



JOURNEY

December 2006

We wish to emphasize inclusiveness and kinship...to serve others in common journey... to honor fellow-pilgrims in struggles and hopes...to risk toward the possibility, passion and compassion of community—regardless of religious belief, age, gender, race, economic circumstances, or personal orientation...to include the poor and the outcast...to learn from those who choose to share community with us...to celebrate exuberantly in solidarity.

We welcome you to join us on the journey



Our Life Together

Fr. Tom

MAJOR CHANGES...AND A CELEBRATION

As we continue in the daily hurly-burly in preparation for the pending **Children's Christmas Party for 400 kids on December 16th**, I wish to share with you some rather **"historic" changes** in our Community...changes that are difficult, yet necessary... emotional, yet worthy of great gratitude and celebration. In this **Season of Birth**, we sense that we are being called to **Re-Birth**. **I hope that you will read all of this, as you are our Companions.**

At a special **Board of Trustees** meeting recently, I asked the members to consider some conclusions I had reached in my own mind and

heart, and then to proceed with whatever action seemed most realistic and necessary in **their** own minds and hearts.

I discussed the facts and figures of the research I had done over the past many months: the continuing struggle, throughout the year, to raise funds for the work and ministry [due, in part, to the immense increase in the number of non-profit organizations over the past few years]...the huge impact that skyrocketing utility rates are having on our monthly expenses...the need, I think, for emphasis on our most important work [the children]...and, finally, a hope of involving “future Companions” into our efforts and spirit.

A *long* and difficult discussion followed—full of brainstorming and passionate memories/emotions—and, to be succinct, some hard decisions were proposed and approved:

1) to divest O.C.W. of the Tyler **Resident-Houses**, which we can no longer adequately finance [and for which we have been unable to pay mortgages since August]; some of the Houses have been quickly purchased by **Community members**, and others will go through the legal “closing” process by the middle of January, 2007; we have aided all other Resident-Companions in finding new places of residence.

2) **Saturday, December 30, 2006**: We will celebrate the last Mass at **St. Dismas House**, followed by a **festive celebration** of our Community’s life in that sacred place; starting at **5:00 p.m.**, we will share **memories, music, food, emotions**, and **gratitude**...and end with a Blessing of the property for the new Companions who have purchased it. **WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US FOR THIS IMPORTANT CELEBRATION!**

3) We will **continue** Community celebrations at **Sanctuary** and in various **private homes** and **public places** in the future.

4) In the week following the Children’s Christmas Party, we will move the **Food Pantry** to a new location, donated by one of our Servant-Leaders... and we will **continue** to provide food to the poor.

5) We will **continue** to provide whatever aid and support we can to the new “**Amigas**” program, which organizes and trains low-income folks for employment and/or education.

6) We will **continue** to offer the many other daily services—counseling, visitation, presence, etc.—to those who contact us regarding their personal situations...whether those include AIDS, poverty, immigration, spiritual struggles, Recovery, marital differences, medical problems, or any other crossroads of life’s journey.

7) We will, of course, maintain—and **expand**—our year-long efforts for the **Annual Children’s Christmas Party**...that *wondrous* event which draws interest and support from Companions throughout the country.

So...

we ask, again, for the immense kindness that you continue to offer us... your **prayers**, your **ideas and thoughts**, your **support**.

For all that you *have* offered to us, we send our **thanks**.

Please join us—in presence or in spirit—on **December 30th**.

Please join us in the Stable on **December 25th**, as we remember our beckoning to re-birth.

May your holydays be filled with *grace*, *hope*, and *love*.....

Love & Blessings,

Fr. Tom

Office: 903-595-3191

Cell: 903-521-0490 journey-ocw@earthlink.net

A great gift for others (or yourself!):
The Poster of "To Follow the Christ":
www.orderofchristianworkers.org/pages/5/index.htm

DID YOU KNOW?

...That the average number of children and adults living in Community ("Resident-Companions") in 2006 was **45** [including *lots* of kids]

...That our Food Pantry distributed over **20,000** pounds of food in 2005...and we continue to deliver food boxes to the two children's clinics for indigent families [Texas is the "**hungriest**" state in the Union (the most people going without food daily)]

...That **no one** in O.C.W. has ever been paid a salary or "perks" for this work and ministry

...That our only means of gaining financial support has always been **begging**

...That it would be very helpful to us (and to *you*, we hope!) in terms of sending these emails to you if you would include these two OCW mailing addresses in your **EMAIL ADDRESS BOOK**:
journey-ocw@earthlink.net and ocwjourney@yahoo.com.

...That we would *love* to offer prayers of gratitude on your **birth and/or anniversary dates**; simply email us the specifics

...That you can visit the **entire O.C.W. website** by going to:
<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/pages/1/index.htm>

✠ *Your Prayers Are Asked* ✠

✠ For those who struggle through continuing medical, surgical, and spiritual processes: Wanda, Athalene, Sam, Ryann, Sr. Mary Joseph, Br. Michael, Maya [6 years old], Norma, Lucy ✠ Those courageously in recovery of addictions ✠ Those living with HIV/AIDS ✠ Those who caretake others ✠ Those adults and children who have no home ✠ Those involved in wars throughout the world ✠ Those struggling to transform their lives within the criminal justice system ✠ Our brothers and sisters at Walker House ✠ The women and children at the Crisis Center ✠ The patients, families, and staff at Women's and Pediatric Clinics ✠ The children who are living in poverty and malnutrition, lacking medical care ✠ Those "undocumented" brothers, sisters, and children who share our work and lives ✠ Those who grieve various losses in their lives ✠ Those who care for the children in families, foster care, and institutions ✠ Those who suffer from fear, hate, and prejudice ✠ The families of those who have died from violence, as well as those who are being executed daily ✠ Those who struggle against the rape of Creation ✠ Servant-Leaders and Companions who live in solidarity with OCW throughout the country ✠ Those who give us continuing models of Christ-work: Andre House (Phoenix), Casa Maria (Tucson), Starcross Community (California), and the many Catholic Worker Houses (both Catholic and Roman Catholic) throughout the US and world ✠ Peacemakers and Holy Fools....



ARE YOU IN THE PICTURE(S)?

Our PHOTO-SHARING WEBSITE [over 200 pictures!]
is **really easy to use**: Just go to www.flickr.com/photos/ocw
take a look...and (we hope) send us photos to **add** to it.
The albums ("sets") are listed;
once in a "set," simply put your cursor over a specific picture,
and it will show you the title of the picture...
if you wish, you can click on a picture to enlarge it.
Another great option within an album/"set" is to click on "view as
slideshow"....and then you'll get a timed sequence of the photos

in that "set"!

So, please **send us photos!**

For email, send to journey-ocw@earthlink.net;

by postal mail, send to **OCW, P.O. Box 4155, Tyler, TX 75712-4155.**

Prayers of Gratitude

FOR THOSE COMPANIONS WHO HAVE SO KINDLY OFFERED
THEIR SUPPORT (FINANCIAL and/or LABOR) TO THIS WORK AND MINISTRY:

This color denotes new contributors in 2006

TYLER: Sr. Jane & Leo B.—David & Joan H.—Carole C.—Lawrence A.—Judy D.—Liza E.—Elihu E.—Kathy F.—Belinda G.—Louis G.—Br. Robert H.—Michael C.—Edna H.—Ginny H. & Jeff—Sr. Maria & Fr. Tom—Paul K.—R.S. & Carole K.—Sr. Mary Ann—Kimberly M.—Sandy M.—Jim & Charlette M.—Celia P. & Jeff B.—Leon & Cristina R.—Patrick S.—Donna S.—Lou Anne S.—Brenda M.—Sr. Elise & Ken C.—Sherry V.—Karen W.—Kerry S.—Betty R.—St. Dismas Resident-Companions—Claudia & Otis C.—Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

TEXAS: Katy K. (Arlington)—Andrea & Don C. (Athens)—Br. Charles & Sherry (Austin)—Alice P. (Austin)—Bill S. (Austin)—William W. (Austin)—Journey Faith Community (Austin)—Lucille S. (Big Sandy)—James C. (Boerne)—Cheryl & Wayne C. (Bullard)—Will C. (Dallas)—Les & Susan H. (Dallas)—Terry & Pam C. (Dallas)—Alan & Patsy C. (Dallas)—George & Paige L. (Dallas)—Richard M. (Dallas)—Damon & Jennifer S. (Dallas)—John & Susan B. (Elgin)—Linda W. (Ft. Worth)—Carole J. (Ft. Worth)—Eloise M. (Jacksonville)—George L. (Kingsville)—John & Dirje S. (Larue)—Deana B. (Longview)—Betty W. (Murchison)—Bryant & Dinah S. (Palestine)—Margaret G. (Quitman)—Bud & Carol C. (Troup)—Tina & Brian K. (Whitehouse)—Elizabeth W. (Houston)

NATIONAL: Jerry & Ada G. (AL)—Teri B. (AL)—Renee M. (AL)—Robert S. (AL)—Fredda B. (AL)—Don & Mary Ann F. (AR)—Tom C. (AR)—Peter & Danielle L. (CA)—Marla & Hartshorn M. (CA)—Alice H. (CA)—Ed W. (CA)—Burr C. (CA)—James & Carol B. (CA)—Steve & Karen L. (CO)—Bob B. (CO)—Bill & Mindi G. (D.C.)—John O. (DC)—Pamela G. (DC)—Greg H. (FL)—Jan B. (FL)—Tim H. (FL)—John L. (GA)—Jack S. (GA)—Jack H. (GA)—John W. (GA)—Jeanie R. (GA)—Julian C. (IL)—Tom S. (IL)—Todd C. (IN)—Bill S. (IN)—Tom & Juli S. (IN)—Debbie T. (IN)—Jo & Mark C. (IN)—Tony & Sherrie (IN)—Arnold B. (IN)—Jim & Joanne G. (IN)—Paul & Mary Ellen H. (IN)—Maynard & Barbara R. (IN)—Ed & Suzanne C. (IN)—Carrie & David C. (IN)—Matt C. (IN)—Brian R. (IN)—Peter & Jayne J. (IN)—Amelia J. (IN)—Phil H. (KS)—Will H. (KY)—Dave C. (KY)—Glenn K. (LA)—David L. (MD)—Br. Michael & Debbie (ME)—Glenn & Diane G. (MI)—First Presbyterian/Elk Rapids (MI)—Judi & Jim Y. (MI)—Lee & John M. (MI)—Bill B. (MI)—Margaret H. (MO)—Richard & Jacque H. (MO)—Dale W. (MO)—Arthur W. (MO)—David & Marcia B. (NC)—Bob & Jane A. (NJ)—Laura C. (NY)—Marli S. (NY)—Neal C. & Roger C. (OH)—Tom & Betty N. (OH)—Mike D. (OH)—Pilgrim Church/Toledo (OH)—Elizabeth S. (OR)—Murphy T. (TN)—Warren & Dorothy M. (VA)—James M. (VA)

FOREIGN: Bill M. (Canada)

Anonymous donors (nationwide)

DONORS TO THE

ANNUAL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Hmmmm....

This morning I received an email from my cousin Emily telling me that her brother Bob died yesterday.

Bob, who was a couple of years older than I am, had lived his entire life in Kent, Connecticut where his father, my father's brother, taught Spanish and was the wrestling and crew coach at Kent School, a boys' boarding school that has since gone co-ed.

Bob raises a bunch of issues and questions that I doubt will be resolved in my lifetime.

He was retarded. Or that is the label the world gave to him. Something—I suppose in his brain—failed to develop so he could perform the cognitive chores required for being admitted to the prized precincts—like Kent School.

So it was somewhat awkward—for me, I never got any indication that it was for Bob—when I arrived from the Philippines at 13 years old to become a student at Kent. If it was any consolation for him when I flunked out two years later I never knew it.

All these years later we have developed a notion about people like Bob—other-abled—which seems perhaps awkward and too politically correct, but in Bob's case was quite accurate.

He was skilled and at home in the outdoors. He knew his way around the woods and wildlife of northwestern Connecticut like Daniel Boone knew Kentucky.

I first met Bob at Emily's wedding when I was 13. What struck me about him was his enthusiasm at meeting a new cousin. That must have been one of the tip-offs for people that Bob was different, his lack of holding back, protecting himself until he found out whether you were trustworthy.

Over the years I have known other people who were retarded—or different, or other-abled—and that eagerness to embrace a new person has often been the first thing I was aware—and wary—of. They seem to lack a filter that we more sophisticated people have, that makes us hold back until the other person tips his hand.

Because I left Kent when I was 15, I didn't see Bob again for nearly 50 years. I decided to brave facing into my adolescent failure and attend the 45th reunion of the class I didn't graduate with. It was a kind of redemption for me, a group of aging men, no longer on the make, reflecting on decades of achievement that now had begun to take a back seat to wonder and gratitude for the chance to connect rather than compete.

The second day, after listening to a classmate, who had been a UN nuclear weapons inspector in Iraq, explain why he was certain – this was before we invaded – Saddam had no effective weapons, as I walked across

the common, Bob appeared.

His over-60 smile and welcome was as effusive as it had been 50 years earlier. He asked me about my sisters and told me about his wife and step-daughter. He proudly showed me around the campus, now so much more impressive than when I had been a student.

You might have thought he was the headmaster.

One of the debates among us right now has to do with whether the mind is simply a product of the chemistry in the brain. Does kindness and openness, radical hospitality, come from the architecture of the brain? Or is there some reality that is subtle, non-material, that influences human intercourse?

It may be that Bob's brilliance in nature and uncommon hospitality was his brain's compensation for his lack of what we call intellectual capacity. Or it may be some other dimension that—were we to prize it—could curb our inability to see the kin in each other.

[Blayney Colmore]

www.CommunityPilgrimage.org

*Have you considered what the possibilities might be
for your
parish or church or community?*

Reminders

What would you gain if you were to win the whole world but lose your *self* in the process? [Jesus of Nazareth]

This is the kind of fast I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I am interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families.... [Isaiah 58]

Ask me not where I live or what I like to eat... Ask me what I'm living for, and what I think is keeping me from living fully for that. [Thomas Merton]

Is it your spiritual practice—*each day*—to offer *gratitude* for the blessings of your life?

Information & Schedule

DONATIONS to the **Order of Christian Workers** are tax-deductible within the law.

OUR MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 4155, Tyler, TX 75712-4155

OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS: journey-ocw@tearthlink.net

OUR INTERNET ADDRESS: www.OrderOfChristianWorkers.org

OFFICE/FR. TOM/SR. MARIA/SANCTUARY: 903-595-3191; fax 903-595-5183

OUR COMMUNITY SCHEDULE:

All activities are normally at **St. Dismas House**, 1601 N. Bois d'Arc, Tyler, TX; on **Fridays**, we gather for Mass and Healing Rite at **6:30 p.m.**, then we have a Community Supper at **7:15**; we also *celebrate* a lot (birthdays, holidays, holydays, child/adult accomplishments, special events, etc.)

In the summer we have many additional activities at **Sanctuary** because the location affords the Community children (and guests) a better opportunity to play and swim.

If you have questions about any current schedule, please contact us.

HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUPS meet twice each week. For information, please call the SHRET office at 903-597-7558.

WILDWOOD COFFEEHOUSE (Proceeds to various non-profit organizations)

Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship; for schedule/further info:

www.geocities.com/uutylertx/wildwood.html

BIRTHDAY AND/OR ANNIVERSARY DATES (year not important!): We'd love to offer prayers on those special days. Please send to journey-ocw@tearthlink.net, or by postal mail.

PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians & Gays) Further information at 903-330-8901; email address is: pflageasttexas@yahoo.com; mailing address: East Texas PFLAG, P. O. Box 130703, Tyler, TX 75713-0703.

QUICK-LINKS FOR THE O.C.W. WEBSITE

Home Page:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/pages/1/index.htm>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/faqs.html>

O.C.W. history:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/ourhistory.html>

Our work and ministry:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/agivenday.html>

The Annual Children's Christmas Party [for 400 kids]:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/thechildren.html>

Journey monthly newsletters:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/newsphotos/newsletters.html>

Directions & Map to find us:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/newsphotos/schedulesdirections.html>

Publications [including some free books!]:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/publications.html>

The “To Follow the Christ” Poster:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/theposter.html>

“Community Pilgrimage” program:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/gatherings.html>

LINKS Page:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/links.html>

Our Prayer List:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/prayers.html>

O.C.W. Memorials Page:

<http://www.orderofchristianworkers.org/aboutus/memorials.html>

JOURNEY

is a monthly expression of the ministry, work, and reflections of the
Companions of the

Order of Christian Workers,

an ecumenical, non-denominational and charitable gathering of
God's children.

Letters or other contributions are always welcome

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St. Dismas House (Mother House) 1601 N. Bois d'Arc, Tyler, TX 75702

MaryHouse

St. Clare House

St. Gandhi House

St. Dorothy Day House

St. Peter Maurin House

St. Oscar Romero House

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