires as signs of hope in a coming spring and renewed light. Christians kept these popular traditions alive, and by the 16th century Catholics and Protestants throughout Germany used these symbols to celebrate their Advent hope in Christ, the everlasting Light. From Germany the use of the Advent wreath spread to other parts of the Christian world.

Traditionally, the wreath is made of four candles in a circle of evergreens. Three candles are violet and the fourth is rose, but four white candles or four violet candles can also be used. Each day at home, the candles are lighted, perhaps before the evening meal-- one candle the first week, and then another each succeeding week until December 25th. A short prayer may accompany the lighting.

Victor Hoagland, C.P.

Update on Companion Goals

1. One hour of adoration weekly. Presently, there are 20 Companions that have committed themselves to 30 hours per week praying with the Sisters.
2. Vocation promotion to our vowed Franciscan Life. November 2 – 4 a Vocation Weekend was held at the Mount under the direction of Sister Frances Sedlacek. Seven women participated in learning more about religious life and discerning their own vocation in life. Please continue to pray for all vocations.

3. Crises of water – Continue to be aware of the usage of water in your own life. Thanks to each of you for assisting in providing financial assistance for a water project to benefit children in Ibanda, Uganda.
4. Awareness of the poor/sick – Continue to service the poor/sick in your area. If you know of anyone that needs prayers please call the Companion Office (719-955-7016) or email michellem@stfrancis.org. The request can be shared with others.
5. Continue to study Franciscanism – This will be our focus during the regional meetings as well as the Companions' retreat in August.
6. Promotion of Companion Relationship – We have one new candidate, Noralda Tobaría and another person has inquired about the Companion Relationship.

Meet Our New Candidate



I am the youngest of three children born to Aura and Florentino Tobaría on March 31, 1972 in Colombia in a town called Duitama. I was raised in a very devout catholic family – God as the center and priority of our lives. Faith was the biggest gift my

parents passed on to us. My parents own a yarn and knitting supply store that my mother still runs.

My childhood was focused in school and vacations were spent helping my parents at the store. We looked forward to the weekends for Sunday Mass followed by ice cream and visits to my grandmother. My life was always surrounded by loving parents and a very caring brother and sister. The most memorable event of my childhood was my First Communion, when I was 8 years old. For reasons that I came to understand later in time, my mother didn't spare any effort to ensure that this occasion was the most special and unforgettable of our lives. She arranged for the Priest of the Minor seminary (where my brother studied) to prepare us and for the Dominican Sisters of the Convent of The Most Holy Rosary to hand paint the invitations and mementos and to embellish our dresses with beads. We had a beautiful ceremony and a big party. The church was adorned with lovely flower arrangements and the songs of the choir touched me deeply.

My parents' dream was to provide us a college education so they worked hard with that in mind. In 1989 I left home to go to Bogotá to pursue a college degree. I was fortunate to share my college life with my brother and sister who were already studying there. Since Bogota is only 5 hours by car from Duitama, we were able to visit home and keep a close relationship with my parents. I earned a Bachelors degree in Science at the University of Los Andes in 1994, and soon after that I started to work in Oracle Colombia, a multinational software company.

After few years of work I decided to go to Canada to learn English for a few months. Before I returned to Colombia I was contacted by Oracle and they offered me a job in San Francisco, California. I took the job thinking that I would go home after few years, but God's plans were different. While working in San Francisco I met my husband whom I married on May 13 of 2002. A few months later my husband was relocated to Los Angeles. The Los Angeles lifestyle turned out to be unsuitable for us, so after 2 years of living in Los Angeles we found the opportunity to move to Colorado where my husband's family lives. With the desire of sharing a closer relationship with them we moved to Colorado Springs in 2005.

Being in Colorado Springs has greatly enhanced my life. I have been blessed with the gift of time and a simple life that resembles the one I used to live and enjoy in Colombia. Now I am able to devote my time to God, my husband, and my family in Colombia. Part of my day I dedicate to God through prayer. I am also committed to serving as a Eucharistic Minister in the St. Francis Nursing Center. When there is an opportunity, I volunteer in church activities and Health Fairs as a Spanish Translator. I frequently travel to Colombia to help my mother at her store when she asks me. I also join my mother and my father in small works to serve people in need. When my sister or my brother are overloaded, I travel to help them, too, for their children or to administer my sister's baby clothing store while she attends her kids, especially for the holiday shopping season of the store.

Noralda Tobaría

Sharing Dinner with the Sisters

YUMMMM! On September 16 the Colorado Springs Companions shared dinner with the Sisters at Mount Saint Francis. Everyone brought something to eat, including the Sisters. We had

plenty of food and a wonderful time talking with the Sisters and each other. It is always interesting to get together with everyone, and just find out what they are doing. Discovering that no one COMPLETELY retires is an inspiration. – We are always doing something! More people came this year because we had it at the “Mount” so transportation for the Sisters was not an issue. We hope to see all again next year.

Janet Galyardt

Companions Share Their Advent Experiences

“What Advent Means To Me”

I have come a long way since my growing up years in the Catholic Church of the 1950's. The word Advent, at that time, was rarely mentioned. Christmas had always been about Santa Claus, reindeer, and presents under a tree. As small children, we had no idea it was about a baby born to a teenage woman and the man she was engaged to. Midnight Mass was the only time during the year that we ever heard about the Birth of Jesus. All members of my family - parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins attended Midnight Mass together and during that time we paid a visit to the Nativity Scene that had been set up in the sanctuary of our church.

Vatican II was a time of change and growth in the Catholic Church. Today the season of Advent begins a new liturgical cycle in the church. Every year we trace the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, from his birth to his resurrection. The central themes of Advent, a Latin word which means “coming” or “arrival,” are expectation and longing for the birth of the Christ child. Advent is a time of preparation as we look forward to the great feast of Christ’s incarnation, and we celebrate God dwelling among us in the person of Jesus.

During the season of Advent, we begin our worship together by lighting candles in the Advent wreath and singing the Advent Litany. As we invite Jesus to come and be with us, the Litany moves from his most exalted forms as monarch and judge to the simplicity and humility of the long-awaited child of Bethlehem. The lighting of the Advent candles, one for each Sunday in Advent, helps us to focus on Jesus, the light of the world. Many individuals and families light Advent wreaths in

their homes as well to highlight the story of God’s redemption that will unfold throughout the year and throughout their lives.

Sandi Grey

What Advent Means to Me and My Family

Advent means many things to me and my family. I would like to share a physical reminder of Advent that is unique to our family.

A tradition I have started with my daughters is to decorate our home only in nativity scenes the first part of December. We have so much fun getting them out of the storage boxes and remembering who made each one or who gave us each one. I don’t think I’ve bought any of them myself....friends and family have just picked up on our tradition and so now, we receive nativities for Christmas gifts. As we put them out, we talk about Christ’s birth and the meaning of Christmas. We keep our nativity scenes out through January. I’ve had people comment when they come to our home in January and wonder why we still have “Christmas decorations” out. I guess to me, the nativities aren’t just for Christmas, but are a great reminder in the New Year of how important it is to keep Christ with us all year.

Shannon Schaben

“What Advent Means To Me”

To me Advent is a very special time of year for all of us to reflect on the coming of the Lord. Advent helps me to visualize the possibilities of life that the Lord has given up for us in his sacrifices. He has given to us true and valid principles by which we should all learn to live. He remains with us in his Spirit, and we look to the future when Christ will come again.

In these few weeks we should all take the time to reflect on the birth of Christ and to his Second Coming. I seem to learn more about our Lord each time there is an opportunity to reflect on his life. Just when you might think you know everything there is to know about Christ, you discover more and more. Sometimes I wonder if we will ever know all there is to know about our Lord. But, we should never stop learning from Christ’s examples since he came to show us what life can and should be.

Judy Garcia

Advent

The Webster Dictionary defines Advent as the period including the four Sundays just before Christmas.

What does Advent mean, as a child, as a teenager, as an adult, and into old age? As a child I was of the Lutheran faith. Traditions of all seasons were of various meaning. Advent was in preparation for the birth of Jesus. We baked cookies and fruit cakes; made candies; prepared for the Christmas pageant and the music. We made wonderful gifts for our parents, extended family and for the poor. Being of various ethnic backgrounds, traditions varied including Jewish, Catholic and Protestant. Family, extended family and friends were of importance. As a teen, it was of World War II and its devastation. As an adult, it was of learning and conversion to the Catholic faith. As a parent and into old age, it was ever changing.

Time changes as do the Seasons. I can appreciate more each day Faith and Hope. It is easy to be caught up in material things that life offers. Some times I ponder the meaning of my place on this earth...how I look to the life with God.

By Mrs. Jeanann VanAckeren

Linda Walker Goes Home to God

Linda Walker, 64, a long-time Companion, died in Denver, on October 18, 2007. She leaves her husband, Jim, of 45 years, two daughters Sandy and Polly and four granddaughters. Linda was diagnosed with cancer on June 24, 2004. At that time she was told that she could only live six months. She lived far beyond this expectation.

Linda faithfully attended the Companion meetings in Denver. At the last meeting she attended on September 15, 2007, she said "Good-bye, I won't be coming to the next meeting." She died before the next meeting, October 27.

Sister Columba invited Linda to become a Companion in 1989. In her biography, she wrote "I feel very blessed to be a part of it (Companions)." However, we have been blessed by Linda. She was a beauty operator and fixed some of the Sisters' hair. She even travelled to the Mount to do Sister Evangeline's hair and as God would have it, Linda died on the second anniversary of Sr. Evangeline's death.

Linda's kind and loving ways will long be remembered by those who knew her. Let us offer our sympathy and prayers to Linda's husband, daughters and granddaughters.

Sister Margaret Mary

Coming Events

Spring Regionals

Topic: "Non-violent Communication"

Friday, March 28 - Motherhouse

Saturday, April 12 - Lincoln, NE

Companion Meeting Schedule for 2008

[Colorado Springs]

Mount St. Francis Companion Meetings:

- January 20 – Study and reflection
Video: "The Franciscan Way"
- February 24 – Study and reflection
- March 16 – Study and reflection
- April 27 – Commitment and
Renewal Ceremony
- August 8-10 - Annual retreat for all
Companions



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Is published quarterly by the

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