

# From the Foot of the Cross



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

Autumn 2011



## *First Religious Profession*



### *of Sister Rose Marie of the Merciful Heart of Jesus*

Then I said it – the prayer that changed my life forever: “Mary, if you want me with you at the Cross, then find a way to get me there.” - So said Shannon Schoppe, now known as Sister Rose Marie of the Merciful Heart of Jesus. As we share with you photos from her First Profession of Vows we thought we would let Sister share with you how our Lady of Sorrows answered her prayer...

It was a few months after I had graduated from Texas A&M University, and I had finally decided to act upon the conviction in my heart that Jesus was calling me to be His Bride in religious life. But there are so many different forms of religious life out there. Where could I begin to find the right one, and how long might that take? I had to start somewhere.

With a prayer of trust, I jumped in– I sat down at the computer and did a search. A vocation placement quiz caught my attention. I took the quiz and ended up with a list of the web-sites of contemplative communities I might be interested in. The web-site of the Passionist Nuns of St. Joseph’s monastery in Whitesville, KY grabbed me. I thought to myself, “There are contemplative nuns who are specifically devoted to being with Jesus in His Sacred Passion in union with Our Mother of Sorrows? Whoa, Lord! Isn’t this the exact desire you have put into my heart?”

On the website, which was named “At the Foot of the Cross,” I saw photos of Passionist Nuns giving themselves to Jesus during their profession of religious vows. They carried a cross on their shoulders. They were crowned with a real wreath of thorns. They were radiant and smiling beautifully. And I remember my heart

feeling powerfully drawn. “If Jesus is calling me, this has to be it!” Then I said it—the prayer that changed my life forever: “Mary, if you want me with you at the Cross, then find a way to get me there.”

Not even 48 hours later, I providentially “happened” to meet the first Passionist Priest I had ever seen in my life—Fr. Cedric Pisegna, C.P., who, unknown to me, was preaching a mission at one of the churches where I went to daily mass. He “happened” to know the Passionist Nuns of St. Joseph’s Monastery, whose web-site I had visited. He gave me their email address, and he told me that he would also email them and let them know about me. Obviously, Mary had answered my prayer. It couldn’t have been more clear. And so my journey into Passionist life began.

A little more than three years later, on July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year—on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—my turn came to make my first profession of religious vows. The time had come to receive the cross of Jesus upon my shoulders, His crown of thorns upon my head, and the sign and seal of His Holy Name and Passion upon my heart and the ring-finger of my left hand. My veil, no longer white, but black—a sign of no longer being betrothed, but of being, rather, a spouse of Christ Crucified.

It was a moment long dreamt of and awaited. But now that the great moment had arrived, how could my heart begin to truly comprehend the great reality before me. How could I possibly feel completely prepared to *marry* none other than the Lord Jesus? How was my heart to respond to the whirlwind of thoughts and feelings that accompanied this knowledge?





We were blessed with the presence of many friends including these men who have placed their lives at the service of our Church: **Fr. Fred Sucher, C.P., Fr. Andy Garner, Fr. Joe Mills, Msgr. Powers, Deacon Kenneth Geraci, CPM, Seminarian Basilio Az Cuc, Mass server Dwayne Roby, Bishop William Medley, Seminarian Julio Barrera, Deacon Jeff Read, Fr. Ray Clark, Fr. John Schork, CP and Fr. Tony Stevens, CPM.**

Being overwhelmed with thoughts of all that I wanted to say, but having so few words to express it, in my heart I clung to the simple 'yes' that Mary gave to God all throughout her life. 'Yes' in the joy of the Annunciation. 'Yes' in the sorrow of Calvary. 'Yes' to the loving will of the Father with Jesus.

After the Gospel reading during the Profession Mass, shortly before I was to make my vows, I made this simple response when the Bishop called my name (as do all Passionist Nuns during their first profession): "Lord, you have called me. Behold, I come to do your will."

Having received His merciful love, I want to spend my life returning His love as a Passionist Nun and bringing others to do the same.



Above right: **Bishop Medley** (Owensboro) incenses during the preparation of gifts, assisted by Deacons **Ken Geraci, CPM** (left) and **Jeff Read**, along with server **Dwayne Roby**

At right: **Aunt Tina Pennica** and **Betty Grigsby (Nanny)**

Below right: Sr. Rose Marie's college roommates from her Texas A&M days—**Liz Sladeczek, Charlotte McNabb** and **Kendra Wheeler**



Sr. Rose Marie's family **Brian, Karen (Mom), Wesley, Matthew** and **Mark (Dad) Schoppe**. Congratulations to Matt upon his graduation from Texas A&M!!!



## ~ Clothed in Christ's Passion ~

On February 2, the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the day dedicated to honoring Consecrated Life in the Church, I received the Passionist habit and a new name. In a simple and moving ceremony, I put aside my secular dress and embraced a new existence as a betrothed bride of Christ, choosing to belong exclusively to the Crucified Lover of our souls. May He who has drawn me here to St. Joseph Monastery be forever praised!



Our Lord inspired Mother Catherine Marie, CP, to give as my name Sister Cecilia Maria of the Body of Christ, a name which holds deep significance for me. I am Cecilia after the early Roman virgin-martyr and after one of the foundresses of our monastery, and I rejoice at the opportunity to learn from St. Cecilia how to sing hymns to the Lord in the oratory of my heart. Our Passionist motto is, *"May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ be ever in our hearts!"*; my refrain will forever be, *"May the canticle of the Passion be ever in my heart!"*

I am Maria after our Blessed Mother, another holy maiden who lifted up her heart in continuous and joyful song to the Lord. Whether in ecstasy as she carried Him in her womb, or in adoration and offering as she stood at the foot of the Cross, or through all the ages as she raises us up as her spiritual children, the Virgin Mary has always sung a double refrain: *"My soul magnifies the Lord,"* and *"May it be done to me according to your word."* May she grant me a share in her spirit as I embark on this adventure of religious life.

My title, *"of the Body of Christ,"* refers to the three great loves of my prayer life: the Eucharistic Body, the Mystical Body, and the Crucified Body of Christ. Indeed, all three are one – the *"whole Christ"* who pours Himself out in order to feed us and to draw us into Himself, so that we are offered upon the Cross with Him in an eternal and perfect sacrifice. May my life, poured out in this Passionist cloister as an offering to Him, become ever more united with His, *"offered once for all"* for the salvation of the world.

Please pray for me, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, that I may persevere in my prayers for you!



Sister Cecilia Maria pictured with her sister **Whitney** and parents **Tim** and **Jane Wynn**

~ Our Sister Returns to the Heart of the Father ~



*Sister Margaret Mary  
of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

~ Mary Delphine Mattingly ~  
1931-2011

*I saw people in heaven. They all love me and I love them. The surest way to heaven is to love God."* These were some of the last words of our Sr. Margaret Mary of the Sacred Heart, spoken two days before her death. Her vocation story, which had begun in the Heart of the Blessed Trinity was about to conclude its earthly phase. Her soul soon took flight to God on May 10, 2011, nearly 14 months after being diagnosed with last stage multiple myeloma cancer.

The 2nd child of Marion and Mary Lillie Aud Mattingly, Sr. Margaret Mary was born April 9, 1931 in Knottsville, KY. She was baptized 10 days later, receiving the name Mary Delphine. Her older sister, Doris, had been born two years before. There were seven other siblings younger than Delphine: Joseph Ligouri (J.L.), Charles Vincent (Binky), James Robert, Thomas Earl, Clara Ann, John William (Bill), and Richard Eugene (Gene).

Sr. Margaret Mary's earliest memories go back to the time her family lived near St. William's Catholic Church and school. She wrote about happy days spent playing near the Church while her mother did housework for the resident pastor. Even during her pre-school years, she often saw and talked with the Ursuline Sisters of Mt. St. Joseph who taught in the school, and this left a deep impression on her. Sr. Margaret Mary was convinced that these early contacts with religious Sisters planted the seed of a religious vocation in her heart. As far back as she could recall, she always thought that someday she too would be a Sister.

In her memoirs, Sr. Margaret Mary wrote that each evening, her father who had a beautiful singing voice would take Doris and Delphine on his knees and sing to them. Doris and Delphine would then say goodnight to both parents before going to bed, a practice they continued into their high school years.

Growing up during the hardships of the Depression, Sr. Margaret Mary learned early in life to "do without." As she grew older, she was expected to take her share in the many chores of farm life, although her father never expected her to do the heavy work. When Doris went to live with a bereaved grandparent, Delphine missed her greatly and soon took over as oldest child at home, becoming her mother's full time helper as cook and housekeeper. By the time she was 13 or 14, she took housekeeping jobs for relatives and neighbors, and said she loved it.



Sr. Margaret Mary with her mother Lilly and sister Doris.  
Photo taken during her sabbatical at Saint Meinrad Archabbey

She also loved caring for her younger siblings to whom she became very attached. When little Thomas Earl died a few seconds after birth, Delphine was inconsolable, but this caused her to become even closer to her other siblings. Sister maintained this closeness to her family throughout her religious life. After her death, many prayers for specific family members were found written on graduation cards, wedding announcements and small slips of paper. She kept this collection of heartfelt prayers along with a complete listing of the birthdates of every member of her family, including nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews. Her family visits were always lively and full of laughter as her large family filled the visiting room at the monastery.



High School  
Graduation 1947

By this time Delphine had made a very graced retreat at the newly founded Passionist Nuns Monastery and began to feel the call to join the Nuns in living out their charism imparted through the founder, St. Paul of the Cross.



L to R: Our "foundation stones" - Sr. Margaret Mary, Sr. Rita Marie, Sr. Rose Mary and Sr. Marie Michael

Later during her years in the monastery, when tragedy struck with the deaths of her brothers J.L. and Robert, and then her younger sister, Clara Ann, Sister Margaret Mary suffered and prayed intensely with her family. This trait was also manifest in the sincere interest and concern she showed for the families of all our Sisters.

On October 7, 1946, the newly founded community of Passionist Nuns in Owensboro held an open house. In his zeal to promote religious vocations, her pastor took a group of students to the open house from St. William's parish. Delphine was among them, as were Sr. Rose Mary Boteler, Sr. Marie Michael Aull and Sr. Rita Marie Boteler, all of whom later entered our community one by one. We lovingly named these Sisters "our foundation stones."

Early in life, Delphine had developed a deep love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, likely inspired by her avid reading of back issues of the Sacred Heart Messenger. This devotion, together with a tender, trusting love for Our Blessed Mother marked her entire religious life, while from her earliest years she remembered praying a daily rosary. Later, after entering the monastery on August 14, 1949, when the time came for her to receive the Passionist habit, she was given the name "Margaret Mary of the Sacred Heart."



A rare photo circa 1958: back row: Sr. Margaret Mary, Sr. Ann Miriam, Mother Mary Agnes Roche, Margaret O'Donnell, Sr. Frances Marie; front: Sr. Rita Marie and Dorothy Anzicek

After graduating from high school, Sr. Margaret Mary spent a year of college at Mount St. Joseph, the Motherhouse of the Ursuline community. This separation from family prepared her to follow her call to cloistered life as a Passionist. Her vocation story can be read on our website.

The hardships of life during the Depression prepared Sr. Margaret Mary for the poverty of the new foundation in Owensboro. During her novitiate, she lived with the novice directress and other postulants and novices in a tiny cottage that also housed the altar bread department. During all kinds of weather, they had to walk (sometimes in the snow) to the monastery for the 2 a.m. Divine Office, as well as all the other Observances of our monastic schedule. After her profession on August 22, 1951, she joined the other professed Sisters who slept in a dormitory in the attic, amid freezing cold in winter and stifling heat in summer.



Sorting apples—a favorite pastime in her earlier years

In her life as a Passionist, Sr. Margaret Mary served as retreat house hostess, cook, sacristan, maintenance supervisor, caregiver for Sr. Mary Cecilia, as well as elected offices. Her generous nature made her ever ready to help out where needed, no matter how arduous the work, and her quick humor added much to our recreations.

In 1970, she was elected novice directress, and then, in 1974, God called her to serve as superior until 1986. These were very decisive years for the Passionist Nuns as we strove to carry out the Church's mandate at the Vatican Council for interior renewal along with the revision and adaption of our Constitutions and customs. With her strong commitment to our Passionist spirit and ideals, as well as her leadership skills and intelligence, Sr. Margaret Mary succeeded in steering our community toward interior renewal as the basis for all external changes and adaptations.

In 1977, Sr. Margaret Mary, along with our Italian speaking Sr. Frances Marie Livotti, traveled to Italy for the international meeting of Passionist Nuns at the Sanctuary of St. Gemma in Lucca, Italy. Through the wise guidance of Fr. Fabiano Giorgini, Fr. Silvan Rouse, and other Passionist experts



On the way to Lucca, Italy in 1977: L to R: Sr. Frances Marie, Sr. Margaret Mary, and the two delegates from Erlanger, KY: Sr. Marie Michelle and Sr. Maria Grace

assigned to assist the Nuns, this six-week gathering resulted in unifying most of our approximately 30 unfederated, autonomous monasteries scattered throughout Europe, the United States, Latin America and the Orient. One book of revised rule of life emerged and was approved by the Holy See in 1978.

This experience was unforgettable for Sr. Margaret Mary as she met Passionist Nuns from throughout the world, who, while sharing the one Passionist charism given us by our Holy Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, lived and expressed it in various ways according to their own culture and circumstances. Upon her return, Sister shared this richness with our community, and led us through the work of implementing the revised Constitutions.

In 1980, Sr. Margaret Mary and Sr. Mary Dolores Hornbeck traveled to the Philippines in an effort to assist our Nuns who had founded a community there. During this Asian trip, the two Nuns also visited the community of Passionist Nuns in Japan.

Sr. Margaret Mary placed her literary skills and her love for Passionist history and spirituality at the service of the community by writing the biography of the foundress of our community, Mother Mary Agnes Roche, as well as by submitting articles for the monastery newsletter and handling volumes of monastery correspondence, among other things.

From childhood, she was deeply devoted to the liturgy of the Catholic Church, and was an insistent promoter of choir practice and devout liturgies in our community. She installed a new organ in the chapel in the mid '70's, and spent weeks on end helping our community adapt to the new breviary published in 1976.



Sharing a joyful visit with Sr. Mary Cecilia Taylor and her sister Pat Murphy



A gift from the community in honor of Sr. Margaret Mary's 50 years of loving fidelity as a bride of Jesus Crucified.

As superior, Sr. Margaret Mary endeavored to make Holy Mass more visible for us by carrying out an extensive renovation of our chapel on Benita Avenue. During this undertaking, she showed skill in working with contractors. She also installed air conditioning in the chapel, her goal being to assist the Nuns, our guests and the chaplain in praying more easily, without the din of city noise coming through the open windows. With our Kentucky summers, this was a welcome addition for all of us! She also carried out many renovations in our kitchen, refectory and visiting rooms as well as other areas throughout our former monastery, attempting to adapt it to the growing needs of the community.

After leaving elective office and taking a two year sabbatical at St. Meinrad seminary, Sister resumed life in the monastery. Though Sister strongly supported the community's decision to relocate from Owensboro to Whitesville, she was unable to take an active part on-site during the construction years, because she was serving as chief caregiver for Sr. Mary Cecilia. Along with Sr. Therese Marie, Sr. Mary Magdalen, Sr. Mary Dolores and four lay women, she carried out this work of mercy until Sr. Mary Cecilia died in 2001.

With her sharp intelligence, Sr. Margaret Mary not only mastered the computer, but also became proficient in graphic art. Amazing us with her creativity, she designed a multitude of cards for our Mass and Prayer Society, as well as birthday, feastday, Get Well and other cards for community use.



During her Golden Jubilee Gaudeamus, Sister is holding a life-sized photo of Sr. Mary Cecilia who had recently died

As time went on, Sr. Margaret Mary's health began to decline, and she began to experience debilitating back pain and multiple health problems. At first this did not slow her down, but the pain grew so severe that on November 18, 2009, she asked the superior to take her to the emergency room. Sister was hospitalized, underwent gall bladder surgery and extensive tests until shortly before Christmas when she was allowed to return home. We still did not have a definite diagnosis.

Although Sister enjoyed Christmas at the monastery, her inability to eat and increasing pain continued, and she was again hospitalized in early February. After returning home, her situation became so serious that we realized we could no longer give her proper care here at the monastery. On the World Day of Prayer for the Sick, February 11, 2010, Sister was admitted to Carmel Home in Owensboro, where she remained until her death.

On the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, March 25, 2010, Sr. Margaret Mary was diagnosed with last stage multiple myeloma. After prayer and seeking counsel, she decided to take chemo. It relieved much of her pain, but she became subject to serious infections and needed blood transfusions periodically. Sr. Mary Dolores was heroic and faithful in taking Sr. Margaret Mary to the hospital for these



Happily at work, designing the cards for the Mass and Prayer Society.



Community welcoming Sr. Margaret Mary home after a long hospitalization

treatments, as well as serving in many other caring ways throughout Sister's illness, along with various other Sisters.

Our deep gratitude also goes out to Sister's well-loved physician Dr. David Johnson, to the wonderful Carmelite Sisters and staff at Carmel Home, as well as to Agnes Stuart, Janie Gayhart and family, Loretta Bailey, Clara Brown, Mary Aull, her sister-in-law Wilda who attended to her personal needs, her niece Debbie Bellamy and so many other family members and friends who were lovingly present to Sr. Margaret Mary. Particular mention must be made of the tender care showered on her by Paula Bittel, assistant activities director at Carmel Home. Shortly before she died, Sister said she was so grateful to Carmel Home and prayed for the staff every day. She commented that they were like an "army of doers" who were there to assist her. We are also grateful to her longtime spiritual director, Msgr. Powers, to our devoted chaplain, Fr. Ray Clark who visited her every week, to her dear friends Sr. Sheila Anne, OSU, and to Al and Doris Burke of Louisville, as well as to our Nuns in Erlanger KY who reached out to Sister in many special ways.



At Carmel Home several weeks before her death. L to r: Sr. Mary Veronica, Sr. Ann Miriam in front, Sr. Cecilia Maria, Sr. Rose Marie

During Holy Week 2011, Sr. Margaret Mary made the decision to stop all but palliative treatment, as the chemo and the blood transfusions were no longer helping her. Her decline was rapid when kidney failure set in, and for the last week of her life it seemed she could die at any time.

Very early on Saturday, May 7, Sr. Mary Dolores phoned Mother and reported on the seriousness of Sister's condition. We then watched at her bedside all day, but suddenly around 7:30 that evening, Sr. Margaret Mary awakened and saw the Nuns and her family gathered around praying. Mother had pencil and paper ready as Sister talked rapidly:

*"I am doing well because I am in the presence of God, and because I have in my sight all those I love. I see Doris and all the family she represents. I see Fr. Solanus, Pope John Paul II, St. Therese and everyone who has prayed for me. To the Gayharts, I say, 'Stay near to Jesus.' It is so beautiful to see the family of God represented. I saw people in heaven. They all love me and I love them. The surest way to heaven is to love God. Oh yes, Our Blessed Mother is with me. Oh yes, I do love Our Blessed Mother."*



Birthday Visit! L to R: Sr. Mary Andrea, Sr. Mary Elizabeth, Sr. Mary Dolores, Sr. Cecilia Maria and Sr. Rose Marie

When Sr. Mary Dolores asked her what she saw, she responded: *"The family of God (she said this three times). I want to go now but I want to go when God wants me to go. The only pain I have is to go to God. Look to God and our heavenly home."*

Janie and Mark Gayhart and children often visited and helped Sr. Margaret Mary. L to R: Christina, Catherine, Janie, Maria Rose, Rachel (in back) and Rebecca.

Her last words to them were:  
To the Gayharts,  
I say,  
'Stay near to Jesus.'



Then she said to Doris, *"Thank you for being such a good sister,"* and to her sister-in-law, Thelma Mattingly (Binky's wife), she said, *"Thelma's great, as are all of my sisters-in-law."* When she saw Sr. Marie Michael, it reminded her of the time her father had found "little Millie" stranded in a snow storm and had picked her up and carried her home. She recalled that her dad kept saying: "Little Millie, little Millie, frozen to death." This made everyone around her bed chuckle.

About 40 minutes later, Sister turned to Mother Catherine Marie and said, *"Mother, may I go now?"* Of course, Mother gave her permission to go to God, but it would be two and a half more days of suffering before Our Lord came for her. The Bridegroom finally came for His Passionist Bride about 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011, in the 80<sup>th</sup> year of her life, and the 60<sup>th</sup> year of her religious profession.

Sr. Margaret Mary's funeral took place on May 13, Fatima Day, which was very dear to her heart. Most Rev. William F. Medley, Bishop of Owensboro, and many priests offered the funeral Mass, with many family members and friends in attendance.

May our dear Sister reap the fruits of her deep sharing in the Passion of Jesus, as scripture says: *"Rejoice in as far as you are partakers in the sufferings of Christ, for when His glory is revealed, you shall rejoice exultantly."* (I Peter 4:13)

ETERNAL REST GRANT TO HER, O LORD, AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON HER. MAY SHE REST IN PEACE. AMEN.



Three photos taken on the day Fr. Ray Clark blessed Sr. Margaret Mary's tombstone: Frame 1, L to R: Dolena Roby, H.C. Higdon, Gene Mattingly, Mary Jo Higdon; Frame 2, L to R: Agnes Stuart, Paula Bittel, Mother Catherine Marie, Debbie Bellamy; Frame 3, L to R: Sr. Mary Dolores, Binky and Thelma Mattingly, Loretta Bailey.

# *A Loving Remembrance of our Deceased*

## **RANDALL MILLS**

### **A Well-Loved Friend and Wonderful "Country Gentleman"**

On April 14, 2011, our community lost a very dear "brother" in the Lord—Randall Mills, the eldest brother of our Sr. Ann Miriam, and of Fr. Joe Mills, one of our devoted Passionist Oblates.

The oldest of seven children born to L.K. and Helen Mills, Randall was looked up to by his younger siblings. He married Margaret "Babe" Hazel, and from this loving union had four children: Marilyn, Mike, Greg and Joe. Often spending quality time together, they were quick to welcome relatives and friends into this close family experience. When Babe died suddenly in 1981, Randall never seemed to get over the loss of his dear wife.

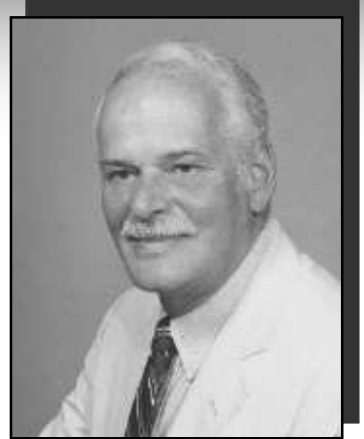
The earliest photos of the founding Sisters of our community who came to Owensboro in 1946, were taken by his wife, Babe, who was then working as a photographer for the Louisville Courier Journal.

Many have commented how good Randall (and his brother Jack) were while running Mills Drug Store in Owensboro, helping so many people raise their families. They had learned well from the tradition their father, L.K. Mills, had established. Our community too was among the many blessed by his generous charity.

Father Joe shared his memories of his oldest brother: *"Randall was highly regarded by those who knew him. He was generous with his money, and helped lots of folks along the way. I was proud of him as my 'big brother.' The Lord used him to help me discover my own vocation to the priesthood. For many years, Randall hosted our family gatherings at their Ohio County campsite. I can picture him now sitting in his lawn chair amidst the family and friends who gathered at the regular outdoor Thanksgiving Mass which it is my privilege to celebrate each year."*

Sr. Ann Miriam had this to say: *"What struck me deeply was his love for the daily rosary. Much of his reading material consisted of books on prayer and other such topics. He was a man of prayer although he was always jovial and loved fun. He was so wonderful and loved our community."*

When Mother Catherine Marie and Sr. Ann Miriam visited Randall at Carmel Home two days before Our Lord came for His faithful servant, they were struck by his serenity and acceptance on his deathbed. We shall always love this wonderful Christ-like man. And the lovely stained glass window he donated for our monastery chapel will be among the many reminders we will always have of his goodness. May he rest in peace!



## **HELEN MARIE REARDEN COOMES**

### **Passionist Oblate and Powerful Intercessor**

Passionist Oblate, Helen Marie Rearden Coomes of Whitesville, KY, went home to God on July 30, 2011. She was the aunt of Oblate Veda Mattingly, and known in the Oblate community for her gentle goodness, and quiet endurance of suffering.

One of the original members of the Oblates, Helen made her Act of Oblation on April 29, 2001, taking the devotional name "Marie of the Holy Cross."

She wrote: *"When I first came into the Inquiry Class...I had some fear of not being able to understand the depth of the Passion of Jesus, and to share in His sufferings with mine, keeping alive the memory of the Passion of Christ. I no know that one grows into this gradually and in stages. I feel I have grown tremendously in my faith through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of your Passionist community and the Oblate family."*

In addition to her devotion to the Passion, Helen had great devotion to the Rosary, frequently offering this prayer to God, and making thousands of rosaries for people all over the world.

Veda who had personally witnessed Helen's deep faith in God's power to bring her through even the most difficult trials, said of her: "I believe it was through embracing a life of prayer and daily Mass. Her heaviest crosses didn't appear to change the beautiful person she was."

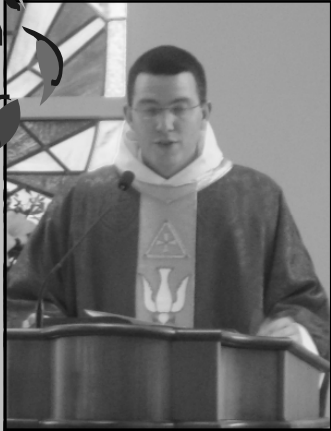
By June, 2006, Helen was continually on oxygen and unable to drive to the monthly Oblate meetings. She told Mother Catherine Marie that she was praying for all of us, and offering her suffering for the Oblates and for vocations to the Passionists. After hanging up the phone, Mother commented that Helen remained humble, peaceful and very aware that God was using her suffering, confinement and declining condition for souls.

May Our Dear Lord grant the eternal fruits of the Passion to this humble Passionist Oblate who generously shared in His Holy Cross here on earth!



# Glimpses of Life at the

## COMMITMENT



**Fr. Austin Dominic Litke, OP**  
Saint Joseph Province



**Transitional Deacon Jeff Read**  
Evansville, IN diocese  
(Sr. John Mary's brother!)



**Fr. Matthew Hardesty**  
Louisville, KY Archdiocese



**Fr. Ryan Harpole**  
Owensboro, KY diocese

Congratulations to the above newly ordained!  
Please keep these men of God in your prayers.  
**O Eternal Father, send us holy priests!**

**Theresa Niehaus**,  
sister of our  
Sr. Mary Andrea,  
has committed the  
next two years of  
her life to working  
with Fellowship  
of Catholic  
University  
Students  
(FOCUS) Please  
keep her in your  
prayers!



## SERVICE



Friends (l - r) **Scott Perez**, **Ethan Hagan** and **Chuck Hagan** skillfully built storage shelves in our freezer room. God bless you!



Skilled craftsmen **Rob** (left) and **Mike Niehaus** built a sacristy closet. They are our Sr. Mary Andrea's brothers!



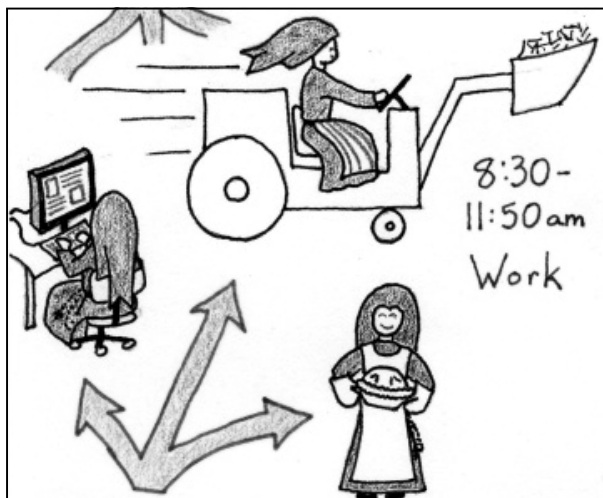
Some of the brothers in formation with the **Father's of Mercy** kindly donate their time to work in our woods. God reward you!



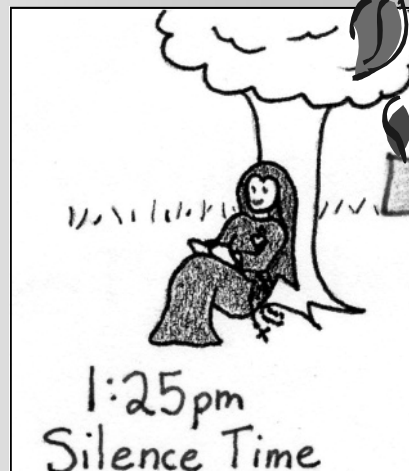
**Chuck and Anne Hagan** give expert garden advice. Thank YOU!

# Monastery during 2011

## COMMUNITY



Hot cross buns



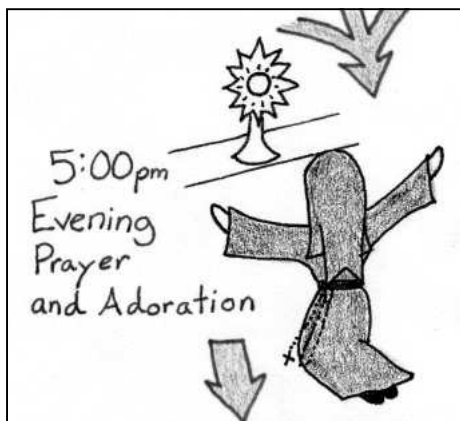
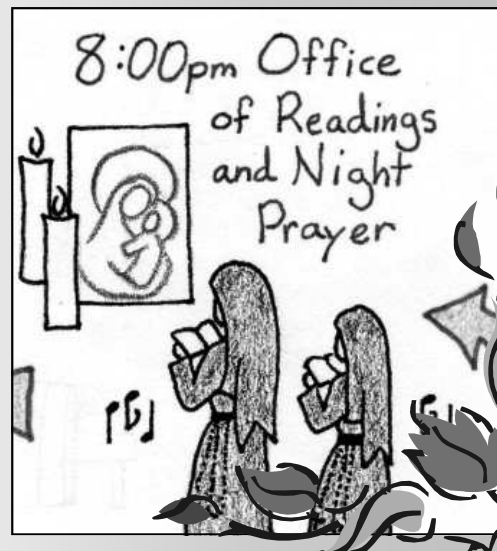
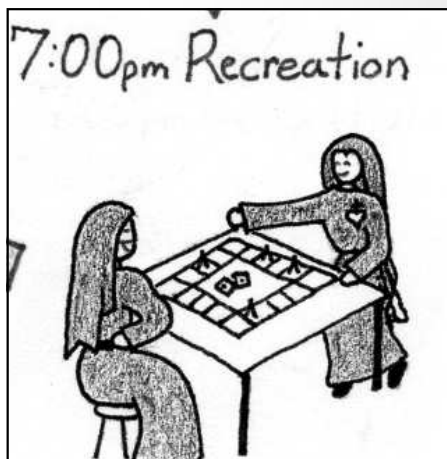
Sr. Rose Marie and Sr. Cecilia Maria created a meaningful brochure about contemplative life. For the inside the drew a cartoon version of our monastic schedule. Here are a few of those sketches!



Sr. Ann Miriam dons the party hat on Mother Catherine Marie's Gaudemus Day. And the Novitiate puts on a skit for some comic relief - "Passionist Nuts Meet Mad Kentucky"!



Enjoying a winter walk



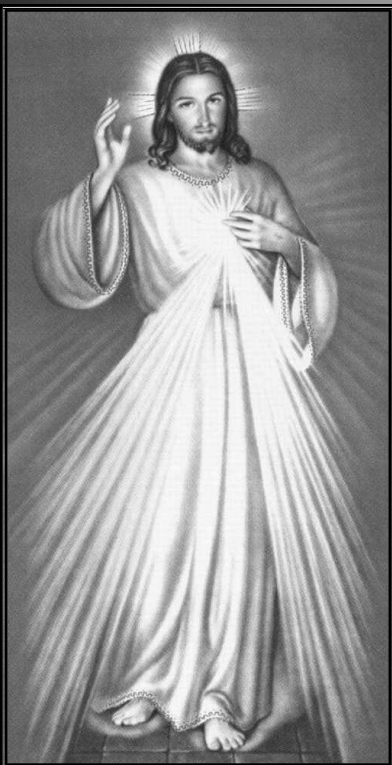
# FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

Passionist Nuns  
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"FOR THE SAKE OF HIS  
SORROWFUL PASSION..."



...HAVE MERCY ON US AND  
ON THE WHOLE WORLD."

As we close this issue of our newsletter, we do so in the prayerful Heart of Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Conception to whom our nation is dedicated. We send deep gratitude to all our relatives, friends and benefactors, along with a renewed promise to keep you and your families in prayer with all your needs and intentions.

In this time of moral degeneration, natural disasters, and wars, we are all called to become more aware of the divine riches we Catholic Christians have to meet and deal effectively with the dangers and hardships we face today. We have the Mass and sacraments, prayer, the rosary, penance and our call to take an active part in the mission of the Church. Through the Passion and Death of Jesus, God has defeated sin, satan and death. It remains for us to be God's coworkers in bringing this saving power of the Passion of Jesus to bear on the world, our nation, society and family.

Every fearsome headline, every new crisis in nation, family or world, instead of paralyzing us should bring us to our knees before God in prayer and motivate us to take a greater part in the work of the Church. Now is the time to get involved, backing up our work by prayer and penance. The Servant of God, Archbishop Sheen, once said that for evil to triumph, all it takes is for the good to remain silent.

We make our own what Blessed John Paul II wrote about imploring Divine Mercy: **"The more the human conscience succumbs to secularization, loses its sense of the very meaning of the word 'mercy,' moves away from God and distances itself from the mystery of mercy, the more the Church has the right and the duty to appeal to the God of mercy 'with loud cries.' These 'loud cries' should be the mark of the Church of our times, cries uttered to God to implore His mercy...."** A Cardinal in Poland once said that devotion to Divine Mercy is determining the destiny of the world. **"For the sake of His Sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world."**

United in prayer and zeal with all of you, we send greetings from the monastery,

*Mother Catherine Marie, O. P. and the Passionist Nuns*