

Monastery of Saint Clare
920 Centre Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

To: The women who are embracing the charism of St. Clare today, and to all those interested in the lives of Poor Clares who have faithfully lived it.

Re: Letter of introduction to our Federation Project: *The Poor Sisters of St. Clare. An Anthology.*

The Fall 2017 edition of *Tidings* brought good news, indeed. The call from our sisters desiring to learn more about our Poor Clare Saints and Blesseds was music to my ears. It has been my great joy to respond to your request.

While the Saints and Blesseds of our Order received most attention, in response to your request, how could I stop there? Martyrs needed to be included because they are courageous Clares on fire with the Holy Spirit who sacrificed their lives for the faith. Those recognized by the Church as Venerable or Servant of God need to be included because they, too, were holy Poor Clares, like our own Mother Mary Magdalen Bentivoglio. We wouldn't want to omit her name from any collection of saintly Poor Clares, would we? Then there are others I have called, Notable. These are dedicated Clares, who may not yet be canonically recognized by the Church, but who were outstanding in their love for our form of life and their contribution to our Order's history. Finally, there is the witness of Poor Clares who nourished the spiritual life of the Church throughout eight centuries through their writings. From the first letters that passed between our holy Mother St. Clare and St. Agnes of Prague, up to the efforts of contemporary Poor Clare Writers, the tradition continues. It takes all these forms of witness together to convey a true picture of Poor Clare life.

After praying about the purpose of the project – which is to nourish our members with the heart and substance of our unique Franciscan/ Clarian way of life – it seemed that the most inspirational aspects of their lives would be: (1) the vocation story of each Poor Clare, and (2) how she lived out the charism of St. Clare. These are the focal points of these short biographies.

It is my hope and prayer that these efforts will be a fitting response to your desire to know more about our sisters around the world, and in every age, who have faithfully passed the Clare candle down to us. I offer simply what I had time to do; the work is actually, endless. I must leave the rest to your dedicated hearts and hands.

May the Spirit of our holy Mother Clare inspire us with the great love she had for her sisters, “both present and to come”.

Blessings and joy!

Sr. Mary Francis Hone, O.S.C
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Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Would you like to help? Here’s how.

1. We invite and encourage those in formation to consider studying the resources and writing one, or more, of the unfinished mini- biographies. The structure of this book will serve as a model upon which to base your own contributions.
2. The process of writing a mini- biography requires that you find the most reliable resource material, take notes that comprise both that person’s vocation story, as well as aspects of daily life that reflect how this person lived the Gospel spirit of St. Clare, and then write it in your own words.
3. We would like to add your name and monastery location to your contribution.
4. The loose leaf form will allow your contributions to be inserted.
5. Because there are a few names on each page, resources might continue from one page to the next. Additions might need to be placed at the end of each section until another printing is done.
6. An editor is needed to maintain the style and thrust of this project. For the time being, I have been asked to serve as editor/contact person for this project. Therefore, please send your contribution to this e-mail address: www.mfhoneosc@gmail.com

Some of the other unfinished work in this project.

1. Someone may know of other Poor Clares that should be represented in this collection. I have a few more I did not get to, and there are other names recorded in Franciscan Martyrologies not included here.
2. There are more contemporary Poor Clare writers, and more recent publications that could be included.
3. Pictures can be found on line or in the books cited in the resource material. One can also write to monasteries in other countries for pictures and information.
4. In a book intended for English readers, names and places should be cited in English. This remains to be done. For the most part, they have been left in the language of the source.
5. In many cases the particular branch the person observed is not given. Monasteries changed affiliations through the years. Research is needed for this.
6. Some of these entries may turn out to be Conceptionists (O. Conc.). If you come across any, please inform me so I can correct my lists. They are often known as Poor Clares, but they had the Rule of St. Clare for only about 12 years, when they composed their own Rule.
7. Please let me know if you find that someone listed as Saint, or Blessed, etc., is not such according to Vatican records, so I can correct this.
8. And, I have a dream: to make a list of all the books about Poor Clares, and all the writings by Poor Clares, throughout 8 centuries.

Note:

It has been said that Saint Alphonsa was a Poor Clare. Although her community has been referred to as a Clarist Congregation, she actually belonged to a Franciscan Third Order Active Congregation that has schools and orphanages, where Alphonsa taught for a year before her illness. The booklet published does not mention her being a Poor Clare, so I did not include her.