

FROM THE FOOT  
OF THE CROSS

Passionist Nuns  
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Daughters of Saint Paul of the Cross



Community photo taken the day Sr. Frances Marie received her new name and was clothed in the holy habit of the Passion of Jesus.

You can see from this August 15th photo, that our community is growing! Please help us pray for perseverance of vocations, as well as the blessing of many more holy and wholesome new members. We in turn renew our promise of prayers for you and your needs and intentions. Have a blessed rest of the year!

With deep gratitude from the hearts of all of us - Mother Catherine Marie and all the Nuns

As we prepare this issue of "From the Foot of the Cross," I am also preparing to participate in an international meeting in Italy of the superiors of our 40 Passionist Nuns' monasteries from all over the world.

This historic assembly will begin at the generalate of the Passionist priests and brothers, and conclude on Isola Gran Sasso at the Shrine of our Passionist, Saint Gabriel of our Sorrowful Mother.

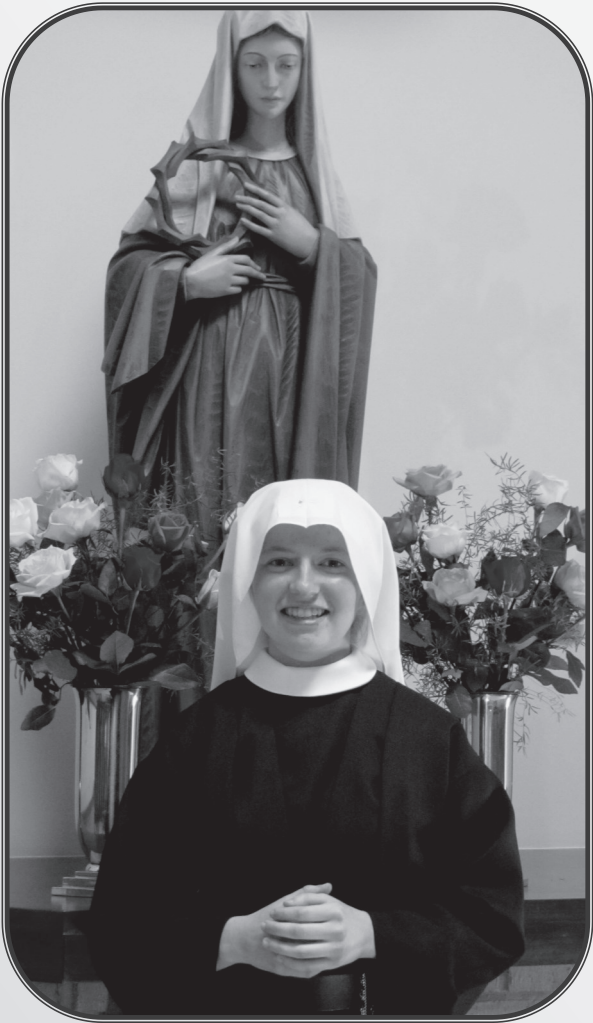
Because we have been so busy this year, we probably will not be able to send an Advent newsletter, so I am taking this opportunity to thank each and every one of you, our dear relatives and friends, for your prayers and support as we strive to be very faithful to our Passionist vocation.

From the Foot  
of the Cross



The Passionist Nuns of Saint Joseph Monastery in the Diocese of Owensboro KY Autumn 2015

Nora Wenke Takes Another Step  
Towards Her Total Consecration to God



Sister Frances Marie on the day of her vestition, is flanked by two dozen roses, a gift from her loving, supportive family.

Our postulant Nora was clothed in the holy habit and received her religious name *Sister Frances Marie of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus* on August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary. Now Sr. Frances Marie begins the most intense part of her formation to prepare to make the complete gift of self through the profession of our five Passionist vows. The following is a reflection by Sr. Frances Marie about her new name.

With my name, Frances Marie, I receive two powerful exemplars and patrons: St. Francis of Assisi, and Mary, the Mother of God.

The three great devotions of Francis' life were the Person of Jesus Christ in the crib, on the cross, and in the Eucharist. Francis' very life flowed from this contemplation of the incarnate Son of God in the poverty and vulnerability of total, self-giving love. I pray that the radical response of my patron to this radical love of God, as well as the virtues of humility, simplicity, poverty, and joy which were so clearly reflected in his life, will continually serve as a model and inspiration for me as I seek to conform my own life to that of Jesus Crucified.

I am honored to receive the name of Mary, Mother of God and perfect model of every Passionist. My Mother Mary has called me to stand by her side beneath the cross of her Son; she has invited me to love, adore, and console Him in union with her, and to participate intimately in His redeeming work. It is through the powerful intercession and perfect example of this dear Mother that I hope to live and persevere as a faithful and fruitful bride of Christ Crucified.

The title I have chosen is the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. The Heart of Jesus, which lives and remains with us in the Eucharist, 'gets to the heart' of devotion to the Passion: the inconceivable love of God which underlies the Passion and God's entire plan of salvation. It is because of this love, and that all souls may come to know this love, that I joyfully seek to live my vocation as a Passionist Nun whole-heartedly.

The Franciscans have had an influential role in Sr. Frances Marie's life. Her family was close friends with many Franciscan friars from the nearby St. Bonaventure University in Olean, NY, as well as with a local community of Franciscan sisters. Her brother joined the O.F.M. Conventuals in 2013. As a child, Sr. Frances Marie wrote and illustrated a book about Saint Francis of Assisi's life from the perspective of a bird. It is so humorous and masterful! For more photos and reflections from the vestition ceremony visit our blog - [www.passionistnunsblog.com](http://www.passionistnunsblog.com).



# *Sister Ann Miriam of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary 1925 - 2015*



(now Spalding University) while she did her internship at Saints Mary and Elizabeth Hospital in Louisville. On the day of her final exams, Helen Mills spent the entire day in our monastery chapel, praying that her daughter would pass the tests, which she did.

After working six years as a medical technologist, Ann surrendered to her call to Passionist cloistered life. She entered the monastery in 1953 shortly after her brother, Fr. Joseph Mills, was ordained to the priesthood for the Owensboro diocese. This was only seven years after our monastery was founded in Owensboro, and there were countless hardships to endure in our poor and struggling community. For instance, it took deep commitment and self-sacrifice for one who was hot by nature to sit for her meals only six inches away from the basement furnace. If she slumped just a little, her back was roasted against the hot furnace.

Having a priest-brother was a special grace for her, inspiring her to devote herself to prayer and sacrifice, not only for her brother, but for all priests as well.

Sr. Ann Miriam was known throughout her religious life for her love and appreciation of everything God has created. (She was our "monastery bird watcher," often seen at recreation with a pair of binoculars.) When the community was relocating to our present monastery and building our small guest house to welcome people for retreats, she wrote the following: *"For me, the relocation means hearing one's name called by wind and trees, sky and water, to a*



L-R: (seated) Molly, Helen "Mother", L.K. "Daddy", Bill. (standing) Joe, Kay, Randall, Ann "Sister Ann Miriam", Jack Photo taken on the 25th Wedding Anniversary of Helen and L.K. Mills.



## **PRO ORANTIBUS DAY**

*Each year Catholics throughout the world are encouraged to support the cloistered and monastic life on Pro Orantibus Day, which is November 21, the memorial of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple. Visit [CloisteredLife.com](http://CloisteredLife.com) to get ideas of how you can promote and celebrate this special day in spiritual solidarity with those "hidden with Christ."*



## **SAINT JOSEPH'S HELPERS**



This has been the summer for volunteers! Special thanks to **Caleb Goetz** (bottom right) who volunteered weekly this summer. Super Job!

We also extend our gratitude to **Faye Klee**, daughters **Jacqueline, Samantha, Teresa** and **Rebecca**, and friends **Felicia** and **Caroline** who also came almost every week. Thanks for everything!

**Jim Toth**, (left) brother-in-law of our chaplain, Fr. Ray Clark, has also continued helping occasionally with yard work on Saturday mornings.

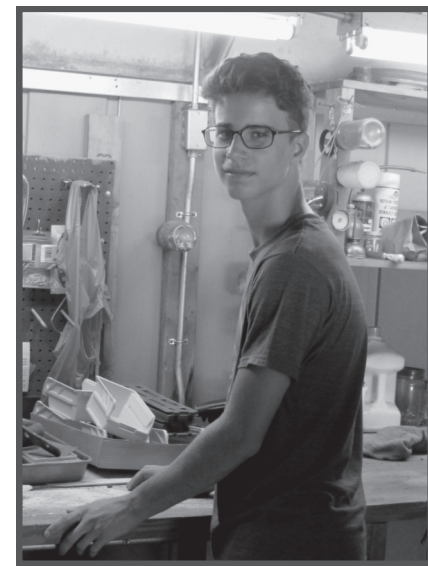


*May God bless all our  
family and friends*

*who have shared their fruits*

*and veggies with us*

*throughout this season!*





# The Year of Consecrated Life

*“The Church is calling us to have and to promote an authentic liturgical life, so that there may be harmony between what the liturgy celebrates, and what we live in our daily existence.” The liturgy, he said, “is the privileged place to hear the voice of the Lord, who guides us on the path of righteousness and Christian perfection.”*

Pope Francis

Sr. Mary Andrea has been fascinated and awed by the Liturgy since her initial studies about the Liturgy after she entered the monastery in 2004. It was no surprise to us that she wanted to share with you her insights into this awesome mystery during this Year of Consecrated Life.

## Religious Life - A Living Liturgy

What is religious life? What makes our life religious? Surely, it is not that we eat and sleep, work and play, cook and clean, read and sew, plant and weed, for indeed these are part of the lives of others, too. It is that our life, when lived as it should be, is a Living Liturgy, and at the heart of our life, as at the heart of the Liturgy, is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the memorial of Christ's Passion.

Each day, we Passionist Nuns are blessed to take with us to the altar each one of you and your loved ones with your needs and intentions. Several times throughout the day, at the sound of the bell, we return to Chapel, with you in our hearts and prayers, to join with the Church (in heaven and on earth) in praying the Liturgy of the Hours. The Liturgy of the Hours (AKA the Divine Office), extends the graces of the Mass throughout the day. Though we do spend much time participating in this official prayer of the Church – praying through, with, and in Christ – our lives consist in much more than these times of Community Prayer.

So, what about the rest of the time we live, going about the things I mentioned at the beginning of this article, our times of private prayer, and more? How is all of this connected with the Liturgy?

As I mentioned above, our life is a living liturgy. The Liturgy is primarily the work of the Most Holy Trinity, yet we are privileged to enter into it already on earth. The Father is the source and goal of the Liturgy. In the Liturgy, Christ is offering Himself entirely to His Father for the salvation and sanctification of souls and making present to us His Paschal Mystery. The Father accepts the offering of His Divine Son Jesus. The Holy Spirit prepares us, the Church, to encounter our Lord. He makes Christ present here and now and unites the Church to the life and mission of Christ.

Baptism makes all of us (laity, religious, priests, and deacons) members of Christ's Body, able to unite ourselves and others with Christ's Self-offering which is made present before us at Mass. This loving and conscious placing of ourselves and others on the altar in order that we and they may receive the fruits of Christ's Sacred



Passion, that is, be made holy, is what active participation in the Mass means.

Notice the words of the priest at Mass and our response to him after the gifts of bread and wine are placed upon the altar: “Lift up your hearts.” “We lift them up to the Lord.” The priest is calling us to offer our hearts to God. In Biblical language (which saturates the Liturgy) this means not simply offering to God the organ that pumps our blood, but our entire person – body, mind, soul, strength, hopes, fears, desires, loves, etc....

We religious strive to continue this throughout the entire day, offering ourselves to the Father, through, with, and in Christ whether we are participating in the Mass or the Divine Office, peeling vegetables for a meal, working at a computer, washing laundry, playing a game, writing a letter, cleaning a room, or doing any of the other things that nuns do. Because we are members of His Body, we can be confident that the Father accepts our offering with that of His Son.

*“The Liturgy of the Hours is the voice of the Bride, the Church, addressing her Bridegroom. Religious communities who celebrate this prayer, and particularly contemplative communities, represent the Church at prayer in a special way. The Passionist Nuns are called to share in this perennial worship, offering to the Father the voice of all creation and the needs of all mankind.”*

Passionist Nuns Constitutions #52 and #53

*ceaseless hymn of praise and adoration, so that I may bless the Lord at all times. It means providing a place where my brothers and sisters in the Lord may ‘be still and know that’ God is God, as scripture says, and where they too may come to know and experience the wonders of His love in their hearts and lives.”*

Sister was endowed with a natural artistic talent with which she created many lovely crafts. Everyone marveled at the beauty of the rugs she designed and made. The Nuns commented that in gazing at the shades of color woven into the overall design, one got the impression of an oil painting.

Sister Ann Miriam became a close friend and confidant of many retreatants and friends, among whom were several Passionist Oblates, as well as the mother of our chaplain, Fr. Ray Clark. Fr. Ray's sister, Joan (Mrs. Jim)



Sister with her brother, Fr. Joe Mills, during a Passionist Oblate meeting

Toth had this to say: *“It seems like she has always been a part of my family's life. Years ago when Fr. Ray was still discerning his course in life, he spent some time in Los Angeles at the Catholic Worker. Sometimes he would hitchhike home to Owensboro from L.A. All this activity made Mother very nervous. So, Sr. Ann Miriam introduced Mother to several of her hobbies: needlepoint and the growing and cultivation of African violets. Mother took up these hobbies and became less anxious. To this day, I include houseplants and violets in my daily routine. Sr. Ann Miriam was always very kind.”* Those of us who knew Sister before the decline of her faculties experienced the absolute goodness of her heart.

Another friend who now lives in Texas wrote after hearing of her death: *“Her supportive remarks and prayers helped me carry on during the last illness of my Dad which was long and full of difficulties that caused me fear of not being able to cope...Sr. Ann Miriam's letters were always a breath of peace and holiness. Her faithful life so fully given to the Lord was and still is so very beautiful and holy.”*



Oblate Veda Mattingly visiting with Sister at Carmel Home. Veda's husband Lou, also an Oblate, built a book cabinet for Sr. Ann Miriam.

Sr. Ann Miriam is being missed, not only by our community, but also by her family and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, L.K. and Helen Mills, her older brother, Randall Mills and his wife Margaret Hazel Mills; and two brothers-in-law, Joe Bissmeyer and Tony Rhodes.

Sister is survived by three brothers, the Rev. Joseph Mills, Jack (Doris) Mills and Bill (Gully) Mills; two sisters, Kay Rhodes and Molly Bissmeyer; and several nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews. Her funeral was like a family reunion, with Mills family members coming from far and near. This brought great joy to our hearts, since we have grown close to all of them.

We are so grateful to Bishop William F. Medley for presiding at the funeral Mass, and for Sister's priest brother, Fr. Joe Mills for his wonderful homily. We also want to thank the other priests and the many dear family members and community friends who were in attendance. A very special thanks goes to our Passionist Oblates for organizing and donating the bereavement dinner after the funeral Mass, and to Pam Howard, for the use of the Whitesville Knights of Columbus Hall. Having accompanied Sr. Ann Miriam so closely during her difficult process of dying, we were all so worn out that it would have been impossible for us to provide such a banquet! We extend our heartfelt thanks to the excellent cooks, and all who so lovingly served the meal and did the cleanup.

Our deep gratitude goes to Jeremy Bradford, CEO of Hospice of Western Kentucky, for his gracious assistance in finding a place for Sr. Ann Miriam after her stroke in early April. We also offer our humble

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# *Passionist Oblates Sharing the Passionist Charism*

On Sunday, June 14, 2015, the community of Passionist Oblates saw a big increase in membership as 16 wonderful Catholic lay people made their public commitment to Christ Crucified following a very "Passionist" retreat preached by Fr. Louis Caporiccio C.P.M. This event brought the Oblate community to 46 active members. The goal of the Passionist Oblates is to interiorize the loving memory of the Passion of Jesus and the Sorrows of Mary, and to express this in the fulfillment of the duties of their state in life, whether clergy, married or single. Our community feels so blessed and enriched by the faith of the Oblates, and we are grateful to God as well as to them for their collaboration with us in keeping the Passionist spirit alive in this Third Christian Millennium.



First row l to r: Anne Hagan, Marilyn Beyke, Dottie Pogue, Monica Rhodes. Second row l to r: Fr. Louis Caporiccio, C.P.M., Rita Hardesty, Margaret Boehmann, Ann Flaherty, Kim Burris, Gary Trogden, Nadine Trogden, Cathy Roby, Dwayne Roby. Third row l to r: Sue O'Bryan, Kerry Ledington, Janie Gayhart, Mike Roby, Msgr. Bernard Powers (Note: Msgr. has been an Oblate for some years.)

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thanks to the Sisters and staff at Carmel Home for their care of Sr. Ann Miriam for several years, to Mary Lou Payne for her many generous services to Sister in our name, and to the staff at Hospice of Western Kentucky for caring for Sister during her final days.

We close with some of Sr. Ann Miriam's own reflections a few years ago: "I am so grateful to my parents, family and friends for their loving support, expressed in many ways through the years, and for the many priests, religious and our community who shaped and enriched my spiritual journey during these

50 years. My call before I entered was a search for the eternal meaning of my life. This was so strong each day and I kept thinking, 'What am I doing for eternity?' I wanted to spend my life with someone special, and found that it was Jesus Christ. He called me to live in close companionship with Him through a life of prayer at the foot of the cross. It's not all about what we do for Him, but what He does for us. Looking back, I realize that He was always there, and it was only because of His love and fidelity that I have made it to this point. I thank Him for this precious gift. I wouldn't exchange it for anything!" May she rest in peace.

## **PRAY FOR VOCATIONS TO THE PASSIONIST NUNS!**

*We thank you for continual prayers for holy and happy candidates to Passionist life. Here is an update on the power of your prayers!*

### **Vocation Retreat**

In June we had a vocation retreat with guests from Memphis, Denver and our own hometown of Whitesville, KY (photo at right). Our next vocation retreat in 2015 is October 23-25. Please pray for the women who will attend. And spread the word about our upcoming retreats listed below.



### **Vocation Visitors**

This summer we had a number of young women visit us to learn about Passionist life. They hailed from Kansas, Tennessee, Ohio and Kentucky. **Theresa** (at right) was here for a few days before starting her freshman year of college. Come again Theresa!

**Olivia** was here for a week-long visit inside the monastery. In photo at bottom right she is sharing photos of her family and friends with some of the Sisters. She first visited us last year during a Nun Run. We hope to see Olivia again next summer.



### **VOCATION RETREATS IN 2016**

February 19-21    July 29-31

November 11-13

Info at [www.passionistnunsblog.com](http://www.passionistnunsblog.com)

*Please particularly pray for those women whom God is calling to our life but who are not in contact with us yet. May God reward you!*

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

