

Dear friends,

I am so excited to have this chance to write you all. I really wish I could write to you each individually, that would probably take me a "letter-writing week" to accomplish, and as it stands, I only have one letter writing day a month (and the chance to write three friends on that day). So, a note to the group will have to suffice. ☺

I heard from some of you that you saw the picture from our entrance day on Sept. 5th that my mom emailed out. It was a wonderful day full of so much grace and so many blessings—I thank you for all your prayers on that day and since! As you saw, I entered with 9 other women from all over the country (From California, to New Jersey, to Connecticut). We range in age from 22 (just out of college) to 31, and have been employed in various fields (construction management, high-school counseling, nursing). Several of us were also working in ministry (FOCUS, NET, & Generation Life). I am so blessed to be on this adventure of postulancy with these incredible women of God. Their faith, courage and love of God (and each other and me!) inspire me every day. (Aside: The Sisters of Life write and mail out a great quarterly newsletter, and the Christmas edition will have a page featuring, you guessed it, the new postulants! If you'd like to receive the newsletter, let me know and I can have them put you on the mailing list) Another aside, I have a prayer request for you: my fellow postulant Virginia's sister (Ellen) has been suffering from some health issues which recently required a difficult surgery for her. Please keep Ellen in your prayers as she recovers, and Virginia, too, as this is a difficult time to be away from her sister and family.

The week after entrance, we went to Washington D.C. for a Eucharistic Congress, hosted by the CMSWR (an umbrella organization of women religious, i.e. Sisters); the Congress focused on Vocation and there were wonderful talks on marriage, consecrated life, and the priesthood. It was a tremendous blessing (and very exciting) to see some of you there. A couple of weeks ago, I went to Kingston, Canada, with another postulant (Julie) and 2 Sisters (Sr. John Mary and Sr. Catherine Peter) for a "Busy Student's Retreat" at Queens University. We stopped at Auriesville, NY, on the drive up to visit the Shrine of the North American Martyrs. The shrine was beautiful and very moving. My favorite part was a walk into the ravine where one of the Jesuit brothers was martyred and buried. The walk was lined with signs telling the story of his martyrdom, as written by his friend and companion St. Isaac Jogues who was also later martyred nearby. If you've never been and are nearby (it's less than half an hour west of Albany, NY), I highly recommend a visit. I couldn't believe that I never made it over there while at Williams.

The shrine and the drive, and Kingston itself were also beautiful and very scenic, especially as the changing leaves were at peak. At Queens, the retreat consisted of 2 days, with mass and lunch at midday and then a holy hour (Adoration) and a talk in the evening. The students also had the opportunity to meet with the Sisters individually if they wanted to. The Sisters gave the talks, and Julie and I got to lead the holy hours. Julie brought her guitar and the chaplain of Queens (actually Sr. John Mary's own biological brother, Fr. Raymond) rented a cello for me to play. So, we had some praise and worship (with Julie on guitar and vocals and myself on the cello). We also each did a short scripture reflection. Apparently, the music was a hit, because we've been subsequently booked for other Sisters of Life functions (i.e. retreats at our retreat house in CT).

