



In the Spirit of FRANCIS and CLARE

Newsletter, Winter, 2012

Honduran Woman in Formation Process for Franciscan Congregation

Erika Calderón has been living for the last two years with Nancy Myerhofer and Brenda Whetstone in Gracias, Lempira, Honduras. During that time she has shared deeply in the life, activities, prayer and celebration of our small Franciscan community. Her sense of humor has enlivened meals shared together in the morning and evening; she has been working daily in a small bookstore and doesn't return for lunch. She takes responsibility for planning community prayer several days a week. And gradually she has taken on the practice sessions for the youth choir, meeting with the members, choosing with them the music for the Sunday liturgies, directing the practices and playing guitar. She is also a part of the team that plans and leads the meetings for the youth group that meets every Sunday afternoon. All of this perhaps comes naturally to her, since both of her parents are very involved in the local church of her village, her mother leading the choir and her father as evangelizer and Eucharistic Minister.

Erika comments that she feels very much at home with the charism of our Franciscan congregation and likes the fact that we are in touch with the lived reality of Gracias and its people. She has also felt deeply touched by the letters and gestures of the sisters from the States who communicate their support for her and desire to someday meet her in person. She hopes for the same as she prepares to

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take the next step in her journey as a Dubuque Franciscan.

This year, normally on Wed. evenings, Erika has been meeting with us in community to study and reflect on the vows, spending about three months on each. At this time Erika is reflecting back on these two years and composing her letter to our Leadership Team, evaluating "where she's at" in the formation process and asking to go on to the next phase, novitiate. We don't know yet where the novitiate experience will take place, in Central America or elsewhere. We are making the road as we walk it.

--Submitted by Sr. Nancy Meyerhofer OSF



Franciscan Way of Life

Beginning in October groups of people in Dubuque, Waterloo and Mason City have been exploring the Franciscan Way of Life. Teresa Anderson in Mason City writes, "The Franciscan Way of Life meetings have given us some background about the lives of Saints Francis and Clare. They came from wealthy families, but as their relationship with God strengthened, they turned to living humbly as Jesus did. I found the parallels between their lives and modern life fascinating. As Christians I think we are being called to follow the Franciscan example and try to live a more simple way of life."

From Waterloo, "Our group in Waterloo is learning about the lives of St. Francis and Clare. These teachings have led to very good and enlightening sharing in our group. I find these gatherings to be challenging as we talk about trying to live our own lives more with these Franciscan ways. I look forward to and appreciate our times together."

Rose Quirk

Beginning in January there will be monthly meetings on the following topics:

January: Love of the Incarnate God

February: Poverty, begin a mentoring program

March: Contemplation

April: Community

May: Franciscan Spirituality; group discernment

July 6-7: Retreat at Shalom

You are welcome to come to our meetings beginning in January. Invite others as well.

submitted by Michaela Galles

Prayer and Common Venture

As a member of the Franciscan Charism team, Sister Ginny Heldorfer visited our Sisters and Common Venture Volunteers in Mississippi. Both Sr. Ginny and travel companion were edified when they visited Sr. Camilla Hemann, Sr. Eileen Hauswald, and Common Venture Volunteer Klaudia Ansay in Morton, MS in late October. After a delicious meal, they all gathered in the living room for evening prayer using the Franciscan Morning and Evening Prayer book. When the readings from Scripture and a Franciscan resource were proclaimed, they stopped and shared their reflections on the readings. Everyone shared

their wisdom- which was powerful. Earlier that week, the traveling Sisters had visited Sr. Terri Rodela, Sr. Liz Donahue, and Reyna Badillo, Common Venture Volunteer, in their Okolona, MS home. They too used the Franciscan Prayer Book for shared evening prayer.

Our Franciscan Common Venture volunteers are expected to "share their faith, reflect on the day's experiences and join in group prayer as part of their shared community living experience". (Common Venture Value as stated in the brochure.)

Sr. Theresa Jungers and Sr. Ginny Heldorfer use a variety of sources with their live-in Common Venture Volunteer, Anastasia Walter. Sometimes they use the Franciscan Prayer book, the *Living With Christ* booklet, create a prayer service or use the Gospel of the day for faith sharing. Even though this is Anastasia first extended time away from her family, she stated that she has continued to pray privately and has participated in the shared community life. Everyone has her/his own style of on-going communication with God which brings richness to community faith-sharing since it is grounded in the love and presence of God.

Many of our Common Venture Volunteers speak about the faith-sharing experience as a way to deepen their own relationship with God. This is just one of the many gifts that the Franciscan Common Venture Experience offers.

submitted by Ginny Heldorfer

Franciscan book for children

How many of your "bucket list" goals have you accomplished?

Franciscan Associate Candice Chaloupka has met another one of her goals! She and her daughter have published a children's book about St. Francis of Assisi. Candice decided to write this book when she could not find a fitting book about St. Francis that would meet younger children's needs. Thus she wrote Francis and Leo which is the first of a series she hopes to write about St. Francis. Her daughter, Brianna Long's sketches are simple but speak volumes about the meaning of the story.

The story of Francis and Leo begins with Francis asking Brother Leo to join him to preach in the

village. As they walked along they met a person with leprosy whom they hugged, Francis then carried a heavy load for a woman, and shared other acts of kindness. When they reached the opposite end of the village main street, Brother Leo turned and asked Francis, "When are we going to preach?" Francis replied with "You just did". In the writing of Francis we find the quote "Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary use words." Candice and her daughter illustrate this point exceeding well in the book.

The book ends with Francis directing this question to the readers - "What do you do to love others like Jesus?"

Chaloupka's book can be purchased at, Knippel's Religious Goods, Dubuque, River Lights Bookstore, Dubuque, The Bookworm, Bellevue, Barnes and Nobles on line, and at Shalom Retreat Center, Dubuque for about \$7.00 submitted by Ginny Heldorfer



40 YEARS of GIFTS RECEIVED, GIVEN and CELEBRATED

Approximately 1,000 volunteers have participated in Franciscan Common Venture in the past 40 years – 1971-2011. One hundred and ten of them gathered at Mount St. Francis on October 16, to celebrate this 40th Anniversary. It was a spirit-filled day of remembering, witnessing, sharing, laughing, feasting, and praying. A day that will be long remembered.

What is the significance of any anniversary? Whether it is one year or 40, anniversaries remind us of something important in our lives. They ask us to pause from the busyness surrounding us and recall our roots, to celebrate what has been accomplished and to rededicate ourselves to what is important. The 40th Anniversary of Common Venture asked of us these same things, and it reinvigorated us to invite others to join with us for the next 40 years-and more-of service among our sisters and brothers who are poor.

Lou Ann Burkle wrote in response: "Thank you a hundred times over for an amazing day. ... The whole day reminded me of the Emmaus story: "Were not our hearts burning as we walked along sharing our stories.' Thank you for Common Venture where we could walk with each other and create a new journey together that changed our lives forever."

"Thank you for last Sunday's reunion. It was not only fun to renew friendships, but also was very good to remember and reflect on what Common Venture has meant for me: kind of like going back to one's roots - -- it's good for the soul!" – June Wessels Francois

Sister Nancy Schreck reminded the group: "Common Venture did not end when we served many years ago, it is an ongoing commitment to serve God's people. ... If we have more memories than we have dreams, we are dying. We need to help each other to keep dreaming of a world that is more."

Jane Shey, in her witness talk entitled: "An Uncommon Summer: A Lifetime of Conversion" spoke of how poverty is thrust upon people who are marginalized, forgotten and vulnerable. "We owe it to them to tell their story. To continue to support them in whatever way we can. Common Venture is like an underground stream that courses through our lives - always flowing, sometimes popping up in unexpected places, giving life. I hope that this reunion will be another step in our conversion: to remember; to challenge; and to respond." Jane concluded with a quote from Raymond Williams, a Welsh novelist: 'To be truly radical is to make hope possible, not despair convincing.'

submitted by Marie Therese

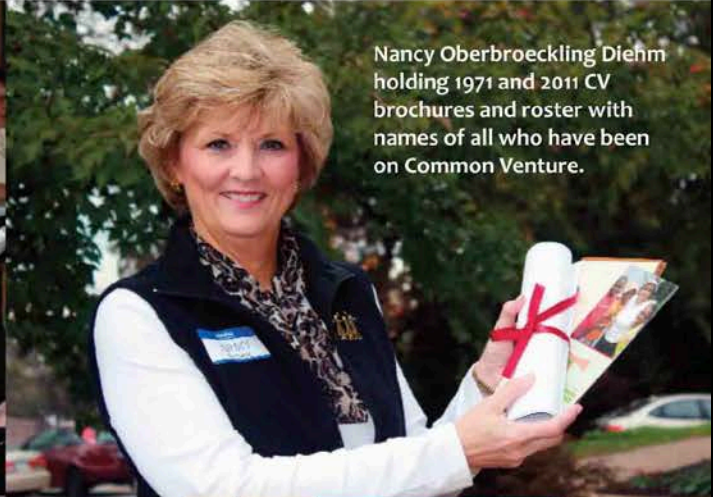
(See next page for pictures of the day.

Common Venture 40th Anniversary Fun - October 16, 2011

Troubadours (L-R) : Mary Kay Sigwarth Pancratz; June Wessels Francois; Sr. Carol Hemesath; Sr. Carol Hawkins; Mary Jedlicka Humston



Nancy Oberbroeckling Diehm holding 1971 and 2011 CV brochures and roster with names of all who have been on Common Venture.



Betty Friederes Hayek & Sr. Michaela Galles



Charade Fun



Planning Task Force Members (back row L-R): Betsy Schmidt, Debbie Gross, Sr. Nancy Schreck, Theresa Deutsch. (front row): Sr. Joan Stoffel and LuAnn Burkle



Sr. Marie Therese Kalb



110 Participants