Sharing God's Presence
by Sister Julie Walsh, Wheaton Franciscan for 67 years

Recently I found two incidents most interesting in my life. First was when Carol Sejda, Covenant Companion, suggested that we share an experience which caused us to be more conscious of the presence of God, who is abiding within us. At the same time I read scriptures, specifically Tobit 5:10. In this part of the story of Tobit, he is lamenting to Rafael, whom he just met, that he was blind. "I cannot see the light of heaven, but must remain in the darkness like the dead who no longer see the light!" And the young man responded: "Take courage! God's healing is near; so take courage!"

I have had many experiences/stories in my life. Some I remember, some I have forgotten. This one I remember.

Some years ago, myself and a Sister companion were on a bus trip to the Grand Canyon. At one of the bus stops, a lady boarded the bus. She was traveling alone since she was a widow. I will call her Helen (not her real name but for the sake of privacy). We had a pleasant discussion with her concerning how awesome was the beauty and vastness of our country. She shared that she was not of our religious denomination.

One of the evenings we stopped for dinner. The tables were set for two at each table. Helen asked to sit with us and we made room for her. The next morning she did not come to breakfast, nor answer her phone. She was sleeping soundly in bed. But the sleep was the sleep of death. She died during the night. Helen's sudden, unexpected death caused us to reflect: How conscious are we of the abiding presence of God within us?

Many persons are aware of God's abiding presence in their lives, but some do not talk about it. Perhaps they are hesitant to share. The reasons may be diverse. Sharing may be impacted by a person's cultural, religious, ancestral beliefs and values. Further this sharing is a deep spiritual expression of God's abiding presence. Just as Tobit was reminded by Rafael, we should recognize and remember God's abiding presence in our lives.