

From the Foot of the Cross



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

Fall 2019

Dear Family & Friends,
Greetings once again from the foot of the Cross! We are delighted to share with you the latest from St. Joseph Monastery. In June, we commended to God the soul of our eldest community member, Sr. Marie Michael of the Holy Eucharist. She was the last of our "Foundation Stones," a term of endearment we gave to the four nuns who entered our monastery after its foundation in 1946 and who all hailed from the town of Knottsville, KY; her passing is the "end of an era."

Four years ago, on her 65th Profession anniversary, we asked for some words of wisdom and this quiet sister shared her thoughts, beginning like this:

"I have no words of lofty wisdom to offer, but just a desire and encouragement and prayer that we may live our Passionist charism ever more deeply, and that is: to hold the love, sufferings of Jesus, the sorrows and anguish of Mary, deep in our hearts..."

What a beautiful expression of our Passionist charism, coming from one who has lived the life for decades.

**May the Passion
of Christ be
ever in our hearts!**

The face of our community is changing: our community in heaven is growing, while our earthly community features bright new smiles. After our June elections, for the first time we have two "millennials" on the Council. The trail-blazing of the new international Monastic Congregation of Passionist Nuns came close to home this summer. We are working through a community review of life and have made changes to incorporate more study and community time into our horarium (that's monastery lingo for "schedule"). Don't miss the listing of our public prayer times on the back

cover of the newsletter. We hope you will come and join us in prayer.

As I hope you will pick up from these pages, it is an exciting time for our community. For us, this is a time of renewal. Returning to Sr. Marie Michael's words, we know that the root of true renewal is an ever deepening understanding and living of the Passionist charism entrusted to us – remaining in spirit on Calvary that the world may know HIS radical and redeeming love. Please pray for us sisters, that we may fulfill God's mission for us in the Church and in the world. It is this that we seek at this time of grace. Each of you, by your friendship, prayers, and financial gifts, are an ever treasured support to us in our hidden contemplative life and mission in the heart of the Church. May God bless and reward you! Know that you and yours are in our hearts and prayers.

Gratefully in Christ our Redeemer,
*Mother John Mary and
Community*



Back row: Christie, Sr. Mary Agnes, Sr. Frances Marie, Theresa, Sr. Mary Elizabeth, Sr. Maria Faustina, Mother Catherine Marie, Sr. Lucia Marie, Sr. Marie Michael, Sr. Mary Therese; **Front row:** Sr. Mary Magdalen, Sr. Mary Veronica, Mother John Mary, Sr. Mary Andrea, Sr. Cecilia Maria

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Let Us Go to the House of the Lord

Remembering
Sister Marie Michael
of the Holy Eucharist, CP



Sr. Marie Michael was born Mildred “Millie” Louise Aull on December 12, 1929, in Knottsville, the ninth of fifteen children born to Michael Xavier Aull and Mary Pauline Mattingly Aull. Living in a large family in the depression era, she learned the importance of hard work, “making do” with whatever was at hand, and not letting anything go to waste! More important however, was the strong Catholic faith instilled in her by her parents and her Catholic education.

The hand of God was at work in Millie during these early years, for soon He would call her to St. Joseph Passionist Monastery, and these seeds of her childhood would blossom into the lively faith, fidelity to hard work, generosity in sacrifice, and spirit of true religious poverty that would characterize her life as a Passionist Nun. Entering the monastery, then located in Owensboro, on October 7, 1948, Sr. Marie Michael was one of the four “Foundation Stones” of the new community, the first four postulants who entered and persevered in the monastery after its foundation in 1946, along with Sr. Margaret Mary Mattingly, Sr. Rita Marie Boteler, and Sr. Rose Mary Boteler.

The new monastery was very poor, and the opportunities for sacrifice were many. Through the teaching and example of the five foundresses, courageous women deeply imbued with the Passionist charism and the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross, these years and every sacrifice became part of a rich Passionist formation for Sr. Marie Michael and the community’s other “Foundation Stones” from the town of Knottsville.

As the Passionist sign which she would wear over her heart symbolizes, she learned to cherish in her heart a loving and grateful memory of the Passion of Jesus and the Sorrows of Mary, to live her life in the light of the self-sacrificing love of Jesus, and to see the loving hand of God at work in all circumstances, living as Christ did, in obedient surrender to the Will of the Father.

These were the pillars of the Passionist spirituality which were expressed in the lives of the foundresses, passed on as a sacred heritage to the first daughters of the new foundation. Sr. Marie Michael cherished the simplicity and austerity of those years, and to the end of her life she spoke of them with special joy. She made her first vows as a Passionist in 1950, and her final vows in 1953.

Sr. Marie Michael was a hard worker right up to her last days, and she did

Born:
December 12, 1929
Passionist Profession:
September 29, 1950
Returned to the Father:
June 19, 2019

Below: Sr. Marie Michael with her parents and older siblings; Sister’s high school graduation photo; Sister Marie Michael enjoyed driving, skilled or not!

Photos Courtesy of Margaret Stuart



Right: Our “Four Foundation Stones” from Knottsville; Sr. Ann Miriam and Sr. Marie Michael; Sr. Marie Michael lovingly tended the sacristy for many years.

Below: With St. Joseph at the original Owensboro monastery; Working in the garden; Sister delighted in flowers to decorate the chapel; Out for a spin on the riding lawn mower!



everything with an intensity and zeal that were remarkable. Even in her hospital bed, she was concerned about counting the hosts for Mass and making sure the lights were turned on in chapel. Over the years, her duties in the monastery were many. After the community re-located from Owensboro to Whitesville in 1995, Sr. Marie Michael enjoyed working outside, tending the outdoor statues, shrines, and Stations of the Cross. She would often use a riding lawn mower or golf cart, but was never known for her driving skills, as many incidents can attest. Take for instance, the time she drove over a small wheelbarrow, without even realizing it! She never did outlive the playful teasing of her sisters for the time she cut her finger with a hedge-trimmer, almost cutting it right off! She then came inside asking for a band-aid, to the horror of the infirmarian, who promptly sent her to the emergency room.

The energy and zeal with which she worked extended also to community recreation. She was a force to be reckoned with in any game of scrabble, and even on the volleyball court. Once, another sister ended up with her veil pulled off in a volleyball match, certainly not from any malice on Sr. Marie Michael’s part, just her energy and zeal for the sport.

The majority of her religious life was spent serving as sacristan, an office she held until her death. Sr. Marie Michael found in this office an expression of, and nourishment for, her tender love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Her spirit of love and adoration of the Holy Eucharist was the hallmark of her religious life from the beginning, as expressed in the devotional title she chose when she received her religious name just a year after entering the monastery: Sr. Marie Michael *of the Holy Eucharist*. She prepared for the daily Mass and liturgies with attention and care, and was vigilant that the chapel always be clean and beautiful.

The Saturday before Pentecost 2019 was the last day she was up and around before the rapid decline which preceded her death. She spent the day getting flowers and arranging them to put before the altar for Pentecost Mass. Especially in the last years of her life, it seemed like Sr. Marie Michael was always in or around the chapel, unless she was out in the garden tending or cutting flowers for the chapel. She never missed a day praying her stations of the Cross. She spent part of her free time each day in prayer in chapel, including praying the Mercy Chaplet at 3:00pm.

If there are two things that Sr. Marie Michael will go down in history for in our community it would be her love of poverty and her longing for heaven. The amusing story has been told for decades now that at thirty-three years old, Sr. Marie Michael declared that she would not need a new toothbrush, since she knew she was going to

die at the age of thirty three, like Our Lord did. The Lord did not come for her that year though, and ever after she waited for his long-delayed coming. Over the decades of her religious life, as she watched sisters whom she had loved and lived with, even some who were younger than she, go home to God, she was heard more than once to half-jokingly remark, "I was supposed to go first!" About a week before her death, when Mother John Mary told her that the Lord may soon be coming for her she grinned and exclaimed, "Good news!" Sr. Marie Michael never wanted anything to go to waste, whether it was food in the refectory, or personal items, or flowers. Mend, re-use, re-purpose was her motto. Some of her habits became a sun-bleached brown or purple, but they were still good habits! And besides, she reasoned year after year, why bother having a new habit made, when she was going to die soon anyway?

Sr. Marie Michael loved her family, and was zealous in prayer for them, especially if someone was nearing death or had need for particular prayers in some other way. There are stories of real miracles of grace in her family, and it is doubtless that her prayers played a role. She kept up with the birthdays, anniversaries, and special occasions in the lives of not only her many siblings, but also generations of nieces and nephews. "Sr. Millie" in turn was deeply cherished by her family, and an Aull family visit at the monastery always meant a full visiting parlor. During the last week of her life, she was surrounded round the clock by members of her family, and though she was not able to communicate, surely her love and intercession for them continued in a very special way during those days. About a week before her death, her last spoken sentiments were words of prayer for her family, as she remembered her parents, siblings, nieces, and nephews by name and prayed that they would all be together one day in the eternal reunion of Heaven.

Our dear sister took her last breath on Wednesday, June 19 at 3:30am. She was preceded in death by her parents; by 10 of her 14 siblings: Therese Elizabeth "Jakie" Miller, Mary Thomasine "Tommie" Higdon, Thomas Charles and Hazel Ruth (both of whom died in infancy), Sr. Margaret Joseph Aull, OSU (Maple Mount), Joseph Harry "Jack" Aull, William "Bill" Aull, James "Jim" Aull, Beverly Clark, Joseph "Joe" Aull; by sisters and brothers-in-law; a niece and several nephews. She is survived by four siblings: Sister Mary Naomi Aull, OSU (Maple Mount), Robert "Bob" Aull, Joy Dunn, and Anna Carolyn "Cricket" Lyddane (Joe Lyddane); a sister-in-law Lena Aull; and MANY beloved nieces and nephews, and great nieces and nephews.

We extend our gratitude to **Bishop William Medley**, who celebrated the funeral Mass, to **Fr. Lou Caporiccio, CPM**, who preached the homily, to **Fr. Will Thompson** who served as Master of Ceremonies, and to our Oblates who assisted with the funeral luncheon. We also thank all the family and Hospice of Western Kentucky, whose aid enabled us to bring our sister home to her beloved monastery for her last days.

Finally, we thank Sr. Marie Michael's physician, **Dr. Mark Abshier**, for his care over many decades.



Above: Sister Marie Michael with her sisters Joy and Anna Carolyn "Cricket" in the parlor; Sister Marie Michael, with Sister Mary Agnes, at her Golden Jubilee celebration; Sister hard at work cracking pecans at recreation. **Right:** Sister had a hidden competitive streak when playing games; Sister's radiant smile will be missed!

Photo courtesy Fr. Josh McCarty

Keeping Up With the Congregation

This summer brought the face of the Monastic Congregation of Passionist Nuns right here to us! Our own **Mother Catherine Marie**, Mother President of the Congregation, is at work with her Council to guide the baby steps of our international structure of communion.

Sister Daniela of Brazil has been with us since May, on a mission to learn English—*Kentucky* English. This is an important skill, as she works closely with Mother Catherine Marie as a member of the General Council and as the General Secretary of the Congregation. Many thanks to all those who have assisted with driving Sr. Daniela to her ESL classes, and to our friends who have come to the monastery to help her practice her conversation skills. It has been a joy having Sr. Daniela with us! She returns to Brazil October 2, and will join Mother Catherine Marie in Tarquinia, Italy in January.



Sr. Luzia Daniela, CP,
of São Paulo, Brazil



Mother Catherine Marie at home in Whitesville with postulant Theresa and aspirants Jennifer & Kathryn

Mother Catherine Marie was here in her old Kentucky home for the summer. Her busy agenda included presiding at our Community elections, a General Council meeting, an assembly of the superiors of the U.S. Passionist monasteries, and an 8-day retreat in Colorado. Now back in Lucca, Italy, in late fall she will be moving to our proto-monastery in Tarquinia, Italy, which will be the legal seat of the Monastic Congregation.

In June, we welcomed the General Council of the Monastic Congregation to our monastery. **Mother Gertrude Poggio** (France), **Sr. Luzia Daniela Almeida** (Brazil), **Mother Ana Maria Cabañas** (Mexico), and **Mother Maria Martina Naiman** (Indonesia) gathered with Mother Catherine Marie for a General Council meeting. It was an honor to host these international sisters, and a true experience of communion within our international Congregation. After a week of fruitful meetings, the group took a field trip which included a visit to our Passionist Fathers in Louisville.



Left: Sr. Daniela, Mother Ana Maria, Mother Gertrude, Mother Catherine Marie, and Mother Martina.

Below: Fr. Sebastian McDonald, CP; Mother Catherine Marie, Fr. Bob Weiss, CP; Mother Gertrude; Mother Ana Maria; Fr. Christopher Gibson, CP; Sr. Daniela; Br. John Monzyk; Mother Martina; Janie Gayhart (Passionist Oblate and gracious driver for the nuns)



Monastic

A community exists inasmuch as it comes about and is built up by the contribution of all, each according to his or her gifts, through the development of a strong spirituality of communion.

Vultum Dei quaerere #25



Above: Christie knits a sweater.
Right: Sr. Mary Therese making rosaries.



Above: Sr. Frances Marie ironing linens in the Sacristy. **Left:** Sr. Mary Elizabeth tidying up the dinette for our guests.



Above: The whole community shucking and silking corn during recreation one evening. Many thanks to all who shared the summer harvest with us!
Right: Sr. Mary Agnes; Sr. Maria Faustina silking corn; Sr. Daniela and Sr. Mary Elizabeth at the "corn party."



Moments

*T*hrough your labor too, you share in the work that God the Creator carries out in the world.

Vultum Dei quaerere #32



Center: Sr. Maria Faustina and aspirants Jennifer & Kathryn, hanging out on the lawnmowers in our new barn.

Clockwise from top: Aspirant Abbey working in the garden;

Sr. Mary Veronica in the garden;

Sr. Mary Magdalen with her favorite flowering shrub;

Sr. Frances Marie and Sr. Daniela on the maintenance foreman's tractor;

Sr. Mary Veronica and Sr. Cecilia Maria on the other tractor;

Sr. Cecilia Maria with the last trowel on a big gardening day;

Sr. Mary Andrea fires up the weed-eater.

Summertime in the monastery brings lots of parties, from “weeding parties” in the flower beds and outdoor shrines to corn or green bean “parties” on the patio. If you do the job in silence during work time it’s work, but get the whole community together at recreation, and it’s a party! Many hands make light work!

Work and recreation are important parts of monastic life. Our daily work is a sacred share in the work of God the Creator and in the work of Christ, done with love for the building up of the community and the Church. Recreation is our daily time to hang out together. Whether it’s spent processing fresh produce, playing a game of

Canasta, or even making a field trip to the maintenance barn, it is a time of joyful chatter and building bonds of communion and charity. We recently made some changes to our horarium in order to make more room for this valuable community time.

More Monastic Moments...



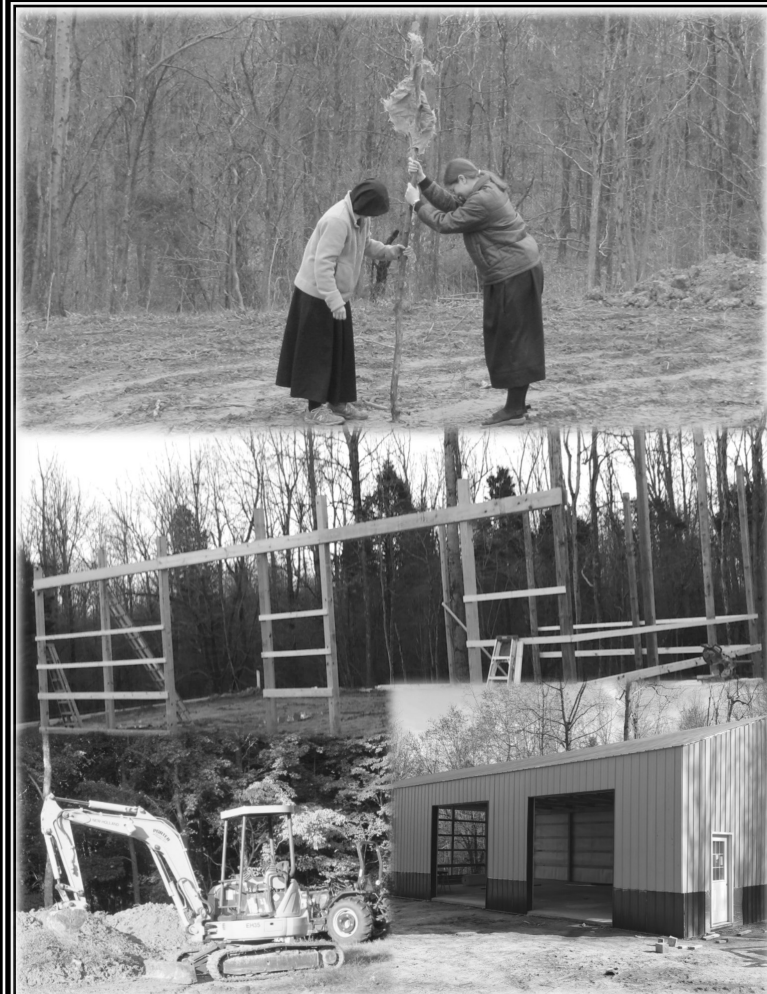
Left: Mother John Mary enjoys an early spring walk with **Isabel**, a young woman from Germany who visited us to discern how to integrate Passionist spirituality into an apostolic consecrated life.

Right: Fr. David Colhour, CP joined us for the celebration of Corpus Christi and 40 Hours.



Left: Sr. Mary Veronica, our vicar and novice directress, was honored with a funny skit on her feast day.

Right: Three of our Passionist brothers were with us in late August to assist at a retreat: **Fr. Joseph Barbieri, CP**, **Fr. Donald Senior, CP**, and **Fr. Gwen Barde, CP**, pictured here with **Sr. Maria Faustina** and **Sr. Maria Elizabeth**.



BLESSING OUR NEW BARN

After over a year of preparations, laying foundations, and building, we have raised a barn! From a muddy battlefield full of tree roots, to a shiny green building full of tractors and lawn mowers—the transformation is astounding. On August 27, **Fr. Joseph Barbieri, CP**, blessed the new storage barn. We are so grateful to the generous anonymous benefactors who made this building project possible. May the Lord's blessing be upon them!

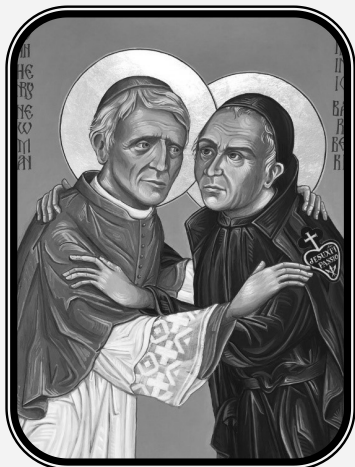
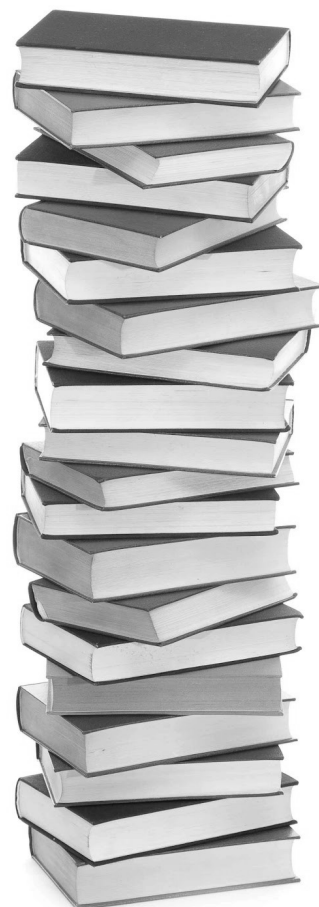




ONGOING FORMATION

An important part of monastic life is ongoing formation. No matter how long a Nun has been in the monastery, there is always more learning and growth ahead as we seek to be conformed to Christ in mind and heart. Part of our ongoing formation is our weekly choir practice—learning and drilling together in order to fulfill mindfully and prayerfully our sacred duty of praising God in union with the voice of the whole Church. Thanks to the generosity of a priest friend of the community, we are excited to introduce new St. Michael's Hymnals into our chapel and choir.

As we go through a community renewal process, we agreed to incorporate more time for study into our afternoon schedule. This provides more time for delving into scripture, Passionist history and spirituality, Church history, philosophy, to name a few topics. During Lent we did a community study and sharing using Dr. Ed Sri's course, *No Greater Love: a Biblical Walk through Christ's Passion*. We thank another generous friend for gifting us with this course!



Bl. J.H. Newman
& Bl. Dominic Barberi

A Saint of the Passionist Congregation Blessed Dominic Barberi, CP

Bl. John Henry Cardinal Newman, who will be canonized October 15, once said of the Catholics: "If they want to convert England, let them go barefooted into our manufacturing towns—let them preach to the people like St. Francis Xavier—let them be pelted and trampled on, and I will own that they can do what we cannot." God answered by sending Blessed Dominic Barberi, who has been called "the shepherd of the second spring". This humble yet brilliant man, came barefooted. He preached to the poor, suffering verbal and physical abuse as he proclaimed the fullness of the faith in England.

From the time he was a child in Italy, Dominic was convinced that he had received a mission from God to evangelize England. He began a long crusade of prayer for England and joined the Passionists with the hope that someday he would be sent to that far-away island nation. Some 20 years after Dominic's priestly ordination, the Passionist superior general sent him forth at last in 1841. Dominic first established the Congregation of the Passion in Belgium and from there, in England. He was to labor there only about 8 years before his death. The crowning of his years of prayer, labor and suffering came when on Oct. 9, 1845, he received John Henry Newman and others into the Catholic Church.

Later, Newman wrote of Blessed Dominic: "Father Dominic was a marvelous missionary and preacher, filled with zeal. He had a great part in my own conversion and that of others. His very look had about it something holy....The gaiety and affability of his manner in the midst of all his sanctity was in itself a holy sermon. No wonder then that I became his convert and his penitent. He was a great lover of England."

Dominic was to live only four more years after Newman's conversion. On Friday, Aug 27, 1849, he suffered a heart attack and died at 3pm; he was 58 years of age. Dominic was enrolled among the Blessed by Pope Paul VI during the Second Vatican Council, on October 23, 1963.

Bl. Dominic, Pray for Us!



Vocation Retreats...

The June Vocation Retreat brought us two visitors, **Rebekah and Allison**.

Interested in attending a Vocation Retreat Weekend? Go to www.passionistnuns.org to sign up for one of the next retreats!

October 11-13, 2019 March 27-29, 2020 June 26-28, 2020

Steps On the Journey

...Aspirants galore...

There are a few pony tails to be seen among the black veils here in the monastery these days. We have been blessed by a number of vocation visitors this summer. **Abbey and Allison** are our two newest aspirants, joining **Kathryn and Jennifer**, who began last year. Please pray for them!

After attending a vocation retreat and returning for a live-in week, these young ladies felt called to discern a Passionist vocation further through our aspirancy program, which lasts a minimum of one year. The aspirants live at home but are in regular contact with the Aspirant Directress, and come for periodic live-in experiences in the monastery. While they are here, they share in our prayer, work, and community life, while receiving formation and individual discernment direction



Top: Aspirant Jennifer, Mother John Mary, aspirant Kathryn, visitor Ashley, and aspirant Allison
Bottom: Postulant Theresa, Sr. Maria Faustina, and aspirant Abbey

Has your postulant been exhibiting strange symptoms?



Chances are, she is experiencing "POSTULANT SENIORITY," also known as "VESTITION FEVER!" The only known cure is to quickly replace your postulant ... with a novice!!!

...& a Novice on the way!

Finally, postulant **Theresa** will receive the holy Passionist Habit and her new religious name and title in a private ceremony in mid-October. Keep her in prayer as she prepares for "the big day" and be on the look-out for pictures of the new novice in an upcoming newsletter!



Looking for an opportunity to encounter the Lord in prayer and silence? Consider making a retreat in our Retreat House! Whether you are looking for a week of solitude or a day of recollection, we are able to accommodate a wide variety of retreat styles and sizes. For example, we recently hosted a large group, the **Holy Name Retreat Center Board** from Houston, TX (pictured above with Fr. Don Senior, CP, and Fr. Joseph Barbieri, CP) on their annual retreat. They utilized our Passionist Saints Hall conference space, enjoyed the home-cooked meals, ambled on the walking paths, and joined the nuns for Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours. Visit our website, www.passionistnuns.org/retreat-house, to see upcoming retreat opportunities and to view more photos of our Retreat House accommodations.

Testimony of a Retreatant:

"Many heartfelt thanks for your hospitality and prayers during these holy days of silence with the Beloved. They were precious days, sacred days. Thank you for opening your home so that others may escape for a time into the heart of Jesus and be renewed in mind, body, and spirit."

Make a Retreat at St Joseph Retreat House!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Christie at
(270) 302-8023

Email retreats@passionistnuns.org

Website www.passionistnuns.org

FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS



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COME JOIN US IN PRAYER!

TIMES OF PUBLIC PRAYER

6:20 a.m. – Morning Prayer (7:20 a.m. on Sun.)

7 a.m. - Holy Mass & Midmorning Prayer (8 a.m. on Sat. & Sun.)
Midmorning Prayer and Stations of the Cross at 9:30 a.m. Friday

12 noon – Midday Prayer

2:35 p.m. – Midafternoon Prayer (Wed./Fri./Sat.)
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 2:35 - 4 p.m. Friday

4:45 p.m. – Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
& Evening Prayer (5:45 p.m. on Fri.)

8:00 p.m. – Night Prayer (7:00 p.m. on Fri.)

Our times of liturgical prayer change occasionally,
so you may wish to call ahead at **270-233-4571** to verify the times.
Or drop by to pray in our Chapel anytime:
ring the doorbell and a nun will let you in shortly.



*C*ome, let us sing
to the Lord...

*L*et us bow down
and worship.

~Psalm 95