

*Poor Clare Nuns of Langhorne, PA*



Christmas cheer came to our monastery when the Men of Harmony filled our chapel with their beautiful four part harmony on December 17. This was their 65th year of visiting the elderly and children to present their short musical program. It began in 1950 at the Steel Plant where many men could not go home for Christmas. They decided to bring Christmas cheer to themselves and to so many others through their gift of music.

We had an unusually warm Christmas this past year with temperatures in the low 70's. On Christmas day, our yellow irises in the sacred garden were blooming. Several trees showed sign of budding, and not far from here, we heard that some people were enjoying fresh roses from their gardens! Even the birds didn't know which direction to fly!

Father Frank Berna celebrated Midnight Mass. Monsignor O'Donnell had our beautiful Christmas Day Mass and a number of our priest friends including Bishop Fitzgerald came for Masses during Christmas week.

January 3 Epiphany saw Sister Anne pick the cupcake containing the bean! As usual, after dinner dishes, we processed through the monastery singing our Christmas carols and blessing our entrance door, the Sisters' rooms, the work areas, and our gathering spaces.

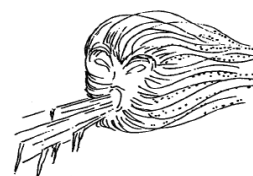
On January 15 our dear Sister Mary Constance had a delightful 96th Birthday and became the matriarch of longevity in our community's history! In honor of her birthday, we watched the movie "War Room" that night. It is a wonderful movie about the power of prayer. Some of Sister's family were able to come and enjoy a visit with her the next weekend.

Our first snowfall (blizzard-like) came in 'like a lion' shortly after Sister Eden's birthday in the latter part of January, covering us with about two feet of fresh snow! Truly for those who delight in winter escapades, this sight was long waited for!

For the closing of the Year of Consecrated Life, two Sisters from each Federation were invited to Rome. Sister Evelyn had the wonderful privilege of traveling to Rome for the Holy Name Federation of Poor Clare Sisters with Sister Carolyn, our Federation President. They attended several talks and were even in a 3-4 second clip on the internet, where our community was very surprised to see them.

The first weekend in February was our Annual Eucharistic Exposition, more commonly known as 'Forty Hours Devotion' which we celebrate the weekend before Ash Wednesday. Sunday, February 7, was also the anniversary of Sister Maria Tereza's and Sister Holy Spirit's First Profession of Vows in Tanzania. Because of the specialness of this day, we chose to celebrate their incorporation into our community on the same day. It was providential that this was also the day when our whole community renewed its vows during our Mass. We thank God for all His goodness to us and to all of you.

Over the years, we have experienced various heating problems with some areas of the monastery being too warm, and others where we sleep or work too cold. During a bitter wintery snap in mid-February we were surprised to "feel" that our furnace was not working. We later learned that the gas company had turned down the flow to meet the peaked needs. Thus our furnace did not have a sufficiently strong flow of gas to power up. We were truly blessed that our water pipes did not freeze or burst!



SPRING, 2016



We began March of 2016 with beautiful warm days in the middle 70's. The Sisters enjoyed this good weather and the man came to engrave Sister Mary Alfred's tomb stone. He did a beautiful job, as usual, and was followed by the window washers who do our high windows and skylights.

The beginning of April saw our Sister Mary Constance failing. Her relatively good eating began to change. Sister was noticeably weaker and sleeping much more. A few of her relatives were able to come and have a short visit with her.

In the middle of the month we were treated to a live showing of "Saint Theresa of Liseux" in our community room. Saint Luke's Productions, with Leonardo Defilippis as its head, called and asked if we would like his actresses to perform their play since they would be in the area. We were very happy to accept, and Jeff Mackay helped get the heavy, and not so heavy, production props plus the lighting set up for us. With Audrey Ahern as Saint Therese and Shalea Otto as stage manager and prop person, all went well. We truly enjoyed and profited by the production.

We learned that there was a Mother Fox and 2 little ones around the statue of Saint Francis that is near our cemetery. She was very protective of her little ones. In fact if any Sister was walking too close, she would "bark" in defense. Sorry to say that our dogs killed one of the babies when he/she ventured out of mama's care and came too close to the monastery.

Towards the end of the month Sister Mary Constance did not want to eat, but could still receive Holy Communion and take a small portion of water. We could see Sister getting weaker. She had a companion with her throughout the nights. Then, on Wednesday, April 27, Sister Mary Constance Mangan of Jesus returned to her true Home about 4 P.M. The Sisters gathered to say final prayers. One of Sister's aids, Eva, was with us. Monsignor O'Donnell, who had anointed Sister at different times, arrived shortly after to lead us in the prayers for the deceased. Sister Mary Constance's Funeral Mass was arranged for May 3rd with Bishop Michael Fitzgerald as the celebrant and Monsignor Joseph McLoone as the homilist. Monsignor James Beisel and Father Fidelis Weber TOR were concelebrants. With Sister Mary Constance's family and friends here, it was a beautiful way of saying "until we meet again in heaven" to a wonderful Sister.

May 1st saw our Sisters preparing for the annual May crowning of our Blessed Mother. As is our custom, the Sisters put their names into a container and one name is pulled out. This year Sister Mary Tereza had the privilege of climbing our little ladder and crowing the statue of Our Lady that is in our chapel. As we expected Sister did a beautiful job of crowning as the rest of the Sisters sang the hymn, "On This Day" to Our Blessed Mother.

Almost a week later four Capuchin Poor Clares arrived at our monastery. Two Sisters were from our Wilmington Capuchin Poor Clares and the other two Poor Clares Capuchins were from Mexico, one from Zacatecas and the other from Chihuahua. We had the joy of hosting the latter two Sisters for almost three months while they studied English before they went to South Africa.

Because of various problems with our heating system for the past few years, the time seemed right to try working out the kinks which ended in putting in a new boiler system and deciding to go with a solar heating system for our domestic water. Work commenced on this major project.

Our larger dog, Lady, was the proud hunter of a cute skunk one day. The happy dog brought her prize into the basement and laid it on her own bed for Sister Anne to see. Needless to say Sister Anne was not as thrilled to see and smell the skunk as Lady was to display it. Poor Lady did not seem to understand why a thorough bath was in order for her after her prize was taken to the farthest vestiges of our property.

SUMMER, 2016



***Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His mercy endures forever.***

How appropriate this refrain was for us this summer. During this great Jubilee year of Mercy we have so much for which to be thankful. First, for God himself; no other reason is necessary. As St. Francis addressed him, “You are the good, all good, the highest good.” Following this, we are grateful for all the blessings he showered on us – all the ways he has shown us his mercy.

A simple, but abundant blessing we received was our garden produce: many tomatoes, zucchinis, green beans, and beets. We also made the unexpected discovery that our dogs Lady and Snickers like zucchini as they devoured the first crop of four one night, much to the surprise of Sister Holy Spirit who came the next morning to gather them for Sunday dinner!

Another summertime gift was the work we were able to begin on the Monastery. Thanks to generous benefactors and the hard work of many, in late June, we had solar panels installed on our roof. They will generate enough energy for our domestic hot water needs during the summer and help during the winter. In addition, since the original old boiler was worn out, we had it replaced with an energy-efficient model. As Franciscans, being friendlier to the environment means a great deal to us.

On July 8, our new, eagerly awaited altar bread equipment arrived. It was a sweltering rainy, day. Seven men, including our neighbor Bob Moser, his son Chris, and his nephew, our maintenance man Jeff Mackay, his cousin and a friend, all arrived to unload and move the machines into our building. After working all day, they had completed their task, and the new stoves, cutters, and humidifiers were in place. We are very grateful for their hard work! The new altar breads produced are beautiful, thanks to training given by the manufacturers Francesco and Juliano Papini who came from Italy from August 4 to 12 to help set us up. The gift was complete when on August 15, Assumption Day, our chaplain Monsignor William O’Donnell came up to the altar bread room and blessed the equipment.

Also on August 15, the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, we had three Sisters given the privilege of being Eucharistic Ministers: Sister Isabel, Sister Holy Spirit and Sister Maria Tereza. May God’s blessings and love always remain with these Sisters.

Sisters Jean Therese and Anne went to the Holy Name Federation Chapter Meeting, where they were joined by Sister Patricia mid-week. Michael Joncas’ presentation on “Liturgy, Music and its Relationship to Contemplation” was very appropriate for our life. A new Federation Council was elected and includes our Sr. Anne as Federation President. Please keep her and all the Council in your prayers during these next 4 years.

Even more joyful news was the reception of our new novice. On July 15, the Feast of St. Bonaventure, our postulant Maria Ramonita Sison became Sister Maria Ramonita Sison of the Holy Family. Monsignor O’Donnell blessed the habit during the morning Mass and the community reception followed shortly afterwards. It was a very moving ceremony, and all eagerly embraced our newest Sister, promising to pray for her peace and perseverance in the years ahead. God is never outdone in His generosity!

God’s mercy and blessings often include sad occasions as well. On July 27 we had our farewell meal for Sisters Angelica and Flora de Maria, the Mexican Capuchin Poor Clares who had been with us for a few months to study English. July 28 they left us for Wilmington, DE, and on August 10, they traveled to their new community in South Africa. Their joyful and loving spirit during their stay was a great gift, and we miss them very much! How happy we are for them in their new missionary life! Please pray for them and for all our Poor Clare Sisters in the whole world.

FALL, 2016



When the Saturday cook noticed that the seeds in the butternut squash she cut up had begun to sprout, she asked Sister Tereza and Sister Holy Spirit if the seeds could be planted, and would they possibly grow. Since our small vegetable garden was already full, our maintenance man Jeff, cleared an area up by our shed for the squash. They planted the “volunteer” plants **and** they came up, were quite healthy and thrived throughout the summer. The two Sisters were able to pick 25 squash from the patch which was a bountiful harvest!

We welcomed Father Tom Hartle OFM as our retreat master at the end of August. Each of his reflections focused on a question asked by Jesus or Francis or Clare. Questions are more important in our spiritual life than answers as they form us, shape us and give us vision. We need the questions in our lives that unsettle us and serve as agents of transformation. “What are you looking for? How does this concern of yours concern me?” These were just a few of the questions that Father invited us to “live into.” Living into the answers to the questions leads to a new way of being in the world.

Father Senan Glass OFM Cap had been our confessor for quite a few years. At the end of August he told us that he would be moving to their mother house. We will miss Father very much. He had served in Papua New Guinea for many years. Father Ben Madden OFM Cap, who also served in Papua, has graciously filled in for Father Senan.

Our faithful TOR friar, Father Fidelis Weber, celebrated the Transitus of Saint Francis with us on October 3. We were joined by the Franciscan Sisters of Philadelphia who live next door at Saint Mary’s Hospital and quite a few Franciscan Seculars. Our chaplain, Monsignor O’Donnell offered the Feast Day Mass of Saint Francis for us the next day. Sister Joan was cook and served us a delicious meal that was enjoyed by all.

On October 12, Columbus Day, we remembered the Poor Clare founder in the United States, Mother Mary Maddalena, and her blood sister, Sister Constance and their arrival in New York by celebrating a votive Mass for Refugees and Immigrants. The following Saturday, our local OFS St. Bonaventure Fraternity, professed seven new members during a Mass in our chapel.

During September and October, we viewed two excellent DVD series during our collation time. *The Second Greatest Story Ever Told* presented by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, traces the story of Divine Mercy. We followed it with Dr. Tim Gray’s presentation on *Lectio Divina: Hearing God’s Voice Through Sacred Scripture* (Augustine Institute).

Sister Joan’s twin brother, Jerry, had been hospitalized with congestive heart failure and COPD, and passed away on October 27. Sister Joan was able to travel to the funeral. She was delighted to hear how much Jerry was loved by the people of the small town of Herington, KS where he lived. He had helped so many of them and took no money for his work. He used his carpentry skills to do some major repairs and some painting in his parish church. Please remember his soul in your prayers.

We were treated to a performance “Faustina: Messenger of Divine Mercy” by another of Leonardo Defilippis’ touring groups on the evening of November 14. The actress gave a wonderful abbreviated performance in our chapel with the sound track and without any large props that usually accompany it. It was both inspirational and beautiful!

**We pray that you have a holy Advent and Christmas with the real meaning of Christmas:**



**God’s Love For Us Is Infinite!!!**

*All the Poor Clare Nuns.*