



From this Holy Mountain

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

FEATURED INSIDE:

*Solemn Profession Homily:
The Mystery of Grace & Vocation*

*Friend's Spotlight:
Responding to God's Invitation*

*St. Catherine de Ricci's
Dominican Lenten Devotion*

*Contemplata Aliis Tradere:
All Time Belongs to Him*

*"Faithful Cross beyond all others,
Noble tree of priceless worth,
Never forest was productive
Of such blossom, leaf or seed.
Honored wood and nails more honored
Christ as burden to sustain."
"Pange Lingua" ancient Passiontide hymn*

A large, multi-story red brick building with a central gabled section and many windows, situated on a grassy hill. The foreground is a lush green field with numerous white daisies with yellow centers. The sky is blue with a few white clouds.

*“May the nuns’ prayers
call down on us
abundant Divine grace
to be a new creation.”*



Dear Friends,

May the grace and peace of Christ be with each of you!

On the 4th Sunday of Lent, in the midst of our solemn penitential observances, the Church celebrates *Laetare* Sunday. The priest's rose-colored vestments, which are a symbol of joy and hope, bid us rejoice as we look forward to the celebration of Christ's triumph over sin and death through His glorious Resurrection.

This Lenten Sunday of rejoicing is particularly significant for us because it marks the day of our annual benefit hosted by the *Friends of St. Dominic's*. Their tireless labor and the extraordinary generosity of so many have made each year's *Laetare Benefit* more successful than the last!

Since the first Benefit in 2013, the funds raised have enabled us to repay our construction loan and the

gifts pledged during the *Angel Auction* have provided for many of our day-to-day living expenses.

Donating to the monastery through the *Angel Auction* is now made possible online:

saintdominicsmonastery.square.site

As we enter into the most sacred days of the Church year, the drama of our salvation is made tangible through the liturgical celebrations. *All time belongs to God* and we are indebted to you for providing the means to make this truth a reality in our contemplative way of life. We pray that each of you may be attentive to God's continuous invitation to the joy that comes from a deeper life in Him and be open to receive the graces He so longs to give you and your family.

With our gratitude and constant prayer,

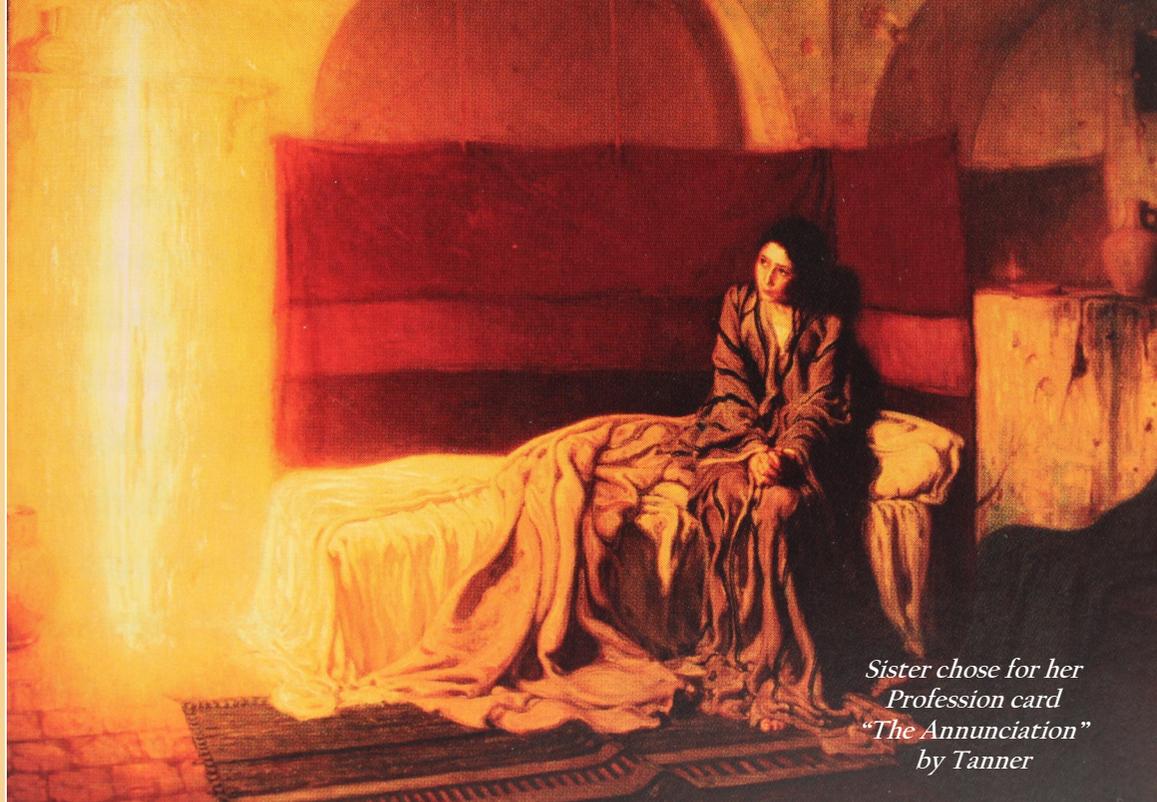
Sr. Mary Fidelis, OP
Prioress



Laetare Benefit 2019

the mystery of
*Grace &
Vocation*

The following is an
excerpt from the homily
given by Fr. Thomas
Petri, O.P. at the Solemn
Profession of Sr. Mary
Grace, January 25, 2020.



*Sister chose for her
Profession card
"The Annunciation"
by Tanner*

*I*n just a few moments, the prioress will ask Sr. Mary Grace about her desires. She will assert in front of all of us here that she desires to be bound more closely to Christ, that she desires to advance in the love of God and neighbor, spending herself entirely for souls. She will assert that she desires to be totally consecrated to God, to announce the blessings of Christ, and to persevere in prayer with the Blessed Mother, so that she may grow more and more in the fullness of the Spirit.

These kinds of desires are not natural. They are given. Sister Mary Grace did not invent these desires. This desire to be entirely with Christ in this life rather than to wait for the next was given to her. All of her dispositions, to hear this call of God, to desire it, and to accept it—all of this is the work of God.

And it's not simply that God revealed all this to Sister and that she somehow, experiencing the glory of God's love, makes this choice. On the contrary, it's the very grace of God that gives Sr. Mary Grace the

ability to say today: "I do desire it, with the help of God and yours." Grace works in her miraculously so that, in fact, she does this freely. God has worked in her to make her will for this the same as His will. They both want this Solemn Profession—God and Sr. Mary Grace—because God Himself has united their wills in a special and unimaginable way. ...We devise and invent nothing on our own but our resistance and our sinfulness.

On a day like this, a profound moment in the life of a young nun, this is humbling because it's not some accomplishment of hers, or ours, or her family's. But this is also radically consoling because this is an accomplishment of a merciful God who is still at work in the Church, in the world, and in us despite our limitations and our sins.

Sr. Mary Grace, may God perfect the good work that He has begun in you. This work is His because you are His.

Friend's Spotlight:

Our God is always revealing Himself to us in history, in mystery, in relationships, in His Word, and we so often miss the message because we are absorbed with the mundane and the passing. This is a tragedy of great proportions because God has something wonderful in mind for us, making us a new creation with eternal dimensions not just an improved existing model. The Old Testament shows God repeatedly renewing his covenant with Israel because the Israelites were always promising obedience and then backsliding into idolatry.

Christ's life and redemptive suffering opened a new chapter for humanity. As St. John Paul II said in his first encyclical, "Jesus Christ is the center of the universe and of history." Christ offers a new way of living in and through Him. This new way involves deep faith and magnanimous love. The Dominican cloistered nuns respond to His call with their life devoted to contemplation. Their fidelity is a spiritual powerhouse for the whole Church.

Responding to God's Invitation

By Mary Ellen Bork



Solemn Profession, January 25, 2020

"...we must be faithful to God's continuous invitation to life in Him... May the nuns' prayers call down on us abundant Divine grace to be a new creation."

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Russian novelist, lamented the spiritual exhaustion of the West in his 1970 Nobel speech. Heeding his warning, we must be faithful to God's continuous invitation to life in Him. The celebration of Christ's paschal mystery is another mysterious Divine initiative in our lives calling us yet again to attend to the graces God longs to give us. May the nuns prayers call down on us abundant Divine grace to be a new creation.

Mary Ellen Bork is a free-lance writer who lives in McLean and is a St. John the Beloved parishioner.

PHOTO: Spiering Photography - courtesy

St. Catherine de Ricci's "Canticle of the Passion"

A Dominican Lenten Devotion

*M*ost Catholics are familiar with the popular Lenten devotion of the Stations of the Cross, especially entrusted by the Church to the Franciscans. Very few, in contrast, have ever heard of the "Canticle of the Passion" or the Dominican saint associated with it.

St. Catherine de Ricci was born of a noble family near Florence in 1522. From the earliest days of her youth, God inspired in her a tender devotion to the Passion of Christ. At the age of twelve, she entered the Dominican monastery at Prato and at twenty, she began to experience weekly ecstasies of the Passion from noon on Thursday through Friday afternoon. St. Catherine not only witnessed in vision, but experienced in her body, the great drama of Christ's suffering and death. These weekly ecstasies lasted twelve years and it was during this time that she received the sacred stigmata.

Shortly after the first ecstasy, the Virgin Mary appeared to the Saint and taught her a Canticle in honor of her Divine Son's Passion. This hymn consists entirely of the words of Scripture, presenting the chief moments of Christ's Passion in a profoundly moving way. Our Lady then entreated St. Catherine to spread this Canticle as a form of prayer supremely pleasing to the Lord. The Master General of the Dominicans at that time decreed that St. Catherine's "Canticle of the

Passion" be included among the regular devotions peculiar to the Dominicans. Over time, it became a Dominican custom to chant the sacred Canticle on the Fridays of Lent. Chanting this Canticle has become a cherished devotion among the nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery.

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.

Contemplata Aliis Tradere

By Fr. Andrew Hofer, O.P.

*"With the witness of the lives
of these nuns, may we experience
the light of the risen Lord
in our own daily lives:
All time belongs to him."*

To begin the Easter Vigil Mass, the priest blesses the new fire and prepares the Paschal Candle. On the candle, he traces the cross, the numerals of the present year (2020), and the Alpha and the Omega, that is, the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. While doing so, the priest says these words:

Christ yesterday and today
the Beginning and the End
the Alpha
and the Omega.
All time belongs to him
and all the ages.
To him be glory and power
through every age and forever.
Amen.

The contemplative nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery live the words of this Paschal Candle inscription intensely in Christ. *All time belongs to him.* They rise



early before dawn to pray Matins. That is only the beginning of a new day given wholly to the glory of the Lord. Whether they are participating in the sacrifice of the Mass, adoring the Blessed Sacrament, singing the Divine Office, praying the rosary, reading Sacred Scripture, studying the writings of the saints, doing their assigned work, eating in the refectory, recreating with their Sisters, resting in their monastic cells, etc., *All time belongs to him.*

Our time on earth is short, and there seems to be an endless list of things-to-do. With the witness of the lives of these nuns, may we experience the light of the risen Lord in our own daily lives: *All time belongs to him.*



St. Dominic's Monastery
2636 Monastery Road
Linden, VA 22642

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Please help us share the
LIGHT

Please consider introducing our newsletter to your friends. Relatively few people know about our community and we would appreciate your help in sharing *"From This Holy Mountain"* with those you know and love. Simply email us their contact information and we will add them to our list.

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Mass Times:
Friday & Sunday: 11:00 a.m.
Remaining weekdays:
Usually at 7:00 a.m.

St. Dominic's Monastery
2636 Monastery Road
Linden, Virginia 22642
lindenopnuns.org

**For Prayer Intentions
and Vocations Inquiries:**
monastery
@lindenopnuns.org