

Summer 2007

CALLED BY JOY



**This is no time
To be Ashamed of the Gospel!**

Pope John Paul II



Come Apart

Each year the Sisters go on a week long retreat. In the past this has always been a community directed retreat in which we explore a more in depth look at Saint Clare or Francis or other Franciscan spiritual topics. These have always been wonderful and of great value but this year as our community was small enough, Fr. Jim Van Vurst, OFM who was our retreat director offered the opportunity for us to have an individually, private directed retreat.

We do so many things together as community: liturgy, community prayers, work, meals, recreation, etc. that a week without a “schedule” was a whole new experience. Almost like

a vacation—a spiritual vacation but a vacation nevertheless. In fact, we even had some friends who brought in some meals so we didn’t have to cook! One friend gave us the gift of a “take out” meal which we very much enjoyed.

We did share together at meal times, with laughter and stories and spiritual breakthroughs. We are such a “family” that I don’t know if we could go a whole week without some sharing!

The last day of the retreat, Fr. Jim, who is an accomplished artist in watercolor and acrylic painting gave us an artistic retreat session. We each had a hands-on experience of creating an abstract painting with watercolors. They were very, very abstract—a bit like something one does with water color in the first grade. Lots of laughter filled that evening, especially as we viewed our spectacular results!

*Sister Rita Louise McLean, OSC
Abbess*



Sister Rita Louise - Her family reunion was held at the monastery this year

Called by Joy — Published 3 times a year by the Franciscan Monastery of Saint Clare in Spokane, Washington. Summer Issue 2007

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The Poor Clare Sisters are a cloistered contemplative community co-founded by St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi in 1212. They number over 20,000 throughout the world. The Poor Clares have been in Spokane, Washington since July 1914.



Poor Clares - Sisters in Joy!

Sister Colleen at the dedication of the Poor Clare Chapel in Great Falls, Montana

Our community belongs to a Federation of Poor Clare Monasteries. Each monastery is autonomous (functions independently) but we share a common rule and constitution. So, even though the houses are separated often by great distances, there is always a sense of family joy and unity when we get together.

Last September I was elected as one of four council members for our federation. The first council meeting was held here in our Spokane monastery so I didn't have very far to travel. The second meeting was held in May in Pryor Lake, Minnesota, and was a joint Federation council meeting with another Poor Clare Federation. There were sisters from South Carolina, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Minnesota, Louisiana, Florida and British Columbia. We had long, productive meetings, but what was really enjoyable was the warm and friendly sharing at meals. Every monastery has similar stories to share so it's always fun to compare notes.

The retreat house we were staying at had some very surprising visitors, a large flock of wild turkeys! They were huge and quite daring. Some tried to peck through the door

to get in, though they never let us get close enough for a good picture.

The exciting event of my Federation travels was the unique opportunity to go back to my home state of Montana. The Poor Clare Sisters in Great Falls were at the point with their new foundation of celebrating the dedication of their chapel. I was chosen to be the official Poor Clare Federation delegate. What a blessing. It was a very prayerful, joyous and wonderful celebration!

After the dedication I visited with family and friends for a few days. I had not been back to Montana since my entrance twenty-one years ago! Normally we do not travel to see our parents or family members unless there is a real need but since I was so close all of the sisters were insistent that I do it.

It took my breath away to see once again the tall green mountains and the wide open spaces. I was amazed to see how tall the trees had grown over the years. And of course it was great to catch up with family and friends and old familiar places.

Sister Colleen Byrne, OSC

spiritual **T**ips for a deeper Relationship

I wanted this newsletter to offer something of spiritual value for you. I didn't know what that could be until the thought came to me to ask each of the sisters to share "Ten Tips" they thought would be helpful in developing a deeper relationship with God. At first I was only going to select some from each sister and make a "Quick Ten" list but as I read them I decided they were each so different that you would enjoy reading each sister's collection and seeing how our spiritual journey toward God as well as yours... has something the same and something very different. So here they are. Lots of tips - unedited .. just as they are. We hope an idea or two might be helpful for you.

Sister Marcia Kay

Set aside definite time daily for prayer.

Make frequent reception of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Make a concentrated effort to appreciate and find God in His works (all the beauty of nature).

Share God with others- his word, love, mercy and compassion.

Do daily spiritual reading – especially the Scriptures

Develop the habit of frequent conversations with the Lord throughout the day.

Make frequent visits to the Blessed

With God

Sacrament for adoration time
Make time periodically to "come apart" to spend some "quality time" on retreat with your focus completely on the Lord.

Make a "closer relationship with You" a daily prayer intention—(specifically!).
"Draw close to God and He will draw close to you."

Simplify your life: Try to get rid of "distracting" externals to union with God—try to get rid of chaos, clutter and constant artificial noise in your life so that your external surroundings are more organized, peace-filled and "non-overwhelming"—turn off the TV, radio, computer, etc. to create times of silence in your life. Get rid of "internal-emotional" clutter as well—all grudges, bitterness, unforgiveness, etc—These are major obstacles to



a close relationship with God who is complete love!

Sister Colleen

Go to daily Mass and spend time before preparing for Mass.

Say a prayer of thanksgiving after Mass for many things through the day.

Ask God for help through the day—talk to him.

Spend time before the Blessed Sacrament.

Talk to Him and listen as well.

Pray the rosary and ask the Blessed Mother to help you; St. Joseph too.

Do things for other people.

Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a month.

Pray daily in the morning and evening.

Go over your day before bedtime—thank God for the day and ask forgiveness for failings.

Ask forgiveness from other people for offenses and forgive people who have offended you.

Sister Jane

Start each day with a morning offering prayer.

Attend Holy Mass daily if you can, but especially on Sunday.

Receive Holy Communion daily.

Trust in the Lord always, no matter the climate of the day! “It is sure folly to pass one’s time fretting, instead of quietly resting on the heart of Jesus” – St. Therese of Lisieux

Forgive! It takes strength of character and grace to forgive

but our Lord said, “Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.”

Accept suffering in your life with a joyful attitude, in the daily living out of life’s different situations.

Spend quiet time with the Lord and His Blessed Mother.

Love your “enemies” – whether they are present with you or far away!

Let God “mold” you into His own likeness daily by being yourself before Him.

Sister Rita Louise

Morning Prayer – Hit the deck! Kneel and praise God, asking His blessing on your day. In the shower will do!

“Morning Offering” – Join the ‘Apostleship of Prayer’ and unite all the actions of your day in union with Jesus’ offering Himself to His Father in all the Masses being offered this day throughout the world. Receive a share in the graces obtained by millions of other Apostles of Prayer making the same offering.

Daily Mass – the infinitely priceless offering of Jesus, God’s beloved Son, to His Father—the source of all graces for our lives and that of others.

Make a Retreat, time set aside to become more aware of God in your life, to reevaluate your spiritual life, to set out again, refreshed and more focused.

Daily time for Scripture reading. Place yourself in the presence of God, asking His grace. Then read—imagine—ponder—apply to your own life with a practical resolution.

Rediscover the Sacrament of Reconciliation and its wonderful power to keep your spiritual life growing in the



knitty-gritty of everyday challenges. Pray for the missions, the needy of every description, and all good works being done on their behalf. A good way to make your own spirit expand!

Be a giver—serving those at home, in the Parish, the local community, using the gifts and resources unique to you.

Recognize how you most naturally relate to God (Father, Divine Providence, Divine Mercy; Jesus as Lord, Teacher, Brother, Friend; Holy Spirit as Counselor and Guide) and direct your prayers accordingly. This may be the key to having your own “spirituality”.

Recollect yourself throughout the day using short “ejaculations” or “aspirations” such as “My Jesus, mercy.” Choosing one from one’s meditation of the day is a good way to bring the day’s Resolution to mind.

Have a stairway in your home? Pray “Jesus, Mary, Joseph!” on the way up or down. Add favorite saints to form your own litany.

Driving or walking? Praise God for all the green and growing things, all the little human incidents along the way.

Sing or hum favorite hymns while you work, “He who sings prays twice.”

Try conversing about spiritual things with a family member or friend. It can be very confirming for both of you.

Wind up the day by regular night prayers. Offer up the day past; thank for blessings; recognize failings and ask forgiveness; express trust as you settle for sleep.

Draw closer to God through association with a prayer-group or study-group.

Study the faith on your own.

Keep your mental powers directed toward God and holy things (Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God!”)

Sister Patricia

Get Real – if you are happy, sad, mad or glad let God know about it.

Make prayer a priority. Give God your “best” time not left over—after I do everything else time.

Look at every situation as an experience to develop your relationship with God in a new way.

Realize that God wants the best for you and is always concerned with your happiness.

Have a regular time for God as well as plenty of spontaneous moments.

Read the scriptures before Mass and look for a “personal” message from God in them.

Challenge yourself to see God working in difficult situations and relationships.

Be flexible—allow God to work in your life through others in a myriad of ways.

Take personal responsibility for your relationship with God. Don’t wait for God or other people to move—you move! Look at where you are with God and ask yourself, “Is this the best it can be? What can I do to make it better?”

Ask questions of yourself. “Is there a way I could be more loving, more generous in this situation?”

Don’t think of God as the big, bad guy—look at all the ways you are blessed and





Vocation Corner

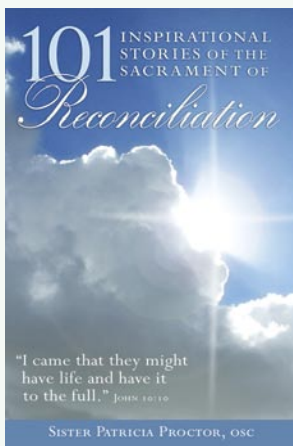
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Sr. Marcia Kay at 327-4479
for more information.

Our general requirements:

- Young women between the ages of 18 to 35.
- Basic good health.
- A love of God
- A love of Prayer.
- High School education at least.
College education is welcome.
- The ability to live in community and to work and pray with others.



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Novena to Saint Clare

August 2 to August 11th

Faithful Saint Clare,
daughter of the Church,
friend and confidante of Popes,
intercede for holy Church.
Look graciously from heaven
on our holy father Pope Bene-
dict.

Enlighten us to remove from
our souls all that hinders the
progress
of the Church on earth.

Grant that we may share
your great love for the Church
of God and spread His kingdom
on earth by a holy life.

You who worked miracles
in the presence of the Popes
on earth, obtain for us the graces
we need, now that you stand in
the presence of the most high
God in heaven.

Amen.

You Are Invited!

Please join us for our annual
“Celebration of Clare” in our Mon-
astery garden on August 11, 2007
at 10:30 a.m.

Father Franklin Fong, OFM
will be the main celebrant for Eucha-
rist, followed by light refreshments
and social time with the sisters.

If you have never visited our
monastery before, or it has been a
long time, we invite you to bring
your whole family and come to join
in the Celebration of Clare!

Outdoor Mass

10:30 a.m.

August 11, 2007

Followed by light refreshments