

# Monastery of St. Clare

Fall 2020

May almighty God bless you. May God look upon you with mercy and give you peace.

Blessing of St. Clare

## Co-workers with Christ

- St. Clare

When we left Boston to come here sixty-five years ago, contemplative communities had a very strict cloister. The sisters were never allowed to leave the monastery and visits with family were few and far between. We have come full circle and are experiencing this once more in 2020!

One thing that hasn't changed over the years is our life of prayer. We are often asked: "What happens when we ask you to pray for us? What does that mean?"

We have a bulletin board outside our chapel where we post all your personal notes, emails and phone messages. We also have a basket where we place the envelopes you return with your specific intentions. Sisters will often bring this basket into the chapel during their quiet prayer times. A book holding the names of those who have received our Prayer Remembrance Cards is permanently kept here as well.

When we receive an urgent prayer request the news is shared immediately and we start praying right away. We offer petitions during Morning and Evening Prayer, as well as during the Eucharist, so the sisters are caught up in these needs.

What kind of prayer requests do we receive? We are asked to pray for the deceased and their families, for healing, reconciliation in relationships, safe travel, studies, employment, financial help, finding lost

items and for those who have lost their way. We also keep up with the news and pray for the many needs we see there: those suffering with the coronavirus, from natural disasters, and for an end to the violence that we see erupting in so many parts of our world.

We believe that our whole life is one of prayer. This is our ministry in the church, our service to the world. As we leave the chapel to go about our work in the monastery, we know that within a couple of hours we will return to again praise God in the name of God's people.

Each year we especially remember the deceased in November, and we invite you to send us the names of your loved ones to include in our prayer. For several years we've had a special service in December to pray for healing wherever it is needed. We continue this tradition, so let us know the names of those in your circle of family and friends who need the Lord's healing and we will hold them in our prayers.

This year, more than ever, we are especially grateful for YOU, your prayer requests, your calls, letters, and emails. We need you because as Franciscans your faith

filled lives encourage us in our Gospel way of life. You may not be able to visit us but you are always in our hearts and in our prayers.

Sisters Marguerite and Mary Connor



Sisters Marguerite and Mary sharing basket of prayer intentions.

*A Message from  
Our Abbess  
Sr. Carolyn  
Forsette, osc*



Several weeks back I was sitting outside on the veranda watching a baby bird “hop” around on the cement. I was concerned for I could not tell if it was hurt, nor did it fly away from me. Eventually it hopped over into the grass and I followed very much wanting to help it, but not knowing how. After a short time, it tried flying straight up like a helicopter taking off, but it couldn’t get very high. By this time, we were close to a bird feeder. I stayed with it sending it loving energy as it tried flying again, getting a little higher, but not far enough to reach the feeder. On the third or fourth attempt I was delighted to see it reached the feeder and began to peck at the seed in earnest. Those few minutes spent accompanying that little bird and encouraging it with all my love were precious and remain so for me. Upon reflection I realize that I have many moments like that in a day as I walk in prayer with those who have made known their needs, those who need a little boost of encouragement, those whom God is placing in my

heart at any given time. Our life of prayer has many expressions, and for me each is an act of sending loving energy – energy that comes from the God life within – out to all those whom God loves so much.

You, my dear friends, are often the recipient of that prayer, as I know I am of yours. My heart is grateful for that. Near the end of January, 2021 we will have our chapter of elections in which a new abbess and council will take office. We invite you to pray with us as we discern with the help of the Spirit who are being called to take up this role at this time. It has been a privilege to serve as abbess with my sisters these past years. There is a grace that comes with the call that is unlike any other. I will always cherish these years, but let it be known I will equally cherish the years ahead when once again I will be simply a sister among sisters.

One of the joys of being abbess is getting a “front row seat” on all the wonderful things that come our way because of you, our dear friends. Thank you for your generous response to our fall appeal. Our HVAC system has been a challenge all along, and with your help we’ll be able to get things running more smoothly. Also because of you we have a phone system that is serving our needs so much better. We miss seeing you and being with you, but at least now we can get a good phone connection!!

With a heart full of gratitude, I close with a prayer and a hug for each of you!

Your sister,

*Carolyn*



Smiling with our eyes!

Back row: Srs. Kathy Ann, Mary, Nancy, Susanna, Sharon, Maryann, Middle row: Srs. Kathy, Annemarie, Rucia and Bernadette, Front row: Srs. Claudia, Carolyn and Marguerite

Photo by our friend Tom Butler

## Remembering the Deceased in Huehuetenango

In Guatemala, November isn't thought of as the "month of the Holy Souls." November 1<sup>st</sup> is a national holiday and has the atmosphere we'd associate with Thanksgiving and Memorial Day. As early as 4:00 AM, the streets are filled with people heading for the cemetery where their loved ones are buried. In the days before the feast, they had cleaned the graves and given them a new coat of brightly colored paint to "freshen" them up. Since our Monastery is next door to a cemetery, we hear the music of the marimba with people singing, talking, laughing and preparing to share a ready-made breakfast together. The atmosphere is joyous as they celebrate the lives of their loved ones with candles, flowers and prayers. In the many villages of the Mayan Indians, food is left on top of the tombs so that their ancestors and recently passed loved ones can share in the feast.

The churches are filled to overflowing. There are so many intentions for each Mass that the lists of intentions start to be read at least an hour before Mass is scheduled to begin. This also occurs in our chapel where many townspeople gather. In some areas flowers for children's graves are brought and laid on their tombs on November 1<sup>st</sup> and flowers for the adults on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The emphasis on celebrating the deceased on November 1<sup>st</sup> is no doubt due to the fact that All Saints is the National Holiday and all are off work. This gives everyone time to visit the cemeteries.

El Dia de Los Muertos, as it's called in Guatemala, is a fun, artistic and prayerful celebration meant to remember the dead in a positive and joyous way. It's how the oral tradition keeps family connected and alive and gives them a sense of their history and belonging.



**Above Sisters Conchy and Jenny**



**Above Sisters Jessy,  
Benedicta and Sandra**

**Right: Sister  
Ana Maria**

**Always something to  
Celebrate!**

**September—  
Independence Day**

**October—  
Feast of St. Francis**

**November— El Dia de  
Los Muertos**



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If we imitate Mary in her poverty and humility we may carry that same  
Savior in our hearts.—Saint Clare

Si imitamos a Maria en su pobreza y humildad llevaremos al mismo  
Salvador en nuestros corazones.—Santa Clara

Please Keep in touch with your Poor Clare Sisters  
with your prayer requests and other messages.

You can learn more about your Poor Clare Sisters in Guatemala by checking: <https://www.ncronline.org/preview/memphis-monastery-war-torn-guatemala>

El número de teléfono es:  
011 502 46037099

<https://www.facebook.com/hermanasclarisas.religiosas>

Prayer requests and other messages in Spanish: Hermana Maria Concepción Menjívar, OSC  
[salvador.a43@hotmail.es](mailto:salvador.a43@hotmail.es)

Prayer requests and other messages in English: Sr. Agnes Stretz, OSC  
[sr.m.agnes@gmail.com](mailto:sr.m.agnes@gmail.com)

We look forward to hearing from you!

*The sisters are not able to get mail through the postal service at this time.*



Travelers Rest

Website: <https://poorclaresc.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Poorclaresc>

Prayer Requests: [prayer@poorclaresc.com](mailto:prayer@poorclaresc.com)

Retreats: [retreat@poorclaresc.com](mailto:retreat@poorclaresc.com)

Prayer Remembrance Cards:  
[prayercard@poorclaresc.com](mailto:prayercard@poorclaresc.com)

Vocation: [vocation@poorclaresc.com](mailto:vocation@poorclaresc.com)

Information: [info@poorclaresc.com](mailto:info@poorclaresc.com)  
(for our schedule and other questions)

Development:  
[development@poorclaresc.com](mailto:development@poorclaresc.com)

We look forward to hearing from you!