

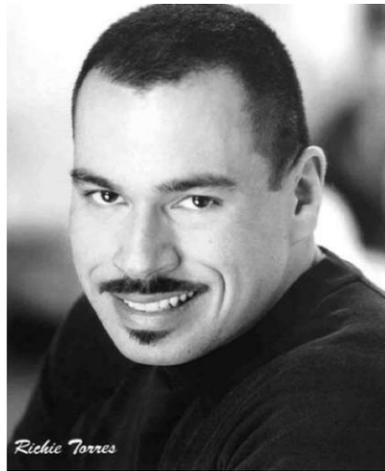
MCCNY Launches *The Congregation Revealed* By Mel Bryant

On Sunday, June 8, 2008, the pilot for *The Congregation Revealed* was taped in the Jackson Hall Art Gallery at MCCNY.

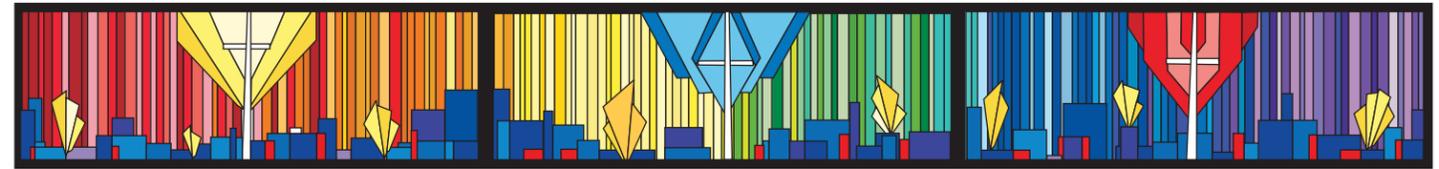
The Congregation Revealed is the brainchild of Deacon Len Richardson and Richie Torres (at right). In each episode, Richie interviews members of the MCCNY congregation to reveal interesting (to say the least!) things about their lives that people may or may not know. His sense of humor and ability to draw information out of his guests really keeps things lively and, well, revealing!

Did you know, for example, that Bradley Curry's first job after graduating from Northwestern University was as a flight attendant for ATA or that the Dr. in Reverend Edgard's title is actually a doctorate in chemistry and that he taught chemistry at the University of Puerto Rico for 16 years or that Sophia Pazos...okay, you'll have to watch the episode for that one.

The next episode will tape in July so watch your bulletins for the date and line-up of guests.



Richie Torres



MCC Consecrates First MCC in Asia By Mel Bryant

(Photos of Malaysia by Stanley Ng)

The Reverend Pat Bumgardner, Chair of the Moderator's Global Justice Team and Senior Pastor of MCCNY and the Reverend Boon Lin Ngeo, MCCNY, traveled to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia last month to consecrate MCCNY's congregation there.

The Good Samaritan Fellowship MCCNY is the first Metropolitan Community Church in Asia.

Reverend Pat and Reverend Boon led a two day retreat in the Cameron Highlands on Friday and Saturday, May 23 and 24, 2008 before consecrating the congregation on Sunday, May 25, 2008.

This new congregation joins its MCCNY family that includes the 9 a.m. Traditional Liturgy, the 11 a.m. Celebration Liturgy, the 3 p.m. Mandarin Service, the 7 p.m. Praise and Worship Liturgy, the Binghamton Congregation and the T.V. Ministry through

Time Warner Cable local access.

When he returned to New York and preached at MCCNY on Sunday, June 15, 2008, Reverend Boon shared the story of a young man in Malaysia who, every night for the last 20 years, had prayed, asking God for forgiveness of sin, the sin of his sexuality. The Good Samaritan Fellowship MCCNY had finally given him, he said, a place of acceptance and love where he knew that God's love was available to him as a gay man.

Reverend Boon went on to say, "We are saving lives, literally. Gay people who would have considered suicide because of their sexuality now know the truth."

This new congregation that started with 4 individuals but has grown to 18 is a powerful witness to the good news of God's transforming love.



PRIDE at MCCNY

Sunday, June 29 Celebrate Pride with MCCNY!

9 am
11 am
7 pm

(Traditional Liturgy)
(Celebration Liturgy)
(Praise & Worship Service)

Pride Parade on 5th Avenue:

MCCNY float (line-up after 11 am service)
52nd St. between 5th/6th Avenues

Communion in the Streets!

Binghamton Congregation celebrates Pride with MCCNY!



Reverend Pat Travels to Pakistan By Mel Bryant

After consecrating Good Samaritan Fellowship MCCNY in Kuala Lumpur, Reverend Pat traveled to Pakistan to meet with members of the LGBTQ community there. When she returned to New York, she shared with MCCNY publicly the witness that is happening around the world. It was because of the MCCNY website that community leaders in Pakistan reached out, she shared, and that is a testament to the work that MCCNY is doing, not only in and for New York City, but around the world.

The community in Pakistan is so excited to have found MCCNY, she went on to say, that they are already calling themselves MCC Pakistan. "This is the work we have been called to do," she said, "here and around the world."

May God continue to bless our siblings, here and around the world.

The Query Quarterly/Summer 2008

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MCCNY is a member of Metropolitan Community Churches, a global movement of faith with congregations in 22 nations. The Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, Moderator



Metropolitan Community
Church of New York
446 West 36th Street
New York, NY 10018

A Pride Message from Rev. Pat Bumgardner:

Live. Love. Be. Who I Am Makes a Difference!

Dear friends:

As I contemplate this year's Pride theme — Live! Love! Be! Who I am Makes a Difference! — I am fresh from many challenging and inspiring, as well as yet-to-be-fully-integrated, often confusing experiences in Jamaica, Malaysia and Pakistan. — Though the locations and cultures varied widely, one thing was amazingly consistent: the strong, strong spirit of life and love that fueled a deep, deep desire on the part of everyone I met, from the village elder in a rural settlement of the Pakistani countryside to the young gay men coming of age on an island of the Caribbean, to make a difference in their communities and in the world.

In Sadohke, a rural settlement outside of Green Town in Pakistan, a young school girl discussing very adult topics — like the state of her country's economy and the issue of human equality — rose to say that she would make a difference in her nation and in the world by valuing the lives of girl children and boy children equally.

Outside of Lahore, a group of underground Lesbians have a plan to make a difference not only for themselves, but for other young women coming after them. They want to organize collectively, pool their resources and one by one work their way into freedom from oppressive cultural norms and for a better future.

In the Cameron Highlands outside of Kuala Lumpur, young gay men articulated their hopes and dreams for the future, believing that coming out will change the course of history in Malaysia and make a difference for future generations. — It was only two years ago that these same young men were terrified to admit even behind closed doors that they were gay or bisexual or transgender. MCC has made a tremendous difference in their lives.

And MCC is making a tremendous difference in the lives of our community in Jamaica. In Kingston, volunteers vowed to make a difference — to put an end to the violence and hatred against Queer people so often tolerated and encouraged — by developing pilot programs for school age children

so that they can learn and practice acceptance of diversity, and developing public education campaigns to eliminate "murder music" and dance hall bashing and promote positive lyrics.

Few, if any, of the people I met with who have such passion and courage for life and the possibilities life on earth harbors, have much in the way of worldly resources. What they do have, in addition to their courage and conviction, is a firm and abiding belief that Queer people are God's people and together we can make a difference.

We live in strange and wonderful, blessed and challenging times — in some parts of our world, like Uganda and Nigeria, Queer people are struggling simply for the right to exist; in others, like the United States, we are celebrating recent court victories on marriage equality. What seems most important to me — what people who have every reason not to care about what happens here, in the States, but who do care passionately taught me — is that if we stand together; if we see what is happening around the globe as part of God's big picture plan to bring the world to just and right-relationship, we can make a difference.

As St. Paul wrote long ago, All creation is waiting on tip toe for the revelation of the daughters and sons of God! I have been a privileged witness to places where that revelation is breaking through, and my prayer has become, Thank you, God, for all you are doing. Help me to live and love and be in a way that will add my life to those who are already making so much of a difference in your world. May those simple words become the prayer of all our hearts this holy Pride Season.

With love,

Rev. Pat

As we celebrate our Pride this month, be proud of who you are because who you are, one of God's beloveds, does make a difference.

Enjoy the issue and Happy Pride!

Mel Bryant, Editor

Letter from the Editor:

Dear Family and Friends,

Live. Love. Be. Who I Am Makes a Difference. As I think about these words, I am moved by the many ways that we can, and do, make a difference in the lives of those around us.

Susan makes a difference in the lives of those in need, letting them know someone cares when they receive her postcards.

Chris and his staff make a difference in the lives of hungry New Yorkers, working to increase and upgrade their experience as clients of the pantry.

Arnold and Scout make a difference in the lives of the young people served by MCCNY/Homeless Youth Services, nurturing them, body and mind.

Valerie makes a difference in the lives of Burmese refugees, raising money to help them tell their story.

Norma and MCCNY's delegation to PAD's 10th Anniversary Conference make a difference in the lives of their allies on the journey, worshipping and fellowshiping to share the good news of God's inclusive love.

Reverend Pat and the Global Justice Team certainly make a difference in the lives of our LGBTQ brothers and sisters around the world, praying and preaching, meeting and marching, for their right to live, to love, to be.

Trans Health Conference By Scout Rose

On May 30th a group of 10 clients and staff from MCCNY/Homeless Youth Services made their way down to Philadelphia for the 7th Annual Trans Health Conference. It was an inspiring and educational trip for all involved as conference goers took part in two days of workshops and networking. Participants chose between a variety of workshops on topics including transgender parenting, femme identity, and holistic herbal care for trans folks and gender variant spirituality. Many in the group spent quality time checking out the vending tables, talking with non-profits and health practitioners from around the country. We set up our own MCCNY vending table, where William Moran-Berberena, Executive Director of MCC Charities, spoke with other conference attendees about the many services MCCNY offers to members of the trans-community. As always, MCCNY's signature "God Made Me Trans" stickers were a big hit. The conference concluded with a truly inspirational keynote address from transwoman activist, Miss Major, followed by a poetry performance with the Hip Hop Feminist Nation. An old friend and comrade of Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, Miss Major delivered a fiery speech about the importance of advocating for oneself and fighting for the rights of people of transgender experience. She also stressed the value of community and personal healing, and reminded us to take care of each other in the struggle. The group returned to New York feeling renewed and excited about transgender empowerment. I know we are all looking forward to next year's conference.

Above, clients and staff from MCCNY Homeless Youth Services at the Trans Health Conference in Philadelphia. At right, William Moran-Berberena, Executive Director of MCC Charities, seated at the MCCNY table.



Reflections from an MCCNY Homeless Youth Services Volunteer by Arnold J. Mungioli

When the youth from MCCNY/Homeless Youth Services first started coming to church, I was scared of them. I would take my backpack with me to communion out of fear that they would steal it. I did not know them. Fear was bred out of what I did not know. It always is. Then through a mild experience of divine revelation, I came to realize that the skills I had honed working in the theater and as a teacher were intended to be shared with these young people. I contacted Kate and Reverend Pat with an idea and with their support I started a Drama Class for the shelter youth at the Marsha P. Johnson Center. On my last birthday, a friend of mine who is an astrologer told me that this year I would be meeting people who would become as close to me as the closest friends of my life. Entirely new circles of friends would enter my life – that these friends would be the shelter youth would have been my very last guess! But of course, I did not know them.

Now I have been working with them every week for almost five months and in that short time they have filled my heart! Now I know them. Fear has been transformed into love.

Drama Class has evolved into Improv Group and I have learned so many things about teaching, about people, about lives outside of my own and about myself! I have grown and changed in ways that I could never have imagined and did not even know that I needed to or could have! I have also discovered that while I thought I was being guided here to teach, I was in fact being guided here to learn. I am most richly blessed.

Arnold J. Mungioli
Volunteer, MCCNY/Homeless Youth Services



MCC Region 3 Children and Youth Ministry Leaders Summit by Mel Bryant

William Moran-Berberena, executive director of MCCNY Charities, and Mel Bryant, Sunday school teacher (pictured third and fourth from left, back row in photo at left), attended the 3rd annual Children and Youth Ministry Leaders Summit in Baltimore, Maryland on Saturday, May 3, 2008. Eighteen MCCers representing 9 of the churches in Region 3 spent the day sharing experiences and ideas for our children and youth programming.

(Photo courtesy of Jan Creamer, MCC of the Chesapeake)

The QUERY

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Metropolitan Community Church of New York
 446 W. 36th St., New York, NY 10018 • (212) 629-7440 • www.mccny.org

**Sunday Worship Services at 9am (traditional)
 11am (celebration), and 7pm (praise & worship)**

On TV in Manhattan: Sundays 1:30pm, Time Warner channel 57, RCN channel 85

Changes at the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry by Chris Stadmeier, Director

The Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry has two large projects that it plans to develop this summer. The first project is converting our grocery distribution style to a Client Choice model. Currently, the majority of food pantries across the country distribute pre-packaged bags of canned goods. This results in people receiving food that they cannot use due to personal preference and religious or dietary restrictions. Client Choice eliminates this waste by giving clients the opportunity to choose food they can use in a grocery store style setting. The Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry has started Client Choice on a limited scale and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. The opportunity to select their own groceries means that clients choose food they will eat and not waste and provides a much more positive experience. One client recently said, "This is great. I feel like I've been shopping at the grocery store."

The second project that will be blooming through the summer is the rooftop vegetable garden. Tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini and squash are growing in pots on the roof of our building and will supply the pantry and Sylvia's Place, our homeless youth shelter, with fresh vegetables. In urban areas across the country we are losing touch with the origins of our food and are falling victim to the industrial food system that is full of pesticides, genetically modified organisms and unsustainable development. In addition to supplying our programs with fresh produce, the rooftop garden hopes to make efficient use of the limited open space in our city and take back ownership of our food.

The food pantry is also proud to announce the arrival of Sarah Wilson, our new AmeriCorps volunteer. Through our partnership with the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, she will be helping with program development and grant writing.

Throughout the summer, the pantry will continue to host a case management table sponsored by Connecting to Advantages every

Thursday at 9 a.m. to assist clients with issues ranging from food stamp applications to tax assistance to free children's summer camp information, a benefits outreach table sponsored by Positive Health Project every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. and free HIV testing sponsored by the Latino AIDS Commission on alternate Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Clients who participate in the HIV testing will receive, when available, a four dollar Metrocard and a gift card to Best Buy.

In April, as part of Volunteer Appreciation Week, we hosted a volunteer appreciation party for all of the volunteers here at MCCNY. It was a great opportunity to meet volunteers from the different programs. If you would like to be part of our volunteer family or would like to make a donation, please call us at 212-629-7440.



Bradley Curry, Rev. Pat and John Garrett, pictured above, at the Volunteer Appreciation Party. John has served MCCNY as sexton for 9 years.

Photo by Chris Stadmeier

Reverend Pat Travels to Jamaica by Mel Bryant

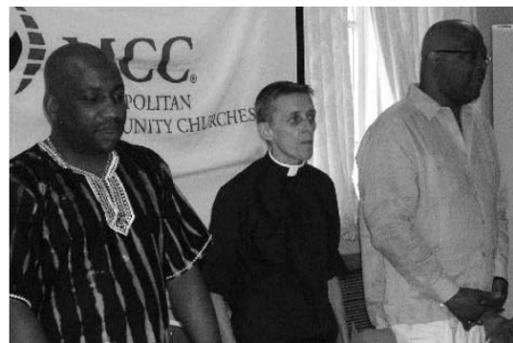
The Reverend Pat Bumgardner, Chair of the Moderator's Global Justice Team traveled to Jamaica with Councilman Ken Reeves of Cambridge, MA, the Reverend Robert Griffin of Sunshine Cathedral MCC Fort Lauderdale and Tom Scaringelli who provided security on May 9 - 12, 2008 to continue building MCC's presence in Jamaica and to increase awareness of the violence against LGBT people there.

The delegation hosted an AIDS Prayer Vigil on Friday the 9th of May where, as Reverend Edgard Francisco reported from the pulpit, they "prayed like heaven" for those lost to and living with HIV/AIDS. An MCC Jamaica Prayer Breakfast was held on Saturday morning followed by a Community Leadership Meeting that included members of Family and Friends Who Care, Jamaica's version of PFLAG. On Sunday, May 11, 2008, Reverend Pat preached at Sunshine Cathedral Jamaica and 22 new members were received into their congregation, bringing their total membership to 137.

In his interviews and speeches, Councilman Reeves, who is Jamaican, spoke passionately about not standing by while Jamaicans, particularly members of the LGBT community, were suffering from violence and hate.



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(Photos courtesy of Rev. Robert Griffin)

PAD Conference by Norma J. Sharp

A shy person in charge of registration?! Me?! I know, church family, that this is a little known fact. But nonetheless it is true! There I was in St. Louis as the Onsite Team Lead anticipating the arrival of more than 200 attendees of PAD's 10th Anniversary Conference!

Due to a scheduling conflict by the hotel, we could not open registration on time. We opened more than an hour late, not a good way to begin! As the attendees appeared to arrive, I felt like a deer caught in a car's headlights! However, my first set of volunteers who were Allies from our host church, MCC of Greater St. Louis, were extremely calm and well organized. They soon reassured me that things would be just fine and yes, they were correct.

"On the Move" the 10th anniversary gathering of PAD in MCC exceeded our expectations in a big way. Over 300 of us sang, worshipped, hugged, cried, renewed old friendships and made new ones during those three days. During one of the many activities, 1st time attendees were asked to stand. They numbered at least half of those gathered.

"PAD was an experience I will never forget and one that I would look forward to reliving. I learned so much and met so many new people. The songs, the preaching and the fellowship working together to take me to another level with God..." says Jen Heyward, 1st time attendee.

"It was a Blessing for me to be with all of my siblings 'An Momma an Dem'. I'm praying for everyone and cannot wait until the next Family Reunion" Noah Seaton said of his 4th PAD gathering.

Although a great deal of my time was spent at registration, one of my fondest memories is of seeing Rev. Dr. Renee McCoy, who was our keynote speaker. Rev. McCoy was my first MCC pastor whom I had not seen in over 20 years.



MCCNY represented at the People of African Descent Conference.

Photo courtesy of Norma Sharp

I learned a great deal from my time at PAD but by far what touched me the most was something that happened after the conference. Many of us worshipped with MCC of Greater St. Louis that Sunday. Two of my volunteers Jackie and Bettye, allies on the journey, came over to me prior to communion and invited me to take communion with them. These two senior women had been my right and left hands throughout registration. Their kindness truly defines what it means to be a servant.

I am forever changed.

More photos of PAD's 10th Anniversary Conference are available online at www.flickr.com/photos/mccchurch/



Photo by Montel Cherry

Gayle Davis Graduates from New York Theological Seminary

Candidate Gayle Davis (receiving diploma at left) graduated from New York Theological Seminary on Saturday, May 17, 2008 with a Masters Degree in Divinity at the beautiful Riverside Church. As part of MCC's ordination process, Gayle will attend the intensives this summer to be approved for ordination. Gayle, who works closely with MCCNY/Homeless Youth Services, will attend Drew University this fall to begin work on her doctorate. Gayle will be studying under Traci West, a preeminent ethicist. Gayle was the only student accepted into this program.

Church Lady Bingo by Mel Bryant

Church Lady Bingo starring Sybil Bruncheon (at right) wrapped up its first season here at MCCNY on Friday, June 13, 2008 with a gala birthday celebration for Noah Seaton. Noah delighted the crowd as he shuffled into the gallery wearing a t-shirt with the slogan "It's a Sin to Look This Good at 60" and oversized plaid shorts. After singing "Happy Birthday to You" and enjoying a homemade chocolate cake provided by Sarah Wilson, Sybil presented Noah with a custom made jigsaw puzzle of herself and publicly thanked him for his devotion to Church Lady Bingo.

MCCNY would also like to thank our sponsors for their support of our first season. Donated prizes from Faces and Names, Xanadu, Cry Baby, Hudson Yards Café and 44X helped make our first season a tremendous success.

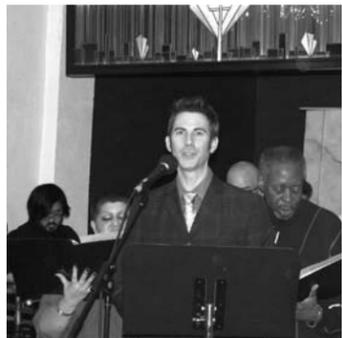
Sybil, Gefil, DJ Sugar and the rest of the cast will return in October for our next season of Church Lady Bingo so watch for the Homecoming issue of *The Query* for the dates.



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Easter at MCCNY!

(Photos by Montel Cherry, Sarah Lewis, and Colleen Sovory)



A Letter from Valerie A. King

Dear Friends:

I would like to give you the opportunity to purchase beautiful art books to assist with the funding of my documentary film representing Burmese refugees who seek asylum on the Thai/Burma border. The book is entitled "Peter Paul Rubens, The Drawings" published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The books will be on sale at each social hour for \$20 each (\$60 retail price). I rescued the books from being discarded and was given permission to use the books as I saw fit. I have chosen to sell them so I have the chance to purchase my air fare and video equipment to make the film. The purpose of the film is to help further educate the public to the atrocities committed against the ethnic minorities in Burma and to show where funds can be sent directly to the NGO that feeds, clothes and gives the only medical care to the malnourished, tortured and traumatized refugees who have fled into neighboring Thailand. In the past, I had hoped to write a book but I now feel a film can reach a much wider audience in many different circles of society.

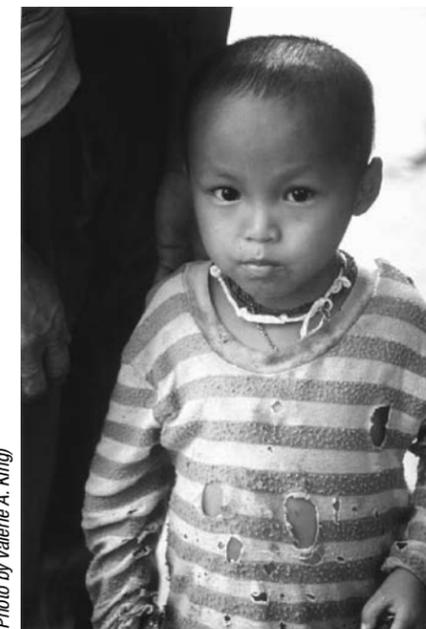
I plan to travel to Thailand in late August to video the refugees themselves within the camps and the medical clinics, along with the Burmese NGO director who needs funding, Dr. Cynthia, a Christian physician who is herself a Burmese refugee, Buddhist monks who escaped the Saffron Revolution and school children who have known no other life than living in makeshift villages that are still attacked daily by the Burmese regime who cross into neighboring Thailand. At the end of the film, the address of the NGO will be given so all who view the film can choose to send funds directly to the NGO.

Thank you for any support you can offer. I am grateful to MCCNY for permitting me the opportunity to sell the art books to help make this film a reality.

With gratitude,

Valerie A. King

(Photo by Valerie A. King)



Aid to Burma

In the aftermath of the devastating cyclone, Avaaz.org has organized a campaign to raise money for the people of Burma. All donations through Avaaz.org will go to the Burmese monks, one of the most trusted groups in Burma. To make a donation, please visit www.avaaz.org.

Avaaz.org is an online community dedicated to creating "the kind of world most of us would rather live in" through people driven politics and actions.

My Postcard Ministry by Susan Chilvers

Do you sometimes get overwhelmed by the number of people in your life who are sick, in trouble, or going through hard times and you have no idea what you can do to help? Prayer of course is very important and has been proven over and over again to make huge changes in people's lives, whether or not they even know they are being prayed for. I have found that in addition to prayer (or actually as a type of prayer) sending postcards to those in need has helped me to feel less helpless in these situations. Several years ago when one of my oldest friends was diagnosed with M.S. and an inoperable tumor, I was devastated and unable to help her as she lived in another state and we were both working with few opportunities to phone each other. I decided to send her a postcard each week.

Then during Lent I sent her a postcard each day as my Lenten discipline. I wrote about things that were happening in my life that would interest her (we had taught together years ago and had kids at the same time), or I just told her about her many qualities that I admired and appreciated or shared a joke or quote I had heard that day. My friend kept all the postcards in a large basket which she showed me when I visited saying that she often pulled one out and re-read it.

After that first Lent I began to include others in my postcard ministry. A postcard is an ideal size because it doesn't take much to fill it up and yet

with neat writing one can also say a lot. I collect postcards wherever I go. I know where to buy 20 New York City postcards for \$1 and 10 London cards for 1 pound. Friends and family bring me cards from their trips and coffee shops have oodles of free advertising cards that are often funny, colorful and interesting. With cheap or free cards, postage is my only cost and if they would come out with forever stamps for postcards, I'd be set! Also I can write cards at 5 A.M. when I'm awake but wouldn't dream of making a phone call.

I have been told by my postcard recipients that they appreciate getting them. Despite email, I think we all enjoy getting something tangible and personal in the post besides bills and ads. Sometimes I have to start my message with, "No, I'm not in Paris" or "Wish I was here in San Francisco, but I'm not" but it all adds to the fun. If I don't know someone very well (maybe they are on the church prayer list) I simply tell them I am thinking about them and praying for them.

Sadly the friend for whom I started my postcard ministry died last fall. In her last bedridden weeks at home I sent a card a day and her husband said he waited for the mail each day to get my card and read her my latest crazy message. Hopefully my experience might inspire someone else to follow suit. It is a small gesture but it feels good.