

From This Holy Mountain

A Publication of the Dominican Nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery - Linden, Virginia - Summer 2020 Issue

*"O send forth Your light and Your truth;
they will guide me on.
They will bring me to Your holy mountain,
to the place where You dwell."
(Psalm 43:3)*

FEATURED INSIDE:

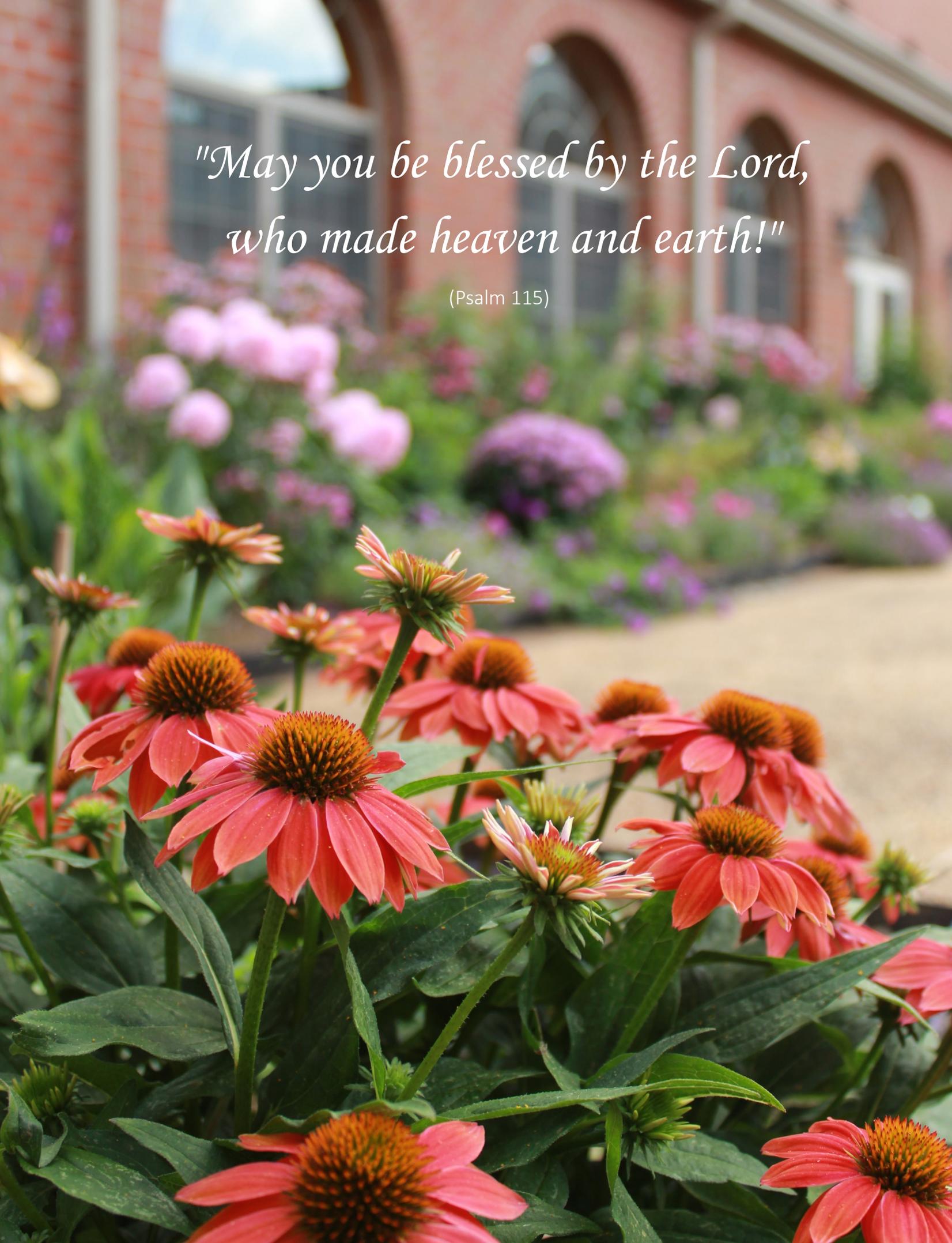
*From the Monastery:
Psalms for Benefactors*

*A Blessed Life:
Meditating Day and Night*

*The Saints and the Psalms:
St. Catherine of Siena*

*Praying the Psalms:
"A School of Hope"*





*"May you be blessed by the Lord,
who made heaven and earth!"*

(Psalm 115)



Dear Friends,

We are enjoying a quiet summer here on Blue Mountain. As I write, I hear through the open window the insistent call of the cardinal and the distant hum of the mower. Though it is nearing time for Vespers, the sun is still shining brightly, casting vast shadows through the scattered clouds onto the valley below.

Summer's quiet beauty on Blue Mountain stands in sharp contrast to the suffering and unrest our world is currently experiencing. Please be assured we are united with you in prayer during this challenging time. Trusting that the Good Shepherd never deserts His flock, we pray with the Psalmist, "Though I walk through the dark valley, I fear no evil; for You are at my side."

God desires that we be men and women of prayer, in good times and in bad. Thus, this issue of *From This*

Holy Mountain focuses on the most treasured prayer book of the Church: the Psalms. The Psalms are the very heart of monastic prayer. Chanted seven times a day in the liturgy and reflected upon in the heart throughout the day, the Psalms are meant to lead the nun into the continual remembrance of God.

Know that in this time of anxiety and uncertainty for so many, St. Dominic's Monastery's rhythm of prayer continues by day and by night, proclaiming God's goodness and fidelity: "Indeed, how good is the Lord, eternal His merciful love. He is faithful from age to age."

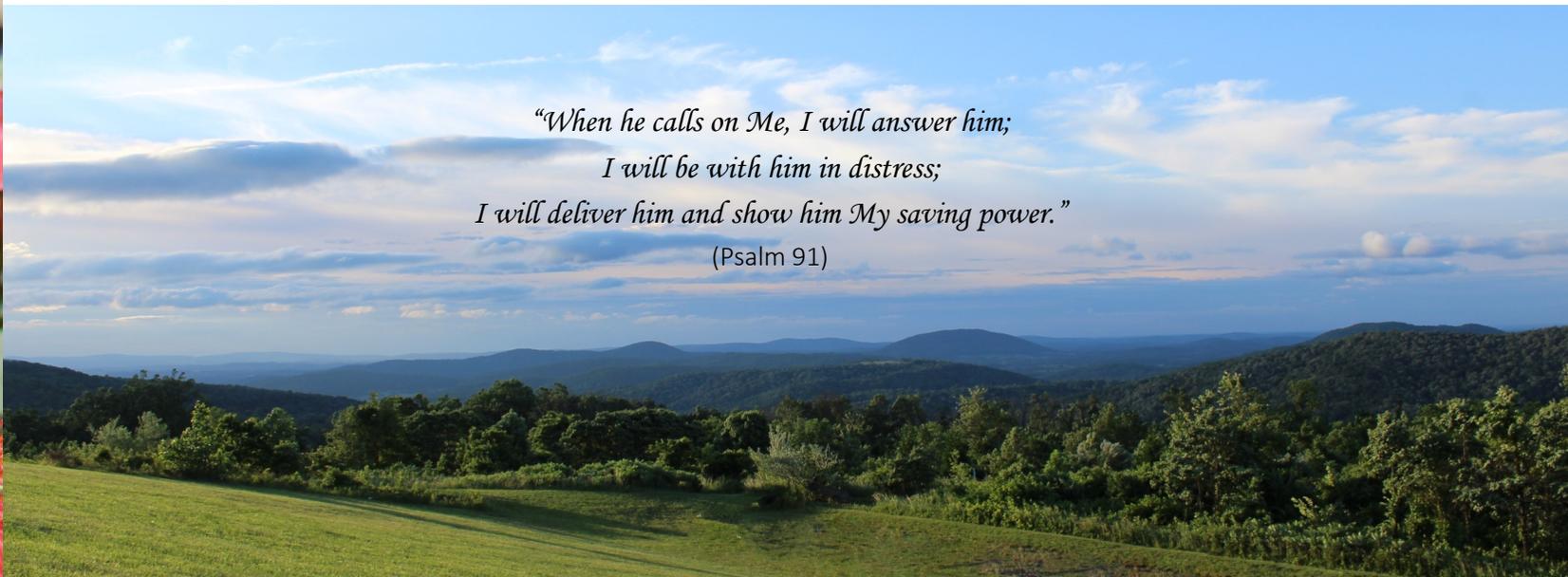
With our gratitude and constant prayer,

Sr. Mary Fidelis, OP

Prioress



*"When he calls on Me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in distress;
I will deliver him and show him My saving power."
(Psalm 91)*





REMEMBERING YOU

in time and in eternity

As a community we remember our living and deceased benefactors daily in prayer at Mass and the Divine Office.

In addition, during our Chapter Meetings, we pray Psalm 20 for all of you who so generously support our way of life. Three times a day, our deceased benefactors are remembered as we pray Psalm 130.

IN TIME - Psalm 20

May the LORD answer you in time of trial; may the name of Jacob's God protect you. May He send you help from the holy place, and give you support from Zion.

May He remember all your offerings, and receive your sacrifice with favor. May He give you your heart's desire, and fulfill every one of your plans.

IN ETERNITY - Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to You, O LORD! Lord, hear my voice!

If You, O LORD, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But with You is found forgiveness that You may be revered.

My soul hopes in the LORD, for with the LORD there is mercy, in Him is plentiful redemption.

Friends Spotlight:

A Blessed Life: Meditating Day and Night

By Dr. John A. Cuddeback



"...[the nuns] exemplify a pattern of holiness to which we all can seek to conform ourselves."

One of St. Thomas Aquinas' lesser known works is his commentary on the Psalms. In treating of the first Psalm St. Thomas finds therein a depiction of the truly happy life. He writes:

The happiness of man is in God; "blessed the people whose God is the Lord" (Ps 143). There is therefore a straight path toward happiness that consists primarily in this, that we subject ourselves to God; and this we do in two ways. First through the will, obeying His commands; and thus the Psalmist says: "but in the law of the Lord." ... Second, through the intellect, continually meditating. And thus the Psalmist says: "upon His law he meditates day and night," that is, continually, either at set hours of day and night, or in good times and in bad.

St. Thomas writes about that which he knows. As a Dominican friar he lived a life of meditating day and night. Dominican nuns do likewise. And in this they

exemplify a pattern of holiness to which we all can seek to conform ourselves.

St. Thomas suggests that 'continual meditation' might be taken as meaning regular, set daily times of meditation, or also during good times and bad.

Our nuns are committed to doing just that: meditating at regular, daily times, in good times and in bad. We rely on them not only for their intercession for us, but also for the example they set and the reminder they give us. Our vocation too calls for regular meditation, according to our state in life. Let us be grateful to our nuns for their fidelity. And let us strive to follow their lead, in good times, and in bad.

John A. Cuddeback, PhD, is professor of Philosophy at Christendom College, where he has taught for twenty years. His blogging at Life-Craft.org is known for applying an ancient wisdom to life today.

The Saints and the Psalms

An Excerpt from the Life of St. Catherine of Siena

"Catherine told me that when she decided to learn to read, so that she could say the divine praises and the canonical hours, a friend of hers wrote the alphabet out and tried to teach it to her; but after spending many fruitless weeks over it, she decided not to waste any more time and turned to heavenly grace instead.

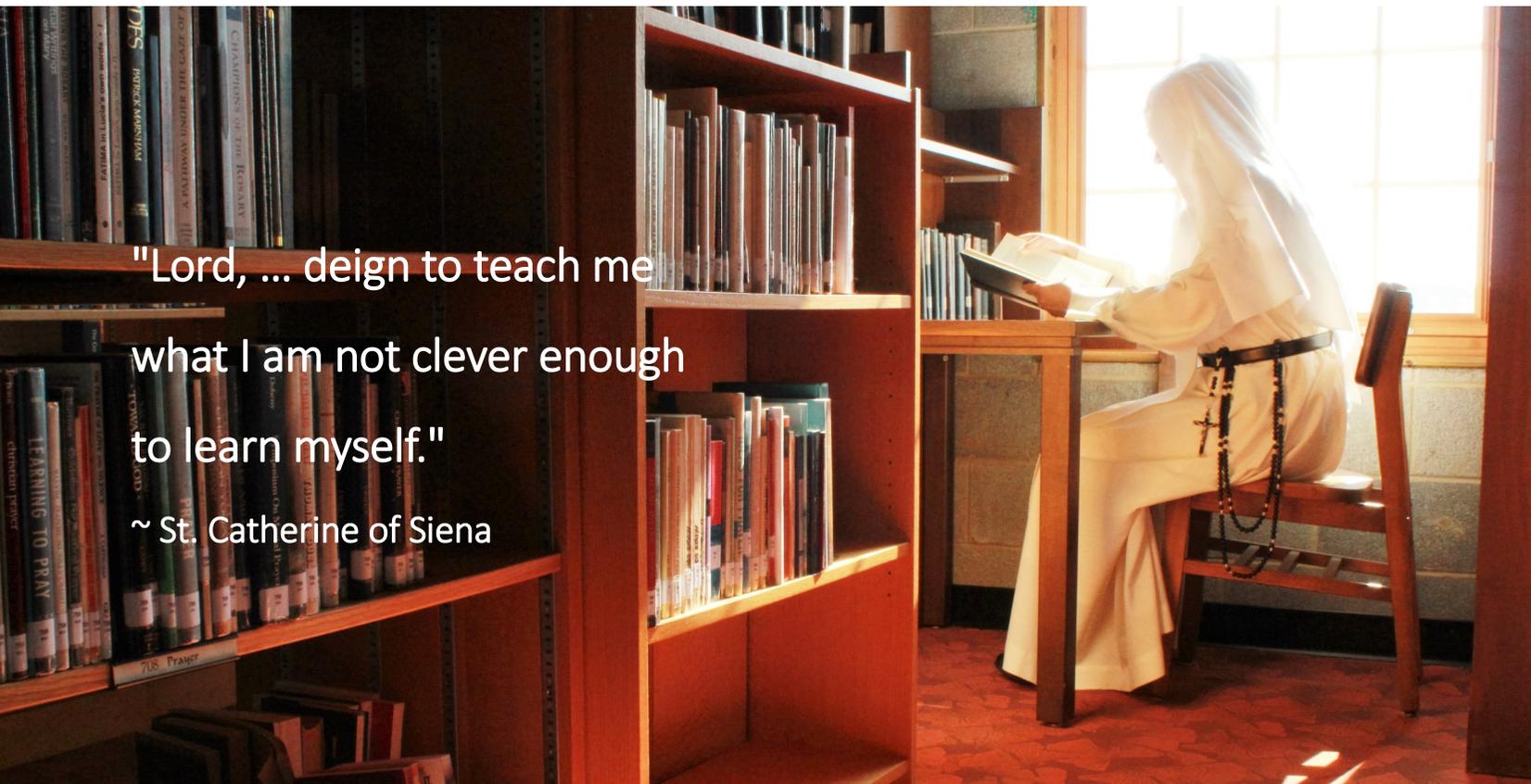
One morning she knelt down and prayed to the Lord thus: "Lord," she said, "if You want me to learn to read so that I can say the Psalms and sing Your praises in the canonical hours, deign to teach me what I am not clever enough to learn myself. If not, Thy will be done. I shall be quite content to remain in my ignorance and shall be able to spend more time in meditating on You in other ways.

Then a marvel happened—clear proof of God's power—for during this prayer she was divinely instructed so that when she got up she knew how to read any kind of writing quite easily and fluently, like the best reader in the world. When I realized it, I was quite flabbergasted, especially when I discovered that though she could read so fast, she could hardly spell the words. I believe that Our Lord meant this to be a sign of the miracle that had taken place.

From then on, Catherine began to hunt for books of the Divine Office to read the Psalms and anthems and the other things fixed to the canonical hours."

Excerpt from:

The Life of Catherine of Siena by Bl. Raymond of Capua



"Lord, ... deign to teach me
what I am not clever enough
to learn myself."

~ St. Catherine of Siena

Contemplata Aliis Tradere

By Fr. Michael O'Connor, O.P.

*F*aith is the solid rock foundation upon which the life and vocation of a contemplative nun is built. Only a radical faith in God—in His hidden presence, in His continual action, in His wonderful providence, in His goodness and love—could sustain the weight of such a radical calling. While faith is the foundation of this vocation, the daily living of the contemplative life is animated in a singular way by the exercise of yet another virtue: hope. Whereas faith believes in God and assents to all that He has revealed as true, hope reaches further still by clinging to God and trusting that He will be faithful to His word—that He will fulfill His promises in *my life*. With hope, one's relation to God becomes uniquely personal. Not only is God the one God, living and true, He is also *my God*: my Savior, my Redeemer, my Refuge, my Stronghold.

The vocation of a contemplative nun, grounded in radical faith, is animated by the daily living of hope—a *hope* that is exercised and expressed, most especially, in praying the Psalms. Nothing so marks and orders the nun's life than the praying of the Psalms. Day and night are structured around this most ancient prayer of the Church. What the nun discovers in making the words of the psalmist her own is that these prayers are defined by hope. The Book of Psalms contains more words and



expressions of hope than any other book of the Bible, such that this daily rhythm of prayer becomes a true "school of hope" for the nun. It teaches and forms her to entrust herself to God, to wait patiently for God, to watch for God, to seek refuge in God, to rely upon God, to live in expectation of God—in a word: to hope in God, and in God alone.

In "breathing the air" of the Psalms, day after day, season after season, year after year, the nun's soul becomes more and more acclimated to living in the rarified air of supernatural hope: trusting firmly and unwaveringly that God will be faithful to His word—He will indeed fulfill His promises *in my life*.



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*"Taste and see
that
THE LORD IS GOOD!"*
(Psalm 34)

Please consider joining our
*St. Catherine
de Ricci Guild*
to help support the nuns
on a monthly basis.



Benefits of membership:

- A perpetual membership in the Monastery's Eucharistic Adoration Association, which includes a weekly Mass for your intentions and a daily remembrance in the prayers and good works of the nuns
- An invitation to join the nuns for Vespers on a Sunday evening in the fall, an opportunity to meet and greet the nuns, followed by a wine and cheese reception at a nearby winery.

Visit our website for more details on how to register to make a monthly donation through Faith Direct: www.lindenopnuns.org.

Mass Times:
We regret that our monastery chapel is temporarily closed to our lay faithful.

St. Dominic's Monastery
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**For Prayer Intentions
and Vocation Inquiries:**
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