

Sentinels of the Dawn

POOR CLARES OF PERPETUAL ADORATION

MONASTÈRE NOTRE DAME DES ANGES TROYES, FRANCE

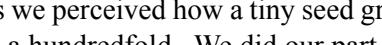
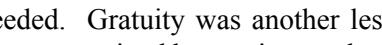
AUTUMN 2009

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Throughout the summer months sounds of hoes, spades and shovels digging into the ground could be heard from our vegetable garden. With tools in hand, our Sisters set out each morning to accomplish their assigned task for the day. Each day brought with it new wonders and joys at God's creation, and some very valuable lessons. First, the lesson of being good stewards with what has been entrusted to us. There is no time to be idle when it comes to gardening, as "new life" begins to flourish. The continuous battle of attempting to keep weeds from choking the growth of the vegetables can be frustrating, even discouraging at times. Patience and perseverance are continually needed. Gratitude was another lesson ever before our eyes, as we perceived how a tiny seed grows into a plant, producing a hundredfold. We did our part in planting the seeds, and then God did the rest. It was He who provided the sun and the rain, and even the time, not to mention an abundant harvest. Truly everything is a gift from the hands of the Creator.

A hundredfold, indeed, we reaped this summer, as jars

THE WORK OF OUR HANDS



of jelly line the shelves and vegetables, which after being blanched, fill the freezers. What a blessing it was for us to enjoy fresh vegetables right from our very own garden! We witnessed (and tasted!) the goodness of the Lord.



How can we ever thank all those who assisted us in this great task? We are very grateful to a dear benefactor of the monastery who came to our aid in early spring. Thanks to her, our field was plowed before the planting season and our fruit trees pruned. She also provided us with all the seeds and plants for the season. A group of Vietnamese friends also appeared on the scene with their expertise to provide a more efficient watering system for us. During one of the hottest parts of summer, they worked to accomplish their task. Their teamwork, perseverance and cheerful spirits were very edifying to witness. These people of good heart, like many others who desire to show their appreciation for our monastic way of life, have taught us a great deal about generosity and self-sacrifice. How grateful we are to those who have shared in this work, too, through offering us their assistance and wise counsels. Each year we have learned something new and God's Divine Providence has been manifested time and time again through the goodness of others. We hope to continue this communal work for years to come, one that offers fruit in abundance in more ways than one!

Lord and Giver of all Life, we thank you for the many ways that you have blessed us. You entrusted to us the task of working the land, so as to bring forth life through our labor. You have blessed the work of our hands; bless those who have assisted us in this work. May the harvest that we have received, a hundredfold, remind us of our call to bear fruit in our own lives. May all that we do be for your glory and honor. Amen.

The Tale of a Tree



Finding out where you come from, who your ancestors were and what they did starts with a very familiar place: yourself! Family trees have proved to be an ideal method for many to trace their ancestral roots to the first member of their family. The Franciscan family tree has St. Francis and St. Clare for its origin. From this life-giving source, many different branches have sprung forth.

We were able to reflect upon this in greater depth during the visit of Mother Clara and two Sisters from our monastery in Bautzen (Germany) in late May. Not only were they bearers of glad tidings and joy, but also of a very unique gift: a pear tree. It looks like any other ordinary pear tree, but, in fact, there is quite a history behind it! This pear tree is one of the many that have been grafted from the original one that our Holy Mother Clare of Assisi had sent to her own Sisters in Brixen (presently Bressanone), Italy in the 13th century. It is amazing to think that parts of this original pear tree are now firmly planted throughout the world, just like the Poor Clare Order itself.

During the visit of Mother Clara and the Sisters, we all gathered one evening to bless and plant the pear tree. Placed in an area of our cloister garden not far from the tomb of our dear Mother foundress, the tree is a living and life-giving reminder of our rich Franciscan heritage. It is also a reminder of our sisterly bond with all Poor

Clares throughout the world, especially with our Sisters in Bautzen.

This sisterly bond was all the more strengthened during the visit of our Sisters from Bautzen. Two of their Sisters are from the same monastery of origin in India as two of our Sisters. Indeed, there was great cause for rejoicing as the four of them were reunited once again. With grateful hearts for this time together, they shared many joyful moments. Within the past few years the Lord called each of them, in His own time and way, from their native land to “go and bear fruit, fruit that will last”.

It seemed appropriate that this “Poor Clare” tree should be presented to our little Community at this particular point in time. A little over two years ago, our Bishop Marc Stenger granted us permission to re-open our monastery here in Troyes, the “firstborn” of our Order, which was first grafted on to the Franciscan family tree in 1854. This tree is a sign of hope for us, a sign of new life for generations to come. May our Holy Father Francis, our Holy Mother Clare as well as the beloved founders of our Order of Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration, Father Bonaventure and Mother Marie de Ste. Claire, intercede for us. May our hidden lives of prayer be fruitful for our diocese and the whole world so that all may come to “taste and see the goodness of the Lord.” (Psalm 33).



SO DEVOTE OURSELVES
TO JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST,
TO THE CHURCH, TO THE
INTERESTS OF THE GLORY OF
GOD, TO THE EXTENSION OF
THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD,
THESE ARE OUR DUTIES.

MÈRE MARIE DE STE. CLAIRE



THE WHOLE LIFE OF A
RELIGIOUS IS CONTAINED
IN THE MOTTO OF SAINT
FRANCIS: MY GOD AND
MY ALL !

PÈRE BONAVENTURE

OUR SUMMER RESIDENTS

As you know, Franciscans have a great love for nature and God's creatures. So, when two families of sparrows chose their nesting place in our courtyard this summer, they immediately attracted our attention.

Soon after the construction of their "new home", which they built on a single but solid bolt supporting a beam in our cloister walkway, our "tenants" settled in. Days turned into weeks and finally we noticed that more than two voices could be heard chirping away! Naturally, Mama Bird became very busy, attending to the newborns. Several times throughout the day she went in search for food. A short distance from the nest, Papa Bird kept watch, while perched on a water pipe. The little ones chirped non-stop, and the noise level especially increased when Mama Bird returned home with their nourishment.

With time the nest became over crowded, as the little ones grew larger and stronger. They also became braver, peering out past their secure, little shelter to get a better look at the "real" world. Flying lessons soon followed. Their solo flights in our courtyard developed into all-day excursions and one day, they flew the coop all together, setting out for new and broader horizons.

800 YEARS OF GOD'S TROUBADOURS

It was while attending Mass at the Portiuncula that our Holy Father Francis embarked upon a life of evangelical simplicity. After hearing the Gospel of the sending out of the disciples, Francis responded wholeheartedly, "This is what I want! This is what I long for with all my heart!" Desiring to follow the Lord in such an extraordinary and apostolic way, he put the Gospel verse literally into practice. From that day forward, Francis did as the Lord commanded: he took nothing with him, neither gold nor silver, neither a second cloak nor a walking stick, nor a traveling bag. He dedicated himself to the service of Christ and His Church by ministering the word of repentance to sinners and to the poor and the lepers, deeds of charity.

The year 2009 recalls the 8th centenary of the origins of the

Franciscan order, the seal of approval put on this way of life for Francis and his followers. As Br. José Rodríguez Carballo, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor said, this year provides each member of the Franciscan family "an opportunity of grace to remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and to open up with confidence to the future" (cf. NMI, 1b). This year also opens the door for preparations of the 800th anniversary of the foundation of the Poor Clares in 2012.

As daughters of St. Francis and St. Clare, we are called to bear witness to Christ and His Gospel through our words and our actions. One of the most effective ways we can be rooted in Christ is to immerse ourselves in His Word. This Word speaks to us daily, we hear it, it shapes us as we allow it to penetrate every facet of our lives. This Word

actually transforms us, if we cooperate with the working of the Holy Spirit.

As a small but very effective way of celebrating 800 years of our origins, we received a set of missals for each Sister, thanks to a benefactor of the Community. This gift not only provides us with the essential means to read and meditate upon the Holy Scriptures, but allows us live more ecologically minded, by saving the money and paper that monthly subscriptions consume.

As this year of celebration comes to a close, we give thanks to God for all the graces and blessings that the whole world has received through the life of our Holy Father Francis and his companions. *Pax et Bonum!*



REACH THE GOSPEL
AT ALL TIMES AND
WHEN NECESSARY
USE WORDS.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI



GAZE UPON HIM,
CONSIDER HIM,
CONTEMPLATE HIM,
AS YOU DESIRE TO
IMITATE HIM.

ST. CLARE OF ASSISI



ON A JOYFUL NOTE...

The rain and wind did not seem to dampen the spirits of the three groups of students from St. Mary's school, as they journeyed by foot to our monastery one afternoon in June. Excitement filled the air as they anxiously awaited the presentation given by one of our Sisters. Prior to their visit, the children had been studying about trees, and one of their teachers, a Sister Oblate, felt it an appropriate time to ask our Sister Mary Antoinette to explain a little bit about her wooden instrument. After expanding their knowledge on a few of the many parts of a violin, Sister played Springtime by Vivaldi, leaving them wide-eyed and speechless. As is the case with every group of students who visit our monastery, our encounter was filled with joy and blessings for one and all! The above drawing by one of the students says it all!



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A FEW GLIMPSES OF SUMMER 2009

