



Notes from the convent...

My journey with the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

April 2010

Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus



The love of Christ impels us.
www.ascjus.org

For monthly updates:

<http://supportkatiehabit.blogspot.com>

Family Support

While this is a letter of deep thanks and gratitude for all my benefactors, I must acknowledge those closest to me. My family has been of tremendous support to me in my vocation journey. Without them I would not be where I am today. Neither of my parents were ever in the convent or seminary (nor did they have many friends who chose that path), so largely this was a learn-as-we-go endeavor.



Mom (Tina) and Dad (Chris) pose in their matching "I Support Katie's Habit" t-shirts while on family vacation just a few days before I moved to Connecticut.

There were lots of questions along the way—some more basic (like would I be able to use my Master's degree) and some a bit deeper (why was it that I felt called to this way of life). But in a very open and honest way, we talked about each step along the way. Ultimately, what it all boiled

down to for them was that I was happy. And I don't mean have a nice house and a stable job. I mean the real, to-the-core, truly fulfilled kind of happy. My parents nurtured in me and my sister the importance of helping others, being yourself, and

loving God. I'm grateful that they instilled in me the values needed to pursue my dreams, search for true happiness and live a life where I can truly be me. So while the distance between us is less than ideal, I'm grateful for emails and for phone calls home. In some ways my moving to the convent was the beginning of the journey and not the end.

But every step of the way I know they are there to support me and pray for me and encourage me.

God made each person to be the happiest, most-fulfilled person you can be. My parents helped me realize this. My friends helped me realize this. The sisters I live with help me realize this. Please consider helping someone in your life realize their God-given potential.

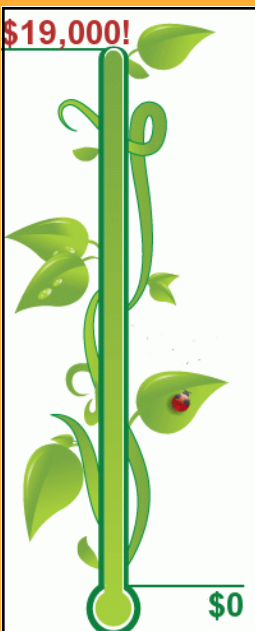
Fundraising Success

On March 2, 2009 I received an acceptance letter to the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to begin pre-postulancy in August. After the initial feelings of elation, I began to get nervous. How would I be able to pay off my debt by then? Before I knew it, wheels were in motion. Friends gathered together to help plan a bingo fundraiser, I started a blog and sent out individual letters, and two newspapers published very nice articles about me to help spread the word. In a little over six months, I had collected close to

\$16,000. In June I paid off my graduate school loans completely. Soon after that, with the help of additional jobs and donations, I collected enough money for a year of room and board. The Bingo Fundraiser totaled just under \$4,000 with over-all donations coming to \$15,000 and I was able to draw from savings the remaining funds needed. All this transpired in a little over six months! Thank you to all who supported me with donations of time, money, and prayers. Your generosity has not been forgotten.



With Bingo Planners Erin and Meghan



STAGES OF FORMATION:

Did you know it takes a minimum of 8 years to become an Apostle of the Sacred Heart?

- **Pre-postulate:** For a period of three months, a woman has the chance to live with the sisters and experience their life and ministry first hand to aid in her discernment.
- **Postulate:** The first official stage of formation, a postulant learns more about the Apostles' history and mission in the Church so as to strengthen her vocation as a Christian woman.
- **Novitiate:** A two year period, one year is spent in Connecticut as a prayer (canonical) year, while the second (apostolic) year is spent in the mission field in full time ministry. These years prepare the sister to make temporary vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
- **Juniorate:** Engaged in full-time ministry, a junior sister prepares herself to make final vows which she makes after five to nine years of temporary vows.
- **Life-Long Formation:** Even after final vows, a sister makes a daily commitment to deepen her prayer life and relationship with God.



Sr. Cecilia, now 102, poses in her dancing angel costume. I am a "vessel of justice and love."

Nuns having fun

One of the highlights of living at our provincial house is being close to our retired sisters. Sacred Heart Manor is truly a powerhouse of prayer. The 30+ sisters in residence are always willing to share a story and a smile as we visit and get to know them as a treasured part of our history. We enjoy spending holidays and other special events with them. They were gracious enough to host this year's Halloween Party. Another advantage to living at the Mount is the presence of the Novitiate community. Being with other women in formation not only helps us build community but also allows us to form friendships and share adventures together. This year we were fortunate enough to travel to Washington, D.C. for a Eucharistic Congress in September and will attend a Spirituality Convocation at St. Elizabeth College in New Jersey in April.



Prepostulants and novices enjoy a warm September day on the beach.

Life in community

Mount Sacred Heart is a busy place. In addition to a retirement home for our sisters (which also houses a nursery school and adult day care), it's also the location of Sacred Heart Academy, Caritas Christi Spiritual Life Center, and our Provincial Offices. Tucked away on the second floor is a hallway commonly called the Mother Clelia Annex, named after the foundress of our community, Clelia Merloni. The Annex has been my home these past several months. I live with two other postulants and our direc-

ress. Cara and Carolyn come from Florida (and have made it through winter and are looking forward to a warm spring). We pray together three times a day with other sisters who live and work on the property. We take classes on Church history and the Sacraments, as well as the history of our community and our foundress. For ministry, we work with our sisters who tutor in New Haven, CT, help out in our spiritual life center, retirement home and high school. As a



Postulate Community: Katie Press, Cara Kissell, Carolyn Brown, and Sr. Luisa Villegas (Directress)

community we enjoy Friday night movies, jigsaw puzzles, enjoying the spring weather, and hosting the novitiate community over for dinner (complete with a game of Bananagrams or Cranium).

God's blessings and prayers

Please know I pray for each of you by name and ask God to bless you for the kindness you have shown me. In addition to my family and friends, I am thankful for the support of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who nurtured my vocation and showed me their love for the Heart of Christ. Thanks also to my coworkers at Aquinas Institute of Theology and Sacred Heart Villa; to St. Margaret of Scotland Parish for helping me host my Bingo and for Oddwalk Ministries and everyone who planned and attended the Bingo.; for the Georgia Bulletin and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch for publishing articles about my journey; for the people of St. Pius X High School and parishioners of St. Jude the Apostle Parish for their donations and prayers for my vocation and all those discerning a call to religious life. For every single person who donated even \$1 and prayed for me. Because of you, I was able to realize a dream. I am very blessed and thank you from the bottom of my heart. God bless you.

United in the Heart of Christ,

This note is intended as an update and thank you letter only, not to solicit any further donations. I have not shared your address with anyone. I am simply grateful for your generosity.