



# SENTINELS OF THE DAWN

POOR CLARES OF PERPETUAL ADORATION  
OUR LADY OF THE ANGESS MONASTERY  
TROYES, FRANCE

SUMMER 2012

ISSUE 12

## THE EUCHARIST AT THE CENTER OF OUR LIFE

The following is an article that was published in the French magazine, *Chemin de Saint François* (The Way of Saint Francis). We would like to share it with you at the close of this Jubilee Year in which we commemorate the 800th anniversary of the birth of the Order of Poor Clares. Prayerfully united with all our Sisters throughout the world, please join us in giving thanks to God for our vocation as contemplatives in the heart of the Church...

What do we live on? It's a rather simple question with layers of meaning. Besides the basics of everyday life, those things that motivate us, spur us on, give meaning and impetus to our thoughts, desires, aspirations – what are they? The answer lies behind *who* or *what* is the object of our thoughts and what it is that we seek in interacting with another.

Gaze upon this mirror each day and continually study your face within it, that you may adorn yourself within and without with beautiful robes... (4th Letter of Saint Clare to Bl. Agnes of Prague)

To the surprise of many, these words were not written by a modern fashion designer but by a noble woman of the 13th century, Saint Clare of Assisi! While today's world of consumerism entices its clients to look at themselves in large, shiny mirrors, Saint Clare bids us to look at *the Mirror without spot* (Sg 7, 26).

It was before this Mirror without spot, namely Christ, that Clare was transformed. She encouraged her Sisters to gaze upon Him, consider Him, contemplate Him, as you desire to imitate Him.

(2nd Letter of Saint Clare to Bl. Agnes of Prague) And imitate Him she did. Due to her great zeal and deep devotion for the

Holy Eucharist, Clare came to resemble that which she consumed and gazed upon so frequently during her life. Pope John Paul II said of Saint Clare: *Her whole life was a Eucharist because ... from her cloister she raised up a continual 'thanksgiving' to God in her prayer, praise, supplication, intercession, weeping, offering and sacrifice...*

For the past century and a half, this continual thanksgiving to God has resounded from the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration. Inspired by the Gospel account of the ten lepers, in which only

one returned to give thanks after being healed, Father Bonaventure Herlaut and Mother Marie de Ste Claire Bouillevaux, responded to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Together they began a Community of contemplatives dedicated to Adoration in the spirit of thanksgiving. In 1854, a new branch of Poor Clares was grafted onto the Franciscan tree and quickly took root. From Troyes, the Order gradually spread to Poland, Germany, Austria, India, Bangladesh and the United States. As is the case with every Order, there are periods of joys and sorrows. Due to a lack of vocations and aging Sisters, the Monastery in Troyes was closed for a period of 10 years. In 2007 a small group of Sisters from different

countries returned to the "cradle" Monastery with the desire to bring to life again the place so dear to all our Sisters. A new chapter in the history of our Order began, and so did the adventure!

After four years of praying, hoping and waiting, we were finally able to renovate our Chapel in 2011, where today the Blessed Sacrament is solemnly exposed for Adoration. The Eucharistic Presence of Jesus is like a magnet that draws those who are in search of something that the world today cannot offer them: silence, solitude and peace. In their search, they discover that this *something* is rather *Someone*.

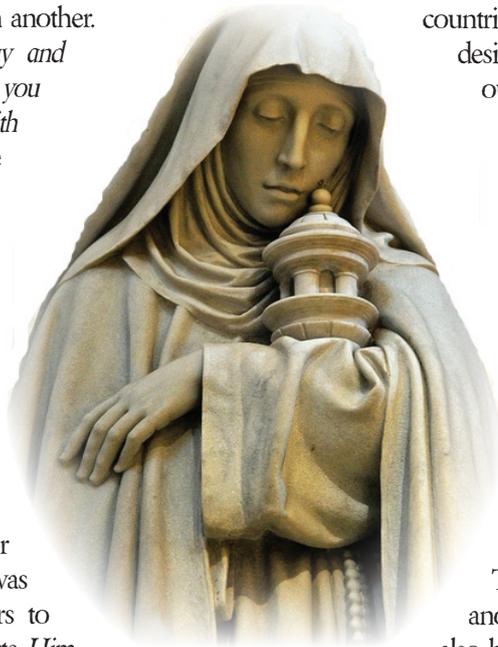
As Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist is at the heart of our life. Throughout the day, the Sisters replace one another for an hour of Adoration. Once a week we also have Adoration throughout the night. Whether

in prayer or at work, in moments of silence or at recreation, Christ's Eucharistic Mystery is incarnated in our

daily encounters with Him, with our Sisters and with the rest of the world. From our little enclosure vast horizons of hope open to the rest of the world.

During this Jubilee Year may we share in the secret of Clare's contemplation: a grateful heart! May our gaze be ever fixed on the Mirror without spot as we raise up a continual hymn of thanksgiving for His goodness in our lives.

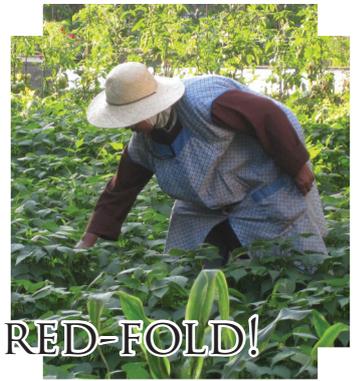
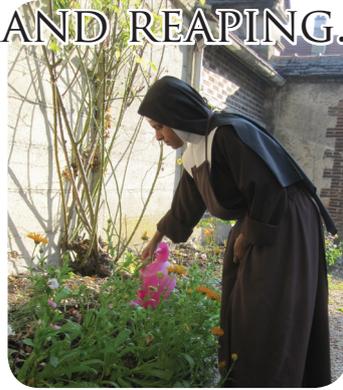
- Sister Faustina Marie



**Q**UAY THE LORD ALWAYS BE WITH YOU  
AND MAY YOU ALWAYS BE WITH HIM.

-Blessing of Saint Clare to her Sisters

## SEWING AND REAPING...



...A HUNDRED-FOLD!

These past few months have found our Sister seamstresses busy as bees, with several different projects. For some time now, Sister Mary Rosalia has been sewing dresses, of all styles and sizes, for little girls. She receives orders on a regular basis for these and several other articles of clothing and accessories. Thankfully Sister Mary Rosalia has the gift. She puts her whole heart into her work and it shows. We have been amazed at her ability to transform a few yards of material into clothing articles. On two different occasions, a sale was held at the monastery during the month of April. This first-time event proved a success, as mothers and grandmothers came, sometimes accompanied by their little ones, to check out Sister's display of dresses. Perhaps one day some of these little girls will be inspired to join our Community, after having worn a dress

made by the hands of a consecrated nun. God works in mysterious ways!

In another workroom, another sewing machine hummed steadily throughout the day as Sister Mary Germaine took up the task of sewing dresses and Bermudas for children making their First Holy Communion. If this were not enough to keep her busy, she accepted the challenge of sewing fifty albs for a large children's choir in Lille, which were needed in less than two months! She accomplished her mission with "flying colors"!

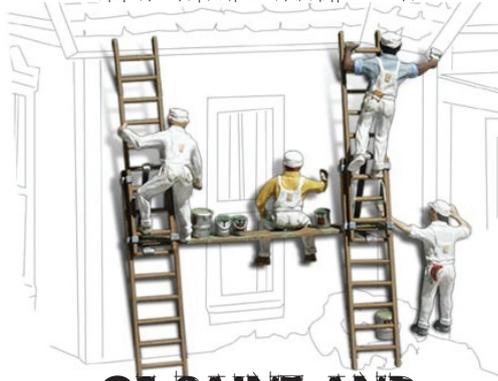
As has been the case the last few years, our vegetable and flower gardens keep many of the Sisters busy during the spring and summer months. After the long, cold winter months of "hibernation", the Sisters are ready to work outside, among God's wonderful creation. Each day brings new surprises and signs of life. Sister Mary Franciscal, who is in charge

of the vegetable garden, is ever ready to work - rain or shine! She has been blessed with a green thumb, as everything seems to grow well under her loving care. We are enjoying many fresh vegetables, the fruit of Sister's hard work. Soon, we will be spending several evenings freezing the excess, so as to have them all year-round. Beautiful bouquets from our flower gardens, arranged by the Sisters, adorn the Chapel and other areas of the monastery. A special thank you to our dear benefactors who tilled the land and supplied us with a variety of plants and seeds. We cannot fail to mention either those who offered their precious time to give us a hand with the upkeep of the gardens. in pulling weeds. Their generosity warms our hearts, which are raised us in continual thanksgiving to God for His bountiful goodness to us... May He who blesses the work of our hands be praised!

**M**id-July found us on the move! We re-located ourselves once again in our "temporary Chapel" (otherwise known as the parlor) for two weeks as the walls and ceiling of our Chapel were repainted. For those who do not have the opportunity to visit our Chapel, a little explanation is necessary... A few months after the re-opening of our newly renovated Chapel in December of 2011, we began to notice black marks on the wall just above the radiators. The heating and painting enterprises were contacted. The problem was evaluated over a period of time. After trying different experiments, they concluded that a very fine dust which had entered into the radiators during the time when the workers were sanding the walls was the culprit! During the winter months when the Chapel was heated, this dust was gradually blown out of the radiators, thus leaving a layer of black soot on the walls.

On July 16th, the workers arrived, ready to begin their task. Within a period of two weeks, radiators were dismantled from the walls, cleaned professionally, and re-installed. Next, the entire Chapel was washed- ceiling to floor. Finally, the

## IN THE MIDST



## OF PAINT AND SCAFFOLDING

scaffolding went up and the walls and ceiling received a new coat of paint. We wish to express our gratitude to the companies involved, for their cooperation in regulating the problem, as well as to all those who diligently worked to complete this project before the beginning of August.

The month of August will give us a little reprieve before another large-scale project begins. This time the scaffolding will be set up in our courtyard for repairing the roof of our monastery. With all the rain that we have had these past few months, not to mention collecting water in buckets

in certain areas of the monastery, we are anxious to see this work get underway, where there is need of urgent repair. Each day our Community invokes the powerful intercession of good Saint Joseph. We ask him to inspire benefactors to come to our aid with the expenses of repairing the entire roof. It is also our desire to one day see our entire monastery renovated so that we may be able to live more fully our contemplative call, and welcome new vocations. Please join us in praying for these intentions, and if you can help us financially, we would be most grateful!



## CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF FAITHFULNESS

In our world today, the whole idea of commitment is difficult for many. People can be very generous when the occasion demands it, but they are fearful of making a total permanent commitment. The religious life, like the priesthood, and like marriage, involves a radical choice to commit oneself for life to what is truly a vocation, a calling from God. Throughout the Church's history, countless men and women have made a great act of faith in God, by setting out on the path of total commitment.

On May 3rd, Sister Mary Antoinette renewed her personal commitment to the Lord as she celebrated her Silver Jubilee of Religious Profession. During the Solemn Mass, presided by our chaplain, Mgr. Bernard Saviourat, Sister Mary Antoinette renewed her Holy Vows into the hands of our Abbess, Mother M. Emmanuel. Many of the faithful in



our diocese joined our Community for this joyful occasion. Together we gave thanks to God for His faithfulness to Sister, and her faithfulness to Him and His Church.

We also thank God for the gift of her vocation, and for the gift that she is to our Community. Sister is talented in many different areas, not only in music, but in computers, book-keeping and little "handywoman" jobs as well. Responsible for the archives of our cradle monastery, Sister's great passion is to make our founders better known and venerated. Above all else though, Sister Antoinette's fidelity as an Adorer of the Most Blessed Sacrament is a blessing to our Order, to our diocese, to the world.

Whatever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Col 3: 12-17). Day in and day out, for the past 25 years, Sister Mary Antoinette has done just this – offering perpetual thanksgiving to God through her spouse, Jesus, before His Divine Presence in the Eucharist. Sister's entire life gives witness to the fact that God is never outdone in generosity and that He gives us so much more than we could ever imagine.

*Ad multos annos,*



## CROSSING THE THRESHOLD OF FAITH



*The "door of faith" is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into His Church.*

*– Pope Benedict XVI*

They called the church together and reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith... (Acts 14:27). In the Acts of the Apostles, we learn that God had opened the door of faith for the early Church. But did you know that God has opened the door of faith for each one of us and He invites us to step through the threshold into a deeper relationship with Him? Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI is giving the Church a great gift in proclaiming a Year of Faith. It will begin on October 11th, 2012, the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, and will end Nov. 24, 2013, the feast of Christ the King.

This event is an opportunity for every Catholic to turn towards Jesus Christ, encounter Him in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and rediscover the Faith and Church. It is a time of grace, too, for Catholics to experience a conversion – to turn back to Jesus and grow in a deeper knowledge of one's faith. The "door of faith" is opened at one's baptism, but during this year, we, as Catholics, are called to open it again, walk through it and rediscover and renew our relationship with Christ and his Church.

A challenge is placed before each one of us. How will we witness to our Faith this year, in our personal relationship with Christ, in our family and community, at school or work, and in today's society? May the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds and hearts.



What the world is in particular need of today, is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord and capable of opening the hearts and minds of many to the desire for God and for true life, life without end.

*– Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter Porta Fidei  
for the Indiction of the Year of Faith.*

SENT OUT ON MISSION...  
... TWO BY TWO!



When our Lord called his disciples on a mission it was two by two. Such was the case for two of our Sisters who left their monasteries in India to come to France. Sister Mary Aloysius from Cherthala and Sister Mary Beatrice from Andhra Pradesh arrived in France on the 13th of June. They spent their first week visiting Troyes, the cradle monastery of our Order, before heading for their new home in Castelnaudary. During their time with us, Sister Mary Aloysius and Sister Mary Beatrice had the opportunity to pray before the tombs of our beloved founders, asking their blessing for the mission that lies ahead of them. We confide our two "disciples" to your prayers, that they may adapt to the change of climate and culture and learn the French language.



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## A REUNION WITH A JOYFUL NOTE



At the end of May we were blessed to receive a visit from one of Sister Mary Antoinette's friends, Anne C. Baker. The two of them played together in numerous concerts in their former music careers as professional violinists. It was indeed a very joyful reunion for these two friends as it has been more than 20 years since they have seen each other. During Anne's visit, we were also delighted to meet three of her friends with whom she was traveling. We had the joy of Anne and Sr. Mary Antoinette performing for us, as they played some music. Memories of the past were recalled and new ones were made, as a song of thanksgiving arose in the hearts of us all for the talent of these two gifted musicians and for the joy they shared in being once again united.

On another note, you may still purchase Sister Mary Antoinette's CD, THE FOUR SEASONS BY VIVALDI, which was recorded last spring with Michael Matthèse in the Cathedral of Troyes, France. For more details please go to EWTN's Religious Catalogue website: [www.ewtn.com/cataloguefeatured/](http://www.ewtn.com/cataloguefeatured/)

