

Vocation personnel continue collaborative efforts in New Orleans

On January 1, 2008, I embarked on a trip and an experience of a lifetime when I joined thirty-two other enthusiastic volunteers to begin a post-Katrina adventure in New Orleans that concluded on January 6, 2008.

Our group was comprised of eight sisters, nineteen young women and six young men students. The sisters from the Federation congregations included: Sisters Janet Gildea, Monica Gundler and Carol Wirtz from the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, Ohio; Sister Jovita MacPherson from the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Martha, Antigonish; Sister Luke Boiarski from the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky; Sister Patti Dotzauer from the Sisters of Charity, Convent Station and Sister Mary Anne Ruzzo from the Sisters of Charity of Halifax.

The students who accompanied me were Jessica Pennell, Natalie Committee and Casie Fox.

We were able to apply dry wall and insulate one home and remove the debris from the yards of several houses. We assisted in cleaning a restaurant and bar business and painted a wrought iron fence in front of an elderly man's house. A chief task was making lunch for the homeless and listening to their stories. We were the recipients of some delicious home cooking, ourselves.

The students were fantastic, so full of energy and love and viewed the entire experience as spiritually uplifting.

My impression is that many people are still in shock, almost frozen in time. I felt that, in a small way, we helped to motivate them into action.

There were light moments including the visit with Les Miles, the head coach of LSU [Louisiana State University] that defeated Ohio State in the national championship game. He spent time with our group and we had our picture taken with him. We're still waiting for the picture!

In summary, as I reflect on the experience, *Elizabeth's* words echo in my heart and remind me, "He will not leave you one moment, nor suffer the least harm to approach you. Not one tear shall fall to the ground, nor one sigh of love be lost."



I-r: Casie Fox, Jessica Pennell,
Sister Rachel J. Blais, Natalie
Committee

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