

From This Holy Mountain

A Publication of the Dominican Nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery - Linden, Virginia - Spring 2021 Issue

*"O chosen people,
proclaim the mighty works of Him
who called you out of darkness
into His wonderful light, alleluia!"*

Easter Communion Antiphon

FEATURED INSIDE:

*United in Christ:
The Monastic & the Mystical Body*

*Friends Spotlight:
Living the Life of Grace Together*

*St. John of Cologne:
A Companion in Life & Death*

*Contemplata Aliis Tradere:
Amazement Seized Them All*



*D*ear Friends,

“The Church is alive - she is alive because Christ is alive, because He is truly risen.”

“The Church, a community gathered by the Son of God, who came in the flesh, will live on through the passing times, building up and nourishing the communion in Christ and in the Holy Spirit to which all are called and in which they can experience the salvation given by the Father. This life of communion with God and with one another is the proper goal of Gospel proclamation, the goal of conversion to Christianity.”

“Communion is also a gift with very real consequences. It lifts us from our loneliness, from being closed in on ourselves, and makes us sharers in the love that unites us to God and to one another. It is easy to understand how great this gift is if we only think of the fragmentation and conflicts that afflict relations between individuals, groups and entire peoples.”

“Communion is truly the Good News, the remedy given to us by the Lord to fight the loneliness that threatens everyone today, the precious gift that makes

us feel welcomed and beloved by God, in the unity of His People gathered in the name of the Trinity. Thus, the Church, despite all the human frailties that mark her historical profile, is revealed as a marvelous creation of love, brought into being to bring Christ close to every man and every woman who truly desire to meet Him, until the end of time.”

This address of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI given in 2006 perfectly expresses the Good News, the word of hope that we desperately need to hear today - to break us out of the prison of our isolation and loneliness into which the pandemic has forced us. The Risen Christ is among us, inviting us, drawing us into communion with the Triune God and with one another. May all of us open our hearts to this tremendous grace being offered to us.

With our constant prayer,

Sr. Mary Fidelis, OP

Prioress



UNITED IN CHRIST

The Monastic & the Mystical Body

*T*he Church is the Body of Christ. We become members of this Mystical Body through Baptism, where we renounce Satan and say “yes” to God. Every baptized Christian has been set apart, has been consecrated to live for God in unity with Christ as a member of His Body.

Christ is the Source of unity within the Church. He is the Head of the Body, and its members are present to each other because they *first* have been joined to Him through baptism. There is a correlation between union with Christ and union with our fellow Christians: the deeper one’s conformity to Christ, the stronger one’s link to the other members of His Body.

This is why a nun, living a silent, hidden life in a monastery, is profoundly present to the entire Church. Her vocation is wholly oriented toward complete conformity to Christ. By vowing to live a life of obedience, chastity and poverty, she seeks to remove all potential obstacle or hindrances to this conformity. In this way, religious vows constitute a deepening of our baptismal consecration since the nun not only rejects evil, but is willing to renounce goods also, in order to be radically set apart for God in total union with Christ. It is this intense union which strengthens the nun’s spiritual bond with all the members of the Mystical Body, a bond transcending space and time, a bond which is already a foretaste of Heaven.



“The contemplative life is the nun’s particular way of being the Church, of building the communion of the Church, of fulfilling a mission for the good of the whole Church. Cloistered contemplatives, therefore, are not asked to be involved in forms of active presence, but to remain at the wellspring of Trinitarian communion, dwelling at the very heart of the Church.”

Verbi Sponsa, #6

Instruction on the Contemplative Life
and on the Enclosure of Nuns, 1999



Friends Spotlight:

Living the Life of Grace Together

*I*f there is one thing we can expect to experience in our Christian vocations it is suffering. This is true for all of us. As the Apostles experienced in a storm-tossed boat on the Sea of Galilee, our earthly lives, if dedicated to loving and being with God, are marked by a suffering that manifests itself in a myriad of ways, not the least of which is the temptation to fear that we are about to perish, thinking that Jesus is not with us—that He is asleep in the stern. However, our Lord is clear that He is always with us. “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Mt 18:20)

Having married the love of my life and having been blessed with ten wonderful children, I can speak to all the incredible gifts that God has showered upon us through married life; just as our Dominican Sisters can speak to the many blessings showered upon them in the religious life. Nevertheless, if we love the Lord, we are guaranteed the privilege of suffering. In this way, the married life is not much different than the religious life.

Let us never forget that we do not suffer alone; instead, we suffer with Him and we

*Let us never forget
that we do not suffer alone;
instead, we suffer with Him and we suffer
for each other—raising each other up
in prayer and mortification.
We are all in this together.*

suffer for each other—raising each other up in prayer and mortification. We are all in this together.

For many years now, our family has been praying daily in solidarity with and for the Dominican Nuns in Linden, VA. Our parallel Christian vocations of prayer and asceticism are both voluntary and involuntary. We all take on certain crosses by choice, and God blesses us with certain others by *His* choice. Whether we are up in the middle of the night to nurse a baby or care for a sick child (in the case of a parent), or to chant the Divine Office (in the case of a nun), we are all praying for each other and benefitting from each other's sacrifices. Neither the Sisters' nor our lives are free from the many manifestations of the Cross (loneliness, physical suffering, darkness, fear, despair, tumult, to name only a few) but we are all strengthened with the knowledge that we are living this life of grace together. As we all lovingly and faithfully struggle to live out our vocations for love of God, we thank you, dear Jesus, for the gift of these Dominican Sisters in our lives.

Mariano Diaz-Bonilla lives in Falls Church and is a St. Catherine of Siena parishioner.

*Neither the Sisters' nor our lives
are free from the many
manifestations of the Cross...
but we are all strengthened
with the knowledge
that we are living
this life of grace together.*



WEDDING PHOTO: Victoria Sanborn - courtesy



St. John of Cologne

A COMPANION IN LIFE AND DEATH

*T*ime and again, God raises up saints to console and strengthen His Church undergoing difficulty. The Dominican St. John of Cologne was one such saint. His heroic witness to Christ amongst those suffering for their faith proved him to be a faithful companion, both in life and in death.

In 1573, when many countries in Europe were rent by political turmoil and religious division, the Catholic clergy of the Dutch town of Gorcum were imprisoned by Calvinist leaders and subjected to brutal tortures. They were offered freedom if they would deny their belief in Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist and the primacy of the Pope. Hearing of their plight, a Dominican Friar, John of Cologne, hurried to Gorcum. He worked as a priest incognito, caring for the Catholics there, deprived as they were of the care of their own pastors. He even managed to visit the

imprisoned priests, bringing them the consolation of the Sacraments.

During one of these visits, his identity as a priest was discovered, and he himself was imprisoned. After a time in custody, the priests were marched in a mock procession amidst agonizing humiliations. Upon nearing the site of their execution, they sang the *Salve Regina* and the *Te Deum*. As they were led out to be hanged, they heard one another's confession and bolstered each other in the faith. On the morning of July 9, 1573, St. John and his eighteen companions were martyred for their faith in the Eucharist and in the primacy of the Pope. Today we remember them as the Martyrs of Gorcum.



"...my fellow Friar said to me,
'Stay close to the Nuns.
They will keep you close to God,
and they will watch over
your vocation.'"

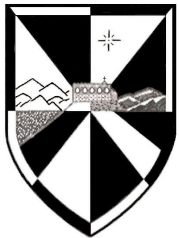
Contemplata Aliis Tradere: by Fr. Jordan Kelly, OP

*A*s I go about my day, saying Mass, hearing Confessions, giving Spiritual Direction to parishioners,—the regular life of a priest—the words of Saint Luke's Gospel often come to my mind: "And amazement seized them all..." (Lk 5:26) I am seized with amazement that God has given this particular grace to me, namely, to be His instrument to all men.

The life of the Dominican Nun is equally amazing and mysterious. Founded before the Friars of the Order, our Nuns have been and remain a sustaining source of grace as the Dominican Friar crosses the world preaching the Gospel of Truth. To choose the monastic vocation of prayer, penance, and the enclosure is a mystery: to experience the efficacy of the Nun's vocation: amazing!

As a young religious, one of our Friars introduced me to our Nuns of Saint Dominic's Monastery. The monastery was a modified home on 16th St. NW in Washington, DC. As we waited for Sister to come to the parlor, the silence and simplicity of the monastery was all embracing. Meeting the Nuns: amazing. As we left the monastery my fellow Friar said to me, "Stay close to the Nuns: they will keep you close to God; and they will watch over your vocation." Thank God I listened to those words! The life of our Nuns is my strength.

Just as every vocation to the priesthood is a mystery, so also is the powerful grace of a life hidden from the world for the preaching of the Gospel and the salvation of souls.



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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 19

Design and Layout by the Nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery ~ Printing by St. Martin de Porres Lay Dominican Community; New Hope, Kentucky



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
2636 Monastery Road
Linden, Virginia 22642
lindenopnuns.org

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