

WINTER  
NEWSLETTER



November-  
December 2017



## A Time of Joy and Sharing



Benefactors and friends of the Poor Clares,

Greetings to each of you as we approach this most joyous season. In this time from Thanksgiving through Christmas, we can look back on the many blessings that are ours, and be thankful for the Lord's constant presence with us.

We are blessed that we know so much abundance, with few material needs. When posed with the age-old question "What do you want for Christmas?" we've come to the conclusion that there is only one thing that all of us still need, and that is prayer.

The Poor Clare sisters in Great Falls have been praying for us, our families, our community, our Church and our world for the past eighteen years. Their prayerful presence among us is both calming and lifegiving. The prayers which they so unselfishly and endlessly offer have positively affected and touched our lives profoundly.

These sisters have been in their present monastery for twelve years. It is a beautiful facility with a lovely chapel, meeting rooms, and accommodations for overnight guests. It is currently home to six sisters, who have been excellent stewards of this property, generously sharing it with all who wish to come and experience its peace and beauty. All of this has been made possible by the generosity of many benefactors through the years. The finances of the property are 100% independent of the diocese, and all contributions go to support the mission of the sisters.

They are extremely grateful for any and all donations received so they can continue serving our community and doing the Lord's work. Financial challenges are ever present as costs increase, buildings and grounds mature, and opportunities to better serve become available.

We urge you to please reflect during this giving time of year upon all the blessings that are yours. God's gifts are not meant to be kept or hoarded, but rather to be joyfully shared. Please consider sharing your blessings by making a donation to help the sisters in their mission. Last year a friend of ours made a donation to the Poor Clares in our name as a Christmas present to us. It was the best present under our tree!

In closing, we would like to invite you to attend a Mass at the monastery if you haven't already done so. Consider bringing a friend, get to know the sisters, see what a blessing they are, and feel the power of their prayers.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas Season,

David and Terry Stukeley, Poor Clares of Montana Advisory Board members

## A Few Words from Our Friends...



When my husband, Dennis, became the contractor for the Poor Clare sisters' new monastery, he was deeply honored. But he soon learned that it would become more than just a working relationship. Dennis came to see the sisters as truly his sisters (homemade cookies for him and his partner, Don, didn't hurt), and he put all his energy and skill into making their monastery a beautiful and welcoming place for prayer. There were challenges, to be sure, such as a certain curved staircase, but he spent many hours planning and cutting so that it would be just right for his sisters. The work was something he looked forward to each day, and it gave him much satisfaction.

Dennis has passed on now, and I go to visit the monastery frequently. He is there, where his work gave him so much joy, and I can experience the tranquility of that prayerful place. His sisters have become my sisters, answering many questions, praying for me, and giving me great inner calm.

—Sue O'Leary



I am exceedingly grateful for the Poor Clares' monastery. It is an island of quiet, order and prayer in my world, a place where my senses can rest, realign and connect with the Creator. When I first came to know the monastery, I was attracted to the aesthetic and design of the place. The buildings show a keen sense of the Divine celebrated in architecture, stonework, handiwork. Every detail has been well considered with a desire to praise God's natural world in earthy media like pottery and wood, as well as the skills of master workers. Sacred spaces complement the sacramental nature of daily prayers in the Chapel. Over time, the silence, order and unharried attention to people continued to draw me there. Now one of my favorite aspects of the monastery is the joy of the sisters. Overflowing and abundant joy is a powerful expression of God's love for each of us, and our essential connection to all humanity. The Poor Clare Monastery passes on this Divine gift of joy in every detail, tangible or not.

—Gretchen Wilson



We have good news! It is now our privilege to have Mass celebrated in our chapel every weekday, and most Sundays. Our present schedule:

1st, 3rd and 5th Sunday of the month ~~ 9:00 a.m.

Monday through Thursday ~~ 7:00 a.m.

Friday ~~ 11:30 a.m.

Saturday ~~ 8:00 a.m.

Come and join us!



With great reluctance, we find that we must increase the amount of the donation for the use of our retreat accommodations. As of January 1, 2018, we must ask \$75.00 per day. Those who have taken advantage of this opportunity for a place of quiet and peace for prayer, writing, or just a break from their stressful everyday lives highly recommend it!



# Celebrating St. Francis and New Franciscans

October 4 is always a festive day for followers of St. Francis of Assisi. All over the world, there are solemn Masses, blessings of animals, processions and plays and parties, all celebrating this “little poor man” from a small town on a mountainside in Italy. Although he lived 800 years ago, he is known and loved today more than just about any other saint.

Our celebration this year held a special dimension. During our feastday Mass, three candidates made their promises to live as Franciscans for the rest of their lives, and received the tau cross to wear as a sign of their consecration. And the joy of that evening can be seen in their faces ever since. Have you ever thought about taking that next step in loving and serving the Lord?



Rita McKinney, fraternity formation director, presents tau crosses to the newly professed Secular Franciscans: Dick Bennett, Kay Walters and Barbara Schlecht.

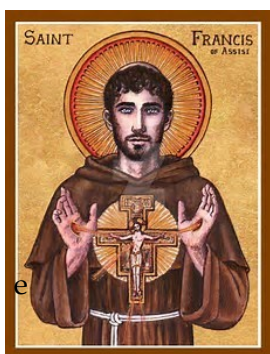


## Annual Retreat for Secular Franciscans

There are seven fraternities of Secular Franciscans in Montana. Because of the great distances between them, coming together to celebrate their shared charism is a challenge. Once every year, however, a strong effort is made to gather for a retreat. Lady Jacoba Fraternity in Havre hosted this year’s retreat, with the Beatitudes as their theme. Elaine Campbell and Sister Judith Ann inspired those attending by sharing their insights on the Beatitudes and Franciscan living, and the theme was carried out in visuals throughout the weekend.

These annual retreats strengthen the bonds among members of the seven fraternities in Montana, and encourage them in their journey of growing in the Lord, “going from Gospel to life, and life to Gospel,” as St. Francis did. Sharing that journey with others in their own fraternity and other fraternities around the state gives even greater joy and enthusiasm to their living out of their Franciscan life.

## Friar Guests for Lunch



Our Franciscan Capuchin friars who minister mainly to the Native American people in our diocese are at some distance from us, so we seldom have the privilege of visiting with them. So it was a special treat for us to have Fathers Mark Joseph Costello, Randolph Graczyk and Lawrence Webber join us for lunch at our monastery. They were in Great Falls attending a priests’ meeting, and took advantage of the opportunity to visit with us. We had a much-cherished visit with them for a couple of hours, and exchanged stories about our ministries. How grateful we are for their presence in our diocese!

## Thanks, and Thanks Again!

As we move into the last several weeks of the year, we are keenly aware of how everything we have and use each day is a gift of caring and gratitude and love from our benefactors, without whom we would not be able to live our life of prayer here in Montana. We are so very grateful to each one of you, whether you sent a donation, or expressed your appreciation that we are here, or came to pray with us, or asked us to share your concerns about problems that you face. You have allowed us to become a part of your life, and we are deeply grateful. Please know that we pray for you each day, often by name, and we ask our good and loving God to fill your hearts and lives with the joy and the peace of knowing that he cares for you beyond your imagining.

# A Nun's Life Ministry ~ on the Road

In early September, two Religious Sisters arrived at our airport with three heavy pieces of luggage, which were actually recording equipment. They host an online program called A Nun's Life Ministry, for the purpose of informing people about religious life and vocation. Sisters Julie and Maxine have been visiting religious motherhouses throughout the country, and chose to come to us—one of the first



Sisters Maxine, Jane and Catherine just finishing up their podcast interview for A Nun's Life Ministry.


monasteries they have visited—to do an online interview with us. While Sister Judith Ann responded to questions in the chat room, Sister Maxine asked questions of Sister Catherine and Sister Jane about our experience of founding a monastery here in Montana, where no other monastery existed. We spoke of the role that the wide-open space around us plays in our spirituality and prayer, and how we adapted to the culture of the West, having left monasteries on the East Coast. We invite you to hear more of the interview by going to: [A Nun's Life Ministry.org](http://A Nun's Life Ministry.org). We can be found under Motherhouse Road Trips.

## Nigerian Sisters Visit

The foundress of the Missionary Sisters of Divine Providence, Mother Augustina Blessing Amadi and her companion, Sister Anthonia Nwoga, stayed at our monastery for a few days in September on a visit from Nigeria. Bishop Michael Warfel had invited them with the intention of discussing the possibility of having some of their sisters come and work in our diocese.

This community was founded in 2000, and has grown rapidly in Nigeria and abroad. Their work is in education, youth ministry, social work and home health care. With declining numbers of women religious in the diocese of Great Falls-Billings, it has become necessary to look beyond our borders to provide what is needed in our parishes and schools.

Our Church is becoming international in ways we did not expect many years ago! Our brothers and sisters from other countries are most welcome as we journey together on our way to the Father.

<p>Return to: MONASTERY OF ST. CLARE 3020 18TH AVE. S GREAT FALLS, MT 59405-5167</p>	<p>Sisters, please pray for</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>NAME _____</p> <p>STREET _____</p> <p>CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____</p> <p>E-mail _____</p> <div style="text-align: right;"></div>
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