

## **SISTERS BOARD THE ONRUST**

*by Sister Mary Ellen Putnam*

On June 11, 2009, Sisters Annette Allard, William Aloysius, Mary Rose Fox and I boarded the *Onrust*.

We left the Provincial House under dark threatening clouds with picnic supper in hand and drove south on the Thruway to Catskill, NY. The *Onrust* was scheduled to lead several tall ships up the Hudson River from New York City Harbor after participating in a quadricentennial celebration. An ad in our local paper, The Times Union (Albany), stated that at 6:00 p.m., the ships would arrive. We were ready and waiting at 5:00 p.m., sitting in our folding chairs right next to the railing. A fire boat shot off beautiful streams of water as we sat eating our supper. I'd never seen fireworks with water, and it was breathtaking. We waited and waited and at 7:00 p.m., the Halfmoon sailed into sight coming from the North. "Oh, no, where is the *Onrust* and why isn't she coming from the South?" Mary Rose checked with her cousins and friends from the Catskill area and was told the ships had arrived there at 4:00 p.m. and the *Onrust* was docked fifteen miles north in Athens, NY. "Athens, here we come!"

Wow, there she was tied to the pier! St. Anthony found us a perfect parking space and we hurried over to the fence. Gioia Blix, the *Onrust* captain, stood on deck talking to a young couple with a baby. I began to yell, "Gioia, it's the sisters; it's the sisters." She began to wave, so I motioned "Could we come aboard?" When she waved a "yes," we were bursting with excitement!

Gioia told two men to make sure the boat was secured, and they helped us up the ladder. I was the first CSJ to board *our* boat. Words cannot express my feelings as my feet touched the deck. Four years ago, at a Home/Land Committee meeting, I had asked what would become of our fallen Swamp Oak. Here I was, standing on deck pieces of our tree. I said a prayer of thanks, feeling humbled by this privilege. After Sisters Mary Rose, Annette and William boarded, we were shown every piece and part of the deck, and all our questions were answered.

Isn't it wonderful that we allowed our tree to take on a whole new life? In our giving, we have been gifted with a beautiful boat named the *Onrust*!



*Sisters William Aloysius Fitzpatrick, Mary Rose Fox, Mary Ellen Putnam and Annette Allard aboard the Onrust*