

Rome is *Magnificent!*



Women of
Spirit

Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes

Sisters Living on the Border

Looking out the window from the "Ranch," one sees beautiful mountains located all around. To the south is a fence intended to prevent people from crossing into the United States. A chain of lights marks the border. Border Patrol vehicles drive past on the road in front of the ranch regularly.

The ranch consists of five houses currently home to four members of CSA – Sisters Susan Kolb, Kathleen Cook, Patricia Younger and Mary Rose Obholz. It is located in Cochise County, Arizona, just south of Bisbee.

"Our goal is to create community among ourselves, to pray together and to trust we will find our way to be of service to the needs of the people here," shared Sister Susan Kolb.

"Members of CSA have always been involved with immigrants and human rights issues," continued Sister Susan. "We are continuing this faith commitment. On any given night upwards of 70 migrants are arrested for crossing the border illegally in Cochise County. Many of these people have been in the desert for days. Their feet are blistered, their clothes torn and they are very run down physically. These people are then put on a bus and driven back across the border into Mexican territory. This is called "repatriation." In a local effort to help the migrants, a group of volunteers on both sides of the border has joined together to open The Migrant Resource Center and Shelter in Naco, Sonora, Mexico. Volunteers provide food, clothing and shelter to "repatriated" migrants who are caught in the U.S. The center is a bi-national humanitarian project started and maintained by volunteers. Sister Mary Rose and Sister Patricia volunteer at the center. This is but one of the ways for us to be involved in the lives of the people on the border," said Sister Susan.

"As CSA members, we are witnessing and reflecting Christ's mission as we volunteer to assist and offer our services in this and other humanitarian efforts," shared Sister Kathy.

In addition to volunteering, Sister Kathy Cook is the Director of Religious Education and Parish Ministry Activities for 80 children at St. Michael Mission Parish in Naco, Arizona. Sister Susan Kolb, a lawyer, is Managing Attorney of a southern Arizona legal aid office which provides civil legal services to the poor in three counties in southeast Arizona. Sister Pat Younger is semi-retired and teaches in the religious education program at St. Michael's. Sister Mary Rose Obholz teaches English as a second language, volunteers at the center, and is exploring new avenues to serve.



Sister Susan Kolb in Cochise County, Arizona

Thirty-three Years and Counting



Sister Mary Ann Bogosoff, Tucson, AZ

"Seems like yesterday when I signed a one-year contract to be the Program Director and I am still here thirty-three years later," shared Sister Mary Ann Bogosoff. She is the director of Merilac Lodge Group Home/Catholic Community Services in Tucson, Arizona. "The focus of Merilac Lodge is to provide a secure, safe environment for homeless young women to help them have a successful outcome of their pregnancy while also learning the parenting skills needed to care for and bond effectively with their newborn children."

"I have the best possible work a person could have. I arrive in the morning to have precious children greet me. I mother young girls into becoming responsible, loving parents," continued Sister Mary Ann. "I love what I do! These young women are here temporarily - usually about a year. They are women who often don't count in our society, homeless and pregnant. I am able to work with them to empower them to own who they are and who they want to become. What satisfaction to watch them change - to see them being able to accept love and then to give it to themselves and their child. We have a wide diversity of American Indians, Hispanics, Anglos and African Americans living under one roof and growing together. I wouldn't trade it for the world," smiled Sister Mary Ann.

Eighty-eight Years Young

As I was preparing to meet with Sister Cecelia Schlaefer to interview her for this article, I happened to mention her name to my colleagues. Time and again they would get a big smile on their faces and, with laughter, tell me I was in for an experience. I kept wondering what they meant. Now I understand.

Sister Cecelia is a very energetic, happy person. She is full of life, spreading her boundless and genuine cheer with whomever she meets. After spending time with her, I have to say I felt my life was a bit dull.

In her own words "my goal in life is to make people happy. I have always had a tremendous amount of energy so I keep myself very busy. I like doing cross word puzzles to keep my mind active. I teach weekly Bible classes. I live in a retirement community and sit with different people every night for dinner. I say hello to everyone I meet each day. I play the piano and lead sing-alongs at ten care centers each month. In addition, I am a spiritual director and grief counselor for the



Sister Cecelia Schlaefer in Mesa, Arizona

residents here and I am part of retreat teams. I enjoy living my life to the fullest." And she does!

Sister Cecelia earned a doctorate of musical arts and chaired Marian College's (now University) music department in Fond du Lac, WI. She retired to Arizona in 1986, if one can call it retirement given the good works that Sister Cecelia continues to offer to the people who surround her.

CSA Ministries - Southwest Style

Visiting CSA ministry sites in New Mexico and Arizona is to be surrounded by missionary spirit. Sisters of St. Agnes serve in retreat centers, schools, libraries, diocesan offices, parishes, clinics, senior living facilities, as teachers, administrators, nurses, spiritual directors, lawyer, campus ministers, promoters, and more. From the high desert of Gallup and St. Michaels to the U.S. - Mexico border, every step of the journey was a lesson in compassion and lived service.

Associates Joan Schilke, Judy Mugerauer, and Ellen Swan spent a week in the southwest this spring.

"Sisters of St. Agnes imprint the gospel mission on countless lives," said Ellen, "and the exciting part is seeing new opportunities bloom in the desert." She cited "the Bisbee project" which brings sisters - and eventually others - together in response to the Chapter 2009 call to BE and BUILD community. "Serving the poor is a way of life," said Judy. Joan added, "Whether it's providing health care, teaching yoga to kindergarten children, or guiding spiritual practices, Sisters of St. Agnes are empowering women."

The next ministry site visit sponsored by CSA associates is New York City in October 2010. For information, contact Ellen Swan, Director of Associates, eswan@csasisters.org.



Sisters Joleen Retzer and Josephine Goebel with associates Judy Mugerauer, Joan Schilke at Tse Ho Tso Middle School, Ft. Defiance, Arizona where Sister Joleen ministers as librarian

Inside...

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CSA Ministries -
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The Cover Photo: Forty-seven friends of CSA and Sisters of St. Agnes traveled to Rome, Italy, in late April 2010. Travelers stayed in Rome but took day trips to Naples, Pompeii, Florence, and Assisi. A guided tour of the Vatican, attendance at the Papal visit in St. Peter's Square, Mass in Assisi and a prayer service at the tomb of St. Agnes made the trip unique and meaningful.

- Valerie Graczyk, CSA Communications Director



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Windows OF OPPORTUNITY!

Come and See Discernment Retreat October 15-17, 2010

Are you interested in finding out more about religious life? Join four women's religious communities to experience religious life through sharing prayer, storytelling, questions, fun, and food! Sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of Racine, Wisconsin, the Sisters of Divine Savior and the School Sisters of Notre Dame of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the Sisters of St. Agnes of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. This retreat is open to single women ages 19-40 and will take place at the motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Agnes in Fond du Lac. There is no cost to attend, but pre-registration is required two weeks before the event. For more information call 920-907-2310 or visit the CSA website at www.csasisters.org.

