Quilting for Hospice Patients
By Veronica Ward, Covenant Companion

After all the work I did as a Pastoral Associate to support the dying and their families, I really thought I would volunteer for Hospice when I retired. It wasn't until I stopped working that I realized how burned out I was.

I have sewn all my life, having an addiction to fabric! And I fell in love with quilting when I took a class in 1989. After retiring, I soon found that I had several quilts that I wanted to donate and I gave them to a local hospital. Then a lady I was quilting for told me about her work with Hospice and the fact that this Hospice has the only children's program in the city. I have a soft spot for teenage boys who tend to get forgotten, so I try to think of them when sewing.

Some quilts are made from scraps given to me, some are my own bits and pieces and some are carefully put together with color and fabrics that I like. The Wheaton Franciscan Ministry Fund helped me with a donation to cover batting and backing which enabled me to finish several tops. I have a long-arm machine in my daughter's basement so I can do a quilt from start to finish. My hope is to donate one quilt a month this year.... we will see how well I do. I have several tops already done and today started searching men's shirting fabrics as I prepare to do a man's quilt!

Several years ago, when praying in any form recognizable to most people became meaningless, a friend suggested that quilting was my prayer and this made all the difference. I join the work of my hands to the hopes of those who will receive the quilts I make. It does not matter that I do not know their names or situations. What I do know is that the quilts that they use during their last days or months become precious keepsakes for their families. Three years ago, a good friend was diagnosed with cancer and—when gifted with a quilt—wanted to tuck it away and keep it safe. But we urged her to use it during treatments and while dozing on the couch. After she died her husband continued to sleep downstairs under her quilt. Quilters often say: “Those who sleep under a quilt, sleep under a blanket of love.”
This quilt went to Reg in July 2018 and she died in December 2018.

Harper & her sister Lila with the quilts I made them.

My favorite scrap quilt.

This most recent quilt went to hospice and became the first donation of 2022.