

December, 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

Pope Francis has often shared that the weak and vulnerable are most valuable in God's eyes. Unfortunately, in our society they may not be valued and are, consequently, underserved. The Sisters of Mother of God Monastery are involved in three ministries that focus on helping the weak and vulnerable to heal and become whole by satisfying basic needs and leading them into a deeper relationship with God.

Sister Charles Palm has been ministering to the Native Americans on the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation near Fort Thompson, SD for thirty-three years. Over the years, she has witnessed that poverty is the major problem on the reservation. Young girls are vulnerable to sex trafficking and abuse because they are poor, hungry and have low self-esteem. I believe that if the basic needs of the reservation's most vulnerable are met, progress can be made for them to complete their education, find employment and live a productive life.

Low income, low self-esteem and lack of faith can often describe the victims of sexual abuse. An organization to support men and women that have been sexually abused has been formed in the Watertown area. The mission of *Hope in God* is to lead people, especially those wounded by child sexual abuse and sexual assault, into a thriving relationship with Jesus Christ. Weekend retreats for survivors are held annually at Joy Ranch near Watertown and several of our sisters help facilitate them. The retreats consist of bible study, meditative art, contemplative writing, prayer and witness. In February, *Hope in God's* second weekend retreat will be held and the number of participants continues to grow.

*Hope in God* Circle Groups have been formed and meet weekly to support each other and pray together. One group meets at Mother of God Monastery. Many of the survivors are thirsting for a deeper relationship with God and have been drawn to the monastery's program entitled, *Journey into Spiritual Growth*. A brochure describing the program is enclosed in this mailing. Briefly stated, it is an eight-month program that includes directed retreats, daily personal prayer, assigned scripture reflections, spiritual direction and personal growth workshops. The goal of the *Journey* program is to enter into a conversion experience and to help lead others to Christ.

All three ministries are serving low income individuals who are building self-esteem and growing in their faith. Each ministry, however, is in need of funding. Resources to keep the food pantry stocked on the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation are essential. Scholarships for the sexually abused to attend the *Hope in God* weekend retreats would provide healing for those who cannot afford the cost of the

retreat. And, finally, scholarships to participate in the *Journey into Spiritual Growth* program would give additional healing opportunities to those individuals who cannot meet the expense of the program.

The people we serve in these ministries are valuable in God's eyes and in our eyes. Your prayers and financial support will give them a tremendous lift in their faith and in their lives. The enclosed card will allow you to select which ministry or ministries you would like to support.

As a community, we promise that we will pray for you. We wish you and your family a very blessed Christmas and much peace and happiness in the New Year.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terri Hoffman, OSB". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Sister Terri Hoffman, OSB  
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