



NEWSLETTER VOL. 1 No. 1 WINTER 2012

With this publication, the Franciscan Common Venture (FCV) begins an initiative to provide enhanced communication with its member communities, the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist (FSE), the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA), the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi (OSF), and the Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis (TSSF) and their affiliates, associates, apprentices and companions. The goal is to share current news and to more deeply realize the relational dimension of our mission that

- fosters a deeper understanding of becoming Franciscan in the 21st century,
- deepens the experience of Global Church,
- opens new understanding and experiences of equi-cultural relationships, and
- supports and encourages mutual efforts to effect systemic change.

FRANCISCAN COMMON VENTURE EVALUATES AND CONTINUES WITH VIGOR

The Common Venture Core Group met for its second biannual meeting in Meriden, CT on December 1-4, 2011. This meeting was the first in which two TSSFs were present via Skype, making more effective the relational dimension of our discussions through the capacity to discern meaning in one another's presence.



Primary on its agenda was the completion of an evaluation of the goals and activities of the last five years in light of the mission stated above. Nearly 40 individuals from our four communities were involved in the evaluation through written response and dialogue. This was the second evaluation undertaken since the origin of the FCV in 1998. Overwhelmingly, the responses indicated that our communities are experiencing deeper mutuality, solidarity, and conversion by living, planning and learning together. We are highly motivated to continue this Franciscan relationship for the sake of the church and God's mission that we share.

PLAN AND DIRECTION FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE YEARS

Moving forward will entail the continuation of projects we have begun and new ways of implementing our mission. Specifically, this means that

- ❖ We will complete the implementation of the **Hilton Fund for Sisters grant for the education of English speaking sisters in Cameroon**. We are now in the third year of the grant. With this year's allocation of funds, a total of 25 Sisters are now receiving the education that is so urgently needed for the development and service of ministries under the auspices of these communities. Our expectation is to apply for a renewal of this grant of \$125,000 in order to continue to develop the professional capacities of sisters in Cameroon.



- ❖ FCV received a \$250,000 grant from The Rauenhorst Foundation in 2010 for the purpose of building a convent and a student hostel for young women near Buea University in Buea. The convent is now being used by TSSF while construction of the student hostel is in progress at the present time. The hope is that the hostel will be available for student residency in 2013.

- ❖ We will assist in establishing a **Development Office for the TSSF in Cameroon** with the help of Sister Joyce Meyer, PBVM, former Executive Director of the Hilton Fund for Sisters. Sr. Joyce indicates that she is very happy and excited to be asked to collaborate with the FCV in this project. She has been in touch with Sr. Hedwig Vinyo TSSF concerning expectations and will use this as a guide for her work. Her plan is to leave for Cameroon around May 24, 2012 and stay until the end of July. Sr. Joyce will be taking American ideas but wants to “Africanize” them to the local situation in Cameroon.
- ❖ Sisters Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA and Marcia Lunz, OSF were recommended as co-facilitators of the **TSSF General Chapter in Brixen, Italy in 2013**. Sr. Alexine Munteh, TSSF was affirmed to be a part of the chapter facilitation team. The emphasis for the chapter is not yet known, but a survey has been sent to the members to assist in setting the direction of congregation.
- ❖ The **Cultural Audit** which all of our communities experienced in 2007-2009 will be repeated for the TSSF as part of the preparation for the General and Provincial Chapters. It will be framed in a larger picture of German, Bolivian, and African tribal history of the congregation. The first presentation given by Rudy Vela SM and Sister Frances Cunningham SSSF in April 2007 gave the TSSF a taste of something they valued, but there was not sufficient time to go deeply into the concepts at that time.
- ❖ In November 2011 through mid-January 2012, three representatives of the FCV - Sister Marcia Lunz, OSF, Sister Georgia Christensen, FSPA and Lesley Stugelmayer (counselor from Viterbo University) were presenters and facilitators for the first-ever **Program of ongoing formation for professed Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis at La Verna Centre in Bamenda, Cameroon**. It was based on the theme of *Be transformed through the renewal of your mind*. (Romans 12:2) From November 1 to December 13, Sr. Marcia Lunz OSF was in Cameroon working with 13 TSSF sisters on a Renewal Program. She spent four weeks in Bamenda at the La Verna Spirituality Centre, and then one week in Shisong to attend the closing celebrations of the 75th Anniversary of TSSF presence in Cameroon. She also spent time interviewing 12 TSSF sisters for the purpose of writing their biographies. Sr. Marcia adds: “Let me take this opportunity to thank you for your prayerful support during those six weeks. The Spirit was truly present, and I was blessed with good health and safe travel. It was a gift and a grace to be an OSF presence among the Tertiary Sisters.” Sister Georgia Christensen continued with the renewal program from mid-December to mid-January, giving presentations on transition and change, ageing and sage-ing gracefully, and reflections on the vows. Lesley Stugelmayer met with sisters individually for conversations about their personal experiences of religious life and their aspirations for ongoing personal growth. FCV has committed to continuing this work in the coming year at a similar event and by providing presenters for a workshop for Temporary Professed Sisters in the summer of 2012.



- ❖ Sister Jean Moore, FSPA gave a workshop in **Franciscan Spirituality for the Bolivian TSSF** in January 2010. FCV will continue to support ongoing formation in Franciscan spirituality in Bolivia in the future. The German sisters in Bolivia are aging and the Bolivian sisters are younger. “They need to learn to journey together in a sister-to-sister

relationship," Sister Maria Theresia, Superior General, noted, "Sr. Jean's work was a wonderful start and all were very happy. Franciscan spirituality is a continuing need for the leadership in Bolivia."

- ❖ CYMA is the name of a software program that was donated and installed in the Shisong Cardiac Centre in the spring of 2010 through the generosity of the CYMA company and the expert technological leadership of Sister Kieran Foley, FSE and her team. The purpose is to manage the center's chart of accounts. A second phase of installation of computers and the CYMA software will be extended to Njinikom and Bafut in the spring of 2012. This project greatly enhances the ability for financial accountability.



UPDATES FROM TSSF STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE U.S.



All of the TSSF studying the U.S. are making wonderful progress on their degree programs.

Sr. Alexine is expecting to defend her doctoral dissertation proposal at the end of January or February 2012. She is considering a number of sites for her year's internship in 2013. Sr. Alexine proudly shared with the group her master's degree diploma which was awarded with honors in the summer of 2011.

With the next quarter, Sr. Marie Therese hopes to get the required courses and finish coursework for her master's degree by the end of summer 2012. Then she would focus on writing her thesis for an estimated completion date by December 2012 or early 2013.



Sr. Kathleen invited everyone to her graduation on May 11, 2012. Sr. Georgia noted that Sr. Kathleen took a class at Viterbo. Her instructor there has become a part of the Friends of Cameroon and traveled with Sr. Kathleen to Cameroon in December/January to assess computer networking needs among the TSSF hospitals. The instructor is thinking of developing experiential models for some of her own students at Viterbo and would like to take students to Cameroon to learn more in Cameroon.

Sr. Virgilia stated that she had dropped a subject when she first came to the U.S. She recently earned ethics class credits by exam rather than by taking the class. Sr. Virgilia is expecting to graduate with her classmates in May 2012 and then complete the course requirements at the end of summer 2012.



TSSF CELEBRATE CLOSING OF 75TH ANNIVERSARY IN CAMEROON

(from the account written by Sister Eva-Maria Kaufhold TSSF)

The jubilee year is over now and we are back to normal every day life. It was a good year for all of us! We had created a special jubilee prayer, which all the sisters prayed every day. Throughout the year we had 24 hours adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament. All sisters took part so that at every moment of the day one of us was praying for the intentions of the Province and Congregation.

We made a pilgrimage in April 2011 in honour of our pioneer sisters, who had to do the last part of the journey on foot because of a broken down bridge which did not allow the car to continue. Our pioneer sisters walked for about 17 hours. We only did the last 33 km of about 12 hours.

In addition, in all parishes, where our sisters are working, a thanksgiving mass was celebrated with the parishioners -- an occasion for all to become aware of all the services rendered by our sisters. The way of celebrating was left to the different parishes. It offered also the possibility to reflect, to express recognition and gratitude, to review the past, to reconcile, throw away old burdens and to start anew.

