**The reason behind the Women for All Seasons Cookbook**

**The Rosebud Reservation**

*This book is dedicated to Debbie Theresa Marie Blacklance, a native American woman of the Lakota Sioux Tribe on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota.*

I first heard about Debbie several years ago from my son, Brendan, who has been going there for the last seven summers to take part in their Ceremonial Sundance. He has helped them with permaculture gardening and has made them an Earthen Oven. Three Christmases ago he told me about a woman there, Debbie, who takes care of twelve children. Two are her own. The others have just come to her door because there is no food at home nor safety, as their parents are alcoholics or drug addicts. They are abusive and contribute nothing to the care of their children as it goes to drugs. The kids attend an Indian School during the week, are bussed to her house on Friday afternoon and taken back to school on Sunday night. She feeds and shelters them, washes their clothes and helps with homework. She loves them like a mother, and they call her Mom. I so admire anyone who takes care of children who suffer through no fault of their own. I wanted to help, so I sent her a check for $250. I just felt like I should. The kids sent me a thank you card that they made, and she sent me a list of items, accounting for every penny of that $250. The items included shoes, socks, underwear, laundry detergent, dish soap, etc. They consider these special gifts, and she said it was the first time in their lives they had ever received a personal present for Christmas! It was while our Bible Study group was studying the Documents of Vatican II that I came across this paragraph in The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes about our responsibility to protect the dignity of our fellow human beings. In practical terms, this means that everyone must consider his or her neighbor, without exception, "another self." Each person must take into account first of all the life of each other person and the means necessary to live with dignity. In our times, this means we have a special obligation to make ourselves the neighbor of every person without exception and to actively assist them when we meet them in the path of our lives. This includes old people abandoned by all, foreigners in our midst, refugees, children without parents and hungry people. Native American reservations are some of the poorest areas of this country. Rosebud is the poorest of the poor. In our discussion of this, I shared with the women what I had started to do for Debbie. Immediately they wanted to help. They gave me money so I could continue buying basic items (laundry detergent, shampoo, dish soap, etc.) through Amazon on a monthly schedule. I was then able to send other things on her humble wish list, like towels, pots and pans, plastic glasses and plates, and a large cast Iron skillet. When Christmas came around, they took on, as a project, making sure that each child got a wrapped personal present of their own. We have done this for two years now. The generosity of these women amazes me. (continued on the back) Now, in the midst of a world pandemic, the children's needs have only increased. Debbie, who had a job lost it when everything closed. She has not received unemployment yet, and she is quarantined with twelve kids to feed and bills to pay. The kids have been home with her since March. We have helped her with money for electric and phone bills as well as food. They are so grateful. The kids especially get so excited about opening boxes from “out there” out of their own small world. They have never been cared for like this before. Ever. In the Indian culture, the act of giving gifts has a special meaning. If you give to help them in any way, you become family. She calls me Sister and the kids call me Auntie. Now they have many Aunties. Rose Bradley