



FRANCISCAN  
SISTERS  
OF LITTLE FALLS  
MINNESOTA

MAY 2014

# The Well

*A message from the Franciscan community at Clare's Well*

## There are no accidents

*Roxy*

My previous family called me by a number of different names but no one ever called me Lacy until I arrived at Clare's Well, March 15, 2014. I have to tell everyone here that my name is Roxy. Some of us Collies look very similar to one another; just want you to know I am not Lacy. I am Roxy.

Leaving one good home to come to another takes a lot of adjustment; it helps that my original family, Allison, Eric, Christopher, Rod and Jan Roering packed all my favorite things, including my bed, when they brought me here. I still miss the Roering family but appreciate that they knew I needed to be someplace where people would be around me when they were gone all day. I am definitely a people dog, and a cat, chicken and "anything else that moves" dog.

Two resident cats, Cosmo and Sunny, seemed a bit fearful of me when I arrived, but it only took a day for them to realize they need not fear me. They and everyone else are welcoming me, which I'm learning is key in living the spirit of Saint Clare, for whom this place is named. The sisters tell me that all creatures are sisters and brothers to one another. (I already knew that.) Saint Clare knew it in her bones. I don't have formal classes here but I'm learning quickly what is expected of me as the staff hospitality dog. I've been assigned the responsibility of welcoming everyone who comes in this yard in that spirit of Saint Clare. If you know Saint Clare, check me out to see if my gentle approach to you resembles hers.

Some other things I notice are that every week a young man, Nick, comes with his Dad, or other family member, to do some of the heavier chores



Roxy (above)

If someone else needs my bed, I willingly let them sleep in it. I do just fine on the rug.



around here, carry wood, shovel stubborn snow, etc. Roxanne, who comes to do massages for guests, smiled pretty big when she heard my name. I like her name, too! Then there's Gail, who comes every week to make lunch for guests. We made friends instantly. She says she will bring their Chihuahuas to play some day.

Changes . . . how we accept them shapes our character. There are no accidents. Someone greater than any of us brought me here at this time when Clare's Well also is facing changes. I don't believe that is just a coincidence. There are no accidents. The decision that I should come to this new home was made in heaven.

*Living the Gospel courageously... with energy, spirit, peace.*

We're still open!



Call now to make your reservation.  
(320)274-3512

## Nothing stays the same forever

We emerge from winter into a season of new life. Everything changes and ends.

Nothing stays the same forever. This winter our friend, Pasha, sent us a wonderful notice of the arrival of her new grandchild. Upon arrival, this newcomer expanded all of the relationships in his family: not only did his parents have a child, but his arrival created uncles and aunts who could now boast of a nephew; cousins arrived in this family album, along with grandparents and great grandparents. One new child creates a whole new family album.

The family photo of our Franciscan family also continues to change, in the opposite direction. Nine of our sisters have died since the last (November 2013) issue of *The Well*, and 30-plus in the last three years.

Perhaps some of us remember having to “sell the family farm” when our parents died and none of our siblings felt called to a vocation of farming. Over the years, we who staff Clare’s Well recognize that this ministry of the Franciscan Sisters has deeply touched thousands of lives. No wonder we

want to continue to live and serve here for as long as we are able. However . . . it is clear we won’t be able to do that forever. Our community is discussing how we will continue to serve guests who come for solitude, quiet, communion with God and Earth to nourish their spirits at Clare’s Well when our current staff retires and refocuses.

You might have heard we have had serious conversations with several persons who expressed interest in owning Clare’s Well. We are looking for someone with the resources and personnel required to continue what these 40 acres have grown into over the past 26 years. We know what these 40 acres have grown into requires a lot of work, but we didn’t realize just how much until others have taken a serious look at it and told us they can’t do it. We’ve been greatly blessed with generous donors and volunteers who help us; we will continue to need you for however long this transition time requires. We aren’t moving out today or tomorrow; we continue to schedule guests. It is true, however, we are open for someone else to continue Clare’s Well.

# Clare's Well guests share experiences

"I just wanted to write you a note to tell you how much I enjoyed my time at Clare's Well and how much I enjoyed sharing our meals with you. From the moment we walked in on Friday night I had the feeling of 'coming home.' Your warmth reminded me so much of the warmth I once felt when I entered my grandparents' and parents' homes, and I even got a lump in my throat. Thank you so much for the wonderful and loving hospitality. It touched a very deep place in my heart." KS

"Being on the brink of exhaustion, I found rest. Being nearly burnt out from work and sensing change may come, I'm content to wait for direction. Your selfless acts of kindness given so I can restore and heal bring me to tears every time. With much love." B

"Over the years you have given me a place to come and open my heart, heal my body and learn anew about my soul. I am ever grateful for the House of Clare—its simplicity always brings me home to myself." ML

"I feel more at home in my own skin than I have in a long time. I have laid my burden down here—I can't remember where, so I guess I won't be picking it up and taking it home. My apologies for not cleaning up after myself!" HS

"Thanks be to God for the blessed, holy, sanctuary of Clare's Well. I came burdened. I leave refreshed." CBL



Sisters Paula and Carol share a moment of joy with frequent guests Pasha Bortnova and Joanne Aho.



Guests who come from distant lands find a welcome, and share a meal they prepared with us. Sister Jan with friends of Rupesh Modi.



Many Clare's Well guests find healing walking and reflecting in the labyrinth.



Chuck Pelzel brings grandchildren to help on workdays!



Chair on the dock of Sabbath Pond: place of solitude for healing any heart.

# Spring Work Day is coming soon:

Saturday, May 17, 2014

If you wanted to help but missed it, we always appreciate help. Please call. God bless you.

Dan Pinotti is just one of our many blessings.



## Wish List

- We have had to replace our John Deere tractor which powers our lawn mower and snow blower, as well as pulls a trailer used for any and everything from garden to barn to woods. We would be grateful if you can help us pay for it.
- Funds for special needs and general upkeep
- Firewood and kindling
- Persons with chain saws to help cut wood
- Help with clearing buckthorn
- Ongoing help with the gardens and other chores
- Mechanically gifted persons to help us keep our machines in good condition

## Thank You

- To the Alery family, who have committed themselves to a forever supply of food for Roxy.
- To everyone who has supplied bird seed and other animal food.
- For all donations to us as well as to our Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls community.
- To all who help us with mechanical challenges, gardening, carrying wood to our house, cooking, cleaning, caring for Clare's Well when we couldn't be here.
- For many friends and family who gift us with help and friendship. God bless you.



The solitude of digging in Earth feeds Laurie O'Connor's soul.



Stu Ulfers, faithful friend who can fix anything!

