



**Order of Christian Workers**

## *JOURNEY*



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*

**JUNE 2008**

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***Dear Ones,***

*The past several weeks have been filled with death, life, and work—indicative, it seems, of these past fifteen years in Tyler [May 9, 1993]...and so I hope you will read the following...and allow me to start with a precious part of these fifteen years:*

**Kristy**

**May 3, 1989-May 30, 2008**



In our previous *Journey* newsletter in March, I wrote “Special Prayers are asked for an 18-year-old young woman whom we have known since she was a wee lass...born with HIV/AIDS...struggling with depression/isolation; what a lovely person she is...and we know you’ll carry her in your heart....”

I know that many of you did that for her.

Since that time, I’ve spent many hours with her, as her health continued to decline—but with occasional and sudden “up-turns”—until, of course, I would receive another call that she was back in the hospital.

As weeks became months, it was clear to me—and to her—that she had simply given up on the possibility of living, and we talked very directly about the consequences of her actions; I told her that I could certainly not offer any “magic” and/or hope if she chose a path through more illness and finally death [she would turn her face into the pillow when we spoke of it all, then look back at me]...and I also told her that I had no intent to “leave” her, regardless of what may happen: “I will honor you—just as I’ve loved you since you were four-years-old—and nothing changes that.”

I wanted her to have some sudden change of heart...some perception of possibility, some indication that she could choose to live...and I knew that she wouldn’t, even as she feared death.

About three weeks ago, she was admitted to hospice, and the response of family and lifelong friends has been breathtaking: an endless vigil of presence, unbroken through all days and nights.

However any of us may “judge” Kristy—one way or another—on her ultimate decision, I know that it was from *her* heart and soul. She had, indeed, known delight and sassiness in her childhood [in one of the pictures I took of her, above, she had shown up for the Annual Children’s Christmas Party in her new cheerleading outfit...and showed us how a cheer is *really* done]; and yet, as her adolescence arrived, her spirit changed.

As a group of us said the Litany in the last days...and as Kristy died quietly in the arms of her best friend on Friday at 11:05 a.m., I knew that she was finally rested from years of struggle and pain. My last words to her were my daily “I love you...always have, always will,” and we looked at each other a last time.

Tomorrow we will bury her, beside her mother...and I will cry for our wee lass, in both grief and joy. Rest eternally, sweetheart.



## Jackson Lee Romanowski



joined our life together [after a *long* labor, and weighing in at 8 pounds, one ounce] on **May 25, 2008**, in Northampton, Massachusetts, son of **Jenny** and **Steve**, longtime Companions of O.C.W.

Oh, Jack, we can't wait to hold you in our arms...and watch you grow and flourish!



## LOTS of hard work!

As you can see



we've been doing some *serious* reconfigurations and reconstruction [about three months' worth] on the interiors of **Hosanna House**, **Grace House**, and **Agapé House** at Sanctuary...all of it aimed at providing better and wider use of the facilities, especially in terms of residence space.

In Hosanna, the Community Room/Chapel will remain essentially the same [for children's/families' programs and activities], but the bedrooms/baths have been redesigned to allow overnight space for healthcare workers who travel long distances to work at the large medical centers in Tyler; changes in Grace and Agapé allow for greater options in residency.

The *next* project is Esperance House...and then *exterior* work on *all* of the buildings...right now, though, we're too tired to think of all that! But we will keep you informed of the progress...and hope you come to visit!!!!

**THANKS TO ALL OF YOU** who continue to donate funds and time for all of our work, gas, supplies, and hope....



## REMEMBER THIS MAN?



Each year, Bob [in New Jersey] rides the number of miles of his current age—and asks O.C.W. Companions to “**Match Bob’s Miles**” with **donations to the Order** [now *that’s* the kind of exercise we support!]. So...in his mid-sixties, he’s ready to challenge us again...and there will be more news of this in an email before long.



As always, know that we carry you in our hearts.

Love & Blessings,

*Fr. Tom*

**A great gift for others (or yourself!):**

The poster of

**“To Follow the Christ”**

[over 1600 already shipped]

**Simply follow this internet link:**

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

✠ *Your Prayers Are Asked* ✠

✠ For the casualties of all conflicts, both military and civilian ✠ For those

who struggle through continuing medical, surgical, and spiritual processes  
✘ 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....

## *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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