

# Community of Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal

Summer 2014

*"I am so glad that God is!" – Fr. Walter Ciszek, S.J.*

Dearest Friends,

I remember well sitting with Father Walter Ciszek (a saintly Jesuit priest whose cause is open for canonization) helping him with his mailing. I was in tears because we both knew it was just a matter of time before he would go on to God. Looking at him with love and gently kidding with him, I asked what he would possibly like to have written on his gravestone. He looked at me and smiled and replied, "Just write: 'I am so glad that God is.'"

Now, almost 30 years later, I can say that these simple words make all the sense in the world to me, when I see the little miracles that have occurred all the years of my life and especially during my years of religious life. How God has "worked for good" so many things! For example, the poor have been cared for, and even children have been transformed as they sit in prayer before their Eucharistic Lord, feeling the presence of God Himself in the Blessed Sacrament. We have witnessed people receiving God's loving embrace in so many ways! There is no doubt in my mind that our good God *does* indeed exist – and what's more, He lives among us, and longs to assist us if only we would allow Him in.

It is certainly the wish of each of our sisters that all can come to a vivid experience and a knowledge of a God who loves us infinitely and Who is truly with us and intends to help us in every event in our life.

We pray that our life and work will be a light of this hope for a world in such great need. Please join us in a renewed commitment to Jesus who will show us the way to bring the hope and joy of God's great Love – to all!

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



for every single person which is the focus of our witness. We must show the world His tenderness! Here, Sr. Felicity is pictured with a child during our Pater Noster Food Give-out.

*The aim of postulancy is to separate from the world in preparation for the novitiate, which is the beginning of religious life. It could be summed up with two words: "Letting Go." Postulants leave behind a myriad of things: careers and possessions, many friends, dreams and aspirations in favor of one thing—doing the loving will of God our Father.*

*Our postulants are: Stacey Dorr from Denver, Colorado, Julia Wong from Columbus, Ohio, Genna Quentin, from Port Washington, Wisconsin and Christine Grote from Cincinnati, Ohio. Please pray for them as they prepare to receive the holy habit of Saint Francis and begin the novitiate, God willing, August 2, 2014, Feast of Our Lady of the Angels.*

*August 15, 2014 will be our first anniversary in Ireland! Our beloved Cardinal Timothy Dolan is pictured here with his very dear 2nd grade teacher, Sr. Bosco of the Sisters of Mercy (far right) and a joyous Sr. Lucille, our Community Servant (Superior) on the day of dedication of St. Colette Convent last year. In the background is the beautiful St. Mary's Church, Drogheda; our convent is right next door.*



*Many sisters and friars have had the opportunity to travel to Haiti and serve the beautiful people there whose suffering continues to be acute, especially for the lack of sufficient food for all. Our friend, Charbie Moran, has been organizing mission trips to Haiti for the past 10 years. This past January, as part of the evangelization efforts, the mission team was able to construct 68 homes, provide food for 650 families, and serve 2000 people during their 8-day medical mission, as well as*



*distribute countless Divine Mercy images, Miraculous Medals, and rosaries. Sr. Maria Grace, originally from Scotland, is pictured here with a little child of one of the families who received a new home.*



*Three times a day the sisters sit down around the table together for a meal. Albeit simple, time is taken to eat together, to talk to one another, and to enjoy the simple pleasures of family life! All the sisters take turns cooking and after at least an hour of joyful conversation around the table we all do the dishes together. This is our "recreation time" when all the "highlights" of everyone's day get shared. Sr. Mary Pieta and Sr. Faustina are pictured here getting ready for a gathering of all the New York convents (biscuits and gravy were on the menu for this celebration!).*



*O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)*

When I was a little girl, I liked climbing trees. I was convinced that at the top of my favorite tree I would gaze upon heaven and see the face of God. One summer, as I finally made it to the top of the tree, I was met with, not the face of God, but a glorious sunset and God's peaceful reassurance that there really was something more beyond the trees. The God I learned about through Church, school and friends, however, didn't match this experience. Little by little my sense of God became distant and impersonal, someone to be obeyed, not known. I tried to be good, a straight-A student, not wanting to offend Him. But my heart knew there had to be something more to life.

At 18, heading off to college, I came close to death with a serious illness. As I recovered, I thought, "How could God do this? Why am I being so good if He was going to let me die?" My heart shifted, turned from God, and I stopped going to Mass, running headlong into worldly pleasures. After college, I had a job with an investment management firm in Boston and everything the world defines as "success". I dabbled in New Age practices and considered myself a "feminist". But nothing was a salve for my unhappy heart consistently asking, "Isn't there something more?"

In 1996 my father invited me to a Marian pilgrimage in Europe. Thinking it would be an adventurous vacation, I went. I got more than I bargained for – daily Mass, spiritual talks – I didn't even know how to say the rosary! But in our group, I encountered people who, despite sorrows – death, sickness, bankruptcy – had a faith in something, in Someone, that brought them a peace and joy I desperately wanted. One night the group was going to Eucharistic Adoration. I asked my father, "What's that?" He explained Jesus' True Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. It was the craziest thing I'd ever heard. Dad said, "That's okay, when you're there, just take a leap of faith and ask God to help you believe." During Adoration I took that leap of faith, asking God to help me believe, pondering if He was the "something more" I longed for. From that small request, God gave me the grace to return to confession for the first time since making the sacrament. I know I had been running away from Him – now I wanted to come back. When I received absolution, my heart opened to God's loving mercy and found the "something more" it sought.

Returning to Boston I strove to keep God in my life. It was a challenge at first, but the desire for His love and mercy kept me coming back. Eventually I began to ask the Lord, "What is your plan for my life?" When God spoke in my heart that it was to be a sister, I was shocked. Surely God had made a mistake! But the more I asked, the clearer and louder He responded. Relying on His mercy, I took another leap of faith and came to visit our community, and my heart was set free.

Instead of trees, my desire now is to climb the ladder of the spiritual life. I have, though, seen the face of God. He is in the faces of my sisters, the lady behind me at Mass, the school children we visit, and the poor and homeless that God gives us the privilege of serving. And each face reminds me, there is something more.

- St. Monica Maria Faustina of Mercy, CFR

*Being so far removed from the greater community, especially during the holy days of Christmas, Holy Week and Easter, is one of the challenges of serving in the missions. With a total of 4 friaries and 2 convents in England and Ireland, times of celebration are growing in size and richness. The "European Schola" certainly isn't lacking anything!*

*Br. John Bosco, London, Sr. Cecilia, Leeds, Sr. Veronica, and Sr. Kelly Francis, Drogheda, Ireland are pictured here leading the music for the Christmas Mass at St. Pio Friary in Bradford, England. How grateful we are to all our brothers and sisters serving in the missions!*



*On an "Upper Room" day our little parking lot behind Our Lady Queen of Angels Convent becomes a playground of hopscotch, hula-hoop and four-square. This year's theme for "Upper Room" is: "Becoming Disciples of Jesus in the Footsteps of Saint Francis". Between 50 and 65 children attend on average. When asked, most children say that the time in Adoration is their favorite part of youth group! Our postulans, Stacey Darr, is pictured here with Priscilla and Samira.*



*Sr. Gemma and Sr. Josephine entered our Community at the same time (September 2011) and have progressed through formation together. Now, the second year of the novitiate, they spend time in the different convents learning our various ministries through hands-on experience. This picture was taken on a pilgrimage which brought all the sisters from the novitiate together again! The old adage is true, "Absence makes the heart grow even fonder!"*



*Servant of God, Father Solanus Casey (1870-1957), was a Capuchin priest who is known for the miracles God worked through him particularly for the poor whom he dedicated his life to serve. We named our soup kitchen after Fr. Solanus Casey, and we hope to care for all those that come to us with the same reverence and love with which Father Solanus was known to have served the people that came to him. Our postulans, Julie, and our good friend and dedicated volunteer, John Tamborini, are pictured serving at the Father Solanus Kitchen.*

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