

# SENTINELS OF THE DAWN

NEWSLETTER OF THE POOR CLARES OF PERPETUAL ADORATION  
MONASTERE NOTRE DAME DES ANGES  
TROYES, FRANCE

CHRISTMAS 2010

ISSUE 9

## A TIME FOR TEARING DOWN, A TIME FOR BUILDING

Suspended from one of the arches in our chapel is a replica of the San Damiano crucifix. Beyond the crucifix lies the choir for the Sisters. Unfortunately, it has remained unoccupied since our arrival three years ago. The scene is bleak: paint peeling from the walls, large cracks descending from the ceiling and empty choir stalls. At the sight of its condition, the words come to mind that Saint Francis heard one day from the crucifix while he was praying in the church of San Damiano: *Francis, go and rebuild my Church which you see is in ruins.* Without wasting any time, Francis set out to repair the chapel with his own hands, stone by stone. He pleaded with outstretched hands for help from others to join him in his mission.

*Rebuild my Church.* Following in the footsteps of Francis, we are about to embark on an exciting adventure.

With joyful hearts, filled with thanksgiving to God, we are happy to announce that the work for the renovation of our chapel is scheduled to begin in January.

Within the last few months the plans have been finalized with our architect. Several different companies have come to the monastery to evaluate the work on the chapel and place their bids. Yes, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel! For the past three years we have waited for this moment. How we have longed that our chapel may be transformed into a beautiful dwelling place for Him whom we adore in the Holy Eucharist!

The renovation work will include the chapel, sanctuary, and sacristy, as well as the choir where the Sisters chant the Divine Office and pray in adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament. We also hope to create a side chapel where the Sisters can participate in daily Mass.

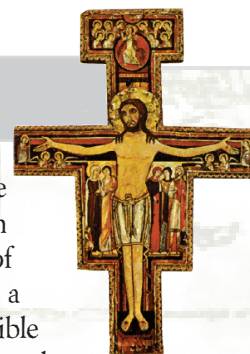
While waiting for the work to begin, we have our own share to do: preparing a "temporary" place where the Sisters will have daily Mass and adoration. In spite of the many inconveniences that go hand in hand with construction work,

we desire to continue our daily schedule within the monastery. Although the main chapel will be closed during the time of renovation, our parlor, converted into a temporary chapel, will be made accessible to those who wish to join us throughout the day for Mass or a time of prayer.

Within the last few months two beautiful statues of Saints Francis and Clare have arrived, along with a small stone altar and some pews. All were offered to us by our dear Poor Clare Sisters of Tassin (France). We are most grateful to them and to a dear benefactor who arranged their transport to our entrance door. There, some good friends loaned us their muscles to transfer the items from the truck to their temporary places of storage in the monastery. The holy angels were surely accompanying those who moved the statues and altar, as the weight was exceedingly heavy. The altar alone weighs more than a ton!

In confiding this project to your prayers, we wish to thank you for your support and dedication to our Community. We feel very blessed to be in this diocese, which has a rich history. The renovation of our chapel will be a memorable event in the history of our Order, one which we hope will give glory to God for generations to come.

Francis believed initially that the call was to a literal, physical rebuilding of a church...only later did he realize the call was to a spiritual rebuilding of the universal Church. He carried out this task in a most humble manner. In rebuilding the church of San Damiano stone by stone, Saint Francis showed through his actions the symbol of his spiritual and eternal vocation. In restoring our little chapel, we want to reflect the simplicity of our Franciscan spirituality. We pray that our life of prayer and adoration will bear much fruit for the Church and the world.







## A TIME FOR ROLLING UP ONE'S SLEEVES



Have you lost something very precious to you? A ring, a book, a photograph...it could be anything. Wondrous stories of the return of precious items have inspired and consoled countless people who have appealed to St. Anthony for help. Although at first glance, praying for the return of some material item may seem frivolous, the fact is that it is part of our human nature to be attached to particular things that have special meaning for us.

Even St. Anthony was attached to a certain object - a book of psalms. When a novice monk left the monastery taking St. Anthony's precious book of psalms with him, St. Anthony was very unhappy. He prayed that the book would be returned. Before long, the wayward monk was stricken in his conscience and brought the book back to St. Anthony. Thus, St. Anthony became known as the patron saint of lost articles.

As members of the Franciscan family, St. Anthony holds a special place in our hearts. A little Oratory, located in our exterior courtyard, was dedicated to his honor in 1895. Unfortunately, when we arrived in 2007 the Oratory was empty and in need of repair.

This past August some dear benefactors of the Community offered

us a beautiful statue of Saint Anthony for the Oratory. Soon after a group of friends set to work renewing the Oratory. Walls were sanded, re-plastered and given a fresh coat of paint. New tiles were also laid down. Within less than two weeks our eyes beheld a complete transformation of the oratory! We are grateful to all those who gave their time, talents and hard work towards this little project. St. Anthony has once again "found" his home among us.

One Sunday after Mass our chaplain, Msgr. Savourat, blessed the Oratory and statue. Many people came to join us for the celebration. This little place of prayer now draws many of the faithful to implore the powerful intercession of Saint Anthony for their families, their jobs, their special needs- and of course for lost objects!



**SAINT ANTHONY,**

**PRAY FOR US!**







Leaving behind father, mother and four brothers and a career as a teacher, Mary Arokiam Jaganathan entered the Order of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration in Vellore, India in 1982. One year later she was clothed in the holy habit and was given the religious name Sister Margaret Mary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. After her two years in the novitiate, she pronounced her vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and papal enclosure on December 7, 1985. She celebrated her solemn profession six years later.

Responding to the appeal from our monastery in Cleveland, Ohio, Sister Margaret Mary felt called to assist them in their need for Sisters. Five years later, Sister returned to her beloved country and thought that her "missionary" work was finished. God had other plans for her. A few years later, she found herself in France, the native country of her

A TIME FOR GIVING THANKS...



patron saint. Sister spent three years with our Sisters in Castelnaudary, before coming with six other Sisters to help re-open our cradle monastery in Troyes in 2007.

In celebrating the silver jubilee of our dear Sister Margaret Mary on December 8th, we join her in thanking God for all the graces and blessings of these past 25 years of religious life. For the joys and sorrows, the trials and accomplishments, we sing a song of praise – MAGNIFICAT – to God, in union with our Lady. May her life as an adorer of the Most Blessed Sacrament continue to bear fruit for our Community, our Order, our diocese, the entire Church and the world. May other young women be inspired to answer the same call, to follow Christ wholeheartedly, in embracing an evangelical life in the spirit of Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi. We wish you many more years of service in God's vineyard, dear Sister Margaret Mary!



*O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His steadfast love endures forever! (Ps. 118)*



Yes, my heart is filled with joy and gratitude for you, my Lord. You are my God and my all, and your love is eternal. You are closer to me than I to myself. Without you I would be lost. Your presence surrounds me all the time. You know all my needs. You are a Father and you carry me in your hands. Thank you, Lord. You have called me and this fills me with great joy. Your grace helps me each day of my life. You love me and you forgive me. Your mercy surrounds me in all my weakness. I find joy in you alone, Lord. You are my only love. In the joy of my heart I cry to you: *Lord, you are my portion and cup; Lord, it is you, yourself, who are my lot.*

During this Jubilee year, I would like to thank God for all the graces that I have received through my family, my spiritual family, my friends and benefactors. You are there to surround me with your prayers, with your help, and with your affection. Each one of you is so precious to me. I hold each of you in my heart before Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. May the Lord Himself be your reward, your joy and happiness always. I invite you to join me in thanksgiving, and with our heavenly Mother to sing the Magnificat to our Lord.

- Sister Margaret Mary, PCPA

*Exactly what do you do all day? Why do you not marry or have children? Why do you not leave the monastery?* Some light was shed on these and many other questions the evening of November 27th. Thanks to a first-time event in our diocese, *Nuit des Monastères* (Night of Monasteries), many people, young and old alike, had an opportunity to visit different religious communities. From 6pm to midnight, the doors of monasteries and convents were open to receive groups of people who desired to discover the different charisms of each Order, to meet the religious of the diocese, and also have the opportunity to pray with them.

Our Community was asked to welcome a small group of youth from 9-11pm. Prior to their arrival at our monastery, they had spent time with the Sisters of the Most Holy Savior in Clairvaux. These Sisters welcome families who come to visit their loved ones in prison. This prison was originally one of the many monasteries that Saint Bernard of Clairvaux founded.

We "uncovered" our hidden life with a slideshow, followed by a talk on the Eucharist and our lives as adorers. Another Sister shared her personal testimony of how she was called to the religious life. An animated time of adoration followed in

the chapel. In the beginning, each one placed a lit candle on a tray before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. This offering symbolized their life. Songs, prayers, meditations on Gospel passages were intermingled with moments of silence. The hour closed with them joining the Sisters in singing Compline, the prayer of the Church which closes the day, along with benediction by our chaplain, Mgr Savourat.

Needless to say, it was an evening full of grace and blessing for all. We trust that the seeds planted in their hearts during their visit will produce fruit a hundredfold for the Church in our diocese in the years to come.





## A TIME FOR GROWING: BEGINNING A NEW CHAPTER



*When a religious community re-elects those in charge, it's always a moment of grace, a sign that they are filled with hope for the future of their community; that they placed their confidence in the Lord, the community and those who will lead it. When the Community elects those in charge for the first time, it's a particular time of rejoicing, because it is like a child they have watched being born, which they have accompanied in its first steps and has grown and has now found its place in the world. We have a double reason to rejoice for you and with you. The time of your community's foundation has passed and now you are called to continue along the path. But continuing along the path also means being responsible for the new foundation that the Lord wants to do each day in you and with you. - Bishop Marc Stenger, Mass of the Holy Spirit, July 13th, 2010*

July 13th marked the beginning of a new chapter for our Community. Our Bishop Marc Stenger presided at our first Chapter of Elections, assisted by Sister Louise Côté, Delegate for Religious Life. Under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Lord revealed His desire for the future of our Community. Mother Mary Emmanuel was elected Abbess, Sister Margaret Mary, Vicar and Sister Faustina Marie, Councilor.

Please join us in thanking God for His continual blessings upon our Community as we strive to do His Holy Will with each passing day.



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## A TIME FOR BEING BORN: AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH...

In the Gospel of Saint John it is written, For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son... God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Christmas is about love. Every year at this time we celebrate this incredible act of love. God became a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ. What seems unbelievable is indeed true – The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Why would God do such a thing? Love is the only answer, for He is Love itself.

May this Christmas season be filled with the true knowledge of how much we are loved. May the coming of Christ into this world fill our hearts with joy, a joy that is shared with others through our words and deeds. With Mary and Joseph, with the shepherds and wise men, let us adore Him, the greatest of all gifts, come down to us from our Father above.



*The Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration in Troyes wish you and your loved ones  
a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with many blessings.*