

A Grateful Remembrance... **FROM the FOOT of the CROSS**



*"Give thanks to the Lord
for He is good.
His love endures forever!"*

**Photo taken during the
Cherish the Flame
Groundbreaking & Rite of Blessing
September 10, 2022**

Courtesy Elizabeth Wong Barnstead
Western Kentucky Catholic

Dearest Family and Friends,

Has it really been a year since we've given you an issue of *From the Foot of the Cross* dedicated to community news? We have given you a few updates on our Cherish the Flame Campaign (with more to come in this newsletter), but now we are eager to bring you up to speed on all that has been happening in the monastery over the past year.

Thanksgiving Day isn't too far away, and we here at St. Joseph Monastery have so many reasons to express our gratitude to God. Looking back, we can truly say that it has been "a year of favor from the LORD." (Isaiah 61:2) Professions! Jubilees! Aspirants! Elections! Construction! The Lord has been good to us in so many ways, allowing us to sustain

and grow in our contemplative vocation here in the heart of the Church. By His grace, we daily have the privilege of joining our hearts to yours in prayer and praise, on your behalf and on behalf of the whole world. How can we thank Him enough?!

As you read the pages ahead, we hope that you will join us in thanking and praising the Lord for His goodness to us, and that you will remember that every day the nuns you see here are praying and praising God with and for you, in the sorrows and joys of your own journey.

*Mother John Mary and the Passionists
of St Joseph Monastery
- Autumn 2022 -*

A Walk through the Monastery Chronicles since Autumn 2021

Giving Thanks - Sr. Miriam Esther's First Profession of Vows

We begin our account of this “year of favor” with the First Profession of our novice, **Sr. Miriam Esther of the Sacred Heart**. Sister had spent the last two years preparing and longing for the day when she could profess the five Passionist vows, and on October 30th, 2021, that long-awaited day finally arrived! The weather was cool and rainy, but nothing could dampen the spirits of the eager bride as she offered her life to Christ Crucified.

The Mass of Religious Profession was celebrated by our own Bishop William F. Medley, and the homilist was Fr. Martin Martiny, OP (prior of Sister’s home parish, St. Louis Bertrand in Louisville KY). Friends and family came from near and far to share in the joy of the occasion.

At the climax of the ceremony, Sister Miriam Esther pronounced the Passion Vow and the vows of chastity, poverty, obedience, and enclosure in the hands of Mother John Mary, for a period of three



Photos courtesy Elizabeth Wong Barnstead



years. She then received the black veil and Passion sign as a symbol of her new identity as a bride of Jesus Crucified. We thank God for the gift of Sister’s vocation!

Giving Thanks - New Discerners to Passionist Life

“Enlarge the space for your tent, spread out your tent cloths unsparingly ...”

This verse from Isaiah 54:2 has been on our minds quite a bit this year, as we have needed to expand seating in chapel and refectory for some new arrivals! We all agree that it is a *wonderful* problem to have, and one for which we are deeply grateful.

On *November 9th*, live-in visitor **Holly** (from Cincinnati) was accepted to the aspirancy! She came to visit monthly for most of the year, and in August she arrived for a 3-month live-in to discern our life more deeply.

On *May 31st*, we had the great joy of welcoming Aspirant **Hannah** to officially enter the monastery! Accompanied by her parents, Joe and Cathy, Hannah knelt at the enclosure door and made her formal request to enter the postulancy. Mother John Mary and the assembled community of Sisters were more than happy to accept, and to offer the Sign of Peace to our newest member! It is such joy to have a Postulant around again. Hannah is now living full-time at the monastery, seeking to enter more deeply into our Passionist contemplative life as she continues her discernment with us.



Aspirants **Hannah** and **Holly**



Aspirant **Emma** and Sr Cecilia Maria



Postulant Hannah, Sr Miriam Esther, Aspirant **Kristin Marie**, Sr Maria Faustina and aspirant Holly

In *August*, we had the joy of welcoming TWO new Aspirants: **Emma** (from Ohio) and **Kristin Marie** (from New York)!

We also continue to hold our vocation retreats three times a year. However, due to increased demand, we are actually holding *four* vocation retreats this year! Please keep all of these young women in your prayers as they seek to discern and follow the Lord's will for their lives.

Giving Thanks - The National Eucharistic Revival

As Catholics, we know that the *greatest* and *most perfect* way to give thanks to God is through the Most Holy Eucharist (Greek for "Thanksgiving")! We can unite our little prayers to those of our Great High Priest, Jesus, as He renews His offering to the Father each day upon our altars. And at the same time, what could be a greater reason to give thanks than the Real Presence of Jesus in Catholic churches throughout the world?

We were delighted to hear of the U.S. Bishops' Eucharistic Revival initiative, and we are praying fervently that these three years will be a time of deep renewal for the Church in our nation. We have been participating in the Revival our own little way by hosting special Adoration services with preached Vespers here at our monastery every month. Any and all are invited – **check out the "Events" page on our website for upcoming dates and guest preachers.**



A moment of prayer at one of the outdoor altars during our Corpus Christi procession this year.

Giving Thanks - Community Triennial Elections

On June 17th, we had another big event in community life: our triennial elections. After several days of special prayer to the Holy Spirit, the Chapter members met and elected the following Sisters to govern the monastery for the next three years:

Superior: Mother John Mary of the Indwelling Trinity

Vicar: Sr Mary Veronica of Jesus Crucified

Novice Directress: Sr. Mary Veronica of Jesus Crucified

First Councillor: Sr. Cecilia Maria of the Body of Christ

Second Councillor: Sr. Mary Andrea of the Incarnate Word

Third Councillor: Sr. Mary Magdalen of the Good Shepherd

We thank the Lord for the "yes" of these five women to serve in positions of leadership. Please keep them in your prayers as they "strive to discover and fulfill the Will of God personally and in community" (*CP Nuns Constitutions #33*)

Giving Thanks - Sr. Frances Marie's Perpetual Profession

Our community celebrations only increased as the summer progressed. On August 15th – the Solemnity of Our Lady's Assumption into Heaven – we had the great joy of witnessing the Perpetual Profession of Sr. Frances Marie of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus!

All five of Sister's brothers, as well as her parents, sister-in-law, grandfather, aunt, and two of her cousins were able to attend, and a large group of friends from near and far filled the chapel. The main celebrant was Fr. Tony Hollowell (a friend from the Indianapolis Archdiocese), and the homilist was Fr. Paul Cygan (a long-time family friend who grew up with the "Wenke kids"). It was with great emotion that we watched Sister lie prostrate before the altar, covered with the black funeral pall that symbolized her death to the world. She then "rose with Christ" and professed the five Passionist vows in the hands of Mother John Mary – perpetually!

The festivities continued that evening with Eucharistic Adoration and solemn Vespers. Deacon Matt Wenke (Sister Frances Marie's father) gave a beautiful and sometimes emotional homily about the connections between the Assumption and his daughter's vocation. There are truly no words to express our gratitude and joy for the gift of our Sister and her Passionist vocation. May God be praised for another perpetually professed Bride of the Crucified!



Courtesy Mel Howard



Giving Thanks - Sr. Mary Elizabeth's 60th Jubilee

July 9th marked Sr. Mary Elizabeth's 60th anniversary of Profession! On August 21st, our beloved "most experienced" Sister welcomed family for a special Mass and reception. It was a joyful time to remember the Lord's mercies and to reconnect with loved ones, some of whom had not been able to visit since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. May God be praised for His faithfulness to Sr. Mary Elizabeth these last 6 decades – and for her own faithful witness to His Crucified Love!



Giving Thanks - Fr. Lou's Silver Jubilee of Priestly Ordination



Since July 1, 2016, we have been enormously blessed to have Fr. Lou Caporiccio, CPM, as our full-time monastery chaplain. Through thick and thin, he has been faithful to his mission of nourishing our contemplative life with the Sacraments and with his excellent preaching. So, when Fr. Lou celebrated his 25th anniversary of priestly ordination on May 31st, we knew we had to do something special for him. A COVID invasion in the monastery and other factors notwith-

standing, we were finally able to hold a Silver Jubilee celebration for our beloved Chaplain on September 3rd. The special Mass of Thanksgiving was followed by a brunch (prepared by the ever-talented Christie, with help from our dedicated staff) and some time of visiting with guests in the parlor. Thanks be to God for Father's priestly vocation!

Giving Thanks - Mother John Mary's Silver Jubilee of Passionist Profession

Courtesy Elizabeth Wong Barnstead



In September, we celebrated yet *another* Jubilee: Mother John Mary's 25th anniversary of vows. The actual date of the anniversary was September 13th, but by a Providential "coincidence," the Mass of thanksgiving fell on September 10th - Mother's 50th anniversary of Baptism! The connection between her first consecration as a child of God and her second consecration as a Bride of Christ made the occasion all the more glorious.

Above: Mother John Mary renews her vows. *Below left:* MJM's brothers **Doug** and **Fr Jeff**, and sister **Patricia**, along with two nephews, and her parents **Bill** and **Bernadine Read**. Her brother **Mitch** did not make it to the celebration.

The celebrant for Mass was Fr. Jeff Read, Mother's brother, and the homilist was a community friend, Fr. Corey Bruns. The special music, the abundant flowers, and the beautiful liturgy all spoke of our wonder and gratitude to the Lord for sustaining Mother in fidelity to her Passionist vocation for these past 25 years. "How can I repay the LORD for all of His goodness to me?" (Ps. 116) It was also a wonderful chance to reconnect with friends and family from near and far.



Mother John Mary with friends from her years serving with NET (National Evangelization Teams) from 1991 to 1993.



Courtesy Mel Howard

Giving Thanks - (Ground)breaking News on the Building Project!

Yes, you read that right – we have finally broken ground for the construction phase of our Cherish the Flame Campaign! In late August we learned that construction was going to begin in early September. You can imagine how thrilled we were, and it worked out great to have a Blessing following Mother John Mary's Silver Jubilee Mass. So, on September 10, we invited our guests to the cloister courtyard, where our Bishop Medley presided over a blessing of the construction site and ceremonial groundbreaking. It was a joyous – and emotional! – moment for us to see this dream finally beginning to bear fruit.

These two photos courtesy Mel Howard



At left: Bishop William Medley and Fathers of Mercy novice Nick Olley during the Rite of Blessing. *At right:* Ground is broken by representatives of the monastery, donors, and design & construction team: (L-R) Rebecca Davis & Ben Grove (AXIOM Architecture); Ron & Sandra Bickers (donors); Laura Ruth Edge (LRuth Interior Design); Rick Bivins (JMJ Construction); Mother John Mary (monastery superior), Sr Miriam Esther (youngest sister), Sr Mary Elizabeth (eldest sister).



Construction Begins!

Excavation and foundation work on the cloister walkways has proceeded well, despite what our general contractor, Rick Bivins, called “the worst dirt I’ve ever seen!” Our Kentucky clay has hardened into rock just a few inches below the topsoil, posing a challenge for the backhoes and shovels. Thank God for jackhammers! Once we have the footer release permit for the new wing we hope to also do that foundation work in 2022, before wet winter weather sets in – “Good Lord willin’ and the creek don’t rise,” as they say in Kentucky!

Giving Thanks - Just Half a Million to Go!

As we come to an end of our quick jaunt through the monastery chronicles of this past year we leave you with a few fundraising stories.

Last November, Mother John Mary and Sr. Miriam Esther responded to an invitation to give a **fundraising appeal at the Passionist parish of St. Agnes** in Louisville, KY. This rare trip outside the cloister gave them a chance to speak at each of the three weekend Masses about our mission of prayer and sacrifice, as well as our need for financial assistance for our project. The good parishioners of St. Agnes responded generously – and some even continue to donate to the campaign! We also appreciated the time spent with our Passionist brothers. Thank you! (See us below with Fr. Febin Barose, C.P.)



This is an inspiring story about how “Every penny counts” ... The **students and teachers at St. Maximilian Montessori school** in Owensboro wanted to help out with our fundraising. Now, elementary school students aren’t usually wealthy – but they gave their “two cents worth” by starting a classroom “Penny War for the Passionists!” Thus, this September a group of students were able to present us with a substantial check towards our Cherish the Flame campaign. May God reward you!

In our last Cherish the Flame Progress Report we shared that an anonymous family generously agreed to sponsor a **\$100,000 matching grant**, beginning June 17th lasting through September 15th. Thanks to your generosity we were overwhelmed during those three months by the response we received! We received more than enough funds to receive the gift of the grant. We are so grateful to this family and to all of you. May the Lord reward you 1000-fold!

After a long and eventful three years, we are close to reaching our Cherish the Flame fundraising goal! Construction prices are in flux with the pandemic-related supply chain issues and labor shortages, but the Lord continues to provide what we need for each step. As of the end of October over \$3,510,000 has been raised. Will you help us reach the goal?



Sr. Mary Magdalen Wurth and Sr. Mary Therese Seitz, our two nuns from Paducah, KY, thank you on behalf of us all!

Will You Help Us Raise the Last 10%?

It is almost unbelievable to see that we are this far along in the fundraising process - thanks be to God, good St Joseph, and to all of you who have made this possible! **If you wish to give a gift to our Cherish the Flame campaign please make note of that when you send in your**

donation. If it is not noted we will place your financial gift in our monastery general fund. Visit our website for more information. You will find more photos there and also an up-to-date donor list.

www.passionistnuns.org

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Giving Thanks - For All of You!

"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever!" We are overwhelmed by the blessings that God has bestowed on us this past year. The Lord has used your generous hearts, your willing hands, and your faithful prayers to work great things in the life of our community, and we are beyond grateful.

Your financial donations are needed and appreciated for the upkeep of the monastery and the needs of the nuns. Thanks to your help, we can more faithfully live out our vocation of bringing our suffering world to the foot of the Cross, helping more and more souls to "give thanks to the LORD" for His greatest gift of love: the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus which brings us into the life of God.

The image at right was drawn by our Sr. Miriam Esther for Mother John Mary's Silver Jubilee. It really sums up what our Passionist life is all about: dwelling with Mary at the foot of the Cross, cherishing the Love of the Trinity poured out through the Passion of Jesus. Here we live, day in and day out, joyfully offering our lives for love of Him, for our family, our friends, and the whole world.

***May our Crucified and Risen Savior bless you and yours
during the Thanksgiving and Christmas Seasons!***

