



WINTER 2015

# SENTINELS OF THE DAWN

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

ISSUE 17

## RESPONDING TO THE CALL TO

### “WAKE UP THE WORLD”!



Pope Francis has called for a Year of Consecrated Life, a great time of grace and renewal spanning over a year: from the First Sunday of Advent, November 30, 2014 to the Feast of the Presentation on February 2, 2016. He is asking the Church’s religious sisters, brothers and priests to “wake up the world” with their testimony of faith, holiness and hope. In announcing this year the Pope desires to share a message, and the message is JOY!

This fourteen-month period of intense reflection and prayer will be an occasion for religious communities to look to the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion, as well as to embrace the future with hope. It will be a wonderful opportunity to highlight the gift consecrated life has been and is to the Church, the ministries consecrated women and men are doing today, and to extend an invitation to join them in this vocation.

One of the many challenges that Pope Francis places before

Religious is to ask themselves if and how they are open to being challenged by the Gospel; whether the Gospel is truly the “manual” for their daily living and the decisions they are called to make. The Gospel demands to be lived radically and sincerely. “Radical evangelical living is not only for religious: it is demanded of everyone. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way.” This is the priority that is needed right now: “to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lived on this earth... a religious must never abandon prophecy” (Pope Francis, November 29, 2013).

Prophets receive from God the ability to scrutinize the times in which they live and to interpret events: they are like sentinels who keep watch in the night and sense the coming of the dawn (cf. Is 21:11-12). Prophets know God and they know the men and women who are their brothers and sisters. They are able to discern and denounce the evil of sin and injustice. Because they are free, they

are beholden to no one but God, and they have no interest other than God. Prophets tend to be on the side of the poor and the powerless, for they know that God himself is on their side. Pointing them again toward their goal – the fullness of life, eternal life with God – the Church asks each religious in this Year of Consecrated Life: *How do you keep watch in the night and sense the coming of the dawn? How are you a prophet of God in our world, a witness to how Jesus lived on this earth? How do you wake up the world?*

Let us pray for all who have committed themselves to the vowed life that they be inspired by Jesus Christ to respond generously to God’s gift of their religious vocation. May they have the courage to remain close to the fire of the love of Jesus; that they will not grow weary of serving the Lord with zeal and that by the example of their lives the Church of Christ will grow from strength to strength; so that in the end they will truly WAKE UP THE WORLD!



## A Triduum of Jubilees— Celebrating God's faithfulness

We live in a time when many people find the whole idea of commitment difficult. People can be extremely generous when the occasion demands it, but they are fearful of making a total commitment. Whether it is the priesthood, the religious life, or marriage, each vocation involves a radical choice to commit oneself for life to what is truly a calling from God. Humanly speaking it can seem an impossibly difficult choice to make. *How can I know how I will feel in ten years from now? How can I commit myself to this person; to this Community, for the rest of my life?* But Christ invites us to do just that. The history of the Church is the story of countless men and women who have made a great act of faith in God, and have set out on the path of total commitment.

The fact that religious life and the priesthood, like marriage are true vocations, does not mean that life becomes easy or straightforward. It is easy to start out with romantic ideals, and to imagine the kind of life it will be. But we all know that there are always ups and downs, there will be the inevitable tedium of the daily routine. One of the great virtues we all need is that of perseverance. Thankfully God is always faithful to His promises.

God's faithfulness is indeed what we celebrate during the jubilee of a priest, religious, or married couple who has labored in the Lord's vineyard for a significant number of years. This past year, our Community had the joy of celebrating not just one or two jubilees but three! 2014 proved to be a "triduum of thanksgiving!" On June 29, we joined our Chaplain, Msgr. Bernard Savourat, in giving thanks to God for his 60 years of priesthood. We cannot express enough our deep



appreciation and gratitude to our Chaplain for his paternal presence in our lives, for his untiring dedication and fidelity to his ministry, as well as for his life of deep prayer and humble witness of what it means to be an "alter Christus". In honor of his Diamond Jubilee, two special Masses of Thanksgiving were celebrated, one in our Monastery Chapel and the other in the parish church of his native town.

On August 11th, Solemnity of our Holy Mother Saint Clare, a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated in our Chapel in honor of Sister Mary Rosalia's and Sister Mary Germaine's 25 years of religious profession. We were blessed to have our Bishop, the Most Reverend Marc Stenger, preside at the Mass. Several other priests from the diocese concelebrated with him, and the Chapel was filled with many religious, friends and benefactors. Afterwards, all were invited to our Parlor for a festive reception prepared by some dear friends. Thank



you to all who by their presence and prayers made this a special day for our Sisters and our Community.

As we give thanks to God for the beautiful witness of the fidelity of our Chaplain and our two Sisters, let us pray that each one of us may also be faithful to our particular vocation. Let us pray for our young people that they may not be frightened of making a commitment in love for life. The Church very much needs today the witness of faithful and loving married couples. The Church and the world need many more men to respond to God's call to the priesthood, as well as many more men and women to consecrate themselves to Him in the religious life. We cannot promise that any of these vocations will be easy. Nothing really worthwhile is! But we know that God is never outdone in His generosity, and that He gives us so much more than we could ever have imagined.

## Requiem in pacis - Sr. Mary of the Immaculate Heart

On December 26, Feast of Saint Stephen, our Community was saddened to learn that Sister Mary of the Immaculate Heart (Becard) passed from this life into Eternity. Sister entered our Monastery in Troyes as a Poor Clare Nun of Perpetual Adoration in April of 1950 and spent more than 40 years of her religious life here. When the Monastery was closed in 1997, due to a lack of vocations and diminishing health of the aged sisters, she and two other sisters transferred to a Monastery of Poor Clares in Nieul-sur-Mer. After some years her poor health required her going to a nursing home where she spent her remaining days until the Lord called her home to her eternal reward. The body of Sister Mary of the Immaculate Heart, accompanied by



Mother Mary of the Cross, Abbess of the Monastery in Nieul-sur-Mer, was

transferred to her native town, Mesnil St Loup, where her funeral Mass and burial took place on December 31st. We express our deepest sympathy to our Poor Clare Sisters in Nieul-sur-Mer, as well as to her family and friends during this time of sorrow and loss. We pray for the repose of the soul Sister Marie du Coeur Immaculee Marie. May she rejoice with our Lady and all the Saints in Heaven and intercede for the Church, granting it many vocations!

We would like to thank Mother Mary of the Cross for her kindness and generosity to our Sister and for her wonderful visit on the afternoon following Sister's burial. We spent several hours together in joyful sisterly sharing.



## A special visitor

As the Year of Consecrated Life opened, our Bishop Marc Stenger expressed his desire to meet with each Religious Community in the diocese of Troyes, to discuss their joys, concerns and hopes for this year and for the future. On January 12, our Community had the great joy of welcoming Bishop Stenger to our Monastery. Our afternoon was spent in a fruitful conversation, as together we reflected



on the many blessings we have received since our arrival in Troyes in 2007 to re-open our cradle Monastery. The spiritual guidance and pastoral care that we receive from our Bishop encourages us to move forward joyfully day after day, one step

at a time, along the path that God opens before us. May our hidden life of prayer and Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament bear fruit in our diocese, the Church, and the world.

## A TIME SET APART



### FOR LISTENING TO GOD

In mid-November Father Thaddée Matura, OFM, who has written many books and who travels all over the world giving conferences on Franciscan spirituality, graced our Community with four days of marvelous conferences. How blessed we were to be partakers of his spiritual wealth.



## STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION!



Thanks to your generous support and several grants from the *Fondation des Monastères*, what seemed like impossible dreams have gradually become realities in the wood, stone and tile of completed projects.

This past summer the second and final phase of our roofing project was completed. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all those who supported us, both financially and spiritually. With the

completion of two big projects during these past few years- that of the renovation of our Chapel and repairing our roof, a new project is "in the making". In one section of the Monastery we hope to have a library and Archives to safeguard the souvenirs of our Founders and all of the original documents which date from the very beginning of our Order. The floor above it will serve as future cells for Sisters. The following is a description written by our architect, Mr. Jacques Téquie, of completed work and future renovations:



*Let us begin with the reminder of what has already been accomplished: Work began by renovating the liturgical space- the Chapel, Vestry, and Sacristy, as well as the Choir and Forechoir. Next, the renovation of the sewing rooms has allowed the Sisters to work in more pleasant conditions and make use of their talents. To prevent the buildings from continuing to deteriorate, it was vital to redo the entire*

*roof. The fetching of buckets to catch the water has finally come to an end! Now, it's time to call to mind the words of Saint Francis de Sales: "We must take care*

*of the body so that the soul may find it pleasing to reside there..." And so this year we direct our attention to the renovation of the Sisters cells (a monastic term for bedroom, and not in reference to a prison!). At the same time, a library and an Archives-souvenir area will allow books, souvenirs and precious documents to be removed from boxes in storage: it is in this particular section of the Monastery (1st & 2nd floors) that we must now focus our attention and set out to work.*



We entrust these projects to your prayers, that we may find benefactors to help us cover the large cost of labor and supplies. We continue to place our trust in God and turn to good Saint Joseph, patron of workers, to provide for our needs. *Ite ad Joseph!*



## Spending time with our youth



On the afternoon of January 8th, our Community welcomed a group of young students from "Cité Aviat", a private school run by the Oblate Sisters of Saint Francis de Sales. Sr. Mary Rosalia gave a moving testimony on her response to God's call to enter religious life, while Sr. May Antoinette (pictured above) performed *Adoration* by Felix Borowski on the violin. A short period of Q&A's ended our time of sharing. Please join us in praying for our youth, who are in search of the true meaning of life.

## ACAAP: A Child and A Prayer

(UEDLP: In French - "Un Enfant dans la prière")



We would like to encourage you to support a an organization that began in February of 2000, under the inspiration of Mrs. Mona Le Cunff and Father Bruno Daniel.

The purpose of this work is it to pray for abused children and abusing adults of all denominations. Numerous souls, who are suffering in body, mind and spirit, count on our prayers to help overcome this evil. For more information, please consult the blog, which is available in English, Spanish, Italian and Polish.

<http://uedlp.canalblog.com>



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## FROST AND SNOW, BLESS THE LORD!



On the morning of January 24th, we received our first snowfall of the 2015 winter season here in Troyes. Within an hour or so, our courtyard was turned into a "winter wonderland"! Needless to say, it was

a beautiful sight to behold for all of us, but most especially for our dear Sister Mary Raphael, who had never seen snow before, coming from southern India. Sister could not resist the opportunity to go out and play in it for a short time and pose for a picture.

## Sharing the same charism

We were recently honored with a short visit from two Benedictine Adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the end of January. Tracing their roots back to the Tyburn Convent in London, England, their Community founded another Monastery in St Loup-sur- Aujon (about an hour from Troyes) in 2013. Like our Order, their life is centered around Adoration of the Blessed Sacrement. We enjoyed sharing our different experiences of learning the French language and adapting to another culture.

