

GROUNDBREAKING

next month in Starfield, Missouri!



AUGUST 15, 4:30 PM

316th Street between Mac Road and VV,
off of Route 169 just north of Gower, MO



BENEDICTINES OF MARY, QUEEN OF APOSTLES

Priory of Our Lady of Ephesus
1400 NE 42nd Terrace
Kansas City, MO 64116

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Look for



this Fall.

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Our Lady of Ephesus
1400 NE 42ND TERRACE
KANSAS CITY, MO
64116

At Ephesus

SUMMER 2009

THE BENEDICTINES OF MARY, QUEEN OF APOSTLES

Dear Family, Friends and Benefactors,

Here we are, in the thick of our third hot Summer in the Midwest. We prefer to use the term, "Heartland", because if it were not for the fact that we are in the Heart of the Church in America, it would be so much harder for those of us not from this area to adjust!

We now know that chiggers prefer east coast flesh, and the hotter it is the more cotton coverage we need; we've learned a nun must tuck her veil in her leather cincture on a windy day;

we've seen the green face of the *Wicked Witch of the West* (tornado indications); and the trees with scary faces on our property look ready to throw their hedge apples at us if we get too close; the soil out here comes in three states: dust, mud or sun-baked pottery that cracks.



The lovely, little star-shaped flower that we discovered growing on the grounds in Starfield

But when folks we meet in passing say, "Hello, how are you?", they mean it, and they don't care how much time it takes to tell you what's on their minds. We love it here, and are so very happy and excited to tell you, after such a long haul in trying to raise funds in "the Show-Me State", that we "Northerners" or "Easterners" are finally going to break ground for the erection of the first building of our monastery project on August 15 at 4:30 PM. And, yes, you are welcome to come on this upcoming feast of Our Lady's Assumption, the day she left Ephesus for heaven.

We shouldn't be surprised, since we have been working towards this for the past three years, but what is surprising is the interesting twist the project took just within the past few months.

In February we had arrangements for the financing of "Phase One", as we described the retreat house for priests, gatehouse and infrastructure for the entire development of our 280 acres southeast of St. Joseph, MO. Being new to the area, we were required by the bank to have a certain amount of a guaranty, and only half of that could be procured at that time, due to the "economic climate".

By God's own economy, which never fails to provide for those who depend on Him, the relatives of one of our sisters generously offered to reclaim and recondition magnificent, sustainable timbers from a former factory which had been built by Thomas Edison in the 1800's to manu-



Temporary housing for Our Lady, too

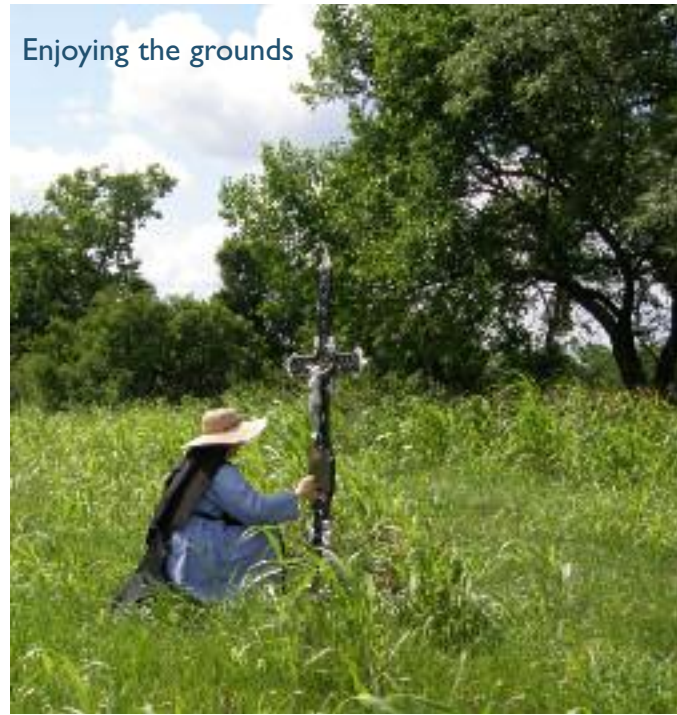
We put Our Lady on the property last Winter and told St. Joseph that if he didn't want her left up there alone, he'd better get us up there soon to be with her. He works fast!

facture the wooden cases for phonograph machines. In the 1920's this same factory became the source of wooden toys and children's furniture labeled, "Edison's Little Folks". As I write, the same family is preparing the gigantic beams, and other sound and worthy materials from this edifice, and they will soon bring them down from Minnesota to construct for us the frame and decks of a 25,500 square foot guesthouse which should rise from its foundation mid-September. With the help of our local general contractor, Ernie Straub, it is hoped that by Thanksgiving, this building, which will serve as our temporary monastery, will be closed in and have heat, water and electricity, the interior to be finished over the following several months. In other words, we should be all settled in by this time next year!

Did we ever think that the first building to go up on our donated property would be a guesthouse? No! We hadn't even drawn up any architectural plans. But we have learned by now to expect the unexpected from the hand of God, and it *always* turns out better than we ever dreamed. Our Divine Spouse Who rules heaven and earth and all things has proven once again that He's a much better engineer than any of us. The truth is, the retreat house for priests which was destined to be our first, temporary dwelling would have been too small for us by the time we moved into it. William Heyer, our architect, actually has done some very advanced drawings and



Location of the future front gate on 316th Street



Enjoying the grounds

plans for it and the gatehouse at this point (Phase One). But uneasiness was beginning to set in due to the fact that Our dear Lord has called many young women to live out their vocations within our community: we realized, by the time the retreat house for priests would be completed, it would already be too small to house all of us.

A special "Thank You" goes to the anonymous donor of the mysterious, unmarked envelope which we received by US Mail, containing a pure gold Kruggerand last year, and this year a gold ring. The gold was recently sold and the cash was put towards the building fund.

So we are calling this the "Pre-phase". The guesthouse that will soon be constructed will allow the community to grow to about 35 nuns. The Great Room will serve as our temporary Oratory; the large basement, our sewing rooms; the wide, open dining area will serve us well for both eating and study space; and the library/sitting room will make an appropriate Chapter Room. Part of the lower level will contain our chaplain's quarters and an extra room for the priest or deacon who so often comes to Ephesus for some spiritual respite.

The original lay of the land had to be adapted because, again by God's providence in the nick of time, our new owner representative and construction manager, Ron D. Jury, advised us that we needed to get some of the buildings and the main road on higher ground if we didn't want a lot of water problems in the future.

So, we've decided to move the main gate to the highest point along 316th Street. Topographically, that area is in the shape of a heart, and it was there we were going to be buried. (It was the closest we could get to heaven from this earth). Instead, we have opened up our heart, so to speak, and our monastery, to our visitors to welcome them to pray with us within the Heart of the Church in America.

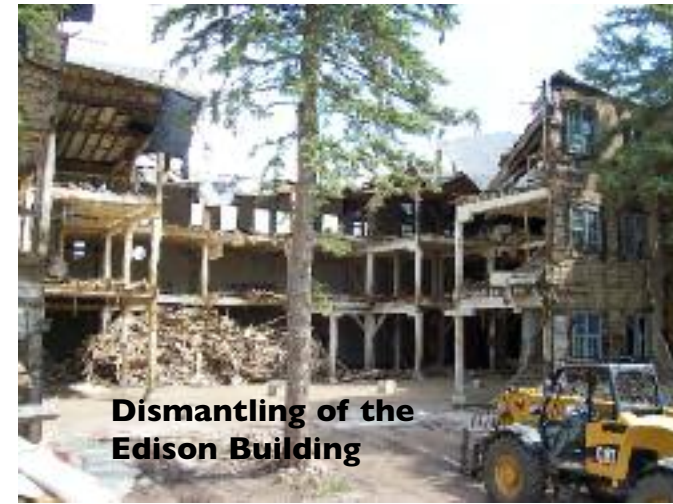
Another interesting piece of news is that according to the Geographic Names Information Service of the U.S. Geological Survey, the exact name of the location for our permanent Priory is: STARFIELD. How beautiful and fitting for us! Well-known is the ancient Spanish pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, (Literally, "Starfield"), where for centuries Christians



New postulants: the "children" of the house

have followed the path of St. James the Greater, to the place where Our Lady appeared to him to encourage him during his struggles as an Apostle. Of course, we can't dismiss the fact that our street is 316: "For God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son" John 3:16.

The community is now twenty strong and growing. We prefer slowly and surely, to quickly. St. Benedict instructs us in his Holy Rule "not to grant an easy entrance". Two young ladies entered since the last newsletter, and a half dozen others



Dismantling of the Edison Building

are discerning with us.

Next January 6 should witness yet another First Profession and Investiture in the habit at Old St. Patrick Oratory in Kansas City. And then, the day we have been waiting and preparing for so long will arrive: May 15, 2010: the Solemn Profession of twelve of us, a first for our fledgling community. Our vows of obedience, continual

conversion of life and stability will be solemnized by the Church, sealed as perpetual, definitive, irrevocable.

As a Benedictine nun, figure of the the Church, the Bride of Christ, each will receive signs of her espousals to Him: a golden wedding band, a crown of lilies and roses, and the traditional monastic cuculla to wear in choir with a distinctive veil characterizing our particular charism. Each nun will be commissioned by the Church to carry on the praise of God for everyone else, as she is handed a copy of the Divine Office. This is considered the most important day in our history, after having first gathered together as a community 15 years ago, and making our first profession of public vows for three years, back in May of 2007. We are welcoming all who can fit into Old St. Patrick's Oratory for this joyful occasion, especially those travelling from as far as France and Italy.



Presentation of the Report of the Formal Visitation



View of the first building, the guesthouse

It is very touching to us that Our Lord will have prepared a new home for His brides to return to after the nuptials, and there we will live, awaiting the final call to His Father's house for all eternity.

In preparation for the presentation of our community to Rome for the next and last canonical step, the Abbess of Ste. Marie des Deux Montagnes, Very Reverend Isabelle Thouin, O.S.B. came from Quebec recently, and with the assistance of our own Most Reverend Robert W. Finn, conducted a thorough investigation of our community and way of life, call a Formal (Canonical) Visitation. It was certainly a grace-filled time. Humanly speaking, as much as we know and love each member of our community, as well as the dear Abbess and our own dear Bishop, at the conclusion, when their report was read aloud to the Professed members, we had a sense of: "Phew! We passed!" The new Constitutions, are currently being examined by one of, if not *the* best, canon lawyers in the Church prior to their presentation to Rome for approval. They were written to serve as a normative and legal code to govern and direct our community in the future, replacing our

current, temporary Statutes, we ask the prayers of all for the particular enlightenment of the Holy Ghost!

The production of our first CD was extremely successful in helping us raise funds for the building of our permanent monastery—40,000 copies and they're almost all gone. Since we are still singing, well... "by popular demand" we are recording another at the end of this month: "Christmas at Ephesus". It should be available in the Fall, but in a less fragile, lightweight cardboard CD jacket with booklet. Keep you eyes open for it, and certainly, it will be available on our website, too. We so much appreciate your support, be it by way of contributions or prayers. Both are very-much needed! Please keep them coming, as we still have to build the monastery to house 58 nuns, and I can tell it won't take long for us to fill up the guesthouse. Besides, when we move out of the guesthouse, then you can come and stay for your private retreat!

We also need to get the gatehouse up soon, because already St. Benedict's words are proving true, that guests "are never wanting in the monastery"

(Chapter 53). Even now, we need to place a gatekeeper to answer the many calls at the door or by phone, throughout the entire day. With our Divine Office chanted in choir "seven times a day and once in the night", and Holy Mass and essential periods of Lectio Divina, it is becoming more and more impossible to do so without frequent interruptions. We have a gatekeeper, a layman, former police officer and father of a Carmelite Nun, who will be available as early next year, if we can manage to come up with some separate housing for him.

Be assured that we pray for you every day. When you send us your prayer intentions on the response envelopes or by letter, I read them aloud to the community at Chapter. When you send intentions, fax or email, even though we don't respond in writing, we always post your prayer requests outside the Oratory where we can all read them as we enter many times a day.

We thank you, we thank God for you, we thank God with you for the grace of our friendship, that true friendship which requires a humble interdependence on one another.

Cellarer's Wish List

- stamps/USA or Foreign
- steel toe work boots
- seam rippers
- plain copy paper
- gift cards for hardware or office stores

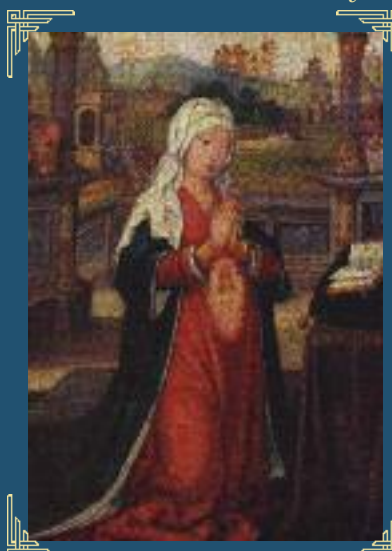
In Corde Mariae,

*Sr. Therese, o.s.b., Prioress
of Our Lady of Ephesus*

Sr. Therese, o.s.b.,
Prioress of Our Lady of Ephesus,
and Sisters

But prayer to God in spirit and in truth is not offered only in silence with the interior and secret utterance of the soul: it also at times finds expression in the spoken word and outpours itself in thanksgiving or supplication or divine praise.

This second manner of praying was likewise habitual with Mary. The psalms and canticles of the prophets which she had learnt in childhood must often have been on her lips; and to her devout psalmody have been applied the words of Scripture: "The voice of the turtle dove has been heard in our land." Besides these sacred hymns, who can say what strains of tenderest love the Mother of God poured forth day by day in prayer? Assuredly her vocal prayer was not, as ours too often is, a cold repetition of words learnt by rote. It was the ardour and energy of love finding expression in glowing words. It is true that one prayer only, composed by Mary, has come down to us, namely the Magnificat, which is sung in the evening Office of the Church with solemn rite. How beautiful is the Magnificat! It has been and will be the subject of learned and elaborate commentaries; but it is beautiful also when understood in its obvious meaning, deep study apart, as a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. First of all, Mary thanks God



for having had regard to the lowliness of His handmaid, and for the great things He has done in her, He who is the Almighty, the Holy One. In this her thanksgiving she magnifies Him with all the ardour of her soul and in the exultation of her lofty mind. Next, Mary extols and magnifies

the power of God in bringing to naught the proud, the rich, the powerful, and His mercy which raises up the weak, the poor and the lowly, and especially Israel His servant according to the promises given to Abraham and to his seed for ever. Here it is noteworthy that in Mary's prayer thanksgiving and praise are inspired by humility. She thanks God for the priceless gifts He has bestowed on His handmaid. She praises Him for humbling the proud and exalting the lowly. Thus the Blessed Virgin penetrates into the abyss of her own nothingness and of the divine greatness, and hence her prayer was such as, to use the words of Scripture, must pierce the clouds and ascend even to the throne of the Most High.

It will be said that the Magnificat is a hymn rather than a prayer. But every prayer that is uttered with the enthusiasm of faith and with all the energy of the soul, is a hymn to God. Such must have been all the prayers of God's blessed Mother.