

# From the Foot of the Cross



The Passionist Nuns of Saint Joseph Monastery in the Diocese of Owensboro KY

Lent 2016

## *Living under the Gaze of His Mercy*

### **20 YEARS IN WHITESVILLE!**

*From the blessing of our monastery chapel  
on Divine Mercy Sunday 1996  
to the Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2016*

For 20 years, the monastery bells have rung out over this farming area of Western Kentucky, the Mass has been celebrated, the Divine Office has been sung, retreatants have been welcomed, and our community has continued to live the memory of the Passion of Jesus with Mary in creative fidelity.

*We remember the past with gratitude* for the countless ways that God has made His mercy and faithfulness visible to us.

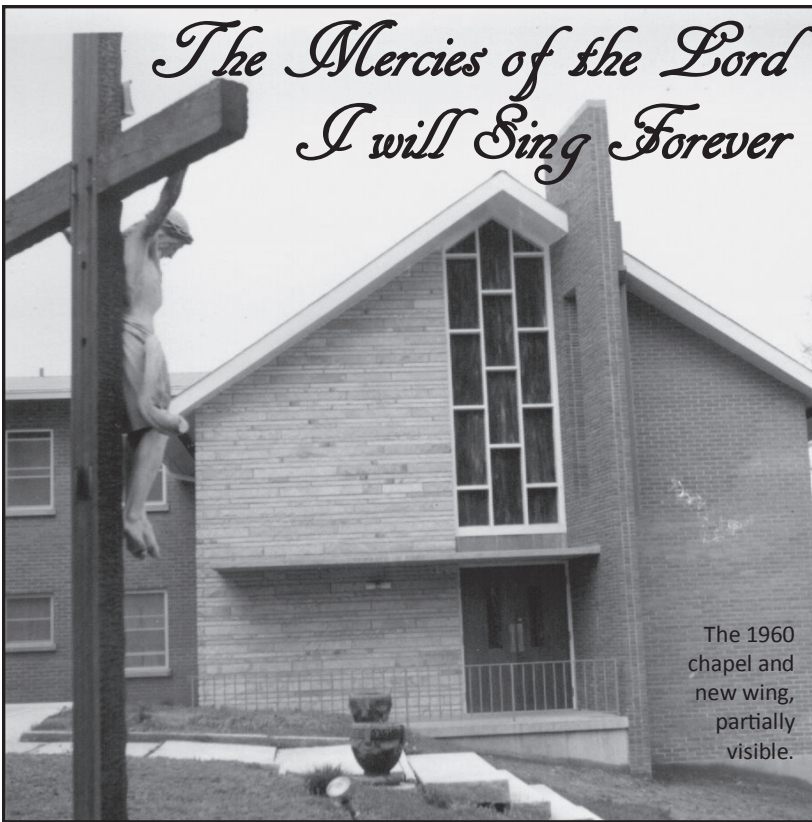
*We live the present with enthusiasm*, committed to making our monastery and guest house a place where divine mercy flows from the open wounds of Jesus.

*We look forward to the future with hope* that God whose "mercy is from generation to generation" (Luke 2:50) will continue to bless us with good vocations and care for all our needs. During this 20th anniversary year, please join us in giving thanks to God whose mercy endures forever.

*"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His mercy endures forever!"*



# *The Mercies of the Lord I will Sing Forever*



The 1960 chapel and new wing, partially visible.



1946—the original monastery on Benita Avenue in Owensboro. The crucifix, donated by the family of Fr. Jude Mead, C.P., is now installed near our Crisp Road entrance gate

**Our novices remember the past with gratitude! We asked each one to reflect on this question: *As you recall the story of our community's relocation, what about it makes you most grateful to God?***

Our Lord tells us in the gospels that the smallest 'mustard seed' of faith can move mountains. When I hear stories about the relocation, I am always amazed and inspired to see power of the grace of God, working through the unwavering faith of my older sisters. How is it that a small group of nuns, living in a modest monastery in the city of Owensboro, would even conceive of, let alone accomplish, a project as grand as the relocation to Whitesville and the building of a new monastery? What made them persevere throughout every obstacle and setback (and I understand there were many!) that they encountered along the way? Knowing my sisters, I know that it was their deep faith in the providence of God, and their commitment and loving abandonment to His Holy Will, that enabled them to achieve the impossible. I praise and thank God for bringing our community here to Whitesville, and for the faith of my sisters, which strengthens my own faith in His almighty power.

- Sister Frances Marie  
of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus



The **five foundresses** along with the **first new members** from the Owensboro diocese. These Nuns have all been called to their eternal reward while many others have taken their place.

**The full story of our history can be read online at:**  
<http://www.passionistnuns.org/newsletter/NLWinter05.pdf>

In recalling the story of our community's relocation, I am particularly grateful for the desire of the community to provide a space in which retreatants and visitors could join in our worship of God through not only the Mass but also participation in the Divine Office. The resulting Chapel design has become a beautiful means by which we are able to witness to the primacy of God, and to fulfill our mission of drawing souls to Him, simply by inviting men and women to join our daily out-pouring of the Church's hymn of praise to her Creator, Savior, and Lord.

- Sister Lucia Marie of the Mystical Body of Christ

I am grateful to God that His providential hand was guiding everything. The Sisters took a leap of faith in deciding to relocate and build a new and bigger monastery in Whitesville, and now the community is reaping the fruits of that faith with several young vocations. God generously provided by leading the community to these grounds filled with natural beauty and plenty of silence, surrounded by generous and loving benefactors. Much prayer was poured into every part of this monastery, and I see the hand of God when I listen to the relocation stories.

- Sister Maria Faustina of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus  
and the Sorrowful Heart of Mary

## **The Shared Vision for our Relocation:**

- *To build a chapel that would facilitate guest participation in all of our liturgies;*
- *To ensure contemplative silence and solitude for future generations;*
- *To engage more earnestly in vocation animation;*
- *To resume the retreat ministry St. Paul of the Cross had envisioned, and build a retreat house separate from the monastery. (Many of us had entered the community as a result of making a retreat at the old monastery.)*

# A Passionist Journey: Following the Bridegroom into the Interior Desert

*By Sr. Rose Marie of the Merciful Heart of Jesus*

One aspect of espousal to Christ that means a lot to me is the call to follow Jesus into the desert to encounter Him in a more profound way. In the Old Testament there are many passages that refer to the desert as a place of testing and transformation where Israel was bound in a spousal covenant to God. Hosea 2: 16-17 is a prime example: "So I will allure her [Israel]; I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart... She shall respond there as in the days of her youth, when she came up from the land of Egypt."

Though all Christians are called to make the journey through the 'desert' of this life to the promised land of eternal life in God, monastic life allows us to personally enter into Israel's experience in a unique way. To enter cloistered contemplative life is to go with Jesus, the Bridegroom of our Souls, into the desert, setting out on an intensely purifying and transformative journey. In this holy desert many distractions are eliminated; it's a place of silence and solitude where we can be purified through the testing of our hearts.

Like the Ancient Israelites as they journeyed through the desert, along the way, we gradually learn through experience (and re-learn!) the lifelong lessons of faith-filled trust in God, and humble, obedient love. Being in this sacred desert with God helps us over time to become less attached to ourselves so that we can focus less on ourselves and more on Jesus.

Again, much like the experience of the Israelites in the desert, we also gain a stronger awareness of the presence of the little 'idols' in our hearts that we tend to put in God's place, and we do our best to renounce them. We allow God to strip us of them so that He can live more fully in us and we can be more whole.

Going out into a desert entails sacrifice. In monastic life we sacrifice the enjoyment of many good but unnecessary things for the sake of 'the one thing necessary.' These sacrifices prepare a space in our hearts so that we



*We do not have a desert but our monastery and chapel are located on 170 acres of woods and fields in which to venture into union with God.*



can better hear God communicating with us and live in greater awareness of His presence. Really, as our Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, liked to put it, it's about learning to live in the 'interior desert' of our heart, alone there with Jesus.

In this desert, we also learn how to live, 'not by bread alone' but by the Word and Holy Will of God. When Jesus was tempted in the desert He quoted scripture, saying, 'One does not live by bread alone.' (Mt. 4:4) In other words, we do not receive true life in its deepest sense from the things that can satisfy our temporal needs and desires. We are called, above all, to nourish the life of our souls with the same food that nourished Jesus, who said, 'My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to do his work.' (Jn. 4:34)

We aim to unite ourselves to the Heart of Jesus and His devotion to the Will of the Father, believing and trusting in God's providence at work in all the events and circumstances of our lives. He teaches us little by little how to rely on Him more than on ourselves or anything else. We are nourished with the daily bread of God's will for us in each present moment, manifested through our monastic horarium, events, our assigned duties, instructions from religious superiors, our Rule and Constitutions, etc.

In the holy desert of cloistered life, Jesus gives Himself to be our food and source of life. Sustained by Jesus, the Living Bread, who we receive each day in Holy Communion, we live in union with His Eucharistic Heart. Jesus takes up His life in us in a unique way, and He accomplishes the will of the Father as we live in Him. We offer our lives of communion with Jesus to the Father, trusting in Him to give this offering power to lift souls up to God. The spirituality of the 'desert' is about communion.



# Named and Clothed in Mercy

Christie Anna Carmichael - one step closer to becoming  
a Passionist Nun - an Apostle of Mercy

December 8, 2015 - On the glorious feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Church began the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, a time when God's merciful love will be pouring out upon the world in a special way. How significant, then, that on this very day, our Christie Anna received the name of the saint whom the Church invokes as "the Apostle of Mercy". She became **Sr. Maria Faustina of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus and the Sorrowful Heart of Mary**. Bearing this new name, Christie Anna lives among us as a constant reminder of a mission that all of us have.

Saint Faustina exemplified in her life so much that is most precious in Passionist spirituality. In our hidden lives of prayer and sacrifice with Mary at the foot of the cross, all of us are called to be apostles of mercy. When we think about it, even our holy founder, St. Paul of the Cross, could have been named by the Church as an "Apostle of Mercy," for indeed he spent his whole life bringing the merciful fruits of the Passion of Jesus to others.

*- Excerpt from Mother Catherine Marie's exhortation - You can read more on our blog*



## **SISTER MARIA FAUSTINA SHARES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HER NAME:**

**Maria:** after the Blessed Virgin Mary, my first patroness. Mary has been a faithful Mother and guide for me all throughout my spiritual life – I can see that in retrospect – and especially all along my vocational journey. Entrusting every anxiety into her hands, I have found that everything has fallen into place. Without Mary's motherly guidance, I probably would have lost my way along this journey a long time ago. She has never failed to care for me with a Mother's love and lead me to the Heart of Jesus.

**Faustina:** St. Faustina is called the "Apostle of Mercy" and for me, the name "Faustina" instantly evokes the thought of God's mercy. At 16 years old I discovered the Divine Mercy devotion and ever since that time, the spirituality of the Divine Mercy has been a cornerstone of my own spiritual life. It is appropriate that part of my religious name signifies the great mercy that God has had toward me, as well as serves as a reminder to always show the same mercy toward others. I look at the Passion through the lens of God's mercy, which is a manifestation of His love.

**Of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus:** When meditating on the Passion of Jesus, more than anything else I find myself asking: "What is the Heart of Jesus suffering?" It is because of His great love for us that He suffers so much in His Passion. For me, the word "agonizing" is very significant in describing His Heart. We see such great suffering in the world today, but especially in the Church, His Bride. I cannot help but see the crucifixion of Jesus as ongoing in the members of His Body.

**And the Sorrowful Heart of Mary:** I have never been able to separate the two Hearts of Jesus and Mary or say to which one I have a greater devotion. They just always go together. An ongoing desire of mine has been to console, in any way I can, the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. They are the two Hearts which have loved more than any others and therefore they are the two Hearts which have suffered more than any others, and deserve our love and fidelity.

To me, it has been providential that two foundational devotions of my spiritual life – devotion to Mary and devotion to the Divine Mercy – coincide on the day of my Vestition. My two patron Saints – the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Faustina – are excellent examples of being faithful to the will of God even when difficult, and in their lives I find great encouragement for my own. Mary, of course, is the most perfect example of fidelity to God. From the beginning she said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word." She never left the side of the suffering Jesus even when it cost her greatly. St. Faustina suffered greatly in her own life in striving to be faithful to God's will for the good of the Church and souls. In these two lives I see the beauty of a life of sacrifice and fidelity lived out in total love for the Beloved, and the tremendous fruit it brings through His grace. I trust that with their prayers I, too, can live a life of fidelity to God and perhaps, by my love, console His Heart.



Please pray for our three novices and for more to join them  
on the journey to become Passionist Nuns!

## *Consecrated to the Crucified Lord*

**SR. MARIE MICHAEL CELEBRATED 65 YEARS AS A VOWED PASSIONIST NUN** on September 29, 2015. During our monastic celebration in honor of her Jubilee Sister shared with us some words of wisdom:

I offer my “desire, encouragement and prayer, that we may live our Passionist charism ever more deeply. And that is: to hold the love and sufferings of Jesus, the sorrows and anguish of Mary deep in our hearts.

“Then no trial that comes our way will be too great to endure, or a cross too heavy to carry in order to gain many souls to live with him forever. As we pray in Psalm 18:30, with Him we ‘can scale any wall; with God we can break through any barrier’ we meet in the way of perfect love, of identification with Jesus and in the fulfillment of the Father’s Will.”



**SR. CECILIA MARIA RENEWED HER PROFESSION OF VOWS** in the hands of Mother Catherine Marie for another three years on February 2, 2016, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple. God-willing, Sister will make her Perpetual Profession in 2019!

At left, these two team-up for a game on Thanksgiving Day.



## *Women Discern Passionist Life*

At right are participants from our October 2015 Vocation Retreat; they hailed from **Virginia, Illinois, Arkansas and Kentucky**. Aside from our upcoming vocation retreats we have some scheduled visitors: **Theresa** will come during her Spring Break, **Tihana** will make a live-in in May, **Mary Kate** hopes to make a live-in sometime in the future and **Olivia** has been accepted to enter the aspirancy program - yay! Perhaps **YOU** will be the next candidate for a live-in or the aspirancy.

Thank you for your on-going prayers for our vocation endeavors and please keep praying for more Passionist candidates to fill our monasteries throughout the world!

**VOCATION RETREATS IN 2016**

July 29-31    Nov 11-13

Visit our Blog:

[www.passionistnunsblog.com](http://www.passionistnunsblog.com)





## ***SAINTS OF THE PASSIONIST CONGREGATION***

**Fr. Alvaro Interiano** of the Galveston-Houston Diocese recently made a private retreat in our guest house. While here he regaled us with stories about his connections with our Passionist saints. Mother Catherine Marie asked if he would share some of it with you our friends. Our Passionist Saints are mighty powerful intercessors!

When I was a transitional Deacon, I had a chance to visit my home country of El Salvador for the wedding of a cousin of mine. While I was there, my aunt recommended me to go to these Thursday masses that were held by one of the local bishops. I decided to go with her. The mass was joyful, the church was packed, and there was a spirit of hospitality and love that was present there that was quite unlike any other masses that I had been to. The particular trait of these masses was that at the end of mass, the bishop would expose the Blessed Sacrament and then pray for people to receive healing. I fell in love with the idea and thought, "when I become a priest, I will have one of these!!"

In the beginning of the third year of my priesthood, I finally got the chance to begin these monthly masses. We called them the "Mass of Our Lady of Sorrows," and we would specifically invoke her intercession when asking for healing. The response was huge. We had nearly 800 show up that Monday night. I knew that I had gotten myself in way over my head because I don't even think I really knew how to heal people. I had no idea what I was doing.

SO I thought to myself....I need help and I need it fast!!! By this time, I already had 3 relics of some Passionist saints: St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin, St. Paul of the Cross, and St. Vincent Strambi. But we needed more...so I very confidently took St. Gabriel and told him..."you better get me your friend St. Gemma Galgani...or else...we're gonna look like fools out there, not healing anybody!!!" Just then I remembered a lady in the parish who had the relic of St.

Faustina. I called her up to see if we could borrow her, to which she answered, "Sure, but are there any other relics you would like?" "What do you mean?," I replied. "Well, I have St. Therese, St. Teresa, St. Gemma Galgani, St. Francis, St. Clare....and St. Faustina." Wow!! Did St. Gabriel answer my prayers or what!! Of course, I took them all!



**Saint Gemma Galgani**

We began using them by having them on the altar and asking for their intercession for those that came up to receive prayer. Since the numbers of people were so large, we soon after had teams of lay people use the 9 relics that we had to pray over other people. Before people came up to receive prayer, we had them verbally repent of their sins, forgive anyone they needed to, and repent of evils in their life. We wanted to teach them that spiritual healing is the primary healing we should seek.

These people were bringing us serious problems: cancer, physical pains, deep rooted sins, infidelity, depressions, emotional wounds, and many other problems; we knew that without the prayers of these saints, it would have been impossible for us to help them. I especially reflect on the role that the Passionist saints had to play. Since their lives were spent meditating on the sufferings of Jesus and Mary, how appropriate that they now were very powerful in aiding others to have their spiritual, emotional, and physical sufferings healed.

# SAINT JOSEPH'S HELPERS

Special thanks to brothers **John, Larry and Al Durchholz** who generously rented a Penske truck and moved donated furniture to our Guest house. 20 years ago, they and other family members helped move our monastery to Crisp Road. It was great to touch base with them again. The Durchholz brothers have also helped other religious communities included the St. Meinrad monks and the Benedictine Sisters in Ferdinand, In, earning the nickname - **Clergy Movers Inc.**

APPLES! We have **so many apples** thanks to our anonymous donor and his family. We are making a lot of applesauce! And may God bless all those who are **keeping our driveways clear** during this snowy season!



*We give thanks to God for the innumerable ways he provides for us through friends like you! May God reward all those who donate their time, talent and treasure. Special thanks also to our staff and volunteers. We couldn't do this without you!*

## *A Mother Remembers her Son*

Guests visiting our monastery usually notice the presence of Oblate Affiliate **Christie Swanson** in our midst. At community visits it is not uncommon for Christie humorously to be asked: "What are you??" In 1989, the Holy See granted an indult to all monasteries of Passionist Nuns to have live-in Oblates. About 4 of our monasteries throughout the world are currently making use of the indult. In our monastery they are called Affiliates to distinguish them from Oblates. Affiliates are Catholic women who, while not becoming professed religious, live within the monastery, sharing our spirituality and assisting us through works of service both within and outside of the cloister. Christie had already been a Passionist Oblate for several years before she received the call to become even more closely associated with our monastery. When she made her formal request, we decided to make use of the indult from the Holy See. Most Rev. Paul M. Boyle, C.P. (R.I.P.) assisted us in drawing up guidelines for the program. Christie is the administrator of our guest (retreat) house, and is our dearly loved sister in Christ.



### **CHRISTOPHER DAVID GOOLSBY**

*~ May He Dwell Forever in the Mercy of God ~*



Christie's only son, **Christopher David Goolsby**, age 36, of Henderson, KY, passed away in a car collision on Thursday, January 21, 2016 and is now safe in the arms of God. Chris was employed by Consolidated Grain and Barge in Uniontown, KY. He was a hard-working man who persevered in earning his Electronic Engineering Associates Degree from ITT Tech. Full of charm and charisma, he enjoyed bringing people together. He found joy in sharing with those he loved, whether it was a new recipe cooked for his mother or an MP3 playlist made for his father. What made him happiest in life, even more than a good ballgame, was being the father to his two children. He was a great father and everything he did, he did for them. We wish to express our sympathy to his son and daughter Camren Michael Goolsby and Caelyn Danielle Goolsby; to Chris' father David Goolsby and David's wife Christy, and to his paternal grandmother Pauline Walker. May Christopher rest in peace, and in this time of sudden loss, may the hearts of those who loved him receive the consolation of the Holy Spirit and the hope of an eternal reunion.



# FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS



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Dear Relatives and Friends,

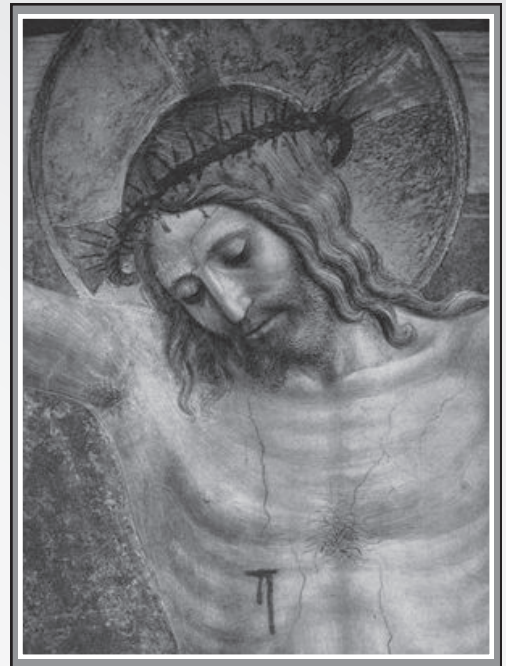
As we conclude this newsletter, we pray that it will arrive in your mail box before Holy Week, the time when the whole Church relives in a deep and special way the events of our salvation: the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. This greatest expression of God's merciful love for us and for the entire world is inexhaustible and its power to save is unceasing.

Passionists remind the whole Church of our Christian calling to live in the spirit of Holy Week, with the eyes of our heart fixed on the face of Jesus and our souls attuned to His Heart. All of us are created to experience the wonder and joy of God's merciful love and to cultivate "the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness" (Pope Francis). "All of us, gazing on the Lord's glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from glory to glory into his very image by the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18).

The joy of being loved by a merciful God spurs us on to show mercy to others in small and greater ways. In this Year of Mercy, the Church is calling us to exercise the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and to make this our way of life in our families, our work and in all our contacts with others.

Once again, we are gathering each of you into the prayer of our hearts, to keep your needs and intentions before God. Thank you so much for the countless ways you have shown mercy to our community by your generous assistance! It is both needed and greatly appreciated. Peace and blessings upon you all!

*Mother Catherine Marie and all the Nuns*



*Jesus Christ is the face  
of the Father's mercy.*

*When faced with the gravity of sin,  
God responds with the fullness of mercy.  
Mercy will always be greater than any sin.*

(Pope Francis)