

A Grateful Remembrance **FROM THE OF THE CROSS**



Passionist Nuns, 8564 Crisp Road, Whitesville, Kentucky 42378

December 2006

The year 2006 is well summed up by the magnificent "Great Amen" of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass! *"The very meaning of the word 'Eucharist' is thanksgiving. In Jesus, in his sacrifice, in his unconditional 'yes' to the will of the Father, is contained the 'yes', the 'thank you' and the 'amen' of all humanity."* (John Paul II, Mane Nobiscum #26)



~ A Year of Thanksgiving ~

Yes, in the sacrifice of Jesus is contained our "Great Amen" of thanksgiving to the Father. An ever deeper effort to live our daily Eucharist, the living memorial of the Passion of Jesus, together with three major public celebrations, consecrated our 60th anniversary year to humble thanksgiving to God:

- thanksgiving for the Silver Jubilee of Sr. Mary Agnes and Sr. Joseph Marie
- thanksgiving for the First Profession of Vows of Sr. Jeanne Marie
- thanksgiving for 60 years of our presence here in the diocese of Owensboro

"Consecrated life still has a history to be written...," Pope John Paul II reminded us. And Passionist life in Western Kentucky still has a history to be written. Having completed the first 60 years of our community, we recommit ourselves to the radical following of Jesus Christ in Passionist life with creative fidelity. We are starting afresh from Christ into the future, with a Eucharistic attitude of thanksgiving and joyful self-giving flaming in our hearts, *"remembering the past with gratitude, living the present with enthusiasm, and looking forward to the future with confidence."* (John Paul II, Novo Millennio Ineunte #1)

Highlights from our 60th Anniversary Mass & Celebration



Fr. Frederick Sucher, C.P., Most Rev. John J. McRaith, Bishop of Owensboro, Fr. Joseph Mills, Passionist Oblate

Sunday, Oct. 15, 2006 was a day of overflowing gratitude and joy in the Lord as we celebrated the 60th anniversary of our foundation in the Owensboro diocese. Our Most Rev. Bishop John McRaith, together with approximately 19 priests, including six Passionists, concelebrated the Mass. A standing room only crowd of relatives, friends and benefactors, packed into our chapel and overflowed into the back part of the cloistered side of the chapel.

Our special thanks to Fr. Joseph Mills, Passionist Oblate and brother of our Sr. Ann Miriam, for his inspiring homily which people are still talking about. "My connection with the Passionist Nuns goes back to a lawnmower...." Father was referring to the fact that as a seminarian, he had cut grass for the founding Nuns in their early years at the Benita Avenue monastery. The entire homily can be found on our website.

The praises of God that "raised the roof" that day, continue to resound in the liturgy of our hearts, as with Mary, we proclaim the greatness of our God, and His creative power continually renewing our community in living our Passionist charism for the sake of the Church.



Carrying the gifts to the altar: l to r: Knight of Columbus Bob Hood, Ruth Steele Reed, Founding Oblate Tom Carter, Melvin Wathen. Seminarian Steve Hohman at right.



The Knights of Columbus, with their usual efficiency, helped park cars and served as ushers in Chapel. Bob Hood, Larry Wahnsiedler, Gene Roberts.

Our thanks to Larena Lawson, Mel Howard & Lois Rutigliano for being our photographers for our celebrations this past year. May the Lord reward you!



Larena Lawson

A few of these photos were taken by Fr. Blaise Czaja, C.P. pictured below.



The October 15 celebration was made "extra special" by the presence of 6 of our brothers in the Passion of Christ.

L to r: Fr. Leon Grantz, Fr. Albert Schwer, Fr. Bernard Webber, Fr. Sebastian MacDonald, Fr. Blaise Czaja, Fr. Frederick Sucher. Never in our 60 year history have we had so many Passionist priests present for a celebration.



Katie and Robert Edge with their aunt Ruth Steele Reed coming through the reception line.



Fr. Blaise Czaja with Passionist Partners Ken Schmidt (left) and Deacon Thales & Kate Finchum and family from Nashville, TN.



Passionist Oblates
Lou and Veda Mattingly



Joe Payne with his daughter Janie Gayhart and some of her children. Charlotte Oberst smiling in the back.



Kenny & Wanda Ward
long-time friends of the Passionist Nuns

***A few of the many happy
faces at the reception.***



Maple Mount Ursulines, l to r: Sr. Mary Irene Cecil, Sr. Marie Goretti Browning, Sr. Clarita Browning. Srs. Marie Goretti and Clarita had two brothers who were Passionists: Fr. Lawrence and Fr. Bill Browning, C.P.



Sr. John Mary greeting her family after the Mass. Her grandfather was hospitalized for serious complications due to a health problem shortly after this occasion.

"I Have Found Him Whom I Love with All My Heart"

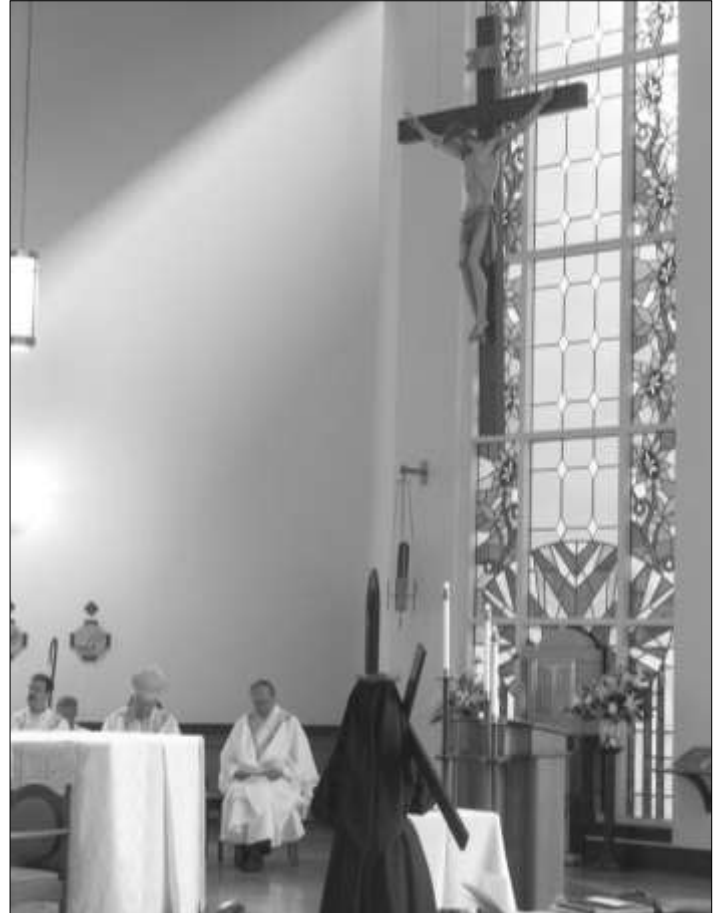


Sr. Jeanne Marie and Mother Catherine Marie greeting guests in the visiting area.

Our 60th anniversary year brought another beautiful blessing. Sr. Jeanne Marie of the Precious Blood of the Lamb (Karen Petty) made her first vows on Sunday, August 6th. Born in Omaha, Nebraska, Karen Kathleen was the first of five children born to Marie and Evert Petty. Karen was the first and only one of the children to be baptized as an infant.

Marie, who had given up her Catholic faith when she married Evert, a Presbyterian, didn't tell Karen at first that she had been baptized as a Catholic. The children were all raised as Protestants, attending church on Sundays, with her Dad cantoring for the services.

In adulthood, something stirred in Karen's heart. Her journey into the Catholic Church began with a desire to find a church that centered on worship. She knew she wanted more than what she found at the Protestant church she was then attending. As she looked around at different churches, Karen couldn't figure out why the only church she was drawn to was the Catholic Church. On asking her mother why, her mother said, "Because I had you baptized



Catholic as an infant."

At the time, Karen was living in Southern California. She went through the RCIA program at St. Juliana's Church in Fullerton, California and was received into full communion with the Catholic Church in April 1988 by the Archbishop of Panama, Archbishop Clavel. Sr. Jeanne Marie chuckles in remembering that no one thought to warn the RCIA participants that the Archbishop confers Confirmation with a **hard** slap on the cheek!

Karen later transferred to St. Joseph's Church in Placentia, where she soon began to take an active part in parish life, becoming an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, a lector, First Communion teacher, and RCIA prayer coordinator.

Later during her mother's last illness, Karen was instrumental in bringing her mother back to the faith of her childhood. She asked the Catholic priest serving as chaplain in the hospital to visit her mother and invite her back to the Sacraments. Much to her joy, her mother went to confession and received the last Sacraments before she died.

All this time, Karen still felt that something was missing. A loving, gentle, persistent call within her kept growing stronger and seemed to be asking for more. It was the call to religious life, a call she didn't particularly want to hear at first. Thanks to the strong and loving support of her Cursillo group, and the spiritual direction and encouragement of Fr. Alfred Baca and Fr. Stephen Correz, Karen moved forward though she found herself praying, "Dear Jesus, is this really what you wish? I am still just learning this precious faith You have gifted me with. There are so many



Sr. Jeanne Marie and her novice directress Sr. Mary Veronica during the Offertory Procession.



Msgr. Bernard Powers preached a powerful homily comparing the transfiguration of Christ and religious consecration.



Fr. Stephen Correz came all the way from California to join in the celebration.

things I don't know." Nevertheless, that "dear voice" (as she calls it) of the Lord continued to plead with her. Finally, she responded and set out on a circuitous journey into religious life.

While on retreat at Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat House in Sierra Madre, Karen found a vocation leaflet published by our community, but felt a monastery in Kentucky was too far away even to consider. Later, after typing "contemplative nun" into the search engine on a computer, our website came up first! (www.passionistnuns.org)

"Hmmm....Wonder what God is saying to me...." And so she entered into a long discernment with us.

"When I got on the plane to come for a visit, I did not know what I would experience here," Sr. Jeanne Marie writes. "What I found was a community where

every member, united in love of Our Lord, has given their heart to our dear Jesus Crucified, contemplating His Paschal Mystery and living for Him and for His Body, the Church."

After a one year postulancy and a two-year novitiate, Sr. Jeanne Marie joyfully made her first vows to the Lord as a Passionist on the feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord. She will continue her formation in the juniorate for six years before making final vows.

We thank God that another generous heart has said "yes" to the call to religious consecration, cooperating with the Holy Spirit, and staking everything on Christ's unfailing love.



At first profession of vows, a Passionist Nun receives the black veil, the Passionist sign and ring and the profession crucifix. During the singing of the Magnificat, the Nun wears the crown and holds the cross of Christ.



THE MEMORY OF THE PASSION

In the midst of a stressful day - the pressures of working as a male nurse at Owensboro Medical Health System - Passionist Oblate, Gene Boehmann, stepped outside during his break. As he walked along the railroad tracks next to the hospital, he picked up some old railroad nails that reminded him of the huge nails that pinned Jesus to the cross.

Later, as Gene was walking along the river bank he saw several pieces of driftwood. He picked them up, remembering some words from the letters of St. Paul of the Cross. Paul spoke about clinging to the driftwood of the cross during storms on the sea of life. This thought played in his mind as he crafted from the nails and the wood a powerful image of the Crucified which was his gift to us on the feast of the Triumph of the Cross, September 14th. The Nuns are holding Gene's cross here in this photo.

A Silver Gaudeamus Celebration

Jubilation was in the air on Labor Day, as we celebrated a monastery "Gaudeamus" in honor of Sr. Mary Agnes' 25th anniversary of Passionist profession. She and Sr. Joseph Marie had their public Mass of Thanksgiving together in May of this year. Sr. Joseph Marie's Gaudeamus had been held last summer, so now it was time to honor Sr. Mary Agnes.

There were three humorous songs repeated throughout the day. A motor scooter (her monastic Cadillac) was decorated with a collage of photos from her childhood, young adult life, entrance into our community, her years as the superior who led us through the relocation, plus many other memories as well.

During the years of construc-

tion of our monastery, Sr. Mary Agnes was often seen wearing a white hard hat. We found one of these hats tucked away in a closet and decorated it with a crown of silver stars, a faint foreshadowing of the reward waiting for her in heaven for leading us through the construction,

"Sing a song of gladness, Sisters,
sing it and repeat!

Sing a song of thanks to God
for "Silver Years" complete.

Sister Mary Agnes,
we are honoring today,
Praising God with gladness
as we have some fun and say:

Break forth with joy!
Let's sing in loud acclaim!

Give thanks to God,
and bless His holy name!
Sister Mary Agnes, Lord,
is such a precious gift.
Choosing her to build Your house
was such a perfect fit!"

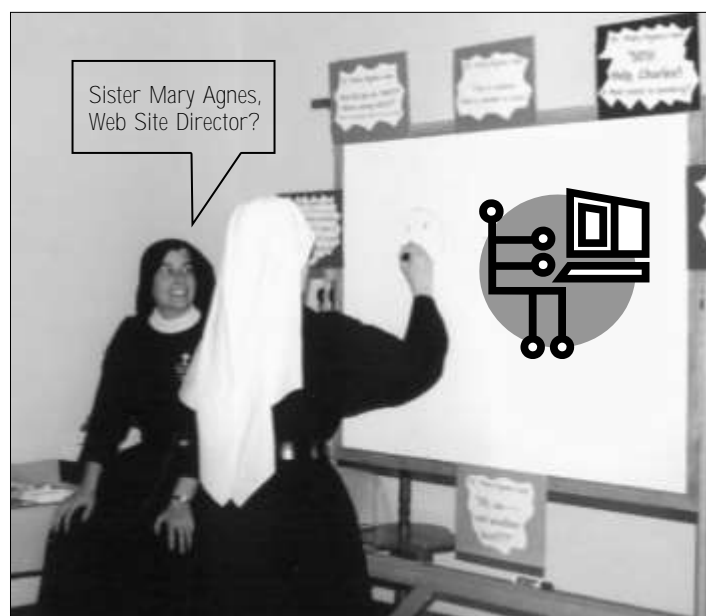


A grand display of the blueprints of Heaven!

then the reconstruction after the foundation in the chapel and bedroom wing failed. The hard hat bore the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

After the Jubilarian was presented with her "now glorious" hat, novice, Sr. Mary Andrea, gave her a set of the "blue prints of heaven," drawn up from the Book of Revelation. This gift honored Sr. Mary Agnes for the many years she had carried the blueprints of our monastery around.

To round out the day, there were games, gifts and cards to honor our Jubilarian. But perhaps the highpoint of it all was when we played a recording of six year old Vickie (Sr. Mary Agnes) singing in harmony with her sister, Barbara Golden, and also her mother, Lois Higgs. After listening to it we were ready to sign her up for some professional CD's!



An animated game of monastery pictiornary in session!

Working Hard for Vocations!

A NEW FACE IN THE MONASTERY



The month of September brought us a new community member! Jill Rodts from Milan, IL brings with her a great desire to love the Lord and to serve Him in Passionist life. Please keep her in your prayers as she begins her journey of transformation in Christ.

PRAY FOR THE NUN RUNS!

Thus far two college groups have contacted us to include us in their Nun Runs during Spring Break 2007. They hail from St. Thomas University in St. Paul, MN and Benedictine College in Atchison, KS. Nun Runs are a wonderful opportunity for young women to visit several different religious communities in one trip.

VOCATION DISCERNMENT RETREAT



Five young women attended our July retreat, traveling from Texas, Minnesota, Indiana and Nebraska. Their desire to know and follow God's plan for their life made the retreat a very enriching experience for all. A special thanks to Larena Lawson for her help as chaperone during the weekend.

CREATING A VIDEO ABOUT OUR LIFE



Our delightful and efficient video crew
Ron DiCianni, Jennifer Orth, and Brett Johnson

Over the years many people have told us that our Passionist monastery is one of the best keep secrets in Kentucky. Often, they have encouraged us to have a vocation video created to make our monastic life more known, thereby increasing vocations to our contemplative life and continuing Passionist life well into the future. This has been a dream of ours for some time.

Recently, Divine Providence arranged a "chance meeting" at a hospital in Nashville with Mac Pirkle, the Vice-President of *Earnhardt Pirkle, Inc. Film, Video and Event Production*. Doors began to open and we realized that we had found a wonderful faith-filled group who could help us bring our dream a reality. Many thanks to this wonderful video production company and their associates! More about this great adventure in our next newsletter.



Some people will do anything for a photo!
Ron and Brett in the bell tower!

Guests Welcomed at the Monastery



On June 29th, a teacher from West Memphis, Arkansas, **Michael Beauregard**, wrote to say that his family possessed a large relic of our founder, St. Paul of the Cross! This relic has been in his family since the 19th century. The authentic of the relic is dated 1881, and signed by Blessed Bernard Mary Silvestrelli, C.P., who was then the Superior General of the Passionists. Michael felt that such a special relic should belong in a Passionist monastery, and so he decided to donate the relic to us! Michael and his father **John** personally and with great reverence and faith brought this treasure to us. The reliquary has an ornate metal frame the color of pewter with glass on four sides. John's wife and Michael's mother went home to Our Lord just a week before their arrival, which made their long trip so much more appreciated by all of us. Their gift has seemed to bring a special presence of Our Holy Founder into our midst. Dear Michael and John, we will be forever grateful to you for this precious gift. May God bless and reward you!



Once again this year, we were blessed to have **Fr. Thomas McGonigle, O.P.** with us. His love for our holy founder, St. Paul of the Cross is well known by Passionists in the U.S. and beyond. By unanimous vote of the monastery chapter in 2005, we invited Father to do a pastoral visitation among us, helping us explore means for enhancing our contemplative life, and ensuring the vitality of means of governance, formation and self-sustenance. Father gave us nine days of conferences on our Passionist charism, besides interviewing every member of the community. These days have proven immensely enlightening and empowering as we move into the future with Mary's attitude of consecration to the Person and work of her Son Jesus.



Fr. Joseph T. Poggemeyer, S.T.D.

*Did not
our hearts burn
as they spoke to us?*



Fr. Andrew H. Cozzens, S.T.L.

These were the words we expressed in early August when we had the joy of welcoming to the monastery two fervent young priests and "scholars for Christ" who are teaching in two of our U.S. seminaries. Fr. Joseph is Director of Formation for the college seminary and professor of biblical theology at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, OH. Fr. Andrew teaches sacramental theology at St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, MN while completing his doctoral dissertation. While they were living in Rome both priests served as confessors, spiritual directors, and retreat directors in Rome and abroad for the Missionaries of Charity founded by Blessed Teresa of Calcutta. May the Lord continue to bless their ministry as they take part in forming the priests of the next generation!

...More Guests



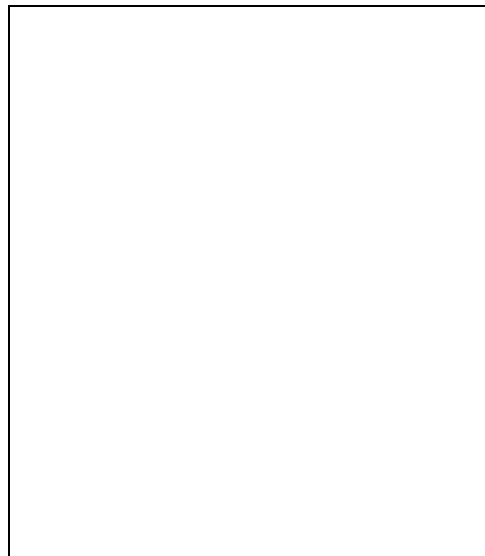
We were blessed to have **Fr. Arthur Carillo, C.P.** with us for a visit earlier this year. He then returned to give a grace-filled weekend for retreatants on the theme of contemplation.

FOOD FOR THE CONTEMPLATIVE JOURNEY

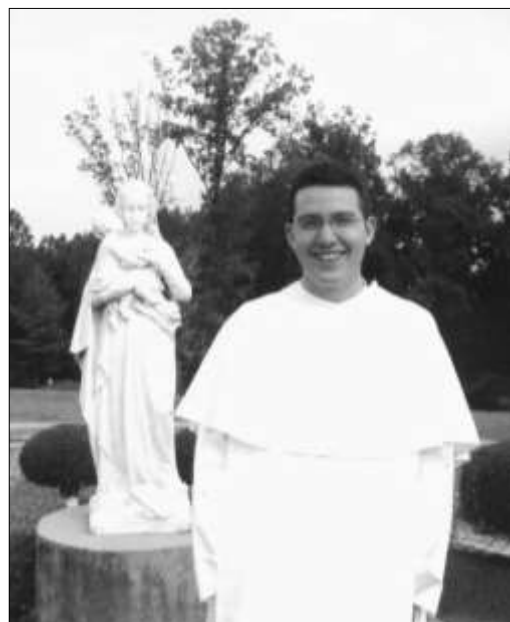
"Mary's Garden" is a four-page Catholic quarterly designed to deepen our contemplative orientation and provide examples of holiness in action. Containing short stories of faith, it offers us inspiration and exceptional quotes to help in prayer and Gospel living. For more information, send a self-addressed and stamped envelope to Mary's Garden / 7101 E. Rosecrans, #159 / Paramount, CA 90723



Ordained a priest on June 3rd, 2006, **Fr. Francis Dominic Valerio** of the Intercessors of the Lamb Community in Omaha, Nebraska offered Mass for us on June 13th. Afterward, we had a wonderful meeting with Father and his mother, Josephine (Jo). Our Sr. Mary met Fr. Francis and his mother at a prayer group in the Nashville area before she entered our community, and has been close friends with them ever since. Since Sister could not attend his ordination Mass, Fr. Valerio graciously came here with his mother to celebrate Mass.



For several years in the 1980's, **Fr. Vincent Tobin, O.S.B.**, a monk of St. Meinrad Archabbey in Southern Indiana, gave scripture classes to the community and classes on monastic history to our formation Sisters. How happy we are once again to welcome our dear friend into our midst after his 19 years in Rome, serving as Procurator for three Benedictine congregations of monasteries, while teaching Greek at the Pontifical Gregorian University and homiletics for three years at the North American College. Now manager of the Guest House at St. Meinrad, Father Vincent will be coming periodically throughout the year to resume his classes with us as part of our program of ongoing formation.



Bro. Austin Litke, O.P. from Henderson, KY, whose grandparents are in our parish in Whitesville, recently made vows as a Dominican of St. Joseph's Province. In August, Bro. Austin and our community enjoyed a wonderful visit together. We told him he was the 32nd Dominican who had visited our monastery this year!

Retreats at the Monastery

Our retreat house reservations are really picking up, and now, thanks to our website, we are getting retreatants from all over. We recently had with us a former news correspondent from Washington D.C. who saw much violence while covering the war in Iraq. She is experiencing a conversion and said she was so drawn to make a retreat here. We also had a Mennonite on retreat who had been a missionary for 12 years in Brazil. A total of 32 Dominican men and women came to the monastery on five separate occasions this summer. The retreat house is slowly developing into a source of much-needed income. Most often people hear about us by word of mouth or by the internet.



Fr. Ray Clark's 2nd retreat on the Holy Spirit was attended by some of our Passionist Associates from St. Louis as well as new friends. His first conference was held in the basement during a tornado but the retreat ended on a glorious fall day.



Bro. J. Thomas Petri, O.P. made a retreat here in July. On departing he left us with these words: *"...Your spiritual proximity to Christ Crucified coupled with your incessant intercession on behalf of the local Church has produced abundant fruit...your charism is most urgent in our day."*



For the 8th consecutive year the **Nashville Dominicans** brought their "brand new" postulants on retreat for several days in August.

Have you visited our web site lately?
www.passionistnuns.org



Brother Brad Smith, an Owensboro native and a Missionary serving in our sister diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica, West Indies made his retreat here in July. His community, Mission Society of Mandeville, was founded by Most Rev. Bishop Paul Boyle, C.P. and is affiliated with the world-wide Congregation of the Passion.



Fr. Donald P. Halpin, O.F.M. Conv., a missionary serving in Zambia, Africa made a week-long retreat here in October. Before returning to Africa Father sent these beautiful words: *"After leaving the other day I immediately missed being with you, the quiet of the monastery setting, prayer with you, my own quiet time in prayer, walks along the paths in the woods, excellent meals, a restful and refreshing time while on retreat. Thank you for providing your gift-charism of hospitality. Along with your contemplative life-style, certainly hospitality and a welcoming spirit is there among you, and I am grateful."*

Our Beloved Dead

"Dad McKimmy"



Charlie and Mary McKimmy
United in time and now in eternity

Charles L. "Abe" McKimmy, the dearly loved father of Sr. Mary Veronica, passed away on April 24, at the age of 89. Sr. Mary Veronica had prayed for decades that her father would one day become a Catholic and be buried from the Catholic Church. God answered her prayers and we share with you now the memorial Sister wrote about her Dad:

"Dad McKimmy was loved and respected by all who knew him. He was easy to please and on the look out for opportunities to do good to others. Growing up, Dad was always solicitous for the older generation, be it his own Mother or his aunts and uncles. God saw and knew this, and in his last years, rewarded Dad by providing that he be most tenderly loved and cared for. Even in his old age and failing mind, if one of his daughters brought him his favorite oatmeal and raisin cookies he immediately passed them around for everyone to enjoy.

My Father's death, while a great sorrow, was also one of the great consolations of my life. Dad had been unchurched. For many years the prayer of my heart was that he would taste the Bread of Life before he died. What tears of joy I wept at his feet when he finally accepted baptism. A week later he received Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. I knew that the prayer of my heart had truly been Jesus' own desire to come to my Dad. Two years later, as my Father lay dying from a leaking aneurysm, it would again seem the Holy Spirit powerfully intervened, for the word that kept coming to me to say was, "Yes". It was almost as though I could

not hold it back even though I thought it was a rather strange prayer. With great force I repeated "Yes". What was my consolation when just a few days later I was reminded, through a video we were watching, that Jesus told St. Faustina that He always gives the soul three chances to say "yes" to Him when they die. Perhaps Dad needed help not to be afraid to say yes to Jesus who had come for him.

After his death I longed to know that all was well with Dad. What a song of joy my heart sang when on the evening of his burial, as I sat on one of the swings he made for us, I felt as if he momentarily came to sit with me to let me know that indeed all was well. Dear Dad, remember us your children as we follow in your footsteps yearning for that great family reunion that will know no end.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT



Earlier this summer **Ryan Duffy** completed his service project to attain his Eagle Scout badge by building this bridge on our monastery grounds. He was also helped by Troop 10 of First Christian Church. Ryan is a Junior at Owensboro Catholic High and is the son of Jim and Donna Duffy and grandson of Wilma Baird. He is pictured above with our groundskeeper Steve Mills after their hard day's work. This bridge is the start of a trail we hope to clear one day which will be called St. Gemma's path.

MAKE A RETREAT!

Please consider making a private or group retreat in the silence and solitude of our monastic environment.

For available dates and more information See our website: www.passionistnuns.org & contact Sr. Mary at (270) 233-4571 or email us at retreats@passionistnuns.org

NEW
*Looking for a place to spend
Holy Week of 2007?*

We are making our retreat house available for private retreats during Holy Week (no spiritual direction provided).
Come participate in the Sacred Liturgies of this holiest of weeks with the Passionist Nuns!

~ **REGISTER TODAY** ~

A Grateful Remembrance **FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS**



Passionist Nuns
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Icon of Our Lady, Protectress of the People of Rome, before which St. Paul of the Cross first made the vow to promote devotion to the Passion of Jesus. This icon is in the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome.

~ To all our Dear Friends ~

This newsletter will reach most of you shortly before Christmas, and so we lovingly extend our warmest wishes to you and to your loved ones for a most blessed and grace-filled Christmas and New Year.

In our prayers, we entrust all your needs and concerns to the maternal intercession of Mary, and leave you with this inspiring quote from the first encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI: *"The words addressed by the crucified Lord to his disciple—to John and through him to all disciples of Jesus: 'Behold your mother!' (Jn 19:27) – are fulfilled anew in every generation. Mary has truly become the Mother of all believers."*

Men and women of every time and place have recourse to her motherly kindness and her virginal purity and grace, in all their needs and aspirations, their joys and sorrows, their moments of loneliness and their common endeavors. They constantly experience the gift of her goodness and the unfailing love she pours out from the depths of her heart." (Deus Caritas Est, #42)

This Christmas and throughout the New Year may you experience the gift of her maternal prayer on your behalf!

Merry Christmas in the Lord!
Mother Catherine Marie and all the Nuns