



From this Holy Mountain

A Publication of the Dominican Nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery ~ Linden, Virginia ~ Spring 2019 Issue

*"These I will bring
to my holy mountain
and make them joyful
in my house of prayer."*

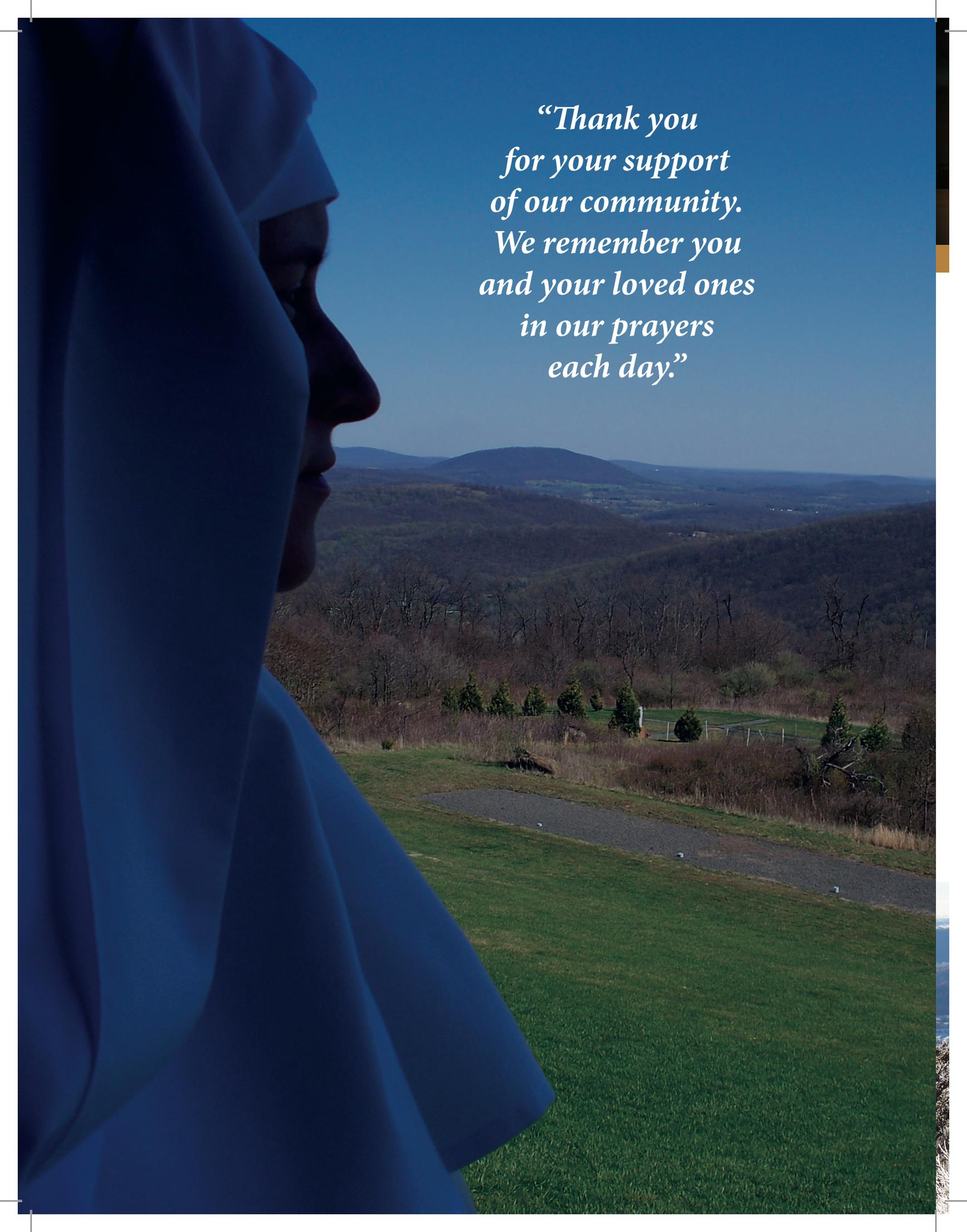
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Column of our Dominican Friars*



*“Thank you
for your support
of our community.
We remember you
and your loved ones
in our prayers
each day.”*



*D*ear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

God's grace and peace be with you! We are delighted to be sending you the in-augural newsletter of St. Dominic's Monastery. It is thanks to you, our benefactors and friends, that this venture in holy preaching From this Holy Mountain has finally come to fruition! As this is our pioneer edition, allow us to highlight a few key features which we hope to include in each forthcoming issue.

Our Dominican Friars will host a column entitled: *Contemplata Aliis Tradere*, sharing with us the fruits of their contemplation. Each edition will also feature a Spotlight page to feature you, our benefactors and friends, and to give you an opportunity to share your insights and experiences in regard to our monastic way of life.

Finally, look for community news and other tidbits of Dominican lore and culture interspersed amidst the rest.

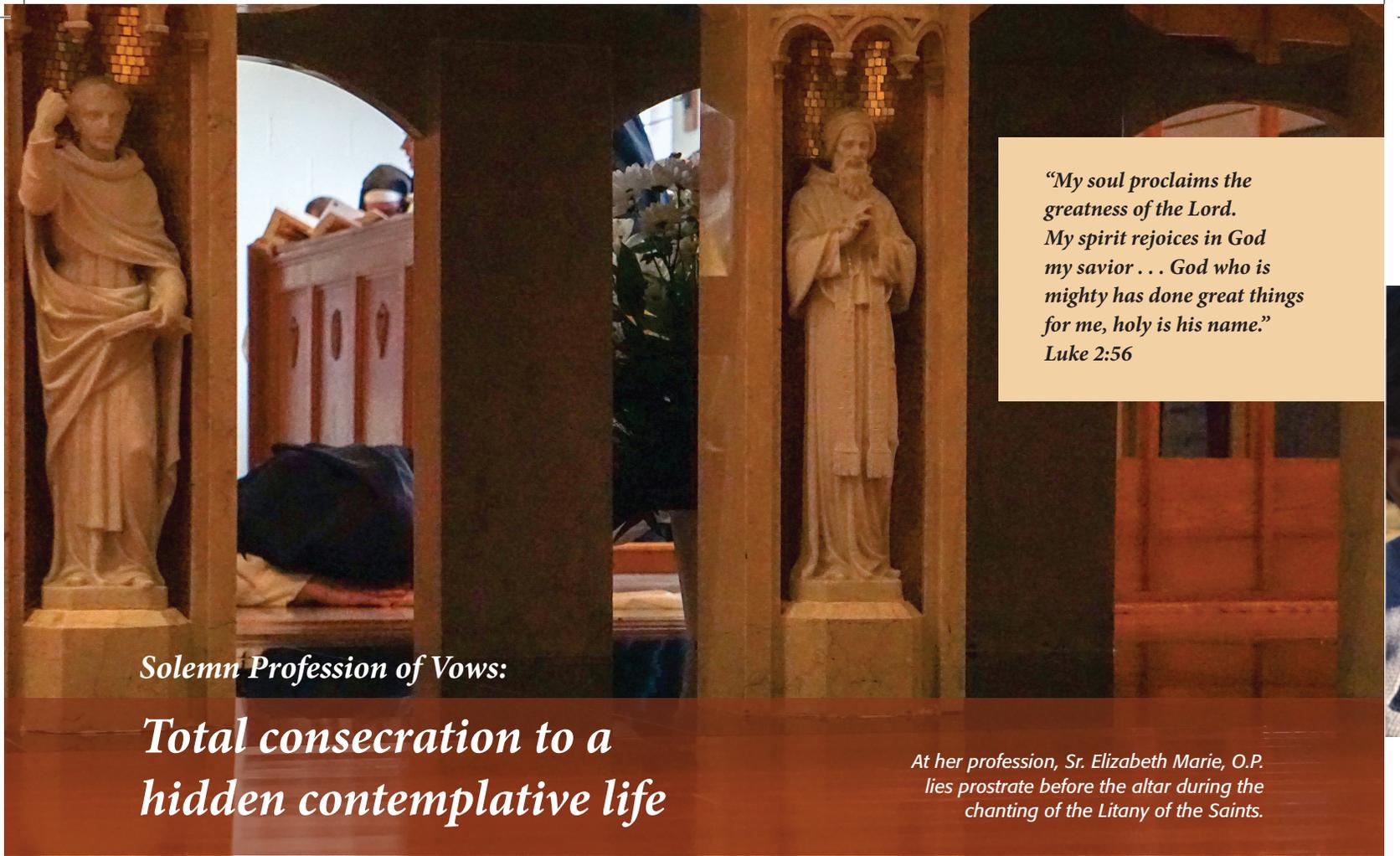
Our lives are interwoven with yours and the interdependency which characterizes our relationship with you is a gift. Truly, without you and your generous support, our way of life would not be possible.

Thank you for your support of our community. We remember you and your loved ones in our prayers each day. May God bless and reward you abundantly now and in eternity.

In Christ's Peace,

Sr. Mary Fidelis, OP
Prioress





*“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my savior . . . God who is mighty has done great things for me, holy is his name.”
Luke 2:56*

Solemn Profession of Vows:

Total consecration to a hidden contemplative life

At her profession, Sr. Elizabeth Marie, O.P. lies prostrate before the altar during the chanting of the Litany of the Saints.

*U*sque ad Mortem . . . until death. “Until death,” two small words, only three syllables, and yet, what binding force! With these two words, an irrevocable covenant is made between God and the nun, who freely chooses death-to-self in order to live exclusively in God and for God. “I promise obedience . . . **until death.**” The solemn profession of a contemplative nun is one of the most profound moments of her life. In her total renunciation of self and complete dedication to God, she enters more deeply into the paradoxical mystery of salvation which begins at baptism. Solemn profession, often referred to by the Fathers of the Church as a kind of “second baptism,” deepens the foundational grace of that Sacrament in a profound manner. The choice and call are God’s. He invites. He gives the grace to respond. *All is His* magnificent work *in* and *for* a creature, all because He delights in her and desires, even more than she, this spousal union. He has desired it, He has desired *her*, from the first moment of her conception.

In the face of such overpowering love, who could fail to rejoice at the “death” that is solemn profession since it is a death that leads to life.

“Standing upon the brink of this freely chosen ‘death’ I can truly say, . . . ‘It is a far, far better thing I do [today] than I have ever done!’”

On December 8, 2018 Sister Elizabeth Marie of the Holy Family, OP made solemn profession in the hands of the prioress and offered herself completely to God, promising to live in obedience according to the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers. When asked for her thoughts she replied, “Standing upon the brink of this freely chosen ‘death’, I can truly say, to quote Dickens, ‘It is a far, far better thing I do [today] than I have ever done!’ ‘He [God] brought me out to a place of freedom. He saved me because He loves me.’” (Psalm 18)

Friends Spotlight: A Local Family Shares Their Story



One-year old Elias at the monastery

The children are peering out of their windows as we turn off the twisty road that raised us from the valley to the height of the mountain. When they catch their first glimpse of the receding ranges and hazy foothills, there is silence in the back of the van. Then my 16-year-old son speaks.

“I could live up here. Having this view every day? I could live right over there.” He points to the rounded hilltop one peak south of the monastery.

“I could never live up here,” says the nine-year-old. They can’t ever leave the building! I would die having to be in-doors all the time.”

“The Sisters go out every day,” I corrected. “See all those fences? They get to walk out there, over the whole hillside!” I gesture to the field that falls away from the monastery with a gentle slope. “But the thing is,” I continue, “when God calls you to be here, you want to stay.”

It strikes me that my children have hit on two existential topics before we even reach the monastery parking lot: beauty and vocation. There aren’t many

*“Beauty and vocation
are inextricably linked,
and they are just
the beginning!”*

places in the world where one faces both in the opening moments of an experience, but up on Blue Mountain, where the Dominican Sisters have taken up residence, beauty and vocation are inextricably linked, and they are just the beginning!

*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**.

May 8th: Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Story of St. Dominic's Vision

One night while Blessed Dominic was keeping vigil in prayer, he was suddenly caught up in spirit before God and saw the Lord and the Blessed Virgin sitting at his right.

As St. Dominic looked around he noticed there were religious of all the orders but his own before the heavenly throne. Standing apart and not daring to approach the Lord and his Mother, St. Dominic began to weep bitterly. And although Our Lady beckoned him to come near, St. Dominic would not dare approach until the Lord himself also called him.

Blessed Dominic cast himself down before them weeping bitterly. Our Lord bid him to rise and asked him, "Why are you weeping so?" "I am weeping because I see all the other orders here but no sign of my own." The Lord said to him, "Do you want to see your Order?" and he answered, "Yes, Lord."

Then the Blessed Virgin opened the cloak she was wearing and spread it out before Blessed Dominic, to whom it seemed vast enough to cover the entire heaven, and under it he saw a large multitude of the brethren. Then prostrating himself, Blessed Dominic gave thanks to God and to Blessed Mary his Mother.

Adapted from:

The Miracles of St. Dominic

as narrated by Blessed Cecilia, OP



“The Blessed Virgin opened the cloak she was wearing and spread it out before Blessed Dominic, ... and under it he saw a large multitude of the brethren.”

Contemplata Aliis Tradere

By Fr. Thomas Petri, O.P.



*I*n a famous passage from *The Confessions*, St. Augustine wrote, “You made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” He had come to recognize that hardwired in every human person God created is an innate desire for Him alone. The great Dominican saint and doctor of the Church, St. Thomas Aquinas, would come to identify this truth as the first gift God gives every one of us. We’re made for happiness, and everything we do in life we do because we believe it will, in some way, make us happy. But only life with God, union with Him, perfectly satisfies us. Only He is perfect happiness and our hearts are restless until they rest in Him.

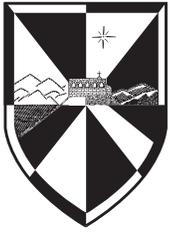
Since we are fallen creatures living with the effects of original sin, we struggle to live for God and for Him alone. We struggle to balance the goods and goals of our life in this world with the goal of eternal life—our perfect happiness in him. So the world is filled with men and women pursuing all sorts of things, most of them very good. People want to be loved; they want family, children, a career. Yet, in our increasingly complicated, connected and technological world we find that people are less happy and less content. Loneliness and sorrow follow us wherever we go and whatever we accomplish, precisely because we have not yet found Him who made us for Himself.

Blessed Jordan of Saxony, who was St. Dominic’s successor as Master of the Order of Preachers, used to remind the cloistered nuns that while they had given up the pursuit of wealth in this world and so were poor, they were rather rich in spirit, because they had come to know and possess Jesus Christ in an intimate way in this life. He would tell them,

therefore, “You are abundantly endowed with the glory and wealth of the Lord’s house, seeing that you possess the kingdom of heaven.” Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God! The Church teaches that the contemplative vocation is the highest pursuit of happiness and holiness in this life precisely because it’s entirely single-minded in knowing Jesus Christ.

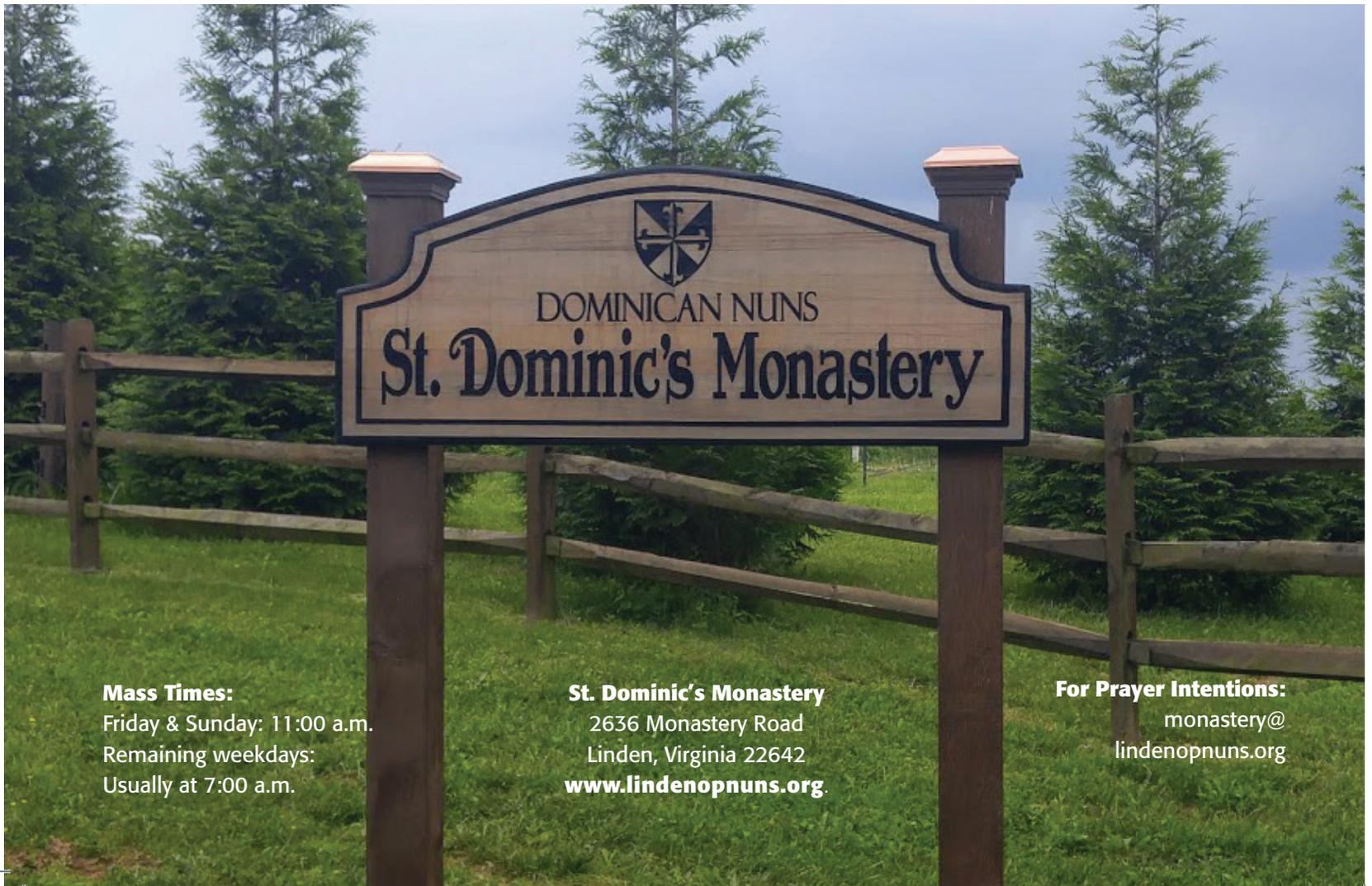
It is not easy for the world to understand the need for cloistered contemplative nuns or how their life can be one of happiness. Most people don’t know why St. Dominic’s Monastery is so very special to many of us. This is why. Our Holy Father Pope Francis has said that monasteries of contemplative women are “set like cities on a hill or lamps on a stand, which despite their simplicity of life, visibly represent the goal towards which the entire church journeys.”

We need the nuns on that holy mountain in Linden for their prayers, but we need them even more for their witness of the goal that every vocation seeks and which, we pray, God will give us in the life to come: complete union with Himself. The life of the nuns reminds us that all of our pursuits in this world must finally yield to the pursuit of Jesus Christ and love of Him above all else.



St. Dominic's Monastery

2636 Monastery Road
Linden, VA 22642



Mass Times:

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

St. Dominic's Monastery

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Linden, Virginia 22642
www.lindenopnuns.org

For Prayer Intentions:

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