



# *Adventures*



*With*  
*Cloistered Nuns*  
My Work at the Monastery  
of Perpetual Adoration

*Bali K. Nelson*

Adventures with Cloistered Nuns:  
My Work at the Monastery  
of Perpetual Adoration

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## Introduction

For the past eight years, I have been working as an English teacher, translator, and editor for the Spanish-speaking nuns at the Monastery of Perpetual Adoration in San Francisco, California. When people find out that I work with cloistered nuns, they invariably ask me certain questions about the nuns' lifestyle and my work with them. After years of being repeatedly asked the same questions by different people, I have written down their questions and my answers in the form of an extended "interview." My hope is that in doing so, I will introduce more people to this wonderful community of sisters and their beautiful monastery.

BALI K. NELSON  
San Francisco, California  
December 2005

### 1. *Where is the monastery located?*

The monastery is located at 771 Ashbury Street in San Francisco between Frederick and Waller, right next to the French Lycée La Pérouse.

### 2. *What is the name of this order of nuns? When was it founded?*

The Sisters of Perpetual Adoration are a contemplative order devoted to adoring Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The order was founded in 18<sup>th</sup> century Italy by Mother Mary Magdalene of the Incarnation, who was declared "venerable" by John Paul II in 2001 and who is expected to be beatified some time in 2006. (Please refer to the biography *Servant of God: The Life of Mother Mary Magdalene of the Incarnation* for more information.) The order currently has twelve houses in Italy, four in Spain, one in Austria, one in Kenya, three in Chile, five in the United States, and more than sixty in Mexico.

**3. *When was the San Francisco community established? How many sisters live there?***

The San Francisco community was established in 1928 by a group of Mexican sisters fleeing the persecution of the Catholic Church by the Mexican government at that time. The community currently consists of seventeen professed nuns ranging in age from 41 to 96 and two postulants (aspiring nuns) in their 30s.

**4. *What does "cloistered" mean?***

It means that the sisters leave the monastery grounds only when necessary. The cloister provides the atmosphere necessary for their apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration. The Sisters' prayer life and daily chores "are all performed in a spirit of adoration, reparation, and love ....[The Sisters are] spiritual helper[s],... channel[s] of grace for the Church and the whole world." (From the brochure entitled *Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*.)

**5. *How do the nuns support themselves?***

The sisters support themselves through income received from benefactors, from distributing altar bread to churches in San Francisco, and from donations received for "Spiritual Bouquet" cards which they design themselves. (See the answer to question 26 for more information about Spiritual Bouquet cards.)

**6. *How much information do the nuns have about what is going on in the outside world?***

Quite a bit. Since they interact with many friends, relatives, and visitors, they receive news about the outside world through them. Whenever any kind of major event occurs, particularly if it's a tragedy such as a plane crash, natural disaster, or terrorist attack, people call the monastery asking for prayers. Since people also contact the monastery for prayers and consolation during times of personal crisis, the sisters are well acquainted with

the range of problems afflicting modern society and are far from being the naïve or sheltered people outsiders sometimes imagine them to be.

### *7. How did you meet the nuns?*

The Mother Superior, Mother Rosalba, called the intensive English school where I was teaching in downtown San Francisco in 1996 and asked if there was a female instructor at the school who would be willing to come out to the Haight Ashbury district in the afternoons and give ESL (English as a Second Language) classes to the nuns at their monastery. At that time, I was still busy working on my Master's degree, so I wasn't interested, but one of my colleagues, Kathy Bassett, interviewed for the position and took it. When she decided to move to Colorado in 1997, she recommended me as her replacement. After an interview with Mother Rosalba at the monastery, I was offered the position and accepted it.

### *8. Why would cloistered nuns need English lessons?*

Although the nuns are cloistered, they are far from being totally isolated from the outside world. They have to talk to English-speaking callers and visitors at the monastery, write letters and cards in English, and interact with English-speaking Church officials. In addition, the daily masses are in English, and some of the young women who come to the monastery for brief stays to determine if they have a vocation for the cloistered life speak only English.

### *9. What do the nuns do all day? When do they have time for English classes?*

The nuns rise at 5:30 a.m. and have a full schedule of activities which lasts until at least 9:00 p.m. every day (See Appendix A—*Monastery of Perpetual Adoration—Daily Schedule*.) Each sister who wants English lessons must get permission from the Mother Superior to take a break from her work once per week, typically from 3:30 to 5:00, in order to attend class.

**10. *What kind of lessons do you give them?***

In addition to using some standard ESL textbooks to develop basic English listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills, I also designed some customized lessons that cover language they need for some of the jobs at the monastery that require interacting with native English speakers. For the more advanced students, I sometimes bring in articles about certain current events and also help them practice reading aloud from the daily missal from which they take turns doing readings at masses. We also work on handling correspondence in English with Church officials, benefactors, and visitors. In addition to teaching English at the monastery, I also occasionally help the sisters with Spanish-to-English translations and editing projects.

**11. *Are you Catholic? Do you have special religious training that qualified you for this job?***

Although I was baptized Catholic, this was a coincidence and was not in any way a requirement for this job. When I first met the nuns, I had only been sporadically attending mass for about a year after a long period of not practicing my faith at all, and my early religious training had been so spotty that I didn't even know what Eucharistic Adoration was. My qualifications for the job were that I had a Master's degree in teaching ESL along with advanced listening and reading comprehension of Spanish; my religious background was irrelevant, and Mother Rosalba didn't even ask me about it when she first interviewed me.

**12. *Is this your only job?***

No. I still teach at an intensive English school in downtown San Francisco every morning and come to the monastery only in the afternoons. I also intermittently work with additional private students from the Russian consulate.

**13. *Where do you have classes? Are you allowed to enter the cloister?***

The nuns requested permission from the archbishop to allow me to enter the cloister. After teaching in the visitors' parlor proved too awkward, the nuns created a classroom with a blackboard and desks in the third floor attic for our classes. We usually have class there, but if I am working with a sister who needs to stay near the door and the phone on the first floor, we have class in a room on the first floor near the visitors' parlor.

**14. *What were your first impressions upon entering the cloister?***

It was really beautiful and peaceful. The monastery has very high ceilings and is decorated throughout with lovely religious paintings (many of which were done by the nuns themselves), so it reminds me of a religious version of certain rooms of the Palace of the Legion of Honor. The monastery also has several beautiful gardens, and the panoramic view of San Francisco from the third floor deck is breathtaking.

**15. *What were your first impressions upon meeting the nuns?***

Although I was really nervous about meeting cloistered nuns since I was worried that I wouldn't be able to relate well to them, they were totally friendly and charming and put me at ease right away. They looked really beautiful in their red and white habits and radiated loving kindness and hospitality. I had expected cloistered nuns to be shy and retiring, but there is quite a range of personalities at the monastery, and several of the sisters are very funny and outgoing.

**16. *Don't the nuns get claustrophobic in there? Don't you feel sorry for them because they can't go out?***

Before I actually met the nuns, I was worried that I might feel sorry for them or that the monastery might seem like some sort of prison. But that wasn't what I found at all.

First of all, the nuns are among the happiest people I know. Not everyone has a vocation for being a cloistered nun, but for those who do, the lifestyle is not an undue burden. Perhaps most people couldn't live in a cloister, but I don't think most people could handle being an ESL teacher either, given the long hours, low pay, and lack of health care or other benefits. But I love my job, so it's a joy to me, and I think that is how the nuns feel about their lives at the monastery.

I think it's very important to remember that each of them *chose* this lifestyle; it was not something that was forced on any of them, and since it takes six years to become a full-fledged nun, they had plenty of time to consider their choice before making their final vows. Before entering the monastery, most of the nuns had gone to school, dated, and trained for jobs on the outside ranging from businesswomen to postal workers to flight attendants; they had had all the experiences people on the outside typically have, and they knew what they were doing

when they decided to enter the monastery. Because they have what they value most on the inside, they don't strongly miss the lives they left on the outside.

Secondly, as I mentioned before, the monastery is very beautiful—it is full of inspirational paintings and plants, and it has several lovely gardens and a magnificent panoramic view of all of San Francisco from the third floor deck. If you're going to be a cloistered nun, this is an ideal place to do it—you are surrounded by both natural and man-made beauty everywhere you look. Despite my earlier reservations, the cloister felt more like a spiritual oasis than a prison once I actually went inside.

**17.** *What is it like for you to go back and forth between the outside world and the cloister almost every day?*

I always feel refreshed and rejuvenated by the beautiful, peaceful atmosphere at the monastery and the loving kindness of the sisters I work with. When life on the

outside is stressful, I always feel calmed by the sisters and better able to deal with any problems I am having. It is a wonderful break from the sometimes hectic urban atmosphere of the surrounding city.

**18. *How has your relationship with the nuns affected you personally?***

The nuns are family to me now.

I grew up in a fractured, unstable family. My parents married and divorced each other twice, and after their second and final divorce when I was thirteen, my two younger brothers and I saw my father only a few times, and he never provided support of any kind. My mother was not close to any of her relatives except for her parents, so the only relatives we had close contact with after our parents' divorce were our maternal grandparents. I have supported myself financially and emotionally since I was a teenager, and while attending college and graduate school, I had little regular contact with any relatives other than my maternal

grandmother. (My maternal grandfather had died during my first year of college.) I never had close contact with a big extended family and always envied people who had the experience of growing up in a caring, supportive, extended family.

By the time I finished graduate school, my grandmother and both of my parents had also died, and my brothers and I had become estranged from each other. When I met the nuns, I was totally on my own except for the close-knit group of friends I have had for many years.

When the nuns found out about my family situation, they instantly adopted me and treated me like an honorary member of their community. They made me cookies, gave me Christmas presents, and had birthday parties for me in our attic classroom. They encouraged me to confide in them whenever I had problems, and through the years I have worked with them, they have completely supported me through several very stressful experiences,

including the abrupt and unexpected closing of a school I was working at and the breakup of my marriage.

Although my brothers eventually reconciled with each other and with me and we are now getting to know each other as adults, I still consider the nuns as much my family as they are. Although I still sometimes feel sad that I didn't grow up in a stable, supportive family, that sadness is tempered now by all the years of love the nuns have given me. I imagine that very few people have the experience of being "adopted" by an entire community of cloistered nuns, so I feel really blessed to have been given this opportunity to become so close to them.

**19. *Have you ever considered joining the community?***

No. Although I love the nuns dearly, I do not have a vocation for being a cloistered nun—I have a vocation for being an ESL teacher. I would miss the joy I get

from interacting with students from all over the world through my other teaching jobs too much to be able to live happily in the cloister. The current arrangement is ideal for me, allowing me to move back and forth between the cloister and the outside world and assisting the nuns in whatever way I am able. The nuns call me "Sister Bali," and I am practically a de facto extern for the community in my current capacity.

**20. *How has your interaction with the nuns affected your personal religious beliefs and practices?***

I have not suddenly morphed into an ultra-orthodox Catholic and I still have some of the same disagreements with the Vatican's teachings which had led me to stop attending church for an extended period in my twenties. I still sometimes wonder if either Eastern Orthodoxy or high-church Anglicanism would be a better fit for me than Roman Catholicism.

Because of my exposure to the nuns, however, I now attend mass regularly and spend much more time reading about spirituality than I did before I met them. The sisters reminded me of all that is good about organized religion, and their example of Christian love, kindness, and charity reminded me of the essence of Jesus's teachings and made me want to get more involved with a parish community trying its best to cultivate these values and put them into practice in the midst of an increasingly materialistic society.

**21.** *In your view, what is the use in being a cloistered nun? Don't you think active sisters are of more service to the wider community than cloistered ones?*

It is certainly true that active orders such as the Franciscans or Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity who take care of the poor, the sick, and the dying are of immense value to society.

But I would argue that cloistered orders are equally valuable to society, though in a different way. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, there are both corporal works of mercy (such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and visiting the sick) and spiritual works of mercy (such as praying for the living and the dead, counseling the doubtful, and comforting the afflicted). The active orders focus primarily on the corporal works of mercy while the cloistered orders focus primarily on the spiritual ones.

The sisters at the Monastery of Perpetual Adoration are constantly inundated with letters, phone calls, and visits from people who are suffering from all manner of physical, emotional, and spiritual difficulties. The sisters manifest God's love to each of them and offer them comfort, counsel, and prayers.

The monastery chapel is also a favorite location for personal spiritual retreats by members of active orders such as the Do-

minicans, the Franciscans, and the Missionaries of Charity. These men and women religious come to the monastery for the spiritual rejuvenation they need in order to continue their work with the poor and suffering.

I think that corporal and spiritual works of mercy are equally important, as are the active and cloistered orders which respectively focus more on one of these two categories. The universal church is a body whose members perform different functions, all of which are necessary to achieve its overall mission.

**22.** *In your opinion, what benefits do monasteries like this one offer to the wider communities which surround them?*

I think that the sisters benefit the surrounding community in two ways: by serving as role models and by providing specific services to the community.

**23.** *In what sense do you see the nuns as role models for the wider community?*

I see them as role models first because of their moral values and the social organization of their community, and secondly because of what they can teach us about the potential role of women and the elderly in society.

**24.** *Explain how you feel their moral values and social organization make them role models for the wider community.*

I think our society has lost its moral compass and is in dire need of reordering its priorities. Many people in our society have become obsessed with money, power, social status, and physical beauty and have all but abandoned the traditional Christian ideals of generosity and brotherly love.

The gap between the rich and the poor in this country is the widest in the industrialized world, and corporate malfeasance such as the Enron scandal shows the extent

to which greed for profit at the expense of ordinary workers and consumers has become the dominant force in corporate America.

Many people in our society who work full-time are unable to adequately support their families, and increasing numbers of working Americans are without health insurance or benefits of any kind. Meanwhile, the current Administration is sponsoring tax cuts which primarily benefit the wealthiest Americans while slashing funding for crucial programs such as food stamps, Medicaid, and government-sponsored student loans to assist disadvantaged students who want to attend college. It seems that we as a society are losing any sense of ourselves as a community which has an obligation to assist and protect the most vulnerable among us, which to me is the essence of Christian ethics.

The value system within the monastery is completely different. With the exception of a few personal items, individual nuns own

nothing: everything they have is shared. In contrast to the anonymity of much of modern urban life in the surrounding city, within the cloister, each member of the community is known, loved, and valued. Previous differences in class and social status are unimportant here. The nuns' backgrounds range from heiresses who gave up lives of luxury to join the order to women who grew up in houses with no indoor plumbing or electricity, yet everyone is equal here. When the nuns talk about particular sisters they especially admire, their admiration is based on who is most generous, hardworking, pious, or kind—a huge contrast to the value system of the outside world, in which people are typically evaluated by others based on much more superficial characteristics.

Finally, while many people in American society focus exclusively on the here-and-now and avoid even thinking of their own mortality whenever possible, the nuns live their lives with an eye towards eternity. The foundress of the nuns' order, Mother Mary Magdalene of the Incarnation, "exhorted them to detach-

ment from worldly things, recommending a complete absorption in a life hidden in the love of God and devotion to Jesus Christ. Such a spirit, she said, was a guarantee of peace against the supreme and solemn moment when all the illusions of life fade away. At that moment, the only treasures are those of the spirit: the hidden virtues which one has practiced and, above all, the divine love which, unseen by others, glows within the soul" (*Servant of God: The Life of Mother Mary Magdalene of the Incarnation*, p. 50-51).

The Sisters of Perpetual Adoration have taken their foundress's words to heart. The monastery is like an intensive school for sustaining the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love and for cultivating the "twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*). After seeing how happy the nuns are and how well they treat each other and everyone they come into contact with, I cannot help but feel that the outside world

would be a much more just and peaceful place if more people outside of the cloister cultivated and practiced these virtues as well.

## **25. What do you feel their community can teach society about the role of women?**

As a Christian feminist with three young nieces and a goddaughter, the status of women in American society is a topic very near and dear to my heart. Even though I ended up choosing the traditionally feminine career of teaching, I am very glad to have grown up in an era when women could choose any career they wanted.

Although American women are closer to equality in the workplace than ever before, in other ways, I think young American women are worse off than previous generations. Although I certainly don't agree with everything Pope John Paul II said about women, I think he was right on the mark when he wrote in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* that the sexual objectification and ex-

ploitation of women has reached epidemic proportions. The American media, which now dominates the world, promotes the message that only beautiful, sexy-looking women are valuable. The extreme pressure to attain increasingly unrealistic standards of beauty has led to an epidemic of anorexia and bulimia among young girls and an explosion of plastic surgery among women of all ages (Wolf 1991; Pipher 1994; Shalit 1999). Although I can admire an actress's beauty as much as the next person and I certainly don't blame women for caring about their appearance, I think it is very sad that physical beauty is so often presented as the most important aspect of any woman. The many women who don't measure up to our culture's increasingly unrealistic standards of beauty often suffer from low self-esteem since they are "invisible" in the media and to men, and the high rates of depression and eating disorders among adolescent girls seem to suggest that they are absorbing the media's message of "Your worth is based on what you look like" (Wolf 1991; Pipher 1994; Shalit 1999).

In addition to intense pressure from the media to look beautiful and sexy, young American women are also suffering from the explosion of sexually explicit films and magazines and the effects this has had on American men's desires and expectations (Wolf 1991; Paul 2005). These media images and other consequences of the so-called "Sexual Revolution" have contributed to a dating culture in which many teenage boys and men now feel entitled to sex after a few dates and quickly dump women who don't comply with their wishes. Young women who prefer to postpone sex until they are in a committed relationship or until marriage often find themselves alone since boys and men can so easily find other women who will meet their sexual demands (Shalit 1999). We seem to have moved from "Nice girls don't" to "Nice girls must, even if they don't want to."

If most women had as much interest in casual sex and as little to lose by engaging in it as men do, the "Women can be just like men" mantra of the Sexual Revolu-

tion might make more sense, but they don't (Davis 2001). Women are, after all, the ones who get pregnant and our very high rate of unplanned pregnancies still leads to many abortions and unwanted births each year. Books such as Wendy Shalit's *A Return to Modesty* and Pamela Paul's *Pornified: How Pornography is Transforming Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families* and articles such as Jeannie Davis's *Casual Sex Leaves Many College Women Disillusioned* (published on webmd.com in September 2001) attest to the fact that many college women feel degraded and exploited by current dating practices and by the obsession with physical beauty and sexual attractiveness that goes along with them.

In contrast to the sexual objectification of women in the outside world, the monastery is a community in which women are valued for their character, their skills, and their willingness to be of service to others. Although the Catholic Church is often viewed as a totally male-dominated institution, the monastery is an all-female environment in

which the nuns elect their own leaders. As my former colleague Kathy Bassett used to say, "Inside the cloister, Jesus is the only man around!"

The nuns are very quick to recognize sisters with exceptional leadership skills, and this phenomenon has sometimes resulted in a particular sister, such as Mother Rosalba, being repeatedly re-elected as Mother Superior while also being chosen to hold leadership positions in one of the order's two international federations. Although these positions demand a lot of work from the sisters who are elected, the whole order benefits from the guidance of these exceptionally kind, intelligent, and diligent women.

## **26. What do you feel the monastery can teach society about the elderly?**

In addition to offering a glimpse into a world in which women are valued for their character, intelligence, and skills rather than their appearance, the monastery also has a lot to teach American society about how the

elderly ought to be treated. In the outside world, the abilities of elderly people are often not respected. They are often forced to retire at a certain age even if they don't want to, and they may have more difficulty than younger workers in getting new jobs due to age discrimination. With fewer opportunities to work and interact with other people, elderly people often become isolated and suffer from a perceived lack of meaning or purpose in their lives. Frail elderly people with chronic illnesses may be put in institutions where they are cared for by total strangers and may lack sufficient emotional support or social contacts.

None of these problems exist in the monastery. There is no age discrimination whatsoever, and elderly members are respected and valued for their wisdom and experience. Every member of the community, including the elderly ones, contributes to the community in whatever way she can, and nuns whose health permits continue to work into their 90s. Any nun who becomes too ill to take care of herself is lovingly cared for

by her fellow sisters, who knew her when she was younger and healthier and care for her with gratitude for her many years of service. Perhaps because their lives are imbued with a strong sense of meaning and purpose and close ties to their community, many nuns in the monastery remain amazingly vibrant well into their eighties and nineties. They are living testaments to what elderly people can do if given the opportunity and to how much better off they are when they are treated with the love and respect they deserve.

**27.** *You mentioned earlier that in addition to then nuns' value as role models, they also provide specific services to the wider community. What kind of services do they provide?*

The monastery provides the following services to the wider community:

**The Pious Union:** The monastery has a Pious Union through which lay people can share in the spiritual work of the sis-

ters. (Please refer to *The Manual of the Pious Union of Secular Adorers* [available upon request from the monastery] for more information.)

**The Chapel:** The monastery chapel is open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily for anyone who wishes to adore Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament in a beautiful, peaceful setting. The chapel is also available for baptisms, 1<sup>st</sup> communions, and private masses commemorating anniversaries or other special occasions.

**Masses:** The 7 a.m. daily masses in the monastery chapel are open to the public, as are all Holy Week services.

**Novenas:** All are welcome to join in the monastery's three annual novenas in honor of St. Joseph (March 11<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>), Corpus Christi (May or June), and Our Lady of Sorrows (September 7<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>). During novenas, the rosary is said at 2:30 p.m. and masses begin at 3:00.

### **"Spiritual Bouquet" Cards and Prayers:**

"Spiritual Bouquet" cards for all occasions are available at the monastery. (A "Spiritual Bouquet" is a collection of various prayers and sacrifices which the Sisters offer for the benefit of the card's recipient.) The beautifully designed "Spiritual Bouquet" cards include both a personal message to the recipient and a list of all the prayers the Sisters will offer for him or her. (Samples of all currently available designs for all occasions are available at the monastery.) The usual donation for each "Spiritual Bouquet" card is \$10.00. (The prayers themselves are free, of course, and the sisters will always pray for all people who ask them to regardless of whether or not they order a card!)

### **28. How can I get more information about the Monastery of Perpetual Adoration?**

You can visit the monastery's website at [www.adorejesus.org](http://www.adorejesus.org) or contact the Mother Superior of the Monastery of Perpetual Adoration at 771 Ashbury Street,

San Francisco CA 94117-4013. The previously quoted brochure entitled *Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament* is available free of charge upon request from the monastery. The biography of the order's foundress, *Servant of God: The Life of Mother Mary Magdalene of the Incarnation* is also available upon request. The sisters ask for a donation of \$7.50 for this book but will provide it free of charge to anyone for whom this poses a financial hardship. Donations received for this book will be used to help finance a planned film about the life of Mother Mary Magdalene.

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## *Monastery of Perpetual Adoration*

### **Daily Schedule**

5:30 a. m.	Rise
6:15	Divine Office (Morning Prayers)
6:35	Rosary
7:00	Mass*
7:35	Divine Office (Midmorning Prayers)
7:45	Meditation
8:20	Breakfast
8:40	Free time
9:00	Work
11:40	Examination of conscience and Divine Office (Midday Prayers)

12:00 p. m.	Lunch
12:30	Recreation with the whole community
1:30	Way of the Cross or spiritual readings with the community
1:45	Free time
2:45	Divine Office (Midafternoon Prayers)
3:00	Individual spiritual readings
3:30	Work
5:00	Divine Office (Office of Readings and Evening Prayer)
5:45	Work
6:00	Dinner
6:30	Cleaning the monastery
7:40	Recreation with the whole community
8:30	Divine Office (Night Prayers)
9:00	Grand Silence
40	

(Holy adoration is continuous throughout the day and night, with the sisters taking turns in individual shifts. Each sister is assigned an hour each day to adore the Lord on behalf of all people.)

\*Open to the public in the monastery chapel at 771 Ashbury Street



*The main entrance to the monastery (2005)*



*A painting inside one  
of the two 'visitors'  
pavilions (2005)  
(The grille at the right  
marks the cloister  
boundary).*



*The inside door marking the entrance  
to the cloister (2005)*



*The hallway just inside the cloister (2005)*



*The monastery chapel (1995)*



*The community in 2000:*

*Front Row (L to R): Sisters Cristo Rey, Amada, Josefa, Bernardita, and Mercedes.*

*Middle Row (L to R): Sisters Carmen, Feliciana, Clara, San Pedro, Angeles, and Eucharist.*

*Back Row (L to R): Sisters Luz and Martha; Mother Rosalba; Sisters Consolation, Alma and Betty.*

*In front of Sister Alma: Sister Imelda.*



*A procession in the chapel (2000)  
(L to R): Sisters Bernardita, Betty, Carmen,  
San Pedro, and Imelda*



*San Francisco Archbishop  
William Levada (center)  
with Sister Amada (left)  
and Mother Rosalba (right)  
at the monastery in 2005*

*The monastery garden (2005)*



*(L to R): Sisters Alma and San Pedro,  
Mother Rosalba, and Sisters Eucharist and Luz  
in the monastery garden (2000)*



*Inside the third floor "classroom"  
(Christmas 1997)*

*Standing: Sisters Carmen, Martha,  
Cristo Rey and Feliciano  
Seated: Bali Nelson*



*The view of San Francisco  
from the third floor of the monastery (2005)*



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