

2008 Affiliate and Sister Cluster Days

This spring, seven Cluster Days were held in seven different locations: St. Rose, Prairiewoods, Marywood, WomanWell, Clare Center, Verona, Wis., and Las Vegas, Nev. In total 154 sisters and affiliates participated. During the Cluster Day on February 15, 2008, in La Crosse, two women celebrated their initial commitment, Nickijo Hager as a prayer affiliate and Kitty Howells as a convent affiliate. The following is the reflection given by Sister Anita Beskar during their ceremony. It references the healing story of the woman with the hemorrhage touching Jesus' cloak found in Matthew 9:18-22.



Kitty Howells, left, and Sister Laurice Heybl

Women – Touch – Jesus – Power – Healing

Anita Beskar, FSPA, from La Crosse, Wisconsin

In the healing story we find a woman who is breaking all the rules of her culture. Her place is in the tent, separated from the community, and above all, not anonymously milling through a crowd to intentionally touch a man. But her desire to be healed preempted all cultural taboos and freed her to follow her heart. Jesus experiences power going out from him and knows that this anonymous healing contact is not enough. He reaches out in compassion to further a human relationship and affirm the courage of the woman. Her healing is complete. She is invited to go forth healed and in peace.



Sister Jean Moore, left, and Nickijo Hager

Is this not the story of Kitty and Nickijo in their health care ministries? How many cultural taboos are broken daily as these two women give witness to Franciscan values of compassion and joy in direct and administrative service with the current challenging health care system? How often do they experience power going out from them and find themselves searching for those who have touched them and whom they have touched? How profound this public witness of espousing a Franciscan lifestyle is in its power to influence the climate of the healing mission of Franciscan Skemp. How compassionate is Kitty's healing touch as a doctor, not only at Women's Health, but at Clare Mission. How challenging is Nickijo's vigilant discernment of the implementation of Franciscan values as a vice president in the entire Franciscan Skemp Health System. For your faithfulness and courage we say, "thank you." Your power goes out and blesses each of us.

Tonight, as we gather for your affiliation ceremony, we are particularly grateful for your desire to touch more deeply, to share community, prayer and ministry with us, your sisters. May all of us continue to risk letting power go out from us so that many may touch us and be healed. Let us go forth in faith and in peace.



2008 Cluster Days

Verona Cluster Day – February 2, 2008

Mary Skemp from Madison, Wisconsin

The topic was particularly pertinent for me; struggling with work and small children is so tiring sometimes that I lose perspective on what is most important. Focusing on compassion helped me center lots of thoughts and feelings and remember my priorities.



Affiliates Patti Gleason and John Tully participated in the Marywood Cluster Day.

each other in presence, sharing and listening. We prayed, journeyed, shared Eucharist of spirit and food together. Sister Suzanne's aura of peace, joy and enthusiasm permeated everyone. It was fulfilling to hear the stories of how the FSPA and Franciscan spirit has permeated our spirituality and relationship with God, man and the cosmos, is lived in our lives and shared in our ministries. The Holy Spirit is working and we are the instruments.

The theme of compassion was so wonderfully illustrated with the DVD and touched one's senses of eyes and ears; our hearts. Discussions followed that led to a sharing of "sacred stories" where compassion and affirmation were a part of the day's journey with each other. I was grasped by the overwhelming sense of community, by "compassion and action" being put together, their interrelatedness and how I see that in the present Scripture readings of Jesus' ministry, how it is in my daily life as Christian, Franciscan. It calls me to more awareness to find greater depth, growth. It was an inspiring day to heart and spirit.

I very much appreciated the meditation at the beginning; the psalm was an excellent opening for discussion. The discussion was "easy" because the atmosphere was loving. Everyone brought a different perspective and I appreciated how generous everyone was with sharing.

Joan Gerhard from Verona, Wisconsin

The day was filled with a sense of community, welcoming each other and new people, being at ease with



This group gathered at Prairiewoods in March. Back row, from left, Mary Lee Folkedahl-Meehleder, Sister Nancy Hoffman, Robyn Krell, Sister Coramarie Wernimont and Sister Lucille Winnike. Front row, Joyce Hanson, Sister Therese Marie Pedretti and Sister Sharon Berger.

La Crosse Cluster Day – February 15-16, 2008

Carol Brickson from La Crosse, Wisconsin

One step. Right now. Right here.



Sister Pat Sheridan, left, with Kathy Benish at La Crosse Cluster Day

Barb Burgess from Holmen, Wisconsin

I enjoyed sharing ideas about what other companion communities are doing.

Emily Dykman from La Crescent, Minnesota

I was renewed in my belief of the "intrinsic goodness of people," especially in the idea of each person having an individual breath-print that began with the first breath.

Karen Hellman from Onalaska, Wisconsin

The day was delightfully relaxing and energizing. It was a day for "planting seeds" for future ministry activities.

Mary Louise Mutch, FSPA, from La Crosse, Wisconsin

This day was a varied and interesting day of sharing what groups are doing, and being inspired and challenged by the activities of other groups and suggestions of the leaders.

John Maule from River Falls, Wisconsin

An important part of compassion is just being.

Prairiewoods Cluster Day – March 28-29, 2008

Robyn Krell from Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The programming was perfect: the planning/organization, focus on "compassion," information presented, meditations and great conversations. I received resources to assist me in living more compassionately

as I go about my life. I was uplifted by the day. When I left I felt more centered in peace, love and hope than when I arrived. I am grateful for the many blessings received. Thank you, thank you.



Affiliate Pam Small, left, with Sisters Rosile Pernsteiner and Kathy Roberg in Spokane

Spokane Cluster Day – April 5, 2008

Kathy Roberg, FSPA, from Spokane, Washington

Even though there was a strong chill in the April 5th air, with dancing snowflakes, and warm, loving hearts gathered at Clare Center in Spokane for the Cluster Day. In this frenzied world we were reminded and called back to become more aware and awakened to the real presence of God in our midst and how we are invited to respond with open hearts to this presence. It was definitely a day filled with God's presence!

Sharon Bonjorno, FSPA, from Spokane, Washington

We gathered in a snowstorm – but that did not deter the 16 brave souls who gathered at the Clare Center for our Cluster Days presentation. As usual Sister Suzanne made the day relaxing and very informative. Sisters and affiliates alike were open in their sharing. The word compassion took on deeper meanings for us and that helped set the stage for our afternoon “quiz” and sharing. I personally gained a greater appreciation for all that has gone into making Affiliation such a vibrant part of our community.



Affiliate Tammy Barthels and Sister Karen Kappell

Congratulations!

- Twilla Hoffman and Peggy Wilderding on their acceptance as prayer affiliates.
- Mary Thompson on her acceptance as a covenant affiliate.
- John Tully on the renewal of his prayer affiliation.
- Joyce Hanson, Linda Kerrigan, Ruthmary Priebe and Sue Smith on the renewal of their covenant affiliation.

Affiliation Committee Update May 9, 2008

Members: Janet Dalton, FSPA, Emily Dykman, Karen Flottmeier, FSPA, Linda Kerrigan, Marci Madary, Eileen McKenzie, FSPA, George Meirick, Linda Mershon, FSPA, Grace Nicholson-Maly, Suzanne Rubenbauer, FSPA, Chandra Sherin and Mollie Williams.

The committee followed up on projects, i.e. reusable green bags, Cluster Days and upcoming ministry surveys, that embody the following goals:

I. Being Franciscan

We, the affiliates of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, offer to the world a shared faith and witness to gospel life. Together we seek opportunities to continue to grow in our common identity.

II. Living as Franciscan

Because we are called to be Franciscan, we are engaged in ongoing conversion centering our lives in Franciscan values in relationship with all creation.

III. Serving as Franciscans

As the mutual relationship between affiliates and sisters evolves, we experience the Spirit calling us to move beyond our respective comfort zones, and, in joint ministry, reach out to others in need.

Other items include:

- Six women have begun the affiliation process, three have withdrawn and two have died since November 2007. There are currently 99 covenant affiliates, 66 prayer affiliates, 12 lifelong affiliates and 34 people in process to become affiliates, creating a grand total of 211.
- Three donations of \$2,500 have been received since December 2007 for the Affiliation Resource Fund. Four scholarships were requested during this time for a total of \$825. The current balance of the Affiliation Resource Fund is now \$511.77
- From December 1, 2007, to April 15, 2008, 14 people made contributions to the Affiliation Office for a total of \$1,550.
- The 2008 Affiliation Retreat will be held at Prairiewoods August 7-10 with Sisters Marla Lang and Corrina Thomas as the retreat directors.
- The 2008 Live-In will be held July 20-24; the Sister and Affiliate Picnic will be Tuesday evening, July 22, 2008, at Myrick Park in La Crosse.
- In conjunction with FSPA, Common Hearts companion community collected \$7,233.50 for two different sponsored families in the Flood of Love appeal. In addition \$5,000.00 was matched by FSPA.
- In February 2008, 22 donors gave \$435.00 for Project Hope, to help support a doctor in Cameroon.

Caring Hearts/Helping Hands

The following is a note of gratitude from the Common Heart Companion Community in regard to the donations received for Flood of Love.

We are so very grateful to the FSPA, the leadership team, the FSPA Development Office, and the many donors who heard the cry of last August's flood victims, and responded with such generous hearts to the Flood of Love. The efforts of all have provided more than \$12,000 of relief, and the important gift of renewed hope and encouragement. In the words of Kelly, one of our recipients, "We know that it will be a long journey before life begins to feel 'normal' again. Just know that as we continue to go through the coming triumphs and hardships, we will never forget the kindness you have shown us. I hope this letter will help you understand how your part in our flood recovery has inspired us to help others when they are in their time of need."

Bernadette Murray from Las Vegas, Nevada

Gina Pignatello is a devout Catholic and mother of six-children. She and her husband were a happy married couple. One day he just informed her that he had found someone else and no longer wanted to be in this marriage. Needless of say, Gina and her family were devastated. Thanks to Sister Lorraine Forster, Gina receives leftover food from the lunches at Bishop Gorman High School where Sister Lorraine teaches. Plus Gina is getting legal help. Gina and her family are in dire need of food, clothing, etc. Gina has started making necklaces from glass-like beads; the stretch beads that are popular now. The youngest is two years old and the oldest child is a freshman in high school. Our companion community helps by giving time, talent and financial aid when possible. Rita helps by babysitting so that Gina can do errands, etc.

Perhaps Caring Hearts/Helping Hands could help by advertising these beads. Sister Suzanne purchased a necklace. I wear mine as a necklace. If anyone else would like a necklace contact me at bbladdress@gmail.com or 702-243-3329.

2008 Franciscan Living Challenge:

By the end of 2008, affiliates and sisters will no longer use plastic shopping bags.

This comment was sent in by Tammy Barthels from Wausau, Wisconsin.

I wanted to thank Mary Ellen Dunford for keeping us informed about plastic, and other knowledgeable green information in *Connections*. I recently used her information about plastic bags and wrote an editorial to the *Wausau Daily Herald* which was printed May 9, encouraging others to reuse/recycle or refuse to use plastic.

Living Simply, Living Franciscan

Mary Ellen Dunford from Hiawatha, Iowa

The Evolution of the Shopping Bag

I remember as a child my mom would send me to the grocery store to pick up a few items. I'd ride my bike to Steiner's Grocery Store. After checking out and paying for the groceries, Mr. Steiner or his wife would help me carry the items outside and put them in the basket on my bike (I had a blue Schwinn bike with a basket attached to the front handle bars). Today I drive my car to a large supermarket and, if I buy the same items, they are put in several plastic bags.

With the movement across the world to reduce the use of plastic shopping bags in grocery stores, I began to wonder about the origin of shopping bags. How did our culture get to the point of families using an average of 30 plastic bags a week? I did some research and here are a few facts about shopping bags:

- Through careful observation, merchants realized that customer purchases were limited by what they could conveniently carry. As a result bags were introduced to help consumers buy more items at one time.
- Paper bags for commercial use were first manufactured in England in 1844.
- Two inventors, working independently, are given credit for the first paper grocery bags in the United States:
 - * Charles Stilwell, a Union soldier, produced the first machine-made folding paper bag and dubbed it the S.O.S. for self-opening sack.
 - * Martha Knight developed a machine to produce the flat-bottomed paper bag. She was one of the earliest women to win a patent for her product.
- In 1973, the first commercial system for manufacturing plastic bags was developed.
- In 1977, the plastic grocery bag was introduced to the supermarket industry as an alternative to the paper sack.
- In the late 1980s and early 1990s the world began to realize the environmental impact of paper and plastic bags.
- 2005 to present time, reusable shopping bags were introduced as a green alternative.
- In 2008, FSPA Affiliation issued green reusable nylon bags as an alternative to paper and plastic bags.

I invite you to make a green commitment to purchase and use reusable shopping bags. You can make a difference.

Pray for...

- ☞ Sister of Emily Dykman
- ☞ Molly Elwell, RIP
- ☞ Lynn Joyce Hunter on the death of her mother
- ☞ Daughter of Jan Prokes
- ☞ Agnes Stoolman
- ☞ Lily Watson
- ☞ All of the family members of affiliates who are serving in the military in the Middle East