

Under His Mercy



Newsletter of the Franciscan Sisters, T.O.R.

Fall 2009

To Clothe the Naked... and Feed the Poor



Heart of Mary House of Prayer and Service opened in downtown Steubenville in 2001 so that we could be a presence to God's people. Since then we have been very involved in LAMP ministry.

LAMP is a Saturday morning "breakfast club" that aims to feed both the body and soul. We begin with a catechesis, usually about the Gospel reading for the following Sunday. We sing praise songs with the people, and it is beautiful to hear them, especially the children, request their favorite praise songs, ! There is also usually some type of skit or game as part of the teaching, as seen in the picture to the left. Then we serve the meal. Afterwards, there is a craft for the kids to do - and some adults also participate! Before the people depart, we distribute bag lunches to each person. Many people help to make this ministry possible, such as the group of men who cook the meal (see picture below). Others come to help serve the food and drinks, prepare the lunches, and assist in other ways as needed. We have also been blessed to have a group of young women from the Theta Phi Alpha sorority at Franciscan University who come and help regularly.



It has been such a gift to participate in this ministry for the past eight years. We have had the opportunity to see both the young and old come to know the Lord and His love for them in deeper ways. Many of the children who regularly come to LAMP have grown to love us. It is not uncommon for them to run up to us when they come in to give us hugs and tell us what has been happening in their life.

Sr. Zita Maria shared with me an experience she had with four children at LAMP. They had come for the first time when some sisters and volunteers had gone out into the neighborhood to invite people to come down for the meal. They came down, not sure of who we were or if they trusted us, but they began coming regularly over the summer while they were in town staying with their dad. One was a ten year old boy, who, at first wouldn't even look up and didn't talk for a long time.

Sr. Zita Maria continued reaching out to them. The oldest girl asked her to pray for her parents because they were trying to get back together. Sr. Zita Maria, of course, promised she would. The next week the girl came back and thanked her for praying. She said her parents weren't fighting as much anymore and asked her to keep praying for them. At one point, the boy was invited to be in one of the skits, and he agreed to play a part. At the end of the summer, he came up to Sr. Zita Maria to say thanks and goodbye and that he hoped they would see her again next summer. The Lord can do amazing things when we are simply available and love His children. It is just one way that we are able to experience spiritual motherhood.



In 2006 we began assisting at Samaritan House, a thrift store and emergency food bank operated by the Steubenville parishes. In August 2008, we took over coordinating the daily operation of the store. It has been a great blessing to serve the Lord through this ministry. Samaritan House is not just a place to buy cheap clothes, and we are certainly not in it for the money! By running the store, we have an opportunity to minister to the many people who come in to shop or just talk. When a person comes in who needs help with food or clothing, we conduct

an “interview” with him or her. However, this is not your typical interview. Our primary reason for meeting with each person is to get to know him, pray with him, and hopefully help him to come to know God’s love in a new or deeper way. After getting a person’s basic information, we take time to pray with him or her for any of his intentions or needs. This has been a beautiful and fruitful experience for many of our sisters as well as for the person receiving prayer. It is not uncommon for a person to be moved to tears during the prayer. After a sister prayed with her, one woman shared with the sister, through tears, that this was



the first place she had come for help where it seemed the people really cared about her. Many sisters have felt the power of the Holy Spirit while praying with people. Another woman shared that she had been very afraid before coming in because she was in an abusive situation, but through the sister praying with her, she was experiencing peace. Some people have returned and asked to be prayed with again, and others have come back in to share how the Lord has answered their prayers. I do not share these stories to give credit to the sisters, but rather to bear witness to the way in which the

Holy Spirit uses us to touch the lives of His precious poor. It is a gift for us to share the Lord’s love with those who are hurting.

Our ministry in downtown Steubenville does start out with “clothing the naked” and “feeding the poor,” but it is our goal to clothe them with **love** and feed them with the **Lord’s Word**.

Sr. Mary Markita Kratochvil, T.O.R.



Santa Chiara ... Up and Running!

Sr. Faustina, Sr. Mary Rose, Sr. Maria Pio, and Sr. Eliana are the four sisters living on Franciscan University’s main campus this year. While it has been an adventure getting the house set up for the first time, it has also been a great blessing.



The Sisters at Santa Chiara house feel immersed in the life of the Franciscan University campus, and their days have been quite full. As you can imagine, there is never a dull moment for them! Being on campus has allowed the sisters to be more available to the students, sharing in their joys and struggles and everyday life with them, which includes praying with them, going to their sports games, and attending various campus activities. The sisters truly experience their vocation of spiritual motherhood and the blessing it is to be involved in these young peoples’ lives. They have been involved in retreats, preparing the students for evangelization ministries, giving spiritual direction, weekly Scripture prayer group, weekly praise and worship, and being a part of their lives in commitments and teachings in their Households (spirit empowered, Christ centered groups on the campus). Living on campus makes their schedule a little different than that of the Motherhouse, but they are incorporating all the aspects of our way of life. They feel blessed to be there and look forward to how the Lord will continue to use them in building up His Kingdom.

Three... Two... One... BLAST OFF!!!



With the countdown to the big event well under way, the last few months were full of prayer, planning, anticipation and much excitement! Finally, the date arrived, and a curious young crowd gathered to participate in this historic affair. September 20, 2009 marked the kick-off of a new youth program and, thanks be to

God, it was a successful launch! The evening was filled with friends, laughter, music, games, food, skits, and the discovery that Christ is our anchor. Around 85 high school students from the city of Steubenville, Ohio and the surrounding area joined in the fun. The night began with a series of relay races which allowed the students to fine-tune their skills of balancing a tower of Oreos on the back of their hand, running with a full cup of water over their head, learning new ways to use a hockey stick, as well as beginning new friendships with their teammates.



Once everyone had worked up a healthy appetite, we headed inside to feast on hamburgers with all of the fixings. After a skit that left everyone in stitches, Sr. Anne Marie reminded us that Christ, as our anchor, will steady us so we do not drift away from Him in this constantly changing world. This new dynamic youth program, led by Sr. Anne Marie Gill and a core team of volunteers, will provide an environment for the students to foster relationships with their peers, have a good time, and most importantly meet Our Lord and know His overwhelming, unique love for them. We, as a community,



are very excited and enthusiastic about this new ministry and foresee the Lord doing great things in the hearts and lives of the young people. There are so many youth in the area who are hungry for more than this world has to offer; we are simply providing a place for them to be fed.

Srs. Sophia Grace Huschka and Elizabeth Beussink, T.O.R.



Sr. Thérèse Marie and Sr. Monica joined Sr. Miriam in Ireland at the end of her home visit. Sr. Thérèse Marie was a speaker at the Youth 2000 retreat this August.



Sr. Mary Markita spoke with young women at Franciscan University's Vocations Awareness Day. It is always a blessing to be with so many other priests and religious and share about our life with the students.



Thirteen of our sisters traveled to Washington D.C. for the Eucharistic Congress in September. Abundant graces were poured out both at the event and during their travels to and from Washington D.C.



Pastor Bruce Hitchcock, director of Urban Mission in Steubenville, came to give our whole community a workshop on working with the poor.



If you are interested in finding out more about our community or visiting us, Please contact Sr. Thérèse Marie at (740) 544-6204, or vocations@torsisters.org

Vocation Discernment Retreat
October 30-November 1, 2009
(See website for future dates)



Construction has begun! Check out the Building page on our website to follow the progress!



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Check out

www.torsisters.org/communitynews.shtml

for monthly community news and pictures

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God's Perfect Timing

A few weeks ago, I had an experience which helped me to realize how the Lord can use us if we cooperate with Him and His timing. Early in the week, while working at Samaritan House, I noticed that there wasn't a volunteer assigned for the Thursday afternoon shift. I would work the Thursday morning shift, and I knew I would need to stay through the afternoon shift as well if there wasn't a volunteer to work with the sister assigned to that afternoon. It is always a temptation for me to stay at Samaritan House rather than face my work at home. However, I felt it was not God's will for me to avoid my work at home, so I looked into getting a volunteer. When Thursday afternoon came, I found myself struggling to leave Samaritan House, even though a volunteer had been found. I felt the Lord nudging me to do what I had planned. So, I reluctantly left Samaritan House, but a little later than planned.

As I pulled into our driveway, I saw a high school student standing on our front porch. When he saw me drive up, he approached the car and asked if I could do him a favor. I responded, "If I am able... what is it that you need?" He asked, "Could you pray with me?" I re-

plied, "Certainly. That is what we are here for." I pulled up two chairs on the porch and sat down with him. He began to pour his heart out about his mother's terminal illness, his grandmother's recent death, and other troubles. He felt like giving up. He said, "I ask for God's help, but things just get more and more difficult." I spent time listening, answering his questions and praying with him. He told me happily as he departed, "I heard the Lord when no one answered your door. I felt the Lord tell me to wait. He knew you were coming. Thank you for praying with me, it really helped!" I thought to myself, "Thank you, Lord, for helping me to be obedient to your nudging, or I would have missed your will for me in that moment and the opportunity to share your love with someone who really needed it."



Sr. Della Marie Doyle, TOR