



# *The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble . . .*

*Nah. 1:7a NIV*

Canaan in the Desert, February 2006

Our dear Friends,



Maybe you have sometimes wondered why there is a little Canaan in the Desert on the edge of the Phoenix Mountain Preserve? – How did the Sisters get these ten acres of beautiful desert land? – What is the story behind them leaving their original place in Darmstadt, Germany to settle in far away Arizona? There are a number of good answers to these questions. But they would not touch on the inner reason for the existence of this little piece of land. The real answer has to do with God and with His longing for places dedicated to Himself, places where He is the King and Ruler, the Source of our joy, provision and protection . . . places of refuge.

In the sixties, when Mother Basilea saw waves of lawlessness rolling in and covering our countries, she wrote:

*In these dark, godless times of ours  
centers and homes are needed  
that manifest God's kingdom of love.  
And a joy-filled life stemming from repentance  
is the key to this kingdom of love.*

At that time God called Canaan in the Desert into being.

Early in the morning already our parking lot is sometimes full. Is this because a group has come? Yes, sometimes. But mostly it is individual people we never saw before. Who invited them? Why are they coming? Here are a few comments, recently shared in notes or in personal talks, which provide an answer.

*“Just driving onto your property brings a sense of peace and rest over one’s soul.” ♦ “Our group visited your Garden and Chapel. It was such a calming and healing experience that we all vowed to visit again with other friends...” ♦ “The Garden is my safe haven and I thank God that He gave me this little piece of heaven.” ♦ “The world out there and this place here . . . it’s a tremendous difference! Such a peace, incredible!” ♦ “I come here often, this place has become my refuge.”*

How good, how merciful is God! He prepares places - “centers and homes” - where His children can find refuge in times of need or trouble.

Of course not everyone who is seeking for more of God can come out personally to Canaan. But receiving something as small as a bookmark or leaflet can bring a message of comfort. Mother Basilea’s writings continue to touch many lives. Especially in prisons all over the country God’s Spirit is working. May we share a few examples?

*“I am in the process of trying to get God back in my life.”*

Carol (not her real name) writes this on one of the cheap postcards that the prison supplies. She seems to be young and begs, “Do you have any suggestions to help me?” It’s one voice out of so many. Practically daily we receive correspondence from inmates showing that there is a field ripe for harvest out there.

“I just got the books today. I am barely finding out who God is and I like what I am learning about him.” A few days later Michael writes another card, “I finished *Realities*. This book gave me new hope. I didn’t realize sin puts a barrier between us and God. Now I have a new understanding of how prayer works. Thanks again.” - God bless you, Michael!

“You don’t even know me,” writes a young man, “and yet you sent me some wonderful reading material to keep my spirit alive.” ♦ And Anton wants more booklets because “they cover many of the things I am having problems with. I continue to read and study them.”

It is amazing what even the little bookmarks can do! David writes, “I got a hold of a book marker in here and it cheers me up so much. Around here there is no color or beauty. Do you think you could send me a few more and I will share.” We mailed a little package with various kinds of colorful bookmarks, *Praying Our Way Through Life* and a personal note.

Roberta is known as the “blessed bookmarker lady” in her institution. She apologizes that she needs a new supply. “But if you could see the faces of the people I hand a marker to, you would be so happy too, just like me. – Finally I got to keep one for myself!”

Sometimes a special encouragement arrives. Such as when a young man asks for the book *Repentance – the Joy-filled Life* because “I just got out of jail and need some guidance.” Or when a few ex-prisoners send us a gift from the little they have.



A heartfelt *thank you* to the Prison Chaplains for their selfless ministry. They order materials from here – over 200,000 pieces for Christmas – make them available in their institutions and let us know that Mother Basilea’s literature is “extremely helpful” and “very popular.”

## *When the Lord is our Refuge He also Provides*

Yes, He does provide. There are always new stories of how He, the Almighty God, is also a Father and cares for His children in amazing ways. No need is too small or too big. We here on Canaan have needs, small and big and the Father provides for them all, whether food, funds, vehicles, etc. – or volunteers! We need a lot of help from others and only Heaven can organize it.



As an example consider our grounds. Usually Sister Bliss, assisted for only a few hours a week by a young man, does all the necessary work. Spring however is an extra busy time as every gardener knows. But spring is also the time when groups come daily – especially during Lent. They want guided tours through the Prayer Garden. There are the Kindergarteners, the classes from Christian schools in the Valley, seniors and Bible study groups — a great variety. And Sister Bliss has a heart and the right words for each of them. But she cannot do both, garden work and tours.

Who other than the Lord could bring Hanna all the way from Sweden, every year for ten years now, always at the busiest time of the year? With enthusiasm she pushes the wheelbarrow and knows all that needs to be done. And Sister Bliss' happiness overflows.

Who other than the Lord could find a man like Curt W.? He loves to play golf when it is 120° outside! and now, all year round, he takes care of the Fountain of the Father's Goodness. This frees our Sister Daniela and also spares her many headaches! FATHER, we thank You!



We have many more stories of God's provision, for instance Veronica, our dear house mother from Texas, who makes Jesus' Delight, our guesthouse, a real home! But let us close with a story that shows how no need is out of the range of God's possibilities.



*“At least I am able to work on something about Jesus”*

Have you visited our website at [kanaan.org](http://kanaan.org)? If not, it's worth your time. On the Homepage to the left, you will see some national flags, including that of the USA. By clicking on this flag, an exciting, brand-new site will pop up!

Would you like to know the story of how our Phoenix branch found their own webmaster - and he lives just a few blocks away?

A few weeks ago, S. Daniela called KXEG radio station here in Phoenix (they air our daily five-minute programs) for information about making the radio programs available on our website. She was referred to a young man named Kurt S. After learning who we are and what we need, he gave us some quotes. Not ten minutes later, we received an E-mail from Kurt saying:

“It did not click in my mind until we were off the phone that I have been to Canaan in the Desert before! My mom used to teach a Good News Bible Club, and we came out there on field trips quite a few times. I would very much like to work with you to develop an attractive website. I would like this to be non-profit for me, as more of a ministry project...”

How happy we are that the Heavenly Father chose such a dear Christian professional — one who was hired by a large computer company even before graduating from college!

Just a few days ago he wrote: “I love being able to do this website with you and the Sisters of Mary. As I said before, it’s exactly what I was looking for in regards to a small ministry I can do. It’s not much, but at least



I am able to work on something about Jesus instead of always trying to make other people money!”

To create a website is a big challenge, as we have already learned! It takes knowledge, planning, imagination and MUCH time! – It’s an ongoing project. Now, at the beginning, almost daily new suggestions, corrections and updates are being sent to our dear webmaster Kurt. He fixes everything excellently and – practically overnight. Our biggest joy is that you are now able to listen to Mother Basilea’s radio programs and view her video messages Online ([www.kanaan.org](http://www.kanaan.org)). FATHER, we thank You!

In closing we want to thank you, our dear friends, for your great faithfulness through so many years. May the Father provide abundantly for all your needs in this new year. And may your homes be blessed in being places of refuge for many.

With love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

*The Sisters of Mary*

P.S.

Enclosed in this mailing you will find the announcement of our first DVD – the Service of Repentance in Denver, fall 2004 (also available as video). We hope that many of you will want to share in this experience which can mean so much for our inner lives. We cannot shake off the impression that the relationship between Christians and the Jewish people is high on God’s agenda in our times.

As we finish this letter we heard from friends that they are excited about the DVD. It is passed around at their church and is scheduled for a church meeting.