

## *Do Not Worry*

Mary Kathryn Fogarty, FSPA, from La Crosse, WI

*Reflection given on Luke 12: 22-32 at the Affiliation Ceremony on October 10, 2008.*

I chose this reading because it is countercultural . . . and so must we be. We live in a culture of worry. Bad news rains down on us every day . . . storm alerts, medical scares, reports of contaminated foods. If it isn't on the big screen, it is crawling along the bottom of the screen.

The Gospel says to pay attention to the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. Do they worry? No, because they can't worry. It is our ability as humans to imagine, to plan, to visualize a yet-to-happen future that disposes us to worry.

Over 25 years ago a new idea was put forth in the FSPA community. It was called the Affiliation. Were there doubts and worries in the community? Oh, yes. We are human. Did the first affiliates have concerns? Did they wonder how this would be? I would imagine they did.

The good news is that those involved, both FSPA and affiliates trusted in the action of God in our lives, gave God permission to act, trusting that the action would be good. Tonight we celebrate the silver jubilee of affiliate Dorothy Maule who embraced that idea and had the grace of overcoming fear.

With the addition of each affiliate to the program, the whole grew in diversity and wisdom. Each director and co-director brought her leadership gifts, skills and creativity to the ministry.

The connections between affiliates and sisters grew. In the beginning, as with all relationships, there was tentativeness. What will you want from us? How will we fit in? But again, trust grew as we remembered the words of Jesus. Do not be afraid. We now have some affiliates who have made a lifelong commitment to affiliation.

In the beginning it was sisters who invited women and men. Today the good news is often spread by the affiliates and by the fruits of their commitment: community, prayer and ministry.

We have celebrated the gift of life eternal for some; and have rejoiced with others as new life came into the world through the birth of a child.

This weekend we share experiences of Ministry at Our Doorstep. Of all the concerns and worries the world wants to put before us, what we see out our backdoor is REAL.

Those who hunger for food, justice, spirituality and the safety of Mother Earth

Those imprisoned by addictions, poverty and abuse

Those who suffer from war, natural disasters and immigration injustices

And so much more.

Working together as sisters and affiliates assures us that somewhere someone among us is looking out their backdoor and ministering to the needs of the people.

As we continue celebrating an idea that is growing beyond any one person's expectations, let us in gratitude, individually and collectively

Be astonished by God's love, joy and presence in and among us

Renew our sense of adventure and our willingness to try new things

And, in the spirit of Francis, Clare and all the saints who go before us,

set our hearts on the reign of God.



# 2008 Fall Sister and Affiliate Gathering

On Friday evening, October 10, Dorothy Maule was honored for her 25 years as an FSPA affiliate. During the ceremony, Mary Thompson celebrated her covenant affiliation and Glena Temple celebrated her prayer affiliation, while Arlene O'Loughlin, Ruthmary Priebe and Mollie Williams renewed their affiliation commitment.

Saturday was filled with conversations on "Ministry at our Doorstep." Following prayer, presentations were given on the flood in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and relief efforts responding to it; the Affiliation GATE to Mexico and the personal impact of that experience; and an explanation of what NAFTA is, the history of it, and the devastation it has had on Mexican farmers. During the afternoon the results of the Joint Ministry Survey were explained and all those present were able to share their ministry and invite others into it.

*"The experience of the celebration of my 25th jubilee was a once in a lifetime moment. Thank you, all."*

– Dorothy Maule from River Falls, WI



*John and Dorothy Maule*



*Mary Calkins and Sister Beatrice Merkes*



*Tammy Barthels, Carl Koch and Joyce Heil*

*"It's so great to feel a connectedness and directed surge in the urgency of our brothers and sisters—it is good to know the strength as Franciscans."* – Sharon Chavolla from La Crosse, WI

*"It's amazing to see the Holy Spirit work in so many people in one room. It's even more amazing that the Holy Spirit is working in every person in the room."* – Patti Gleason from Zion, IL



*John Tully and Sister Josephine Mary Weiler*



*Leanne Spacek, John Barrow and Kathy Benish*



*Mollie Williams and Glena Temple*

*"The richness of our community's gifts for ministry is truly inspiring."* – John Tully from Milwaukee, WI

*"The spirits of Francis and Clare were alive and moving, stirring our hearts, cementing our relationships, and fueling our desires for shared ministry."* – Linda Kerrigan (La Crescent, MN)



*Mary Thompson and Sister Rita Heires*

*"It was wonderful connecting with former Live-In friends again."* – Kathy Benish from Elroy, WI



*Sister Mary Kathryn Fogarty and Peg Schumacher*

# *Affiliation Committee Update - October 10, 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.

## **2007-2010 Focus Areas for FSPA Affiliation**

**Being Franciscan:** Building and nurturing community: offering to the world a shared faith and witness to Gospel life, seeking opportunities to grow in our common identity.

**Living as Franciscan:** Engagement in on-going conversion centering our lives in Franciscan values in relationship with all creation.

**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.

Agenda Items included:

- Ten people have begun the **affiliation process**, one has withdrawn, and two have died since May 2008. There are 107 covenant affiliates, 68 prayer affiliates, 12 lifelong affiliates and 32 people in process to become affiliates; creating a grand total of 219.
- One donation for \$100.00 has been received for the **Affiliation Resource Fund** since April 16, 2008. Six scholarships were requested during this time for a total of \$3,245.00. The current balance of the Affiliation Resource Fund is now a negative (-)\$83.23. Donations need to be immediately sought after to keep this fund at a positive balance.
- Since April 16, 2008, affiliates and sisters have **contributed \$1,780.00 for gatherings**, specifically for the Affiliation Retreat. That is also the amount received in total for the 2008-2009 fiscal calendar.
- From April 16, 2008, to September 16, 2008, eight people made **contributions to Affiliation** for a total of \$795.00.
- The **2009 Live-In** will be held June 21-25; the **Sister and Affiliate Picnic** will be Tuesday evening, June 23, 2009, at Myrick Park in La Crosse.
- The **2009 Affiliation Retreat** will be held at The Christine Center July 30-August 1. As of September 15, 2008, 16 of the 18 prayer affiliates have completed their renewal process.
- Nineteen out of 20 covenant affiliates have completed their **renewal** paperwork, including four who have chosen to become prayer affiliates and one who has withdrawn from affiliation. Nine covenant affiliates need to ritualize their renewal.
- **The Midwest Associate Directors** are planning a gathering for associates and religious in April 25, 2009, with Joe Nangle presenting on the radical Gospel.

# *Joint Ministry Survey Results*

The Affiliation Committee sent out a questionnaire to discover how much interest there is in joint ministry, find out who is interested, in which type of ministries sisters and affiliates might be interested, and what type of resources should Affiliation invest in further exploration of joint ministries.

We received 129 responses: 88 from sisters and 41 from affiliates. Of these, 64 said they were interested in joint ministries, and 47 were not interested, often due to age and health. Forty-five percent of the affiliates and sisters of those who responded know of current ministry opportunities. Over half (64 percent) are interested in serving in the next year. And 45 percent are interested in being a part of a discernment process to explore further joint ministry opportunities.

The proposed ministry options that had the most interest were prayer, single events and serving in their immediate community. Although international service was the ministry option that had the least amount of interest, it still ranked a 2.9 out of a five point scale.

The conclusions that were drawn are that there is more interest than we anticipated and the interest is in a variety of ministry opportunities, from local one-time events to exploring the “growing edges” of joint ministry. We also realized that there are many current and future opportunities for joint ministry.

In response to the survey results, we shared them during the Fall Sister and Affiliate Gathering to raise awareness of our resources because “together we can do what we cannot do alone.” We also presented current opportunities for service. For the future we recommend that the Affiliation Committee further the development of joint ministries by creating a standing subcommittee on Affiliation Committee to help coordinate joint ministry and to continue to utilize the **Caring Hearts, Helping Hands** column in *Connections*.

## *Congratulations!*

- Dorothy Maule on the celebration of her Silver Affiliation Jubilee.
- Mike and Arlene Bonacci on their 50th wedding anniversary.
- Glenna Temple on her acceptance as a prayer affiliate.

## *Pray for...*

- ☞ Sister of Mary Ellen Baumhover and S. Suzanne Rubenbauer
- ☞ Peggy Schumacher on the death of her father
- ☞ Kay Shriver on the death of her sister
- ☞ Frances Wolowick, RIP
- ☞ All of the family members of affiliates who are serving in the military in the Middle East

## *2008 Franciscan Living Challenge:*

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

## Caring Hearts/Helping Hands

### *Neighbor-to-Neighbor: Share a Sheep*

During the FSPA Affiliation sponsored GATE Mexico pilgrimage, the participants visited San Isidro De Gamboa, a small village in Mexico. Since most of the men can no longer find work in or near the village, they have had to leave their family and home to find work elsewhere. The women and children of San Isidro are keeping their village together through community networking and just plain hard physical labor. One way San Isidro is becoming financially sound is by raising sheep.



FSPA Affiliation through GATE is sponsoring the Share a Sheep Project. These tax deductible donations will go directly to the village of San Isidro. The funding received will help six families by providing each family with 7-9 sheep, along with start-up funds for metal roofs, corral building material and animal food. The total cost of the project is \$6,000.

Enclosed with this issue of *Connections*, is an envelope for the Share a Sheep Project. Your donation can be made in honor of a person or family. A gift card will be sent by the FSPA Development Office to your giftee. In addition, donors will receive a thank you letter and a receipt.

Affiliates and sisters, please spread the good news about Share a Sheep by inviting your family, friends and co-workers to donate. Be a good shepherd by gifting others for Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries. Besides supporting our San Isidro neighbors with sheep, our ultimate desire is to deepen our relationship with the people of San Isidro. Affiliation sees this as an on-going relationship of neighbor-to-neighbor. Our backyards extend beyond our cities, villages and nations.

One final note, continue to watch for information on an affiliate-sister spring trip to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in order to help the flood victims with further clean-up and house building/repair. Also, don't forget to keep updated on volunteer opportunities and other needs in Postville and Cedar Rapids by going to the FSPA Live Web site. Remember that this column of *Caring Hearts, Helping Hands* is always looking for volunteer opportunities from any affiliate or sister in any neighborhood of the world.

## Living Simply, Living Franciscan

Mary Ellen Dunford from Hiawatha, Iowa

### #3 - The Poisonous Plastic

In the last column I discussed the dangers of PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic, commonly known as vinyl. It has a toxic life cycle from production, to usage, to the trash. PVC is used in numerous consumer products and packaging. You can identify packaging materials or a product made from PVC by the number "3" or the letter "V" inside or underneath the universal recycling symbol. PVC products also may release an odor. The following is a list of a few items that are commonly made with PVC.

- Clothing items such as baby bibs, diaper covers, raincoats, shoes, boots, lingerie, and t-shirts or any other clothing with shiny prints,
- Inside our cars within the dash boards, door panels, upholstery, seats, and wire coating;
- Building materials;
- Cleaning product containers;
- Checkbook covers;
- Mattress pads;
- Photo album sheets;
- Shelving,
- Strollers;
- Shower curtains;
- Dishwashers;
- Freezer and refrigerator racks;
- Food wrap;
- Food containers;
- Table clothes;
- Credit cards;
- Toys;
- Outdoor furniture;
- Paper clips;
- Cellular phones;
- Computer equipment;

And the list goes on and on. Most of us unknowingly handle a poisonous plastic item everyday.

In response to the toxic lifestyle of PVC, many companies are working with manufacturers to stop the use of PVC in products and switch to healthier and safer products. As consumers, we can stop buying products made with PVC, write to companies and encourage them to stop purchasing products made with PVC, and ask local stores to commit to phasing out PVC in consumer products. Use your consumer power to protect yourself, your family, and the environment. You can make a difference!

## Getting to Know You . . . Theresa Washburn

Theresa Washburn was born in Honolulu and has lived in three countries and ten states. Because her father was in the military, her family moved often. Now Theresa lives in the small town of Viroqua, Wis., and works out of her home. Primarily she completes projects for the Franciscan Spirituality Center, but in addition she does some freelance graphic design and writing. Even with her busy schedule, she finds time to do the other things she enjoys like being with her daughter, riding her horse and spending time out of doors.

She became acquainted with FSPA Affiliation while driving to Rochester, Minn., for meetings with Marci Madary. Theresa remembers that they argued doctrine, discussed religion and shared faith each and every mile. As a



S. Norene Bollech from La Crosse, WI

result of these in-depth car conversations, Theresa decided to become an affiliate. She celebrated her initial covenant in 2004 with S. Maria Friedman as her sponsor.

As an affiliate Theresa says her life is wrapped around spirituality. She works in it, thinks about it, and as much as possible, writes about it. However, time (or the lack of it) is a great challenge in her ministry of spirituality. Being an affiliate is very energizing and rewarding because it allows her to be part of a community of like-minded people. She hopes that as time goes on, we all learn more about care for each other—sisters and affiliates—and let that love and care guide the structure of the relationship.