



Reflections Reflections

...on my first year

By Joann Heimiller

One of my missionary brothers recently asked me about my thoughts on my first year as a missionary. I sat there in silence because I hadn't really reflected about my first year – it has gone by so fast. Two things I know:

I am where God wants me to be, and this community of men and women have become my family.

For those of you who don't know me, I am the former district manager of Hancock Fabrics. I started working for Hancock Fabrics as a sales consultant in the Northern Virginia area in 1984. I managed several stores in the Northern Virginia and Richmond, Va. area. The opportunity arose to move back "home" with the opening of a Hancock store in Tonawanda. The rest, they say, is history – my involvement started as a FOSL and Associate Lay Servant of Divine Mercy with St. Luke's. The Lord has been calling me to become a missionary for several years; I just wasn't listening until the day I lost my job with Hancock Fabrics due to a restructuring process...that day was January 23rd, 2006. On February 1st, 2006 I moved to the Mission and on April 23rd, 2006 I made my simple promises as a Lay Missionary of Divine Mercy. I saw the hand of God in all of that – His protection, His love, and His mercy.

I now reside at the Queen of Peace House with two other missionaries: Elaine Schmitt and Teresa Mayer. As a women's residence, it also is the home of three other women. My duties are many and varied (as are all the missionaries). I work in the sacristy on a daily basis, shuttle a group of children to Kolbe Catholic School on a daily basis, help set up for Generations of Faith program, to name a few duties. I am part of the team that accompanies the Voices of Mercy on ministry to sell the CD's and other religious articles. That is a double joy for me as it allows me not only to meet some very beautiful people at the ministry but it also allows me to either hear Amy and Norm speak or to participate in a healing mass.

The work is plentiful, the hours long, but the rewards are great. Sharing a smile, word of encouragement, a hug with someone means just as much to me (if not more) as to he or she with whom I am sharing it. It is not about what can you do for me, but what can I do for you. I could not do this work or live here without God's love, protection, and mercy. I think that's the greatest lesson I've learned during the year.

In a message to "Anne" (a "Lay Apostle" whose book I am now reading) received from Jesus, "So today, concentrate on My continual presence. Ask Me what I would like you to do. Ask Me what words I would like you to use. Then listen to My answer. My Spirit will speak to you and you will hear the words, resting upon your soul."

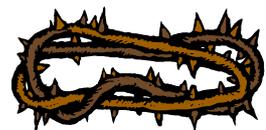
NORB SAYS SO...!

I call this a "Letter to Jesus":

"What do you see when you look up at the cross? Well, when I do I see a man, a real man, not a fake one, who also happens to be my hero, because He gave up so much. What Jesus, my brother, did, what he endured...I could never compare it to what I may endure, no matter how painful. All I have to do is look up at the cross and see the suffering that He went through and realize that my pain can't compare to His sacrifice. I look up at His loving and caring face, and consider that the world calls Him a selfish man. How wrong they are! When He gave His life for you and me He wasn't selfish; He showed us true love, the greater love. He paid the price for our sins with His life. I say to the world, stop calling my savior selfish; you have no right to.

So I thank you, Jesus, my loving brother, and I pray you can show me how to love You as much as You love me. This letter comes from my heart. And most of all, Jesus, I love that no matter what we do or say, You still love all of us."

Your Servant,
Norbert Bentkowski



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