

A Path of Mercy: One Companion's Journey

You can never really predict where Mercy will lead you. When you set out on a path of merciful living, you have to be prepared for an adventure that will unfold in unimagined ways. When Companion Sue LaVoie (Northeast) set her foot on this path, she couldn't have foreseen that it would bring her to pronounce a vow of Mercy service, together with five other Companions in Mercy, on Pentecost Eve of 2005.

For many years the path had consisted largely in being the mother of six children—and lately “Grandma Sue” to three delightful grandchildren. When her own children were grown, Sue headed back to school, earning her Master of Divinity from Yale Divinity School, a degree which served her well during her 14 years of ministry at Mercy Center, Madison, Connecticut. There she facilitated and taught in the School of Spirituality, provided spiritual direction and days of prayer and worked on eight-day Ignatian retreats. Sue describes this ministry as “a type of contemplative ‘watch’ where you try to be attuned to the movement of the Spirit in people’s lives and the quiet merciful way that God is at work.”

In 2002 Sue and Sister Elaine Deasy (Northeast) decided to form community together, sharing life, daily prayer and mutual support. Sue comments, “While we enjoy plenty of quiet moments, there is never a dull moment in the sharing of our lives. Elaine easily welcomes regular visits from my children and the occasional appearance of a high chair in the kitchen.”

Recently, Sue and Elaine moved



Companion Sue LaVoie (Northeast) journeys with a young woman.

to Hartford where Sue continues her spiritual direction ministry and works part-time at York Correctional Institute with Chrysalis, an interfaith program which furthers the healing, self-understanding and deep spirituality of women who are preparing to leave prison. “This ministry opens my eyes to the struggle, suffering and beauty of these women,” Sue says. “They are the ones teaching me what mercy means.”

Last November, the path of mercy led Sue to represent the Companions in Mercy at the School of the Americas vigil at the gates of Fort Benning, Georgia, marching together with associates and sisters calling for the closing of that school. Whether

she is acting for justice or joining with other sisters and associates in her monthly faith sharing group, Sue delights to walk a path of mutuality with these other forms of Mercy life, constantly discovering the gifts that each brings to the other.

“My vision is that all these forms of Mercy life are interconnected and intertwined circles of Mercy,” says Sue. “On whatever path Mercy takes us into the future, we need to walk with each other.”—*Companion Rita O’Dea (St. Louis)*

For information about Companions in Mercy contact Sue LaVoie at Suzanne_d_lavoie@sbcglobal.net or visit www.companionsinmercy.org.

Share a Ministry Story

Each of us has wonderful stories to tell. To make a submission to the ministry column, please contact Sister Patricia Kenny at pkenny@sistersofmercy.org.