

# From the Foot of the Cross



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

Advent 2013

## A Year of Celebrations



First Vows



Final Vows



50th Anniversary of Vows

## Commitment Fidelity Consecration

Many friends have asked us when the next issue of our newsletter was going to be published. You will see from the following pages that we've been happily busy, celebrating the mercies of the Lord! Sr. Cecilia Maria made first vows in February (featured in our Spring 2013 issue); Mother Catherine Marie

celebrated her Golden Jubilee of vows in August; Sr. Mary Andrea made final vows in October. Many other important events took place this year, too much to cover in one issue of "From the Foot of the Cross" but we will try to give the highlights. "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His mercy endures forever!"

# *Captivated by Love of the Crucified Christ*

*On October 19, 2013 Sr. Mary Andrea Niehaus, formerly of Newburgh, Indiana, made her Perpetual Vows as a Passionist Nun. We were honored that Most Rev. William F. Medley, Bishop of Owensboro, presided at the Mass attended by many priests, religious, family members and friends.*

*During her month of immediate preparation for this final Passionist commitment Sr. Mary Andrea wrote the following reflections.*

## **VOW TO PROMOTE DEVOTION TO AND GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST**

I admit that before I became acquainted with our community of Passionist Nuns, I never gave much thought to having a particular devotion to the Passion of Jesus, nor to promoting it. However, as I have looked back at my early spiritual life, I see that God had chosen this devotion for me even before I was born. On the inside cover of the booklet for my Perpetual Profession, I wrote about the devotion to the Passion which my great-grandfather Henry Steckler practiced, and which influenced me. At my First Holy Communion, Mom and Dad gave me a rosary, which I still treasure. I remember commenting to them at the time about how real the crucifix on it made the death of Jesus seem, noting its details. Encouraged by the example and prompting of others, the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross were two devotional practices towards which I was drawn, even while in the midst of making our Catholic faith my own.



**Dave and Carol Niehaus** radiant with their daughter's bridal joy.

Living our so called "Passion Vow" certainly does include taking time for both personal and communal practices, such as often praying the Stations of the Cross and the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, fasting and abstaining (especially on Fridays), and participating daily in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, among other practices. This vow, which in the Church is unique to Passionists, is so much more. It is calling to mind Christ's sufferings when I experience, see, or hear about suffering in any way. It is uniting our sufferings with Christ's for the redemption of souls, for love of God, ... It is a lived and grateful awareness that I and all humans have been redeemed at the price of the Blood of God!

Through fidelity to this vow, I am able to be more recollected, to live more attune to God's Will. It is a great source of strength, peace, and encouragement for me, and gives me a greater ability to recognize that God has a purpose for my life. More and more, I find that living this devotion fills in me a deep, God-given desire for union with my Spouse.

## **CONSECRATED CHASTITY**

Chastity means to love God above all else and in all else. It is a single-hearted devotion/love for God and all that He loves. It is a zeal for the salvation and sanctification of souls. It is loving my Sisters, and indeed all people, with the love of God while not allowing my heart to belong to them (as married persons give their heart to their spouse), for God has already claimed my heart as His Own. Of course, this includes not being married, nor engaging in activities meant to lead to marriage, but this is not the primary focus of one who vows herself to live consecrated chastity. Living the vow of Chastity leaves my heart free to love God with all of my heart (and body and soul), not just part of it.



*In the traditional monastic ritual during the singing of the Litany of the Saints, Sr. Mary Andrea falls prostrate before the altar, and is covered with a funeral pall, the symbol of dying to herself that she may rise a new person in Christ. In this ancient ritual, there is rich Paschal symbolism of death and resurrection. When the pall is removed, the religious "rises up" to pronounce her religious vows, an intense participation in the covenant of baptism.*





Photo: Mel Howard

**Most Rev. Bishop William F. Medley** and concelebrants offering the Mass of Religious Profession: l-r **Fr. Jeff Read, Fr. Joe Mills, Msgr. Bernard Powers, Fr. John Boeglin** (relative of Sr. Mary Andrea who baptized her), **Fr. Lou Caporiccio, CPM, Bishop Medley, Fr. Joe Ziliak** (former pastor), **Fr. Brandon Williams, Fr. Jason Gries** (2nd cousin) and **Fr. Chris Forler**. Besides server **Greg Mills** pictured at left, **Deacon Will Thompson** was Master of Ceremonies; assisted by seminarians **Basilio Az Cuc, Nick Higdon** and **Jeff Hebert**. **Fr. Brandon Williams** preached a soul-stirring homily for the occasion.

## POVERTY

Poverty means depending not upon my limited abilities and capacities. Rather, it is depending upon God. It is living in a way so that God is truly my dearest and only Treasure. It is using things in such a way that I am not owned by them, that I am not so concerned with the things of earthly life that I neglect the things of eternal value – namely charity, prayer, relationships with God and others, etc... Living the vow of poverty enables me to put God first in my life, to live this life as it is meant to be lived, that is, with eternity in mind, for on this earth all things are passing.

## OBEDIENCE

Obedience is listening to God's Will and acting upon it. It is recognizing this Will of God in the voice of Mother Superior and in the voice of the Holy Father. As with all five of our vows, obedience is practiced in imitation of Jesus. It is a share in His Passion, and is, therefore, redemptive, for He unites it with His Own perfect obedience. Through living the vow of obedience, I am freed from much struggle in discerning, at least in most situations, what is God's Will. Without this struggle, I am more free to act upon what I know to be God's Will, which in turn leads to more a more peace-filled heart and life.

## ENCLOSURE

Living the vow of Enclosure is living with God. It is keeping closed the doors of my senses and my heart to all that the world uses to lure people away from God by practicing mortification. Of necessity, this means living within the cloister and observing the norms for leaving and for contact with those not given this great gift. This includes not only physically leaving the cloister, but also includes limiting our use of the means of communication – phone, e-mail, letter, etc. I think it is also respecting the solitude of my Sisters, not encroaching upon their need for silence. Along with the other vows, living this vow ena-

bles me to live for and with God, concerned with pleasing Him, recollected in His presence.

## HOW PERPETUAL PROFESSION WILL GRACE ME

At Perpetual Profession, I give myself totally and perpetually to God. The Church, through Mother Catherine Marie, accepts my vows. Through her voice, I know with certainty that this call to Passionist cloistered contemplative life that I sense within my heart is authentic, and something to be heeded as I seek to follow Christ more closely. God, Who is never outdone in generosity, in turn, gives to me the grace to be faithful to living each of my five vows with generosity and vigor, making them for me, for our community, for the Church, and indeed for the whole world a source of new life, new life which comes through the cross.



**Fr. Jason Gries**, 2nd cousin of **Sr. Mary Andrea** and **Fr. Jeff Read**, brother of **Sr. John Mary**, savoring the joy of lives consecrated to God.

# Grateful Memories of a Golden Jubilarian

Mother Catherine Marie of the Most Holy Trinity

1963—August 7—2013



Mother Catherine Marie enjoys a happy moment with her mother Cassie Schuhmann and her youngest brother Paul.

Since this is my Jubilee year, I thought I'd share a few highlights from my vocation story. Contrary to the stories of so many today, mine is rather plain and simple, like the parable in Mark 4:26-29 about the seed growing of itself. Jesus said, "A man scatters seed on the ground. He goes to bed and gets up day after day. Through it all, the seed sprouts and grows without his knowing how it happens. The soil produces of itself first the blade, then the ear, finally the ripe wheat in the ear."

This parable speaks to me about the small seeds of faith sown in my mind and heart by my parents and Catholic teachers, and through the liturgical life of my parish. Without my knowing how it happened, as I went to bed and got up each day, these seeds of faith sprouted and then ripened into an awareness of my life's

calling, and finally into a determination to answer God's call even at great cost to myself. Many were the struggles in between the sprouting and the harvest, but I only found deep peace when I chose to follow what I knew in my heart God was asking me to do.

My story begins in Louisville, KY, where I was born the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest in a family of 10 children. My parents, Ed and Cassie Schuhmann, were people of *lived Catholic faith*. It was they who sowed the first vocational seeds in my heart. From my earliest years, I remember them taking an active role in parish life, and also cultivating a deep private prayer life. Mom was and still is a night owl. Often I would find her sitting at our big kitchen table late at night, saying her prayers. As for Dad, he was definitely a rooster. From as far back as I remember, he went to an early Mass before coming home for breakfast and then leaving for work.

Over the years, I have often reflected how true it is that the faith is more "caught" than "taught." My parents' example sowed many seeds of prayer in my mind and heart that would one day ripen into a vocation to a contemplative life of prayer!

My Dad was a great evangelizer. When he talked to us kids about a vocation to priesthood or religious life, he never pushed, nor did he talk about it as a career. Dad showed us the beauty of a way of life that is a total dedication to God and to the Church. I'm not sure just how or when these seeds of faith brought me to an interior conviction about my vocation, but as far back as the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, I knew I was called to religious life, yet I never told anyone. One incident in particular stands out. Shortly before my First Communion, the pastor who was visiting



"Mom" Schuhmann with 9 of her 10 children: l-r Michelle Hall, Sarah Doolittle, Mary Schafrick, and the six Schuhmann brothers, Bill, Paul, Ed, Tom, Den and Charlie



our class, asked how many of us girls wanted to be religious sisters. Nearly every girl in the class put her hand up. At that he said, "Oh, at the time of First Communion, every girl wants to become a sister, but later on, you won't." I remember the great determination with which I thought to myself, "But *I really do want* to become a nun."

Our parish too sowed many seeds of vocation in my mind and heart, not only through the wonderful teachers (Sisters of Charity of Nazareth), but also through the liturgical life of the parish. I was a parish organist from the 5<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Getting up early to play the organ at Mass even during the summer was a real penance, but it meant that I often received Holy Communion. Knowing what I do now about the Holy Eucharist being the great fountainhead of priestly and religious vocations, I am convinced that *closeness to the Eucharist* was a protecting grace throughout my school years.

The seeds of a *strong devotion to the Passion of Jesus* were also sown in my heart through parish life. The huge crucifix in the sanctuary of our church touched me deeply, and always seemed to be "alive", not merely representing something that happened 2000 years ago. But it was the Friday Way of the Cross services during Lent that sparked a deep personal love for Christ Crucified in my heart. I was sometimes brought to tears as the pastor read the Stations prayers. The story of the Passion became very real to me, and my soul was stirred to its depths. I began to think about and meditate on the Passion. At this time I had never heard of the Passionist Nuns, and never dreamed of becoming one. I just knew I wanted to love Jesus.

More vocational seeds were sown in my mind and heart in the mid-1950's, when I saw "The Miracle of Fatima" movie. The urgency of the *Fatima message of prayer and penance* made me realize the challenges facing the Church, and particularly, the threat of militant atheism and communism. There was a sense of urgency about Mary's call to me, but since I was young and still enjoying life in many ways, I didn't think too much about my vocation.

At this same time I was a normal girl, fascinated by boys and by having fun going to parties and the like. I put aside any idea of being a religious as my social life developed and the thought of having to make a vocational decision seemed so far away. I told myself I could serve God just as well if I became a nurse, married and had a family. This of course would



Early 1961 family portrait of the **Ed and Cassie Schuhmann** family:  
front row l-r **Charlie, Michelle, Sarah, Paul, Tom and Den;**  
back row l-r **Ed, Kay (Mother Catherine Marie), Mary and Bill**

have been true had it been God's plan for me. Somehow deep down I knew I was rationalizing, because whenever I tried to flee from my vocational call, there would be this deep sense of grief within me. I thought that if I gave myself completely to Jesus, I would somehow miss out on all the happiness and love I wanted in life. Afraid of being cheated, I didn't yet realize how Our Lord can satisfy the deepest hungers of the human heart.

So, during my first two years of high school, life was exciting and I made new friends, but there was this emptiness inside that kept gnawing at me. It was as if I was always looking but never finding what could really satisfy my heart. My restlessness continued until in a moment of truth, amid many tears, I finally said yes to what I had known all along was His will and plan for me. No big events. Just the seeds of vocational awareness sprouting and ripening without my knowing how as I went to bed and got up each day. All this brought me to a determination to answer God's call even at great cost to myself.

Once I surrendered to the "Hound of Heaven," I thought about becoming a missionary sister, giving up everything, even my country, for Jesus, and spending my life bringing as many souls as possible to Him. God truly *did* want me to be a missionary, but not in the way I first thought. About this time, I read the autobiography of St. Therese (the Little Flower) and there I learned how a cloistered nun is actually a *missionary to the whole world*. A cloistered nun can work for Jesus everywhere—by means of her whole life of prayer and sacrifice. Soon the idea of entering a cloister really took hold of me. It surprised even myself, because just two years before that, I held the opinion that cloistered nuns lived in "ivory towers" out of touch with the real world. How totally wrong I was! St. Therese is co-patroness of the missions along with the active missionary, St. Francis Xavier, even though Therese never set foot outside her cloistered monastery!

Then I made my first retreat at the monastery in Owensboro. Just getting there was quite an ordeal. First, our car wouldn't start, and then after I got on a Greyhound bus, even the bus broke down! I have often wondered if the devil was trying to prevent me from going. In the midst of it all, my heart had a steady peace that I

## GOLDEN JUBILEE MASS—AUGUST 24, 2013

**O**ur deep gratitude to Bishop Medley of the Owensboro diocese and Bishop Emeritus John McRaith who, along with about 15 priests, concelebrated at the Jubilee Mass. We were honored also by 3 deacons, several seminarians, members of the Passionist Oblate community (who hosted the reception), many family members and friends. A particular joy for Mother Catherine Marie was the presence of her 95-year-old mother along with 7 of her 9 siblings, their spouses and family members.



Photo: Larena Lawson

**Mother Catherine Marie and Bishop Medley** during the Offertory a perfect symbol of Mother's total gift of self to Jesus the Great High Priest. **Greg Mills** and **Dwayne Roby** serving.



*Our brothers in the Passion of Christ who attended the Jubilee: **Fr. Bernie Weber** and **Bro. John Monzyk**.*



*Jubilee guests from the Kingston, Jamaica Archdiocese: **Deacon Brad Smith** and **Msgr. Michael Palud** with **Sue O'Bryan**, a member of the Passionist Oblate community.*

was on a spiritual journey. I remember looking out the bus window as we left Louisville, and feeling the strangest sense that I was "heading home." At this time, I had no idea who the Passionist Nuns were, nor that I would ever feel profoundly drawn to their life.

When at last we got to the monastery in Owensboro it was late, and we were the last retreatants to arrive. The steep walk up the hill toward the monastery entrance was awe-inspiring. The grounds seemed cloaked in stillness and peace even though I could hear the noise of traffic from the highway below. Little did I ever dream what a surprise awaited me. As soon as I set foot on the monastery grounds, I knew in my heart that I had found my home, my place in life, my vocation. And yet I had never even known there *were* Passionist Nuns! God seemed so present on the holy ground of the monastery, and this presence seemed to reach out and envelop me. Throughout the entire retreat, this experience never left me, though I kept it to myself. I didn't quite know what it all meant. Everything was so new and intriguing, going inside a cloister. It was like going into God Himself. Having a deep devotion to the Passion of Jesus, I was thrilled to find here a whole community of nuns who were totally dedicated to loving our Crucified Lord and bringing souls to Him! I also loved the idea that prayer was so powerful for changing our world, and here was a community who made prayer their *work* for the Church! Having always loved school retreats, I was greatly attracted by the thought of joining a community that offered retreats to lay people while being strictly cloistered. It all seemed to "fit" what was stirring in my heart.



*L-r: **Greg Mills**, **Bro. Jim Heeb, SVD**, **Mother**, **Fr. Joe Mills**. **Fr. Joe Mills** preached a wonderful jubilee homily. **Bro Jim**, a retired missionary in Africa, grew up with the Schuhmann children. **Greg Mills**, nephew of Fr. Joe and of our Sr. Ann Miriam, serves Mass here at the monastery as does **Dwayne Roby**.*



## JUBILEE GAUDEAMUS DAY



**W**e have the custom of celebrating the life and vocation of each Jubilarian by designating a day as a Jubilee Gaudeamus (a recreation day). Joy and laughter was in the air on Mother's Gaudeamus, Oct. 26, 2013, as everyone enjoyed the special meals, participated in "monastery" games, and viewed a "This Is Your Life" skit complete with specially written songs, excellent acting, costuming, props and the posters shown at the right. As the festivities began, Mother was greeted with her "carriage" for the day — a wheelchair transformed into a two-rank organ! Sr. Rose Marie was given the privilege of "pushing Mother around" for the day. Sr. John Mary and our formation Sisters lovingly put the celebration together: photo at right, first row: **Sr. Mary Andrea, Mother, Sr. Rose Marie**; second row: **Sr. John Mary, Aspirant Elizabeth** (soon to be a postulant!), and **Sr. Cecilia Maria**.

About a month after that first retreat, I began writing to the Passionist Nuns about entering their monastery and was told to get a spiritual director. Not too long after my second retreat, I was accepted for entrance the next year.

Many couldn't understand my desire to enter the Passionists. Why was I walking away from all else that I could have done with my life? Why was I not going to use my musical talents? And how could I just walk away from a career and from marriage? Why a *cloister* of all places??

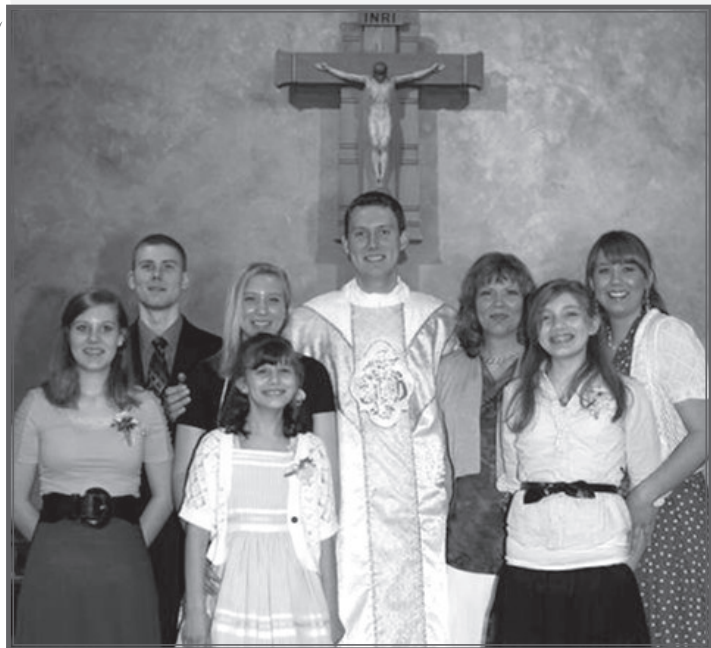
I entered the Passionists on August 5, 1961, a day marked by the mystery of joy and sorrow. I felt tremendous joy in finally entering religious life, yet missed my family terribly. I was determined, however, that I would stay with Our Lord "for better or for worse" no matter what it cost. Two years later, I made first vows. This was before many of the wonderful adaptations our community has made, and it was very difficult to leave a close knit family. Many times I cried bitterly from homesickness; many times I wondered if I would make it and also if the community would accept me — just the normal ups and downs every candidate probably experiences. Little by little, the homesickness went away and my family began to be very happy about my vocation as well as the tremendous fruits they saw coming to our family. My prayers and those of our community have always been a source of comfort and strength to them. This is part of the hundredfold

Jesus promises to those who to leave family and the good things of this world in order to follow Him in religious life.

An account of the past 52 years is another whole story, but briefly I would say it's been very interesting and formative, to say the least. I actually feel quite blessed to have lived through the upheaval of the 60's, through the many changes in the liturgy, and through the years when we took part in the revision of our Constitutions. A lot was learned during those confusing years. What kept me going was the grace of Our Lord in His Paschal Mystery made present in the Holy Eucharist, the maternal prayer and protection of His Mother, and the wonderful tradition of contemplative prayer that is our Passionist heritage. All of this thrills my heart as much today as it did in the first years of my religious life.

So there it is — an overview of the organic growth of seeds of faith planted in my mind and heart by family, school and parish. Without my knowing how it happened, these seeds of faith sprouted and then ripened into an awareness of my life's calling, and finally into a determination to answer God's call even at great cost to myself. Being a vowed religious now for 50 years, all I can say is a deep and humble thank you to God, to my family, teachers and parish, and to the Nuns of this wonderful community of which I am blessed to be a member.

# Laborers Serving in the Lord's Vineyard



*Our dear friends **Janie Gayhart** and her children at the priestly ordination of Fr. David: l-r **Catherine, Matthew, Maria, Rebecca, Fr. David, Janie, Christina and Rachel.***

**Fr. David Gayhart** of the Lincoln, Nebraska diocese, was ordained to the Priesthood on May 25, 2013. The son of the late Mark Gayhart and Janie Gayhart, (members of the Passionist Oblate Community), Fr. David celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi here in our monastery chapel.

Fr. David and his brother Matthew often served during our monastery liturgies since their teen years. His sister Rachel is part-time employee here, and his grandfather Joe Payne is faithful daily communicant in our chapel.



*Congratulations Fr. David, Janie and all the family!*



Photo: Larena Lawson

**Fr. Julio Barrera** was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Owensboro, KY on Saturday, June 1, 2013. Although Fr. Julio wanted to be a priest from his early childhood, Divine Providence led him on quite a journey of discernment. Originally from Mexico, after learning of the need for Spanish-speaking priests in the U.S. he affiliated with our diocese in 2006. As a seminarian he served for many of our liturgies. Congratulations to Fr. Julio, his dear parents and all the family!



Photo: Larena Lawson



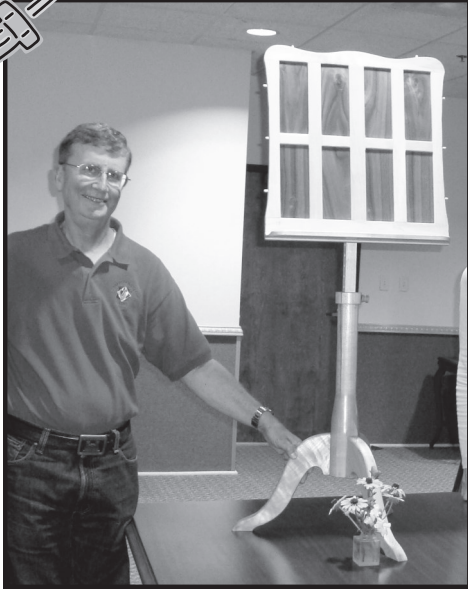
**Passionist Fathers Jeffreys Foale and Thomas Anamattathil** display the map of their mission in communist Vietnam where they have established a growing Passionist community. The red outline of Vietnam speaks powerfully of the Catholic and Christian martyrs of that nation.



**Roman Reunion: Fr. Joseph Carola SJ** with his "spiritual children" **Sr. Cecilia Maria, Fr. Christopher Droste**, seminarian **Jared Kaelin** all of whom lived and studied at the Bernardi Campus of the University of St. Thomas in Rome, Italy where he is chaplain.



# Great Friends Hard at Work!



**T**im Wynn, father of Sr. Cecilia Maria, crafted a new icon stand for our chapel. The majority of the wood used is maple with panels in various exotic woods. Tim and Jane brought it in their suitcases in pieces when they flew in for their family visit, and Tim assembled it here. God bless and reward you Tim for this labor of love!



**T**his past spring the Niehaus clan (Sr. Mary Andrea's family) took a day out of their busy lives to move and stack wood for us. Shown above is only a small contingent of the group that came. L-r: **Natalie, Gary, Rob, Mitch** (Sr. John Mary's brother), **Mike, Dave and Chris**. It was a full day of hard work. One of them told us he enjoyed it so much he was "praying for another ice storm" so there would be need of another clean-up job at the monastery. We told him to please be careful what he asks for!



**M**onastery maintenance man, **Steve Mills**, with his brother **Russell ("Rut")** have collaborated on many projects. Shown here is the closet for our Christmas crèche.

Pictured below, **Steve** and **Rut**, along with **Diddle Lanham** and **Gary Trogden** (a member of the Oblate community) worked hard to stretch a tarp over an eating area for Mother's Jubilee reception.



**A** massive brush pile grew and grew below the lake dam, as the Nuns gathered broken limbs left in our woods by the churning of Hurricane Ike and the 2008 Ice Storm. Too dangerous for amateurs like us to burn, our good friends, the Whitesville firefighters came to our rescue. Top l-r: **Ronnie Mayfield** and **Patsy Mayfield** and **Scott Howard**. Bottom: **Scott** with **Barry Isbill**.





## Growing the Future of Our Passionist Community



*Elizabeth holds the cake she decorated in honor of Sr. Mary Andrea's Perpetual Profession.*

Thank you for your continued prayers for new members to our monastery. Aspirant **Elizabeth** (at left) was recently accepted to enter the monastery in January 2014. Praise the Lord!

God-willing, we will have 2 young women come for live-in experiences in November. This past year we have had several groups visit to learn about Passionist life, including a Nun Run from University of Miami (upper right).

Also, we are grateful to God for the good work of **Corey and Katherine Huber** and the Mater Ecclesiae Foundation. A grant from this foundation is assisting our Sr. Rose Marie in paying student loans so she could enter our monastery. Corey (at right) by the Station of the Cross that he and Katherine gave us. This symbol of God's love graces our front entrance arcade.



Check out our website [www.passionistnuns.org](http://www.passionistnuns.org) and while you are there click on the BLOG

## And Loving God in the Present



**Sr. Therese Marie** in prayer

**Sr. M. Magdalen** rejoices in God's creation!



**Sr. Mary Therese** keeps the public area flower gardens looking beautiful for all our guests to enjoy.



**Sr. Marie Michael** delights in snapdragons to cultivate for chapel flowers



**Sr. Mary Dolores** visits with the twins



**Christie, Sr. Mary Elizabeth and Sr. Mary Agnes** - daughters of the Church!



# *A Loving Remembrance of Our Deceased*

## FR. FREDERICK SUCHER OF THE SACRED HEART, C.P.



We lost a dear friend, spiritual director and brother on May 31, 2013, as Our Lord came for His faithful follower Fr. Frederick Sucher, C.P., 96 years of age. Since the 1980's, Fr. Frederick worked with our monastery as well as our other U.S. monasteries of Passionist Nuns, giving retreats and conferences on Passionist spirituality.

A native of St. Louis, Fr. Fred entered the Passionist preparatory seminary in Normandy, Missouri, in 1931. He made vows in 1938, and after his ordination to the priesthood in 1944, was engaged in teaching Passionist seminarians, as well as in various ministries and leadership positions in Holy Cross Province.

As young Passionists, he and one of his classmates, Fr. Roger Mercurio, C.P., became so intrigued by the letters of our Holy Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, that they resolved to master the Italian language in order to draw the rich spiritual teaching from them. Consequently, both Fr. Fred and Fr. Roger became scholars in Passionist spirituality, making "all things Passionist" their lifetime study.

Along with Brother Larry Finn, C.P., Fr. Fred and Fr. Roger collaborated in producing the 3-volume definitive English translation of the letters of St. Paul of the Cross.

Reaching out beyond the Passionist community, Father Fred served as a team priest on Marriage Encounter weekends, a work that took him all over the U.S. Many summers found him travelling from parish to parish, making fundraising appeals on behalf of our Passionist missions.

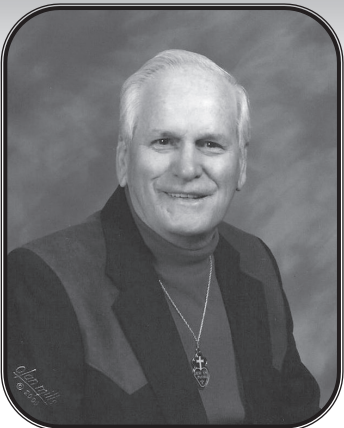
Fr. Fred also found time to serve as chaplain to the Sisters of the Resurrection in Chicago, and to be deeply involved in the formation of the lay Passionist Partners of Holy Cross Province. His presentations to these lay people on the life and spirituality of St. Paul of the Cross took him to Detroit, Houston, Sierra Madre, Citrus Heights, and Nashville.

In the last 12 years, many were the times that Fr. Fred gave talks on Passionist spirituality to our community, even offering special sessions to our Sisters in formation. At the time of his death, he was busy translating a book on the holy Passionist men and women whose causes for beatification have been introduced.

We conclude by quoting from the inspiring funeral homily preached by Fr. Michael Higgins, C.P.: "Today we thank God for sharing with us his beloved servant, Fr. Frederick Sucher, a man of long life, many accomplishments, deep friendships, but most especially a man who passionately loved God and followed Christ Crucified with a pure heart."

May Fr. Fred continue to pray that all of his Passionist brothers and sisters, as well as the Passionist laity, may live the Passionist charism with a deep personal union with and burning love for the One who laid down His life for us!

## JIM WEDDING - DEVOTED GROUNDSKEEPER



James ("Jim") Carrol Wedding, 80, died on June 18, 2013. He is survived by a daughter, Cathy Roper, a grandson, Steven James Roper, a great-grandson, Cayden James Roper, two brothers, Tommy Wedding and Jody Wedding, together with other family members.

Jim was an Army veteran of the Korean conflict, achieving the rank of Corporal. We first met Jim on the feast of Christ the King, 1995, at the dedication celebration of our newly built monastery. Having recently retired from Hon Manufacturing, Jim was feeling a call from God to do volunteer work here during our relocation. He stayed 11 years, soon earning the nickname "Brother Jim." During the first years of his service to the monastery, Jim refused to take a salary, but at the insistence of the superior, Sr. Mary Agnes, he finally let us pay him a small amount for his work.

Having served as our supervisor of maintenance from late 1995 until 2003, Jim showed himself to be a good steward of God's gifts, and a devoted friend of the monastic community. We soon learned that there wasn't much that Jim couldn't do, whether it be farm work, installing various items throughout the monastery and guest house, doing appliance repairs, working with concrete, taking care of the upkeep of the building, and countless other tasks.

Jim became a member of the Passionist Oblates, and for years, served at our weekday and Sunday Masses. We pray that God will abundantly reward this generous-hearted man for the countless ways he helped our community and many other people besides.

# FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

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**I**n the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1:78-79

**W**ith burning ardor the Church prays throughout Advent for a new coming of Christ our Redeemer into our hearts and lives. These ancient liturgical prayers seem timeless as even today they address current needs, dangers and hopes. We make our own this prayer from Saturday of the First Week of Advent:

*"O God, who sent your Only Begotten Son into this world  
to free the human race from its ancient enslavement,  
bestow on those who devoutly await him  
the grace of your compassion from on high  
that we may attain the prize of true freedom...."*

As we see the dangers to "true freedom" (particularly religious freedom) arising in our world today, we join with the Church in making the closing prayer of the bible our own in a special way this Advent: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20) How wonderful it would be if we all prayed this many times each day during Advent!

We close this Advent newsletter, thanking you so much for your friendship and help. Your donations, your gifts of fruits, veggies, meats and groceries all make it possible for us to continue our life and mission of prayer in the Heart of the Church. Our grateful prayers will be with you, and we in turn ask yours for ourselves, particularly for the wonderful young women discerning a Passionist vocation with us.

Have a happy and grace-filled Advent and Christmastide!

*Mother Catherine Marie and the Passionist Nuns*

Please remember us in your Will and help continue our Contemplative Passionist Mission