

BEING A PILGRIM

Jesus went through towns and villages proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God and healing. With him were the Twelve, and some women whom he had cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary Magdalene from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward, Susanna and several others. - Luke 8: 1-3 adapted.

What a wonderful model of pilgrimage! As I pray this exciting excerpt, I imagine Mary Potter also embracing it. Our Chapter delegates captured Mary's spirit beautifully when they chose "pilgrimage" as a challenge for each of us. I now ask myself: at my present age of 93, how can I continue to *fall into step* with Jesus and his followers, especially the women? Given the ages of most of us, it is a serious question.

May I share with you some "steps" I find helpful on my pilgrimage.

First, my love for our Congregation; I thank God daily for inviting me into Mary Potter's vision. I attend Eucharist most days. I frame my quiet times with the Lord using a well-worn book "Prayers of a Planetary Pilgrim" which aids my awareness of and prayer for the wider suffering world and its ecology. To my shame I didn't always pray the Rosary. Now it's an integral part of my day and, when possible, I walk around the lovely environment in which I live as I ponder the decades.

Being involved in scrabble, knitting and other groups in the village enables me to hear about the people in trouble. Last week I sat for a couple of hours with a dying man, while his family took a much-needed break. Time is the one commodity I have in plenty, so I enjoy "stepping up" to do the little things: phoning neighbours on their birthdays; a card in the letterbox of one who is recently bereaved or in personal suffering; offering to stay for a while with someone sick or restless ...

There is nothing special about any of this; it is the daily life of all of us as we age. I share it with you only to clarify my own sense of *pilgrimage*.

Dear Sisters and Mary Potter Family, following the Chapter challenge I'm committed anew to starting out each morning in step with Jesus and the holy women who loved him and whom he loved. This resolution may well weaken when (not if!) I become enfeebled (I am 93) but I know that Jesus my Lord is with me every hurting step of the way. I'll end with Mary Potter's gentle words, hinting at pilgrimage: *The Sister who begins and ends her day for God in union with Mary (of Nazareth) is preparing herself and others for Eternity.*

Mary Scanlon, LCM (Region of Southern Cross)