

The Nun Interview; Pebbles In Your Shoes  
Would Sister Sensible Shoes approve of your footwear?  
Will "God" approve of your answer?  
By  
Michael Salinas  
With  
Sister X-plosion!  
Of  
The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence

**MS. What is your sister name and how does it best describe you?**

SX. Sister X. Though her full name is Sister X-plosion! The name describes me because Sister X is explosive material. She deals only in truth, and where lies and manipulations or shades of truth are concerned you run the risk of detonating her. Pushing the right buttons... or the wrong buttons... can be a dangerous act with Sister X. It can be heaven or hell, whichever you choose. I chose the name because I was very angry when I took my vows... angry at a shameless system that would allow so wonderful men to die of AIDS. When I retire from the AIDS Crusades, I will take the name X-tasy... she is X-plosions polar opposite. I pray that soon I will have earned the peace to retire explosion!

**MS. How do you perceive nuns? What virtue, if any, do you especially admire in a nun? What do you think is the most important virtue you possess as a nun?**

SX. Dominican nuns taught me from kindergarten through the sixth grade and have always remained powerful and fascinating icons to me. Humility is a virtue I greatly admire... a good nun works for the greater good outside the demands of her own ego. I wish I could say patience is my own most important virtue, but I constantly struggle with impatience. Astrologically I am an Aries, therefore, I have a great desire to control things. Also I'm like the romantic Englishwoman.... All she wants is everything, now. Loyalty, without question is my strongest virtue. Sister X is a very passionate and committed nun.

**MS. What was your earliest brush with religion?**

SX. Kindergarten under the care of Sister Imelda. She was older and very kind and gentle, like a grandmother. I remember being very frightened though secretly drawn to her my first day of school. At noontime she told me to go home for lunch since I had not brought a lunch. I thought she was sending me away because I had done something wrong or that she didn't like me. I went home and hid in the back of my mother's closet for the rest of the day crying, they had to search to find me. They decided I was too young to start kindergarten and that I should wait a year. The next year I was less afraid of Sister Imelda... she told me I was a holy child like on the holy cards.

**MS. Do you believe you had a calling as a nun?**

SX. I believe so, but I wasn't fully aware of it until quite late in my life. I did not set out to become a nun. I had the qualities necessary, but if your calling is that of a nun, and you become a nun, it can be difficult to find a convent that will take. Certainly I never laid any plans to become a nun. Who could have known

that such a radical order as the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence would emerge and not discriminate on the basis of gender. Chance, I will say, graciously favored my prepared mind and I found my way into the convent.

**MS. In the Catholic view, things are polarized. Nuns are black and white from wimple to shoes and things are good and bad, right and wrong, heaven and hell. Do you find a polarity in your experience as a Sister of Perpetual Indulgence?**

SX. There are many things in my experience as a nun that mirror the polarity of life. I'm a fascinated admirer of the great mythologist Joseph Campbell, who believed to live on earth means to live in a world of polarity and dichotomy. As far as the nun thing goes, the most difficult polarization for me to deal with is not, as one might think, the male/female equation, but rather Sister X being out of the real world, heaven bound, and John being so grounded, his feet thoroughly mired in the muck. It gets confusing because Sister X has a worldly mission, but her head is in the stars.

**MS. Drag queens continue to breed controversy within and without the gay community. Are the Sisters drag queens?**

SX. Yes, and isn't it absurd. Drag queens have always existed in every culture throughout time. Drags as entertainers, USO girls, cheerleaders, and they serve many other roles in our community like fundraisers and funraisers, but I think their basic function is the personification of mother earth. Drag queens are generally very wise, elders of the community. Drags introduced me in the gay world, and I must say, they gave me a sense of community and a feeling that I belonged. Drag queens have always espoused celebration of diversity. They honor our uniqueness and have always stood for liberation of the soul, the imagination, and expression of the self. Drag queens taught me not to be conformist when I came out. The gay white boys today miss the whole point. Yet, they have freedoms they would not have today if it had not been for the commitment and balls the drag queens showed twenty-five years ago at Stonewall. Assimilationist gays are fighting for acceptance and civil rights. The really Queer gay people, like drag queens, are fighting for liberation... the right to be who they are and express it in whatever way they choose.

**MS. What about the sisters?**

SX. Well, I'm a drag queen, but we have members who do not consider themselves to be. Certainly, the women in our group don't. as a group, however, we fight for the rights of drag queens. And, more importantly, we honor them as the true leaders and pacemakers of our movement. I'm proud to be a drag queen, though most people don't put us into that genre. I think with drag queens there is always the question of sexuality and deviation from an acceptable norm. nuns by tradition have asexual images. I think the Sisters are excused their rather flamboyant drag because they are more clearly a theatrical expression and are anchored in the good works they do for the community, raising money and awareness.

**MS. Assimilationists in the gay political movement tend to want to push drag queens, people of color, women and "queers" to the background and present an image of gay people to America that they have deemed more "normal" and acceptable. As an unusual gay person who is frequently in the medias eye, how do you feel about representing the gay community and issues to the American public?**

SX. I feel fine because it's proven that I'm very adept at it. The Sisters have always enjoyed tremendous access to the media. We have seen it as a gift and a great responsibility, that's why we have so educated ourselves about the issues and the nuances. I always invoke Sister Mary Media of our order, she understood the importance of media manipulation. Certainly, I have had experiences where an Assimilationist has tried to push me to the background because he didn't feel I was appropriate. The irony is that it's usually a boy young enough to be my child and when he was running around in diapers, years away from expressing his gay sexuality. I was in the streets fighting for the freedom he enjoys today, and I did it by creating a rapport with the media. I think the assimilationists are confused and misguided. If what they want is to present an image and a behavior of which heterosexuals will approve, then they should just do it. I don't think the liberation part of our movement is for them... they want to conform to someone else's idea of who they are. If their desire is, and they have the attributes to blend in with the straight culture, then they should just do it. . they are the ones who should step to the back... it's not their fight. And if they think becoming an ass kissing conformist will get them their civil rights, history doesn't bear that out... we have been closeted for centuries and all we have to show for it is deep seated layers of oppression of our spirits and our lives. Certainly women, people of color, transgenders, drag queens, and the truly "queer" don't have the option of blending, nor, I think, the desire to do so. So you see, it's really our fight, that's why we have led it.

**MS. Some say you trivialize important issues with your garish and outrageous costumes and theatricks, while others say you elevate and make the message accessible through performance art. How would you answer your detractors?**

SX. That I'm not a fool. The Sisters have been doing what they do for more than thirteen years. If we weren't getting a positive response, we would stop doing it. I'm not into abuse and if that was what I was getting, I would probably stop. The best educators have always been entertainers. The best nuns are the ones who are teachers. We have very successfully combined those elements. We are social and political educators, as well as spiritual teachers. I definitely feel we make the message accessible. AIDS and issues of sexuality are complicated and difficult for anyone to deal with... we can make learning fun. The London Times described what we do as "... The art of making activism recreation."

**MS. The BBC stated that some Christians find the Sisters "SHOCKING AND OFFENSIVE!" What is the most SHOCKING AND OFFENSIVE response you might have for those who feel that way?**

SX. Jesus was a faggot who fought organized religion and government; he was an anarchist. I'm sure he sucked a little dick in the desert. Christian bigots have no credibility as far as I'm concerned; they've practiced genocide for two thousand years and should be more than shocked and offended; they should be punished. I'm not seeking their approval; I'm trying to shock them to their senses. If they are offended then they need to deal with that. My fight is to free the words of Jesus from the mouths of bigots and free the rights I am guaranteed by the constitution of this country... how arrogant that Christians hold our civil rights and presume to hold our souls hostage, lest we conform to their desires. I believe strongly in not only the separation of church and state, but the separation church and religion. We were given not only our freedom "of", but freedom "from" religion in this country by our very insightful and "queer" founding fathers. Gays and lesbians must be committed to fighting for those rights in any way they can. I've chosen "guerilla" theater and if Christians are shocked and offended, I can only say that I'm equally shocked and

offended at their arrogance and their assumption of divinity. Christians accept all of creation as god's handiwork, yet they assume their own divinity by saying homosexuality is not part of creation, but an aberration. They are truly hypocrites.

## **Part 2**

### **MS. How important is the uniform? Do you want to be buried in your habit?**

SX. The habit is essential because it invokes all that traditional nuns stand for. Our habits have become very abstract at times, but that's just our twist, we're nuns of the future. I will be cremated and my habit passed on to a novice, but I do think it would be appropriate to be buried in it... it represents who I've become and that of which I am proudest in my life. Sister X has been a gift in my life and I feel blessed to be her.

### **MS. Are there aspects of life that your Sister persona is better at and how has that been an educating experience to you?**

SX. X is better at everything than John (my given name) because she has all of John's experience, talent and drive coupled with her own passion and insight. She also has no past to bog her down, nor a future to confuse her. She is a creation of the immediate and completely spontaneous. She has great insight, not to mention her clear understanding of her purpose and mission and her spiritual destiny. Sister X has inspired John and freed him completely... everything important that John has learned is Sister X; everything important that Sister X has done has empowered John.

### **MS. How has being a sister affected your sex life? Cruising life? Romance? How OUT are you about being a sister? Would you tell a man on your first date? Third date? Or would you treat it like a reform school background?**

SX. My lover of thirteen years, Bruce Collette, died two years ago. He was madly in love with Sister X, as she was with him. His last words to me were "you're Sister X now. I want you to go on helping the community." Beyond my relationship with Bruce, I am most proud of in my life of what Sister X has accomplished. AIDS has affected my sex life, not my vows. Our most important vows are expiation of stigmatic guilt and promulgation of universal joy, which includes sex. Sister X, though, is dedicated to safe sex education and condom use and distribution in junior and senior high schools. She makes the boys take a Condom Saviour Vow. I would have no hesitation telling a man on a first date that I'm Sister X. I would only be interested in dating a man who could embrace Sister X for the truly remarkable creation that she is. I am no longer sexually aggressive in my life and men generally don't follow through on passes they make at provocative nuns, but the game is fun. Celibacy is perhaps a virtue to which X also aspires.

### **MS. There have been Sisters in the past who haven't been able to handle their experience as a Sister in positive ways. What, if any, negative impact has your Sister persona had on your life? How do you avoid it?**

SX. Sister Boom Boom, I think, is the classic example. Poor dear, she drank and drugged herself nearly to oblivion. Clearly her nun persona was too big for her to handle, she left the convent to become a media

critic of the Sisters. The early Sisters tended to debauchery, but then the times called for that, the Sisters personified the extreme decadence of gay men in the late seventies and early eighties. Personally, X has been only a positive influence in my life. If there is a negative impact, it's that I would rather be X, which leaves John (myself) waiting for his body to be returned a lot. I avoid it being a problem by forcing John to continue to create and promote his own abilities separate from X. My challenge is to teach both John and X to pull in tandem like a perfectly matched team of horses; it's the same synchronization Bruce (my lover) and I had, now John and I are learning to do it.

**MS. What is the ratio of personal and public good in your work as a Sister?**

SX. They are mirror images of each other. The more I do for the community, outside my own ego, the more I am internally as a human being. Conversely, the better person I'm becoming makes a better nun. The public and personal aspects are symbiotic and they feed on each other.

**MS. Some describe the sisters as "clown nuns" ... how has your work as a sister carried on the traditional function of the circus clown?**

SX. It's the real fun part. Our colorfully painted whiteface tradition definitely is an expression of the "clown" in us. We come down the line of the court jester, circus clowns and mimes. In the circus or at a rodeo, when a performer gets hurt, they send in the clowns to distract the audience and safeport them back to the lighter side. I have performed that function so many times during the AIDS war that it breaks my heart. The clown also represents the polarity of sadness and joy, he can make you laugh and he can make you cry. The clown is the child in each of us and the wise, aged one. The Sisters have definitely served as clowns through the tragic AIDS war. We're very like mimes, as well; that marvelous tradition of theater and the venerable genre of social activism through ideological street theater that we carry on. In the past, one of the court jester's function was to mimic the Emperor, anyone else who dared to would be beheaded. Too, religious parody is a Western tradition; the Sisters carry on with distinction and great aplomb.

**MS. Have you had your hour of need that has put the Sisters to a test on a personal level for you?**

SX. Yes, when Bruce became ill. Paradoxically, for all that the sisters have done to help the community through the AIDS War, they have not instituted systems to take care of their own in crisis. Individual Sisters have helped me in my hour of need, but because our convent has no physical structure and exists in spirit and mind, I felt the convent failed me. However, I learned about my own strength and commitment by figuring out how to handle it in spite of what I saw as failings of the group. We're nuns, we're human. No one wanted to let me down, but out of our habits we're all just struggling to survive, like everyone else. I can say that the group has always learned from past mistakes; we have been better able to respond to the crisis needs of our members of late. Perhaps my situation with Bruce was the test; a test I hope we ultimately pass.

**MS. How would you rate the Sisters in terms of Sisters taking care of Sisters?**

SX. Sister Vice and Virtue, Sister Marquesa De Sade, Sister Psychedelia, and a founding Mother Superior are all struggling with advanced AIDS. I see the group responding very compassionately and in practical ways. It's ironic because virtually all the early Sisters are dead from AIDS. We were slow to

respond to our own; much the way the nation has been slow to respond to us. I think Sister Luscious Lashes and sister X were catalysts for more concern about taking care of each other, too.

**MS. In terms of your responsibility to other Sisters who are in crisis, is it personally more or less important than the outside work you do as a Sister?**

SX. It should be just as important. However, we're not all soul mates. We are not perfect; there can be backbiting and competitiveness within the convent. I jokingly say that I can debunk the myth that they shave your hair off when you enter the convent; the reality is that they pull it out by the roots. To be completely fair, I have to say that we are learning to value each other in the same way the bigger community is learning to value one another in the face of the loss from AIDS. We're all important to each other and time is so short and AIDS can be so swift. The best I can say about the convent and the nuns who comprise it is that we are humans intent on discovering the deepest reaches of our humanity, but we are not saints; yet.

**MS. As an investment in your own future, how do you feel about your involvement with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence?**

SX. I don't believe in the future; for me the future is right now. When Bruce died, the future died with him. I no longer project myself beyond what I am doing in the moment. I go forward, I just don't project to the future. I do believe though, that my involvement with the Sisters has afforded me the opportunity to leave a vital legacy when I die; people in the future can learn from it... what better investment is there for the future?

**MS. How do the sisters prevent becoming like the institutions they mock... or have they? Traditionally, convents have been institutions of conformity. How do the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence measure up in that regard?**

SX. It's a constant vigil and something we have to deal with on a continuous basis. I think the propensity is our nemesis, but we are an eclectic group of very creative and imaginative nuns; change is our hallmark. Generally speaking I think we have embraced the diversity of our group; we encourage everyone who joins to express his own individuality and then struggle to harness that energy for the goals of the group... it's a challenge.

**MS. Stop the Violence Campaign. What impact has it had on gay bashing in San Francisco? How do you explain the dichotomy between the Sisters "Stop the Violence" campaign and violence in actions and the military imagery they use in their Queer Army's Holy War?**

SX. The awareness of the escalation of bashing on the streets is definitely having an impact on how potential victims deal with the situation, but it's not changing things overall. Unfortunately, it's a bit like swimming upstream; the violent attacks are increasing exponentially because we live in a society that needs scapegoats. The commies are dead, so gays and lesbians become the target for the hate mongers and bigots. When Presidents, Vice presidents and Governors bash gay people in the media and the halls of democracy, how can you blame the Neanderthals who carry out the hateful agenda of our leaders? It's just a sad reality that we all have to work on. As far as a dichotomy in our actions and our rhetoric, the reality is that gay activists are not violent. In Los Angeles one activist broke one window and the media

christened us “violent”. In South Central the disenfranchised people burned down half of the city; people died; property was completely destroyed; jobs were lost. By comparison, gays are polite; perhaps too polite for their own advancement. We are a group committed to non-violence, we use the images of war in Queer Army as an exercise in parody. We are not violent, that’s a media “spin”.

**MS. How “queer” are the Sisters? Why a “Holy War”?**

SX. I think the Sisters are the queerest of all. We certainly have been out there getting in the establishment’s face for a long time.... Thirteen years. We actually see “Act Up” and “Queer Nation” as our children. A Holy War because the church is our biggest enemy. Ours id the Holy War; they have conducted an “Unholy War’ for centuries. The church is arrogant because they got away with the inquisitions and the crusades; they were caught but never punished. The time is coming for the church to receive punishment for the genocides it has perpetrated throughout history on many cultures and which they continue vigorously today on gays and lesbians.

**MS. Do you think the most important impact of the sisters is in the past, present or future?**

SX. I think the Sisters importance is linear in our movement for civil rights and personal liberation. We continue to provoke because we have always been ahead of our time on the issues, but that is our function, we break the ground; we represent the level of freedom there is in our society. When you no longer see the Sisters on the streets doing what they do, look around, you’ll probably find that the whole system has turned even more Fascist and gay people in general will be less visible. In a way we are a barometer as to how much freedom there is for everyone. I think that’s why the community has embraced us so thoroughly, on some level they understand that function of the sisters.

**MS. Will you be most remembered as yourself or as your sister persona? And which would you prefer?**

SX. I think it may become difficult for John to eclipse Sister X; she has a stellar atmosphere about her and she travels so relentlessly meeting people. She also leaves an indelible impression on those she meets. John spent so much time of his life perfecting the art of invisibility in order to survive that I doubt that he will be remembered the way X will be; she’s bigger than life; John has never aspired to that. Perhaps history will remember them in tandem; that would be nice.

**MS. The Sisters are primarily known as transvestite “male” nuns and the political edge and theatrical gimmick has always. More or less, pivoted on that fact. How does the experience translate for the real women in the group?**

SX. I cannot speak for a woman’s experience. No man can, and I wish they would stop presuming that they can. I do know that the women in our group are dedicated and have worked hard to be a credit to the order; the vocation of nun is familiar to them, that much is obvious.

### **Part 3**

**MS. How do you feel about groups like the catholic bishop’s conclave in Lourdes, France, condemning the Sisters as blasphemers and heretics?**

SX. I'm thrilled. I wonder what has taken them so long, but then look at their response to all the important social issues over the last twenty centuries... face it, they're slow. When they notice what we're doing, we're doing our job well. When they notice what we're doing, we're doing our job well. When we provoke them to publicly condemn us, they are entering a public dialogue. We like them to speak because they generally make fools of themselves and reveal their own confusion and bigotry. We renamed our safe sex show, *Banned in Lourdes*, in honor of their condemnation. They strongly objected to our Condom Saviour Mass where our Pope Dementia the Last blesses the latex as the new "flesh" of the savior and then conducts a mass communion of condoms. We're just doing their job for them. If religious institutions do not transform themselves to serve the needs of the community, they become antiquated and fade away; that's what's happening to the church... it does not serve our spiritual needs and, like communism, we will witness it's fall this century. Personally, I can't wait; that's why I keep provoking it.

**MS. How do you feel about the Catholics for Truth and Justice (the catholic lawyer group) accusing the sisters of "church bashing"?**

SX. Make no mistake, we are "church bashers". We consider it to be bashing back, however, they started it two thousand years ago and should be grateful that we're not burning them at the stake as they have done to us in the past and continue to do with their passive genocide through the AIDS epidemic.

**MS. More than any other factor, AIDS seems to have woven the Sisters into the fabric of gay history. What is your most important contribution as a Sister to the fight against AIDS? What is the group's most important contribution?**

SX. The sisters published the first safe sex pamphlet (Play Fair) in the world in 1980. they also produced the first AIDS fundraisers in the world.. they were a series of dog shows on Castro street. Shirley MacLaine was co-hostess with Jane Dornacher and Sister Boom Boom. And the first AIDS patient in the world to go public was Bobby Campbell when Time magazine put his face on the cover... he was Sister Florence Nightmare. RN. In addition, over the last thirteen years the sisters have carried on a continuous fundraising effort for AIDS and community service organizations. Personally, I think Sister X's most important contribution is the Condom Savior Vow and the insight she has shared with millions about AIDS and her experience as a caregiver to Bruce. So many of us have been called on to be caregivers and, sadly, many more will be called. It's a difficult role and Sister X continues to minister to those in need. The silver lining of AIDS is that it presents us all with an opportunity for spiritual growth; soul evolution is in the balance; AIDS plays an important part in that. I think, too, that being sent in as the "clowns" has been an important contribution.

**MS. Which is more rewarding for you, ministering to an individual or to the community?**

SX. Individuals. The individual is easier to reach. When you've educated enough individuals, the community evolves. Herd behavior is not always conducive to Sister's message, so she tends to go for the individual lambs.

**MS. The Sisters have been so involved with the community and on the cutting eddge throughout the AIDS War that they have perhaps seen more of the heartbreak firsthand than most of the gay community, yet they appear to be pillars of strength during these trying times. Has being a Sister alleviated or aggravated your personal fear level in the face of the AIDS crisis?**



SX. I feared losing Bruce, but I have no fear of AIDS. I have lost hundreds, if not thousands, of personal friends and loved ones to AIDS and I've nearly lost the battle myself recently. For a long time I felt numb. I cried until I thought I would drown in tears; I prayed that they would stop. When they did, I felt dead in a desert of despair. When Bruce died, he took away all my fears about illness and death. Now, I do my job and take care of the demands of my nunly vocation and sometimes when I am alone, I cry, but they are not tears of sorrow and fear; they are tears that soothe. Fear cheats us of our lives so I have vanquished it along with my doubt.

**MS. Do you relate more to the Sisters as icons or iconoclasts? (Celebrity vs myth smasher; ego vs the work)?**

SX. Definitely iconoclasts. I take great joy in smashing the icons and myths that tend to be our oppressors. Shatter, splatter icons don't really matter. The Sisters are living religious statuary from Hell who deign not reverence, but demand irreverence. Sometimes the celebrity gets in the way of the work; I am most interested in the work; I have learned how to manage the fame.

**MS. In thirteen years the Sisters have gone from a message of hedonism to hedonism with responsibility. How has that changed what the Sisters do or the way that they do it and how they are perceived? How important a virtue is "fun"?**

SX. It hasn't really changed our approach; the sisters still throw the best party in town; celebrating life in the face of death is essential. Unlike institutional churches, we have continuously transformed our order to serve the needs of the community. We're nuns who never hailed Mary, but we did hail the party, and we still do. Fun may be the most important virtue and I think gays and lesbians certainly deserve to have fun; we've been an exemplary community during the AIDS war. We stuck together and took care of one another; we did what our government and religious institutions refused to do. In the process we created a model for the world and a community for ourselves. I resent Christian assumption that we have no spiritual nature because they have deemed homosexuality deviant. Through our deep losses we have found our humanity and it is profound. Gays and lesbians have created non-traditional families that make all the tongue wagging about "traditional family values" a very sad and sick joke. I would want gays and lesbians to be role models for my children.

**MS. Can you find a point in your own experience as a Sister where it changed for you, say from "Bad Boy Nun" to "Committed Nun" and you saw something for the greater good happening?**

SX. I guess at Gay Games in Vancouver BC. The gay men who organized the event were gay apologists and Assimilationist. They were carefully trying to control the gay image that straight Vancouver would see. Gay Games was a coming out for the gay community and there was concern that we appear "normal". Try as they did, event organizers could not keep Act Up, Queer Nation and The Sisters out. They were unsuccessful because we have a place in the workings of the community and no one is going to push us to the back. The irony was that the Sisters were the lead news story each day of the event. In fact, it was the Vancouver straight press that first described us as "Clown Nuns". That caption legitimized us to straight Vancouver, and parents began coming to the festival and trade center to see what the event was all about. I had many parents thank me for the good work I was doing for our community. One mother told me that when her daughter told her she was a lesbian, it broke her heart. She thought that to be gay or lesbian

meant you would live a life of isolation; a sad and lonely life. When she saw what our community was doing and how we celebrated our pride and how we helped one another through the AIDS crisis, her entire perception changed and she knew her daughter had a beautiful and committed community to which she belonged. That mother came to the festival because she saw the Sisters on the six o'clock news. That's when it changed for me, during that conversation and when she handed me her baby and asked me to pose for a photograph.

**MS. How have you succeeded as a nun? How have you failed?**

SX. I've been a good educator; I have traveled to many countries trying to shed light onto the darkness; I have been dedicated to ministering to the boys and girls, who have grown into men and women through the horrific AIDS War; I have helped raise badly needed dollars for our community; I have reached into the heterosexual community where spiritual ministering is woefully inadequate. I fail sometimes to forgive my oppressors. Sometimes when I'm really missing Bruce; I fail to understand why he was taken from me. I am still impatient for this to be a better world. I fail sometimes to recognize John's virtues. But I succeed by working hard scrubbing the corners of the convent and my heart.

**MS. What would you consider your legacy to the Sisters to be?**

SX. The international scope. We now have functioning orders in Paris, London, England; Berlin, Germany; Heidelberg, Germany; Florence, Italy; Edinburgh, Scotland; Dublin, Ireland; Norway, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Also a personal legacy has been my dedication to educating the younger generations of gays and lesbians about their history. I meet young gay people who don't even know who Harvey Milk was. It's important to document our history and pass it on. Sister X has been dedicated to that mission.

**MS. How well have you kept your vows? What are your vows?**

SX. Sister X has kept her vows because she believes in the importance of vows, the most important being expiation of stigmatic guilt, promulgation of universal joy, celebration of diversity.

**MS. I have experienced that people become very confessional when in the presence of a Sister of Perpetual Indulgence. Using the catholic confession opening; bless me Father, for I have sinned... what would you confess to your public?**

SX. Bless me father... for I have sinned... though I have reached millions with my message of humanity, I have failed to reach my own family. I condemn my flesh and blood brother as a hateful and abusive man; in my heart I can find no forgiveness for my own family. Such is the reality and tragedy for many gay and lesbian people.

**MS. Did you ever imagine that the Sisters would become internationally known? Do you think it's important for gays and lesbians to think in terms of a global gay community and how do the Sisters factor into the international equation and struggle?**

SX. Yes, because that was the intent on it along with our Mother Superior, Sister Vicious Power Hungry Bitch. Together we have been a dynamic duo, we're both nuns who get things done. I think a global gay

consciousness is essential. Our detractors (ie the churches) are working against us on that scale. The Sisters have always been boundary and border jumpers and will continue to do just that... the successes of our international orders bear testimony to the factor we are in the equation.

**MS. In Berlin during the reunification at the Brandenburg Gate, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence proclaimed the throngs who gathered looking for symbols of the newly acquired “freedom” .... “runter mit allen mauren” which translates “down with all walls”. On an internal plane, what wall have you NOT brought down? On an external plane, what wall would you like to see brought down in your lifetime?**

SX. Internally the wall that I have brought down is doubt. I still doubt, though I have learned to doubt the doubt and push through... it's an aggravating exercise and I desire to rip that wall down once and for all. Externally I want to live long enough to see the walls of the churches demolished (along with) the walls they throw up around our souls. Christians are too fond of saying they are in the business of saving souls for the church,. If there is a soul, it is the individual's responsibility to figure out how to save it. Certainly, it's not there for the church to encase... yes, definitely, down with church wall!

**MS. If you had the power, what is the one thing Sister X would want to change about the world? About herself?**

SX. Man's inhumanity to man and his disrespect for Mother Earth. The impatience and doubt I spoke of earlier.

**MS. What makes you cry? What makes you laugh?**

SX Everything and everything.

**MS. There has always been a fascination with the paodical and salacious names the sisters bear. What are your favorite Sister names?**

SX. Sister Opiate of the Masses, Sister Homocycle Motorsexual, Sister Vicious Power Hungry Bitch, Sister Missionary Position, Sister Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, Sister Florence Nightmare, Sister Sensible Shoes, Sister Dana Van Niquity, Sister Who the Hell Does She Think She Is, Sister Vice and Virtue, Sister Brutally Honest, Sister Nocturnal Omissions, Sister Sadie Sadie The Rabbi Lady, Chanel 2001, Sister Sleaze Du Jour, Sister Unity-Harmony, Sister Maria Maria Gonorrhea, Sister Lily SisterWhite Superior Posterior, Sister Salvation Armay, Sister Lida Dogs Life, Sister Penis Fly Trap, Sister Lips O'Sucksome, Sister Olive O'Sudden, Sister Mary Fellation, Sister Freida Peoples, Sister Racial Racial Slur, Sister Mary Fink, Sister Jackie O'Nasty, Sister Zsa Zsa La Bore, Sister Juanita La Bufadora de Insane Francisco, Sister Teresa Stigmata, Sister Sucuba, Sister Merry Homo Sapiens, Sister Gala Eventa de Monte Carlo, Sister Merry Mary Quite Contrary, Sister Baby Jane Bitch Lips, Sister Queer As Can Be, Sister Why The Fuck, Sister Hateful Sow, Sister Afelia Rubber, Sister Loganberry Frost, Sister Rosanna Hosanna Fellebella, Sister Sophia Moremen, Sister Share and Cher Alike, Sister There's No Place Like Rome ,stop me, this could go on all night! It's a parlor game.

**MS. How would your Sister epitaph read?**

SX. “Strange as it may seem, my life is based on a true story”

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July, 1992 Los Angeles.