



*Poor Clares of Montana*  
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May the Lord always be with you, and may you always be with Him.  
—Blessing of St. Clare



## Repent, Believe, Rejoice!

Lent moves slowly. When the ashes are crossed on our foreheads, we seem to see a long, dry road ahead of us. No one seeks out deprivation for the joy or fun of it. And that's what Lent is, for most of us: what can I give up for six long weeks? But at the halfway mark, the days seem to go by more quickly. Is it perhaps a matter of remembering that God is longing for us to "come home" to him, to recognize that the smallest prayer, like a tiny seedling, can grow into a strong and loving relationship with the One who loves us beyond our imagining?



Then what was a penance takes on new meaning, and Lent, which means "springtime" becomes a time in which we can truly participate. The Church invites us to walk with Jesus in his last earthly gift, being convicted as a criminal and dying a most painful death on an infamous Roman cross.

As we know, that was – and is – not the end of the story. All who walk with Jesus, each on our own way of the cross, can find Jesus reaching into our lives with Resurrection joy and love. He is

## Open House: Hello, Welcome, Come Back Soon!

The sun shone brightly, and the outside temperature was unseasonably springlike. After weeks of planning and preparation, we opened most of our home to anyone who wanted to see what we and our monastery are about.

And they came, a steady flow of people, both old friends and many whom we had not yet met.

Thanks to the help of our Advisory Board members and Secular Franciscans, everything went smoothly. Our well-prepared guides were able to answer a



Visitors enjoying their first look at our monastery.

million questions (well, almost!) and point out details that our guests might have missed.

Most people found places or elements that they particularly liked: the many windows overlooking God's beauty in nature, the peaceful, inviting chapel, the accommodations for retreatants, the wel-

coming entrance.

May all who came, and all who *didn't* come, know that you are welcome to visit whenever you can. We look forward to seeing you!



Sister Maryalice sharing rosary stories with a guest in our retreat area.



Sister Catherine answering visitors' questions in our chapel.

## Christian Meditation & Upcoming Workshop

Two groups of Christian Meditators continue to meet on Wednesdays (4:00 and 7:00 pm). Both groups have recently welcomed new members. Feel free to join us at either time on Wednesdays. We meet for approximately an hour with a short recorded talk by John Main, OSB followed by a 20 minute period of silent meditation.

Haven't been introduced to Christian Meditation? We will host a workshop on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> entitled, Introduction to Christian Meditation from 10:00 to 4:00. Registration fee is \$10.00. Sign in will begin at 9:30 with talks beginning at 10:00. Bring a bag lunch and we will provide beverages. All are welcome, bring a friend!

## Scripture Study

We are currently studying The Prophets: Messengers of God's Mercy by Thomas Smith & Sarah Christmyer from Ascension Press. Three women from local parishes are joining Sisters Catherine, Maryalice and Judith Ann on Tuesday afternoons.



This has been an enriching study and sheds much light on the Scripture readings we encounter at Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours. One of the tools given that is so helpful is the Bible Timeline. We highly recommend this bible study and the others from Ascension Press!

## Our Vow of Poverty: What Does It Mean?

Poverty is one of the vows professed by those who enter religious orders in the Catholic Church. It is an important one for Poor Clares, followers of St. Francis and St. Clare, who embrace poverty as a way of life. Sometimes people will say, "You are living in a beautiful monastery. How can you say you live in poverty?" So what is this vow all about?

The prophets in the old testament denounced poverty as something needing to be changed. Those who had more were asked to reach out to the poor, to care for them in their need. Yet we are called to be poor by the beatitude: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."

When Jesus began his mission of teaching and preaching, he and his apostles were supported by donations from those who believed in him and in his message. They were not rich, nor were they poor. Jesus reached out to the poor and tried to help them, just as we do today out of our love and concern for those in need.

The fact is, religious are not called to

destitution, but are called to live simply and humbly. When a sister makes a vow of poverty, she renounces the right to personal ownership of property. She is dependent on the community that she enters to provide for her basic needs. The monastery where we reside belongs to the community and has been provided for us through the generosity of our benefactors. We decided as a community, with the help of an architect, what would be needed to serve the people among whom we live as well as our own needs. A good part of our building is for the use of the people we serve, and the enclosed part where we live is provided for the present community and those who will come to join us in the future.

We are called in our Constitutions to live simply, to renounce our own will through obedience and in chastity. Our main work is prayer for the people of the diocese and for all people. Therefore we follow a strict order of prayer, both vocal and contemplative. We do not leave the monastery unless it is necessary and with permission. All this is part of our poverty and all of it is part of the joy of following in the footsteps of Francis, Clare and Jesus.

## Men's Retreat

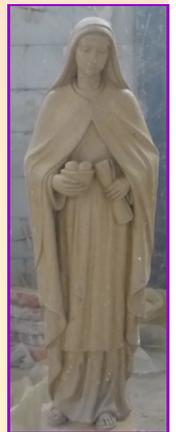
This past January gave us a unique opportunity to offer a three day retreat to a small group of men from the Roundup area. The men, who have been praying together regularly, made the request. They wanted to have a concentrated time to deepen their relationship with God. The theme was: God's Abundant Love—coming to us who have been chosen by God, and our responsibility to carry it to others whom we meet along the journey. When these men left for home, we knew that we had been enriched, just as they were.



## Update on Statue of St. Clare



Last year we shared our dream of having an outdoor statue of Saint Clare. Because donations were given specifically for this statue, she is in process. We have seen the clay form, which is the model for the marble statue. She is beautiful! Once she is placed in front of our chapel building, the entrance to the whole monastery, she will remind all who enter, for many years to come, that this is a place of prayer and peace.



## Spinners at Work—and Play

The middle of February brought a new group to use our gathering space and share their skills with us. These talented people are accomplished in the fiber arts, and chose to come to our monastery for their most recent “spin-in”. Each one brought her own spinning wheel, and we were invited to learn from them the joy of spinning. We learned some of the terms used in spinning: batts and bobbins, carding and drafting, and tried our hand at what looks so easy. Are any of us up to the challenge? We shall see!



## Our Deepest Thanks!

As did Jesus and Saints Francis and Clare, Poor Clares live a life based on prayer. Like them, we also depend on the generosity of those who believe in the goodness of God and in the value of a life dedicated to prayer. We have no outside source of support, so we depend, day by day, on your generosity. Every gift is received with a prayer of

thanks, and we have often been deeply touched by a donation making it possible to pay a substantial bill. (It happens that we are facing such a situation at present, and we are confident that our needs will be met with the help of our dear friends.) **May God bless and reward each one of you, and fill your life with peace and his great love!**