



CHRISTMAS 2013

SENTINELS OF THE DAWN

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

ISSUE 15



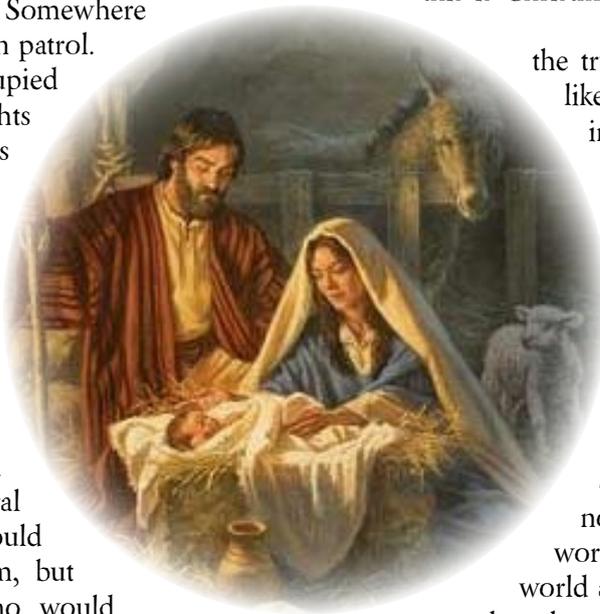
**FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN,
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN... ISAIAH 9:6-7**



December 25, 2013. During a family gathering a moment arrives when hearts are torn because the place at the table is empty where a precious loved once sat; cherished traditions are robbed of their joy. A homeless person huddles outside a soup kitchen to get a spot for Christmas dinner; on December 26th, he will be back on the streets, back to wondering where the next meal will come from. In Syria, men, women, and children live in fear as the threat of violence is always near, even on a night as peaceful as Christmas. Somewhere in Afghanistan, a soldier is on patrol. His mind is not preoccupied with gifts and carols, or lights on the tree. Every sense is alert. Every nerve is on end. "Will there be a roadside bomb, a suicide bomber, or a sniper?" And so this is Christmas.

On that first Christmas, some 2,000 years ago, a couple is forced by a Roman decree to make a perilous journey to an ancestral home. The long journey would be difficult for both of them, but especially for a woman who would soon give birth. They get to where they are going only to find no room at the inn. The woman goes into labor and the newborn is laid in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. It is filled with old, molding hay. At midnight, in the piercing cold, a baby is born into this world. And so this is Christmas.

In a distance poor shepherds watch over their sheep. Suddenly the sky explodes with the song of the whole heavenly host, which shatters the silence of the night. The shepherds are scared to death, but the angel



says: *Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.* Lk 2: 8-10 The shepherds set out for Bethlehem and upon arriving, find the mother and her child wrapped in swaddling clothes. The rest of the world doesn't know. There is no announcement to the Emperor or the governor of Judea. The Son of God the Most High is born and the only ones who are told are these lowly shepherds. And so this is Christmas.

And so this is Christmas, celebrating the truth that Jesus became one of us – one like us in all things, except sin. Jesus lived in troubled times as we do today, His homeland was occupied by foreigners; His society troubled by political and religious unrest. Jesus knows what it is like to be poor and homeless, he knows what it is like to have to flee one's homeland for safety's sake. Jesus knew He was to bear witness to the truth of God's love for all of us – and He was faithful to that witness even to the point of dying. Jesus was not born into a perfect world, and the world still isn't perfect. He came into our world as it is where people mourn and grieve, where hearts are broken and sin destroys. He came then and He comes now, not to condemn, nor to set the world "right". He comes looking for us – for you and me. And how does He come? As a tiny child. As we upon the manger this Christmas, let us receive the Christ Child in our hearts as we would one of our own little ones. May the warmth of His Love touch us where we most need hope, acceptance, forgiveness, peace. May the light of His Presence illumine our path and make us witnesses to His saving grace.

We pray that the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts with joy and peace.
May the Prince of Peace bless you and your loved ones during this holy season
and throughout the New Year 2014.

*Merry Christmas from your Poor Clares Nuns
of Perpetual Adoration in Troyes, France*



Fraternity Family Franciscain



The following is an article written by a couple who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, feel called to create a Third Order Franciscan Fraternity in connection with our Monastery.

“Due to a transfer, we moved this past summer to Mailly-le-Camp. We are the Desachy family: Anne and Jean-Baptiste (parents) and children: Jeanne (8), Sistine (6), Maximin (4) and Constantine (6 months). Looking for a Monastery which is rooted in the Franciscan way of life, we came ringing at the door of the Poor Clares in Troyes.



In January 2010, a couple of friends introduced us to the Fraternity Pace e Bene (Peace and Goodness) connected with the Poor Clare

Monastery in Vermand, France. It was the first time we had heard about a Franciscan fraternity. Our beginnings in the Franciscan spirituality left us perplexed. Having been accustomed to planning everything out, organizing our time, we were convinced that such structure was THE perfect solution for a harmonious family life, until we meet people who advocated the opposite! During the course of these fraternity meetings, we got “hooked”. We started to let

go. We were more relaxed, more in tune with our children and more welcoming. We let go of the nets of our well-ordered life to allow “God’s surprises” to happen : a meeting, an event, so many little things that we would not have experienced if we had remained wrapped up in our tight daily schedule.

We discovered Franciscan spirituality, we found friends and even more so: a family. A very large family, a family without borders. Small plants of St. Francis and St. Clare grow everywhere. While on mission, Jean-Baptiste, who is in the military, was able to meet the Poor Clares of Djiri in the Congo. When we travel, we see whether brothers or sisters are in the vicinity and every time it is the same warm welcome and the strange sensation of being “at home.”

In 2012 we celebrated in fraternity at Lourdes the 8th centenary of the Poor Clares. Again, we were able to measure the wealth of the Franciscan family. We were in the middle of a crowd of people previously unknown, and yet we were family. Contacts were as simple as if we had known all these brothers and sisters forever.

All that we have received in recent years in our fraternity, we want it to grow and share.”

- Anne and Jean-Baptiste DESACHY

The first meeting will be on January 11, 2014. Please pray for this special intention that it may bear fruit and draw many to share in our Franciscan way of life..



A Day of Prayer for the Family every Wednesday at the Monastery

In listening to the news, or reading the daily headlines we can easily see that our society is quickly spiraling downward into a culture of death. The family is under attack and the respect for the sacredness of human life is being lost. In its place are new laws or proposals which are distorting and destroying God’s design. In response to this mutation our Community has decided to consecrate every Wednesday as a Day of Prayer for the Family and for all that concerns the dignity and protection of human life from the moment of conception until natural death. Each Wednesday, the Mass, the Divine Office, the Rosary and a time of prayer with the “Sentinels” will be offered for these intentions. We invite you to unite yourselves with us in prayer.



Another project that has been “under construction” for some time has finally seen the “light of day”! We invite you to check out on new website. It is still in the “toddler” stage, so please keep posted for further updates.



www.clarissesdetroyes.com



CHRISTMAS IS FILLED WITH THE SOUNDS OF MUSIC

As mentioned in our last newsletter, Sister Mary Antoinette recorded another CD this past September in the Cathedral of Troyes, France with Mr. Michael Matthes, Titular Organist of the Cathedral, who is a highly esteemed concert artist and organ professor at the Music Conservatory of Troyes. This is yet another project to finance the long list of repairs

and renovations needed in our Monastery, our leaking roof being our first priority. If you enjoyed their first CD, *The Four Seasons by Vivaldi*, you are sure to enjoy this next one as well, featuring different compositions by Bach and Handel. This CD will be appreciated by all music lovers and will provide all listeners with a lively and joy-filled performance.

Thanks to the generosity of EWTN, this CD can be purchased through their Religious Catalogue. Unfortunately, it will not be made available for sale until spring. We will keep you posted on future updates...



For those of you who did not have the opportunity to purchase Sister's first CD, there are copies still available.

www.ewtnreligiouscatalogue.com



As 2013 comes to a close, we wish to take this time to share with you some of the many graces and blessings of this past year, as we give thanks to God for His continual goodness in our daily lives.

While workers were still busy with repairing our roof, sounds of different workers could be heard in another part of our Monastery. Thanks to a generous donation that we received from an Association, as well as the

generous support of a benefactor, we were able to begin work on the renovation of our sewing rooms. Our Sisters seamstresses are anxious to move into their new workspace and start their projects! We will be sharing more with you on this subject in our next issue.

February 11, 2013. As news from Rome spread throughout the world that Pope Benedict XVI had announced his decision to relinquish the Petrine office, we were deeply moved by his humility and courage. How comforting to know that Pope Benedict XVI, like us and many other

contemplatives, is united with us through a hidden life of prayer for the needs of the Church and the world.

Habemus Papam! Who would have ever guessed that Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio from would be elected the 266th Pope? A "first" from the continent of South America and from the Company of Jesuits, not to mention a "first" with the name of Francis – one that would set the tone of his papacy from the very beginning. It is clear that his heart's desire is to lead the Church in the path of humility and simplicity, and to reach out and embrace the poorest of the poor.



Throughout the year we were happy to welcome numerous visitors to our Monastery. Thank you to all those who brought us such joy through the time that we shared together. At the end of May we had the privilege of hosting the regional meeting of Abbesses of the Poor Clare Monasteries of France. It was truly a day filled with Franciscan joy, a time in which sisterly bonds were strengthened.

November 24th, the feast of Christ the King, marked the closing of the Year of Faith. How grateful we were to have been granted this time of grace to be renewed and strengthened in our Faith, in union with all our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

During Advent our Community entered more fully into a profound spirit of prayer and silence. Meditating upon

God's Word and sharing our insights upon it each Sunday evening helped to prepare our minds and hearts for Christ's coming into the world, into our hearts. *Come, Lord Jesus!*

As we enter into this New Year, we place it in the hands of our Lord and His Holy Mother, Mary, asking them to grant us the grace to live it to the fullest in faith, hope and love.



GROWING IN OUR FAITH



Since June of 2012, our Community has had the great privilege of having Brother Guillaume, an Olivitain Benedictine monk from Mesnil St Loup, give us monthly spiritual conferences. Some of the topics that we have already covered range from Lectio Divina to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Throughout the Year of Faith, which came to a close on the Feast of Christ the King, we also spent time reviewing the Catechism of the Catholic Church and growing in our Faith. Most recently we have begun looking at the Psalms, penetrating their meaning, which in turn has helped us to enter more fully into prayer. The Psalms are very much a part of our monastic life, as we chant them everyday. We wish to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to Brother Guillaume whose well-prepared and insightful conferences are helping us grow in our knowledge and love of Christ.



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A CHRISTMAS SALE TO BENEFIT THE POOR CLARES

On November 25th and 26th a special Christmas sale took place at our Monastery. Its purpose was to help our Community obtain extra funds for all of the necessary repair work of our Monastery. Special thanks to two dear friends of the Monastery, who organized and took care of all the details of this fund-raising event... it proved to be a great success! During these two days, from late morning to early evening their warm smiles welcomed all those who came to the sale. We wish to express our deep gratitude to these two wonderful ladies, so full of ideas and energy, and to all those who donated various articles. May God reward each one of you for your support and participation! We look forward to the next one this spring!

