

# Under His Mercy



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

Summer 2009

## How Good and Pleasant...

*"How good it is, how pleasant, where [sisters] dwell as one...  
There the Lord has lavished blessings, life for evermore." Psalm 133*



*Community picture, June, 2009*

It truly is good to dwell together in unity. When God created us, He did not create us alone. He created man and woman, and then children, and grandchildren, and in-laws, and cousins, and on and on! God created us to be in relationship, first with Him, but also with others. God is a Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are three distinct Persons, but their distinction lies in their relationships to each other. (The Father is only Father in relation to the Son.) God created us in His image and likeness, therefore, we are also relational. We have relationships with other people. The primary relationships we have are those with our families.

This summer has been one of relationships and unity for our community. We have had a lot of community time together, and it has been good and pleasant to dwell as one. The Lord has lavished blessings on us!

The month of May started with our Groundbreaking and Open House on May 2nd. It was a time of unity not only among ourselves, but also with family and friends who joined us for the celebration. Sr. Katherine shared about the event in her last letter, and there is a slideshow of pictures from the ceremony on our website (go to [www.torsisters.org/communitynews.shtml](http://www.torsisters.org/communitynews.shtml), and then click on the May 2009 link).

A few days later our four sisters from Greccio House in Gaming, Austria, came home for the summer. It is always such a blessing to have them home. In a particular way, the Postulants exuberantly welcomed Sr. Faustina, Sr.

Monica, Sr. Grace Anne, and Sr. Jean Marie home. Heather and Sarah finally met the rest of the family! Sr. Faustina will be assigned to our new house on Franciscan University's main campus and Sr. Joan Paule will be taking her place at Greccio House in Austria.



*Two sisters praying in the chapel during retreat in Chardon, Ohio*

On May 20, eighteen sisters went to Chardon, Ohio for their annual retreat. Fr. Joe Lehman, TOR, Mary Kay Lacke, and Fr. Vit Fiala, OFM were the retreat directors. It was a time of great grace and blessing for our sisters. While it was a silent retreat, the sisters sensed a unity that comes from sharing the experience and witnessing one another's desire to grow in love and intimacy with the Lord through prayer.



One of the architectural models. It was awarded "The most structurally sound" award.

A few days after the retreat ended, all 28 of us packed up to go to a Capuchin retreat house in Pennsylvania for five days of community time. What a blessing it was to all be away together! It was a time for prayer, fraternity, and relaxation. Since we are preparing for the construction of Father of Mercy Chapel and a new residence addition, we thought we would help the architects out by creating our own models of the chapel – out of marshmallows, graham crackers, and other candies. We had some creative designs! We also had evenings of recreation together including skits, a bonfire, and some Irish Dancing. It truly was a blessed time of fraternity and joy in the Lord.

When we returned from our time away, Fr. Timothy Gallagher, OMV, gave us a workshop on Ignatian Discernment of Spirits for Spiritual Consolation. Fr. Gallagher presented Ignatius' teachings in a very understandable and practical way.



Fr. Timothy sharing the wisdom of St. Ignatius with us.

After the workshop, the sisters parted ways once again. There have been many comings and goings with sisters visiting their families, speaking and being present at the summer conferences at Franciscan University, and being involved in a variety of other events. I was blessed to travel to Clearwater, Florida in June with Sr. Mary Catherine and Sr. Eliana to The Cenacle of Our Lady of Divine Providence School of Spirituality for training in spiritual direction. Sr. Mary Catherine completed the program this year, while Sr. Eliana and I began the first session. Although away from home, I was able to experience the blessing of community life there, particularly when the three of us spontaneously went outside to pray Evening Prayer while watching the manatees in Old Tampa Bay.



Sr. Thérèse Marie spoke at three High School Youth Conferences on prayer, the Eucharist, and Mary and the Saints.

Many of you are probably able to spend time with your family and friends this summer as well, whether through vacations, visits, or other opportunities. I pray that it also has been and continues to be a time of great blessing for you. It truly is good and pleasant for families and friends to dwell together in unity.

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

## Assisi Heights, Here We Come!

This fall, on the campus of Franciscan University, we will open our new mission house—Santa Chiara House of Prayer and Service. Our house will be a renovated duplex in the Assisi Heights student housing development (formerly known as “the Projects”). Sr. Faustina, Sr. Mary Rose, Sr. Maria Pio, and Sr. Eliana will be our first sisters to live on the main campus. Sr. Faustina will be working in Student Life and Sr. Maria Pio will continue doing pastoral ministry in the residence halls. Both Sr. Mary Rose and Sr. Eliana will be working in the Office of Evangelization.

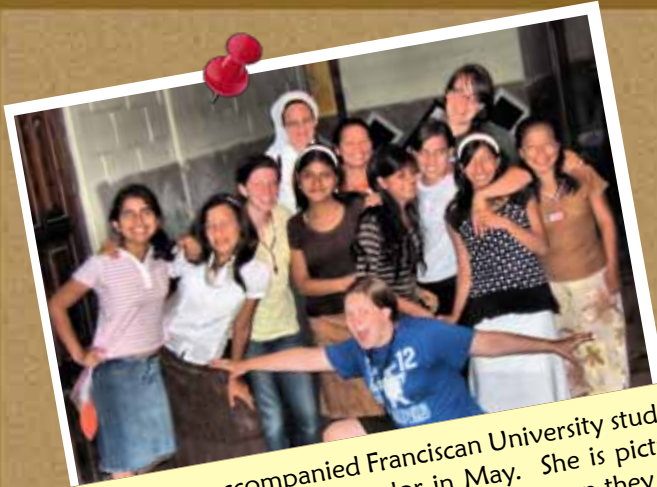
Since we were founded from the graces operative at Franciscan University, we have always felt called to be part of its mission. Although we have been ministering at the university in various ways since our founding, including our mission house on the Austrian Campus, we have not resided on the main campus. Living in Assisi Heights will allow the sisters to be more integrated into the University community and to live out our own call to renew the fullness of Catholic life through preparing the students to be agents of renewal in the Church. Sr. Mary Rose

says, “Personally I love being among the students and the atmosphere of the campus. It’s our privilege to be part of the university and help it reach its goal of being dynamically Catholic.”

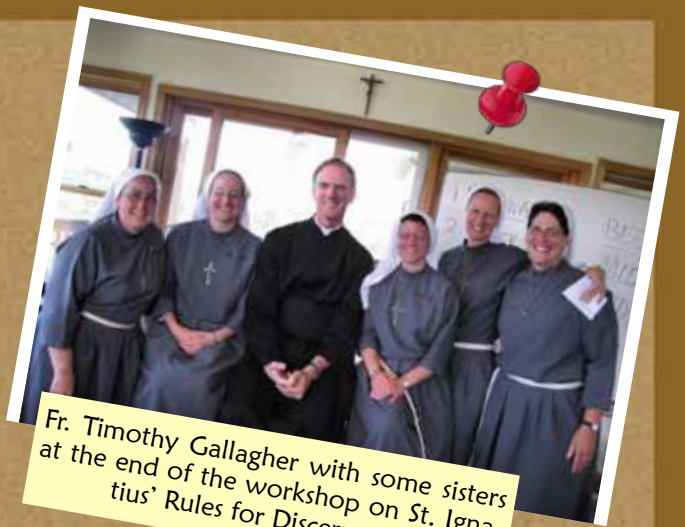
Sr. Faustina is moving to Santa Chiara from our Greccio Mission House on Franciscan University’s Austrian campus where many students participate in a study abroad program. She has experienced first hand how blessed our sisters are to “be part of the students’ life-changing experience.” Through living in Assisi Heights, we hope to bring greater continuity to the relationships our sisters have formed with the students when they return to the main campus.

Living in Assisi Heights will also enable us to help create a stronger Franciscan witness to religious life. Sr. Faustina considers it “a blessing to complement the Friars’ presence on campus as Franciscan women.”

May our sisters living in Santa Chiara be a blessing to the entire Franciscan University community!



Sr. Monica accompanied Franciscan University students on a mission trip to Ecuador in May. She is pictured here with some students and young women they ministered to.

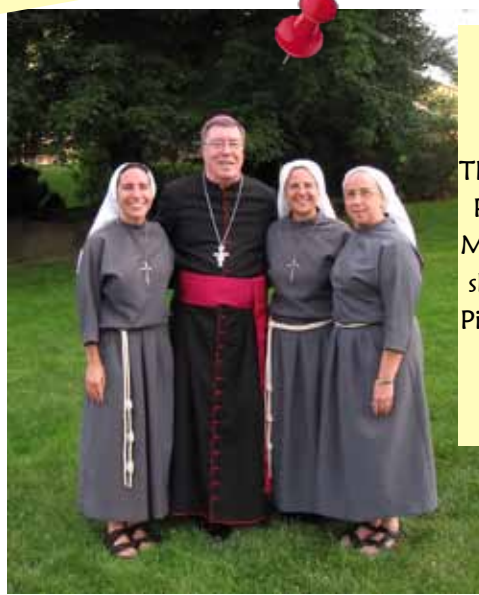


Fr. Timothy Gallagher with some sisters at the end of the workshop on St. Ignatius' Rules for Discernment.

## Begging Box

Our way of life would not be possible apart from your generosity. Thank you and may God bless you!

† We are in need of new or "gently used" desktop computers. If you are able to help us in this area, please contact Sr. Mary Catherine at (740) 544-5542 or [franciscansisters@torsisters.org](mailto:franciscansisters@torsisters.org)



Bishop Robert Baker received the Shepherd's Award from Franciscan University this summer. He is pictured here with Sr. Thérèse Marie, Sr. Maria Teresa, and Sr. Maria Pio. Bishop Baker was pastor at Sr. Thérèse Marie's home parish in Jacksonville, FL when she was growing up. He later was Sr. Maria Pio's bishop in the Diocese of Charleston, SC. He is currently Bishop of Birmingham, AL where Sr. Maria Teresa is from.

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](mailto:vocations@torsisters.org)

Vocation Discernment Retreat  
September 4-6, 2009  
(See website for future dates)



More pictures from our community time together! Left: Another possible model of Father of Mercy Chapel. Below: Sisters praising the Lord!



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*Check out*

*www.torsisters.org\communitynews.shtml*  
*for monthly community news and pictures*

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## How Can I Love You in Return?

On April 21, 2009 I had the opportunity to go to The Cenacle of Our Lady of Divine Providence in Clearwater, Florida for a 30 day retreat. The Lord blessed me with many graces that will continue to bear fruit as I grow in the religious life. One day, towards the end of my retreat, I asked the Lord, "How can I love you in return?" As I reflected over the past 30 days, I recognized that I had gained a deeper sense of the Lord's love for me as a beloved daughter of the Father, and I was moved to ask Him how I am to return such a great gift of love. I sensed the simple words of faithfulness and trust. Faithfulness to what God is asking of me through my community and the way of life I have chosen to live, and trust that He will never give me more than I am able to handle. With God I am never alone. I work with Him in the plan that He has for my life. I have come to realize that God has a special and unique plan for each one of us in His redeeming work of creation.



*House of Prayer Chapel at the Cenacle  
of our Lady of Divine Providence.*

Only through God's grace can I faithfully live out the mission to which God has called me. The Lord has opened my eyes to see the many gifts He has given me. If I surrender these gifts to Him each day, He will show me how I am to use them, holding nothing back for myself. Each morning I go before the Blessed Sacrament and offer God all the gifts He has given to me so that my hands might be empty to receive the gifts I will need for that day. Each day brings about new joys, graces, blessings, sorrows, trials, and sufferings. My 30 day retreat has helped me recognize God's providential care in my life, and that all good things come from Him, who first loved me. Entrusting my life into the hands of God may mean that I am led on paths unknown, but I know that all good gifts come from God, even the gift to believe in His providential care for me. I trust that God will answer my prayer when I pray, "Lord, help my unbelief!"

Sr. Carrie Ann McKeown, T.O.R.