



CHRISTMAS 2012

## SENTINELS OF THE DAWN

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

ISSUE 13

### *Jesus Christ: The Gift that keeps on giving*

Christmas is a time of giving and receiving gifts. For the young, (and perhaps not so young!), the moment of discovery as paper and ribbons are torn away, is thrilling. Soon all the packages are unwrapped, and the excitement fades away. While focusing on things, something else can be easily overlooked: the love and joy shared, the only gift that truly lasts.

At Christmas, we celebrate the most enduring gift of all: a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Jesus Christ, the gift that keeps on giving, the mystery that still unfolds. Some 2,000 years later, the very reason we exchange gifts is to remind each other of God's great gift of love, echoing through the centuries...  
*For behold I bring you good news of great joy! ( Luke 2:10)*

Jesus Christ is the gift that we keep unwrapping not just today, but throughout our lifetime. He is the grace of God in our midst, the light that shines in our darkness. Jesus understands our human weakness for He became one of us, one with us. He knows our poverty and sadness, our hopes and desires. He supports us as we battle an addiction, He comforts us when we worry about a loved one, He blesses

us when we seek to ask or to offer forgiveness, He helps us to see the goodness in our neighbor.



Jesus Christ is a gift that can never be exhausted; He is the gift that is meant to be shared. We receive His gift of love when we spend time in prayer, reading and meditating upon the Holy Scriptures; when we enter a Church and spend time with Him in prayer. He is present in the Tabernacle, in the Most Blessed Sacrament and waits for us to visit Him. He wants to pour out on us His many graces and blessings. He desires that we return love for love. During this Christmas season why not spend some time praying before the manger scene to thank God with our Lady and St Joseph for the gift of His Son, our Lord and Savior.

There, let us open our hearts to receive His love so that we may carry it back out into the world, a world that is desperately in need of God's love.

Indeed, Jesus Christ is the gift that keeps on giving. We are reminded of this, too, when we participate at Mass and receive Him in Holy Communion. Glory to God in the highest! A Savior is born for us, a Savior has died for us. The gifts of bread and wine are changed into His Body and Blood. Receive Christ. Give Christ.



The Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration in Troyes  
wish you and your loved ones  
*a Merry Christmas....*  
May Christ's blessings accompany you  
throughout the New Year!





## Celebrating Saint Clare and the gift of our Vocation



It was a year of grace, a year of joyful celebrations, a year of rediscovering and entering into a deeper understanding and appreciation of Saint Clare's spirituality, as Poor Clares around the world gave thanks to God for the gift of our

vocation. The Jubilee Year for the 8th Centenary of the Order of Poor Clares ended with a special gathering at Lourdes from November 2-4. Over a 1,000 people joined the Sisters, who numbered

more than 100 from monasteries in France, Belgium and Switzerland, for a weekend full of events, rooted in Franciscan joy. The three days spent at this much loved Marian Sanctuary were filled with powerful moments of prayer and liturgical celebrations, conferences, workshops

presented by the Sisters and members of the fraternity, not to mention various forms of entertainment (dances and skits!) for young and old alike!



Two of our Sisters were privileged to participate in this unforgettable family celebration. Sister Mary Antoinette

joined several other Poor Clare musicians and fraternity members to form an orchestra. Each instrument added a special touch of beauty to the liturgy, as together they harmonized and praised God through their music. For Sister Faustina Marie, her task was that of presenting a workshop on the Initiation of Eucharistic Adoration. Sister gave a 1/2 hour presentation to a group of 40 people, which was followed by a period of silent Adoration.

The event closed on Sunday with a Solemn Mass celebrated by the Most Reverend Jean-Pierre Grallet, archbishop of Strasbourg, followed by the sending off of the Poor Clares, back to their monasteries, back to begin anew our call in the heart of the Church: living for Him, and praising Him at all times.



## A Saint for our Time

Father Louis Brisson



The bells of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Troyes pealed with joy on September 22, as they announced the beatification of Father Louis Brisson, priest of the diocese and founder of the Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales. More than 3,000 people participated in this event, including a dozen bishops and some 200 priests, thus filling the Cathedral to overflowing for the beatification Mass, which was presided by Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints.

Uniting our joys with the spiritual sons and daughters of Father Brisson, especially those in the diocese of Troyes, we give thanks for the beatification of their founder, who has moved one step closer to sainthood. Father Brisson was, in every way, a man of his times – a faithful son, good friend, eager seminarian, zealous priest, learned scholar, man of science... the list goes on. And still today, his example of faith and heroic charity continues to give witness to the Church and the world. Blessed Louis Brisson, pray for us! To read more about his life, check out this website: [www.oblatesisters.org/founders](http://www.oblatesisters.org/founders)



In every age, there have been men and women, obedient to the Father's call and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who have chosen a special way of following Christ in order to devote themselves to Him with an undivided heart. They have left everything behind in order to be with Christ and to put themselves, as He did, at the service of God and their brothers and sisters.

On January 10, 2013, our Community will celebrate Mother Marie Emmanuel's 25th anniversary of Religious Profession. This is a time of great joy, for a jubilee is an important milestone in one's life journey. Mother Marie Emmanuel's journey, as a Poor Clare of Perpetual Adoration has been like Mary's own journey – a pilgrimage of faith, a pilgrimage of consecration, a pilgrimage of devoted service to others through her life of prayer and fidelity to her vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Her life devoted to adoration of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament is a blessing not only for our Community and Order, but for the Church and the world.

25 YEARS AS AN ADORER OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT



In our postmodern world challenged and characterized by relativism, the life of a consecrated religious is a sign of contradiction that serves to invite and encourage others to follow the same path.

A jubilee is also a time of thanksgiving to God. We are grateful for Mother's witness, her perseverance and service to Christ and His Church as an Adorer of the Most Blessed Sacrament, for the many gifts she uses to help build up our Community and God's Kingdom here below. We are grateful as well for the many people who have lovingly supported her by their prayers and sacrifices, who have been a source of encouragement to her in her response to follow Christ whole heartedly.

Please join our Community in praying for Mother as she prepares for this special day. May this Jubilee Year be filled with an abundance of graces from Christ to whom she has given all. May His love and mercy, His peace and joy accompany her all the days of her life. *Ad multos annos, dearest Mother!*

## Renewing God's House day by day...

We all know the story well... over eight hundred years ago, a young man went into an old, dilapidated Church to pray. St Damian's, just outside Assisi, was in much in need of repair. As the young man prayed, looking at the cross, he heard Christ call him by name. "Francis, rebuild my house, which as you see is falling into ruin." The mission that Saint Francis received from Christ was simple yet profound, and His own simplicity was beautifully revealed in his response to this Christ's call. Beginning with bricks and mortar, Saint Francis rolled up his sleeves and got to work! This, in turn, attracted several companions to join him in a rebuilding project – one that all could understand and relate to.

Yes, our little Community also participates in Francis' mission and, like him, we have begun with our buildings. The renovation of our Chapel was, of course, our first priority. There, the holy sacrifice of the Mass is offered, the Divine Office is chanted, and hour after hour we adore Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The project was completed just before Christmas last year. The sober beauty of its design reveals the sacredness of the space and draws our community and all who come to our Chapel into the presence of the Lord.

On November 5th, chapter two began: the first stage of our roofing project! One section has already been completed

where some major leaks and infiltration in the walls were damaging the building. All the noise, the financial concerns, and just living in a work site seem far from the ideal setting for a contemplative community. Yet, so many of the great European abbeys and monasteries were built with the monks own hands. Such work can only be done relying totally on God, and undertaken only because He asks it. We thank you for your encouragement, your prayers, your financial help. The Lord is rebuilding this house not just in "bricks and mortar" but also in hope and grace. May He bless all who participate in bringing His plan to fruition !





# A Hymn of Thanksgiving



November 13th marked the 125th anniversary of the death of our founder, Father Bonaventure Heurlaut. It was a day in which the hearts of his spiritual daughters, not only here in Troyes, but throughout the world, were lifted up in thanksgiving to God for the gift of his life to the Church. Father

Bonaventure was the parish priest in Nogent-sur-Aube for a number of years and it is here that he died and was buried.

In the months ahead we would like to have a special celebration to commemorate this event. We will keep you posted on further details!



Photo: Mother Mary Jeannette and Mother Mary Joseph, from our monastery in Quilon, India had the opportunity to pray at the tomb of our Father Founder during their visit to Troyes in August. They were accompanied by Mother Mary Emmanuel.



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Our new website will be up and running by the first part of February. We invite you to visit us at our new address:  
<http://www.lesclarissesdetroyes.sitew.fr/>



During this Year of Faith, we cannot help but think about what an exciting time this is to be serving the Church, even in the midst of the serious challenges that we face in our culture: abortion, euthanasia, and questions concerning same sex marriages, filiation, and the adoption of children. Our Holy Father could not have inaugurated this year of Faith at a more appropriate time. For all of us, it is a moment of grace and commitment to a more complete conversion to God, to strengthen our faith in Him, and to proclaim Him with joy to others. It is a time of hope in the healing power of the Gospel with its message of truth and love. The Church calls each one of us to engage in her mission of a "New Evangelization" in the task of awakening our brothers and sisters to the presence and love of Christ in their lives. In speaking of the call to the New Evangelization, our Holy Father stated that "all cultures are changed by being open to the truth that 'God is love'." (*General audience, September 2012*). Each one of us, in our daily life, is called to be an instrument in making that truth real to those who are placed in our path. May this year be an occasion for us to make concrete acts of faith as we live out what we believe.

