

From the Foot of the Cross



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

Spring 2014

God Loves a Cheerful Giver

Sister Mary Dolores Hornbeck of the Incarnate Word

Our beloved Sr. Mary Dolores Hornbeck of the Incarnate Word celebrated her Golden Jubilee of religious profession on February 27th, the feast of our young Passionist Saint, Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin. Sister Mary Dolores has brought much love and joy into our community over the years since she entered St. Joseph's Monastery. In honor of the 50 years of loving service and companionship she has given to Jesus Crucified in contemplative Passionist life, we would like to share our joy and some special highlights from Sister's journey up to the present day— from the early years before she entered the monastery, to living for 50 years as a beloved bride of Jesus Crucified.



Celebrating Fifty Golden Years of Passionist Consecration 1964 - February 27 - 2014

LIFE AT HOME

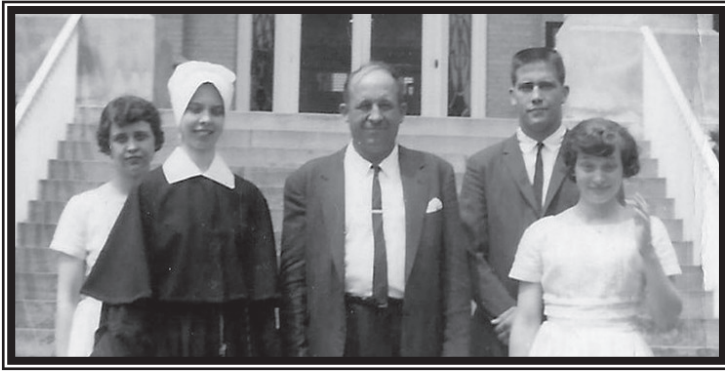
Before Sister was known as 'Mary Dolores', she was Mary Margaret (or Cissy) Hornbeck— the daughter of Joseph William (Joe) and Mary Elizabeth (Betty) Hornbeck, born January 24, 1941. The cross was present early in the life of this family as two of the six children born to Joe and Betty died as infants. The surviving children were Barbara (Barb), Cissy, Bill and Betsy. The family lived in a home built by her dad on the west side of Owensboro. All four children attended St. Stephen's Catholic grade school run by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth.

When Cissy was in 8th grade, the cross of a deep sorrow struck her family when her mother died suddenly of an aneurysm. In recalling this experience, both Sr. Mary Dolores and her only living sister Betsy Brodnax, gave the same reply: "It was as though the world had come to an end." But their loving father was determined to keep the family together as they struggled through this sorrowful time.

Soon after this loss, Joe and the children relocated to Louisville. A couple years later in 1957, Barb entered the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, leaving Cissy to be the "woman of the house" and a second mama to Bill and Betsy.



Cissy on her First Communion Day May 16, 1948. Her beautiful and self-giving mother Betty stands at back gathered around her children: Cissy, Bill, Betsy and Barb



July 1960—Barb as Sr. Mary Josepha, SCN visiting with her family at the motherhouse in Nazareth, KY after her First Profession of vows. L-R: Cissy, Sr. M. Josepha, dad, Bill, Betsy. Cissy and Betsy were wearing matching dresses Cissy bought for the occasion.

At this point Sr. Mary Dolores already had thoughts about becoming a nun. She said, "When I was in the 3rd or 4th grade, a lot of my classmates also were thinking about it. What drew us was the witness of the Sisters - their love for the children they taught; their goodness and thoughtfulness." The desire to become a nun never left her. Meanwhile, she wanted to be there for her two younger siblings, Bill and Betsy.

Somewhere within that time frame, Cissy made her first retreat at our original Monastery on Benita Avenue in Owensboro. After that she continued to make retreats with our community any time she could. In order to encourage Cissy in her spiritual life and vocational discernment, the superior at the time, Mother Mary Agnes Roche, C.P. (also the foundress of our monastery) introduced her to Fr. Hubert Bohne CP, a canon lawyer and spiritual director residing at Sacred Heart Passionist Retreat and Seminary on Newburg Road in Louisville.

After graduating in 1959 from Presentation Academy in Louisville, Cissy decided to stay home for a few more years until her brother and sister were able to take care of themselves. She began working as a proof-reader and office assistant for the "Yellow Pages", otherwise affectionately called "Wolley Segap" ('yellow pages' spelled backward) by Cissy and her co-workers. She made many friends there.

ENTERING THE MONASTERY

In 1962, Bill and Betsy were old enough that Cissy could 'leave her nets behind' and follow the 'Divine Fisher of Men' into contemplative religious life as a Passionist Nun. Before she left her



Graduation from Presentation Academy in Louisville in 1959

job at "Wolley Segap", her friends and co-workers there threw a going-away party and presented her with her very own St. Joseph's Missal as a parting gift.

A humorous anecdote from her early formation years: For the occasion of her religious profession, Sr. Mary Dolores received a lovely bouquet of flowers from "Wolley Segap." The novice directress thought this must have been an old boyfriend of Sister and she asked her about it. With a chuckle, Sr. Mary Dolores explained that Wolley Segap was "Yellow Pages" spelled backward, and the gift was from her former co-workers!

When asked why she joined the Passionists instead of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth whom her sister, Barb, had joined several years before, Sister Mary Dolores replied that during one of her retreats at the Passionist monastery, which were always preached by a Passionist Father, she was greatly drawn to devotion to the Passion of Jesus. She was also drawn by the Passionist habit and just the whole atmosphere of the monastery.

Later after she entered the community, she would find herself greatly drawn to the humility of Christ who emptied Himself to become obedient unto death on the cross. The mystery of the Incarnate Word - Jesus in His human nature - truly became a source of prayer and inspiration to her. Thus, at her Vestition (Clothing) in our holy Habit, Sister was given as her devotional title, "of the Incarnate Word."



Mary Margaret (Sr. Mary Dolores) and Catherine (Mother Catherine Marie) as postulants with Sr. Mary Bernadette, novice directress

LIFE IN COMMUNITY

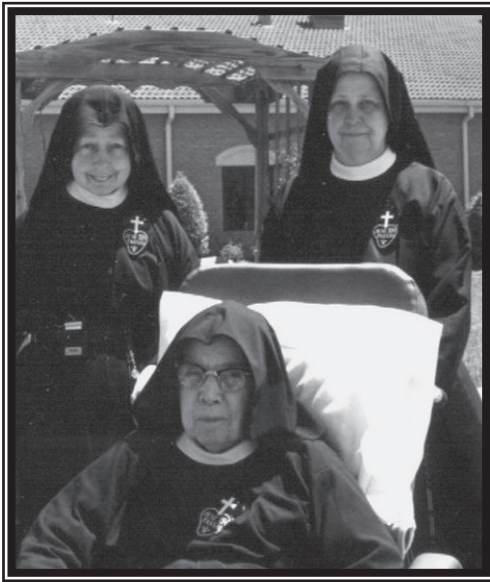
Like her father, Sr. Mary Dolores has been a "jack of all trades" throughout her years in our community. She has served as novice directress, as bookkeeper of the monastery, secretary to the superior, cook, and many other services as well. She also served on the monastery council.

When Sister was first assigned as cook in the monastery kitchen, she soon learned that cooking for a community of Nuns was very different than cooking for a small family. During her first days as monastery cook, she gathered a collection of nightmare tales about kitchen disasters which she would recount with much laughter. But soon, Sister emerged as one of the best cooks in the history of our monastery.

She has a reputation for excelling in meat preparation and bread baking. Mother Catherine Marie's father used to say that when he

would come to visit, and Sr. Mary Dolores served him a meal, he didn't have to eat for a week.

One young sister remembers a time when Sr. Mary Dolores once made up a new kind of breakfast bread. It reminded her of the delicious cherry kolaches her family used to get from a special country bakery. She told sister, "That was so good! I didn't know you made kolaches!" Sister smiled, shrugged her shoulders and said, "I didn't either." So the sister asked her, 'You mean those weren't kolaches? If not, what do you call them?' Sister Mary Dolores laughed and replied, "That's what I call 'salvation'!" Sister Mary Dolores then went on to explain that the type of sweet bread she had originally planned to make had not come out as planned. Therefore, she decided to put cherries on top and see if that would fix it. Apparently, "Salvation" is what you get when you turn a cooking project gone wrong into a totally new (and delicious) dish!



Sr. Mary Dolores (right), along with Sr. Therese Marie (left) and other sisters, lovingly and generously cared for our last living foundress Sr. Mary Bernadette.

Sr. Mary Dolores would care for Sr. M. Bernadette's needs at night and have charge of kitchen and do community correspondence during the day.

Sr. Mary Dolores also spent many years showering tender loving care on our sick Sisters, especially on the aged foundresses of our community. With no thought for her own convenience, Sr. Mary Dolores served them both in the monastery infirmary as well as at Carmel Home, encouraging them and making them laugh.

Having a practical, generous and self-giving nature, Sr. Mary Dolores is always among the first to offer help when the work load is particularly heavy. Her generous nature, however, sometimes turned Sister into a "Tom Sawyer" – she would get people enthused about a project, so that they somehow found themselves knowingly or unknowingly volunteering to help, while Sr. Mary Dolores looked on and enjoyed watching everyone else work!

Sr. Mary Dolores is notoriously gifted with a mischievous sense of humor, and inimitable laugh. She has also helped to brighten many a community recreation, or difficult situation.

One community member summed it up this way:

St. Paul tells us, I think in Galatians, that "everyone should see how generous you are. The Lord is near." To me, this fits Sr. Mary Dolores to a tee. She is one who would give you the coat off her own back, and is always a ready helper. And her sense of humor can't be beat! I have caught myself saying to myself at times, "I just love that Sister!"



Betsy, Bill, Sr. Mary Dolores and Sr. Barb at Sr. Mary Dolores' Silver Jubilee celebration in 1989.

Another of the younger Sisters recounts the following testament to the warm and loving presence that Sr. Mary Dolores has been in our community: The morning after I arrived to enter the monastery, when Sister first saw me wearing the postulant jumper and veil, she gave me a huge smile, grabbed my arm, and said enthusiastically, "Look at you!!!" That little encounter helped the joy of that day prevail over the considerable trauma of the day before (leaving my family, etc.). I've been grateful ever since.

There are so many beautiful (and humorous) memories we could recall!

As Sister celebrates the past 50 years of living in the Lord's house and loving Him and His Church, we wish her a very blessed and joy-filled Golden Jubilee year. We give thanks to the Most Holy Trinity for calling her to Passionist life in our community and for the gift of love she has given to Our Lord each and every day for the past 50 years as she continues to say 'yes', with such love and generosity, to His will and His loving providence for her life!

See photos from the Golden Jubilee celebration on page 6



**Sr. Mary Dolores cooking a meal for the community.
Mmm...maybe she was frying some chicken
for a nice Sunday feast!**

MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF OUR MONASTIC COMMUNITY



Elizabeth Johnson hails from Florida and entered on the great solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. This was also the feast of our Passionist St. Charles of Mt. Argus. Recently Elizabeth was awarded a grant from **Mater Ecclesiae Foundation** to pay her student loans. Visit fundforvocations.org to find out how you can assist young people in overcoming this growing impediment to religious vocations.



The Lord sent our Floridian a good Kentucky snow shortly after her monastery entrance.



Visiting with Elizabeth's delightful family
L-R: Anne Marie, Gabriel, Martin, Jeannette and Jennifer

Growing the Future of O

What do all these women have in common? They desire to be totally Christ's and to put their lives at the service of the Church and all humanity. They want to be signs pointing to the primacy of God. Because we are cloistered nuns and not seen often we are not well known. But our website and blog have been a tremendous blessing in promoting our life. The Sisters, postulant and Aspirant below are from Indiana, Texas, Washington, Florida and New York. Four of them found out

Sr. Mary Andrea, what advice would you give a young woman discerning a religious vocation?

Ask, seek, and knock. Ask God for help, not only to know His Will for your entire life (which can be rather daunting for us humans), but ask Him to guide you in the next step to take. Ask knowing that most often God does not send a "lightning bolt", but a simple tug at your heart. Ask Him to lead you to the people who can help you. Seek, that is, do your part to find out information about religious life and about particular religious communities. God will use this to "tug at your heart". Knock, that is, go visit the religious community / communities that interest you or where you feel God might be calling you. You may need to visit the communities more than once.

Sr. Rose Marie, what aspect of our spirituality do you find most meaningful?

I love that Mary at the foot of the Cross has such a special place in our spirituality as the Handmaid of the Redemption, and that it's our special vocation in the Church to be vessels of God's mercy to the world with her through uniting ourselves to Jesus in His Paschal Mystery as she did, so that we are handmaids with the Handmaid of the Redemption.



Sr. Rose Marie:
professed first
vows in July 2011

Sr. Cecilia Maria: professed
first vows in February 2013

Sr. Cecilia Maria what drew you to the Passionist monastery?

When I first came to the monastery run from Minnesota, I was prompted by several things. First was to keep company with Mary on the foot of the Cross, uniting ourselves in His sacrificial offering. Second, of intercession, channeling the graces flowing from His wounds, witness, drawing others to the same. Finally, I fell in love with the spirituality with which this monastery is the fruitful seedbed of God's eternal life.



Check out our website passionistnuns.org



MEET SAINT GABRIEL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS PATRON SAINT OF OUR NOVITIATE



Saint Gabriel (Francis Possenti) had many friends and was nicknamed "The Dancer". Yet running beneath Francis' zest for the good things of life was a life of prayer and devotion to Our Mother of Sorrows. It was not unusual to find him kneeling before the Pieta statue.

As Francis weighed the decisions about the future that every young adult must make, a war broke out in his heart as the world with all its potential for pleasure and success held out its arms to him and a deeper, more urgent call to give himself wholly to God also made itself felt. Francis vacillated between promises to enter religious life and parties and the lovely girl who was devoted to him.

Finally, it was our Lady who strengthened him to leave all behind and dedicate himself totally to the Passion of her crucified Son. Once within the walls of the monastery he gave himself with joy and complete surrender to the life he had embraced. He faced every difficulty with the courage of a lion always looking for ways to give more, to return love for Love.

Please pray to Saint Gabriel for new members to join the Passionist Nuns monasteries throughout the world!



Please keep our aspirant **Nora** in your prayers as she discerns Passionist life. Nora is from New York and has five brothers, one of whom is a Franciscan Friar. Photo above Sr. Mary Veronica (novice directress) with Nora and postulant Elizabeth whose places in the refectory were decorated in celebration of the feast of St. Gabriel.

about us through our website/blog. As you can see from reading this newsletter, monasteries, monks and nuns are not going extinct! This form of life is as necessary now as it was in its primitive stages in the 4th century. We humbly ask your prayers as we seek to continue to follow the mission God has entrusted to us of making Jesus Crucified known and love. Please pray that more young women from far and near will embark on this monastic journey.

Nora, how did you find out about the Passionist Nuns?

After graduating from high school last year, I was taking some time to explore a vocation to the religious life that I had been discerning for some time. In my search for religious communities, I found myself on the website for a community of Passionist Nuns in Whitesville, KY. As I browsed the site, it was apparent that this was a community solidly grounded in loyalty to the Church-my first criterion for a potential religious community. In addition, I was immediately attracted to the devotion of this congregation to the Passion of Our Lord and to Our Sorrowful Mother, two devotions very dear to my own heart. Further encouraged by pictures of a beautiful monastery and nice, joyful looking nuns, I decided to contact the monastery to get more information and see about arranging a visit. Now, after several months of e-mail correspondence and a week-long live in, I continue my discernment as an aspirant with the Passionist Nuns!

Nora: Aspirant

Elizabeth: Postulant

Sr. Mary Andrea: professed perpetual vows in October 2013

you to this Pas-

astery on a nun profoundly struck our charism to Calvary at the selves with Jesus and was our life to the world the ds, and also our e feet of Jesus. silence of prayer impregnated - nduring love!

Elizabeth, why do you want to be a Passionist Nun?

God gave his only Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the most perfect act of sacrificial and life-giving love. Inspired by this great mystery, I desire to offer my life back to God completely. As a Passionist Nun, I will be able to make my offering of love ever more fully as, with Mary, I compassionate Jesus in His great moment of love on the Cross and strive to conform my entire life to that of Christ Crucified.

g & while you are there click on the BLOG

Golden Jubilee Day - February 27, 2014

Our deep gratitude to Bishop Medley of the Owensboro diocese who, along with 7 priests, concelebrated at the Jubilee Mass. Sister opted for a very small celebration



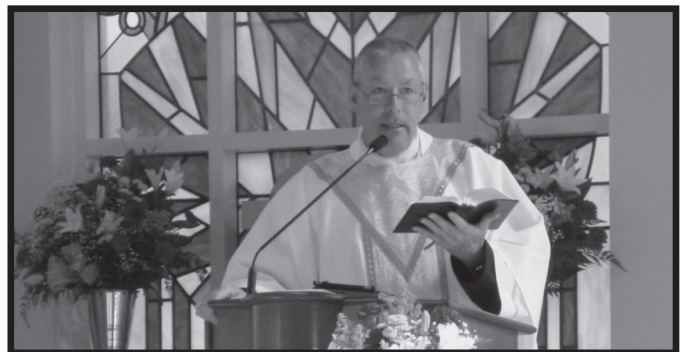
With her sweet sis and favorite brother-in-law
Betsy and Chuck Brodnax



With cousins **Gene (& Margaret) Boehmann, Judy Hoffman, Fr. Bruce Fogle and Jerry Boehmann**



Mother, Sr. M. Dolores, Ed and Wanda Schuhmann and Fr. John Schork, C.P. talk about the "old days" growing up in Louisville, KY



Diocesan priest **Fr. Jerry Baker**, pastor of St. Mary of the Woods in Whitesville, gives the homily.

Serve the Lord with Gladness!

The long-awaited day finally arrived! **Fr. Brad Smith** was ordained to the Sacred Priesthood December 1, 2013. Fr. Brad and his family have been close friends of ours since the 1980's. Having watched Fr. Brad grow up, leave home to pursue the Lord's calling and now to see him come to this point in his vocational journey has been a great joy for each of us sisters.

Fr. Brad has been a missionary in Jamaica for nearly 20 years. He belongs to a small international community who are awaiting final approval to become an Oratorian community. To learn more about them you can contact them at missionsocietyofstphilip@gmail.com

Upper right: Fr. Brad offers a Mass of Thanksgiving in our monastery chapel on January 26, 2014. Seen here with **Msgr. Powers, Deacon Bill Bach** and our chaplain **Fr. Ray Clark**

Bottom right: Fr. Brad with his brother **Michael** and parents **Beverly and John Paul Smith** during a special reception which our Passionist Oblates generously catered and served.



May God be Your Reward!



Special thanks to all our benefactors for their monetary gifts that help us continue our life of prayer at the heart of the Church. We are also grateful to God for the many ways people assist us: volunteer work in retreat house, taking sisters to doctors' appointments, yard work, planting trees, clearing woods, donations of food and the list goes on. We couldn't do this without you! You are an instrument of the Providence of our Heavenly Father's care for us. May God reward each of you!

The Polar Vortex not only brought us busted water sprinkler pipes (you can see photos of that wild experience on our blog) but also heat pumps that couldn't work fast enough to keep our chapel warm. Therefore we had Mass and Divine Office elsewhere. In the meantime, **Joe Birkhead** (upper left) and **Joe Stelmach** (right), along with **Shelby Strobel** (not pictured), worked quietly, quickly and skillfully to build a large sacristy closet off of our main chapel. With two "Joe's" working on this project, we knew our patron, Saint Joseph, was in charge. God bless you!

Nadine and Gary Trogden (left) on their days off have been clearing away damaged trees and also planted 14 white pine trees. May the Lord reward you!



which is so much according to God's heart, obliges me to give my humble, affectionate thanks in Christ for the great charity you show to this Retreat and to our Congregation. "Your reward will be exceedingly great in spiritual and temporal things for the glory of God." I do not lose sight of you in my poor prayers, and in those of the whole Congregation, in witness of the great gratitude we hold toward you and will hold forever.

- Letter of St. Paul of the Cross to Thomas Fossi

Annual Oblate Retreat

Part of our Passionist Oblate family that made the annual retreat March 7-9, 2014 directed by Fr. Ken Geraci, C.P.M. Our special thanks to the Oblates for the countless ways they assist us to continue our Passionist way of life, as well as for their prayers and their love for the Passionist charism.



FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

Passionist Nuns
8564 Crisp Road
Whitesville, Kentucky 42378-9782



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To all of our relatives, friends and benefactors,

Although this issue of "From the Foot of the Cross" will arrive only after Easter, we are keeping you in special prayer as our community enters deeply into the liturgy of Holy Week and the Easter Triduum. Borrowing the message of Pope Francis, we send you these words of consolation: *"The Risen Lord is the hope that never fails, that does not disappoint. God's hope never disappoints! How many times in our life do our hopes vanish, how many times do the expectations that we carry in our heart not come true! The hope of Christians is safe and sound in this land where God has called us to walk, and is open to eternity, because it is founded on God who is always faithful."*

How wonderful that the Church gives us an entire season in which to immerse ourselves in the Easter mystery! May we experience the Risen Jesus living within us, filling us with His Holy Spirit and sharing all we go through *"in this land where God has called us to walk."* With our eyes fixed on Him who loves us and gave Himself up to death on the cross for each one of us, our hope is *"safe and sound, and open to eternity,"* the goal of our lives.

All of our Sisters join me in sending you greetings of Easter joy and hope, along with heartfelt gratitude for the many, many ways you help us continue our Passionist contemplative life for the Church and the world. Be assured always of our faithful prayers, and we ask the charity of your prayers for us in return.

Mother Catherine Marie and all the Nuns

Please remember us in your will and help continue our contemplative Passionist mission.