



*To discover how to be truthful now is the reason I follow this star*

*To discover now to be living now is the reason I follow this star*

*To discover how to be loving now is the reason I follow this star*



*To discover how to be human is the reason we follow this star*

*W.H Auden For the Time Being*

Newsletter from the "Watching Place"

Skowhegan, Maine

Advent 2015

My prayer for all of you is to grow in holiness and awareness of God here on earth, even in these troubled times. Our redemption is not a pursuit but surrender to Him who is always present. W.H. Auden, in his Christmas Oratorio, For the Time Being, says it far more eloquently than I could. Take some time to read it- better than the Night Before Christmas!

In my search for the history of Skowhegan I have learned many things. The name is Abenaki for "watching place," notably for fish. So the Companions of Clare stand watching for the net to be cast for fish of the human kind. How about that for stretching the name! The town still reflects the historical beauty in architecture and spirit. I love being here. The population is about 8500- far more than Sutton's 1400, but the same personal spirit pervades. The parishioners are responsive to me being here and have accepted me- hook, line and sinker! I have found time to meet with them, laugh and exchange stories. I am in the right place.

Our Church is a large building, not often filled with bodies, but filled with spirit. The parish priest works very hard taking care of 3 churches which compose Christ the King Parish. The pastor is an excellent speaker, and when he speaks from his heart, it's poetry. I think he would be in real competition with Fr. Biron as the best. I attend Mass on Mon. and Fri. in Madison- Church St. Sebastian, and Tue., Thurs. in Notre Dame here in town. The shortage of priest is sorely felt here. On Wed., we have Mass here in the convent. Anywhere from 4 to 9 people attend. Recently a gentleman stood up and said we need to expand the size of our chapel. So...with the funds provided by a benefactor we have been able to expand our chapel without loss of heat or exposure to traffic noise. The priest who says our Mass is retired and comes every week from Waterville. He is a delight- beautiful Mass (slow and easy) with warm, funny homilies. He is well loved by those in attendance.

The house is in order and now I am readdressing every room to refine the position of furniture and décor. A wonderful gift from our major foundation benefactor has enabled us to build a carport on the house for car and some outside equipment. What a blessing! As of this writing there is no snow on the ground – a far cry from last year but I am now ready. We will soon, if possible, be putting up permanent partitions in the cells. They will then be more like real bedrooms.

I have been here 1 and ½ years. During this time I have settled in, met many people here and have hosted several “come and see” visits. I have refused 5 women entrance, each for various reasons. But now in the coming new year we have a woman who will be entering at the end of January. We have spoken many times over the phone, all her paper work checked out so it looks good. I am hoping and she is hoping the Spirit will be close in all we do. I'll keep you posted as to the outcome. So many false starts but I know the first person to follow is always the most difficult. So the plan is the end of January, unless we experience the end of the world!!!!

With the coming of snow, cold and companion time will be spent organizing the library, a constant challenge. It gives a focus when you can't go outside. It will also give us direction in our study. Seeing what books we have can be a real eye

opener to the windows of spirituality. We will also start our weaving and sewing projects as time allows.

I think about the friends we have lost in the time I have been here. They are part of the history of the Companions of Clare since they watched the process and encouraged me all the way. We know all of them are resting in peace before the face of God.

This newsletter is long and it doesn't even come close to relate all the wonderful graces the Lord has given. The time to pray, read and reflect has been invaluable.

For those of us who are facing the road and journey of life we pray for courage to continue to lead a life worthy of Jesus.

Peace and every good, my friends.

May you all have a blessed Christmas.

Sr. Courtney

Companion of Clare