



Priory of  
Our Lady of Ephesus  
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PAX

# At Ephesus

THE BENEDICTINES OF MARY, QUEEN OF APOSTLES

NOVEMBER 2011

Dear Family, Friends and Benefactors,

“The heavens proclaim the glory of God and the firmament declareth the works of His hands”. (Ps 18:2) It has been almost a year since our move to the countryside, and how these words of the Psalmist sound with even deeper meaning in our hearts since being brought so close to God’s creation! As the world seems to become more and more entranced with the inventions of man, we delight evermore in the marvelous inventions of God: “the works of His hands”, the contemplation of which draws us ever closer to Him.

During these last several months, we have been the beneficiaries of God’s goodness in so many ways, spanning a vast array of both material and spiritual blessings. What follows is just a small taste on the material side: the 40 gallons each week of fresh Jersey milk from our sweet cow, Ephy, which our “Sr. Dairy Queen” transforms into cheeses, yogurt, butter and ice cream; the freshly laid eggs collected each day from our 17 hens; the beautiful flowers grown on our own soil to adorn our altar; the rich harvest of potatoes and other tasty vegetables; and we can’t overlook our two loyal guard dogs, Sunny and Rosie, who faithfully sound the alarm when a car turns into the drive!

We have enjoyed quite a few walks in the warm fall weather through our recently harvested corn field, which we rent out to family farmers nearby. It was a wonderful experience to glean in the fields, just like Ruth of the Old Testament, (though I’m sure Ruth did not get such an “earful” of “corny” jokes as she worked!) Our recreational walks can be quite lively! Between our own small crop of corn and the fruits (or grains!) of our labor in the field, we’ve collected quite a bit to feed Ephy and the chickens through the winter.



One of the greatest spiritual blessings of the summer was a very special visit in July by the Abbot of Clear Creek Monastery in Oklahoma, the Right Rev. Dom Philip Anderson, OSB. We were honored by his presence, receiving several wonderful conferences on Benedictine life and thoroughly enjoying our merry recreations with him. We continued to benefit from the goodness of the monks at Clear Creek with the arrival of Father Bachmann, OSB who conducted our annual retreat the last week of September. The Sisters in vows renewed their profession during Mass on the last day of the retreat, just before bidding Father farewell.

On October 10th, we had the privilege of hosting Christopher Check, Executive Vice-President of the Rockford Institute, who gave two animated and inspiring talks, one on the Mexican Cristeros, and the other on the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great. We hope to have him back again soon!





At the last Mass during our annual retreat, Fr. Bachmann, OSB, received the renewal of vows.

On the Feast of All Saints, November 1st, we welcomed two young women into our midst as new candidates: Gina Eid from California, and JoAnna Randazzo from Illinois. We are delighted to welcome them both into our Benedictine family and in a couple of months, God willing, they will become Sr. Gina and Sr. JoAnna as postulants.

We continue to thank God for the presence of our chaplain, Fr. Christopher Henderson, C.P.M., who daily brings Our Lord down on our altar through the Extraordinary Form of the Mass. We simply cannot be grateful enough for the gift of this ancient and beautiful liturgy, along with its accompanying Divine Office, which has produced and nourished the saints for centuries.

With all of that being said, do not think that the life of a Benedictine of Mary is strewn only with roses. Our Lord is in the business of purifying all of our souls, whether we are called to religious life or not, and He most effectively accomplishes that work by way of both interior and exterior trials. But He always knows what is best for us. He longs for us to be completely abandoned to Him, trusting unceasingly in His Fatherly love and care. This spirituality is very simple, yet very pleasing to Him. We read that though the Little Flower, St. Therese of Lisieux, had an ardent desire for suffering and death, she realized that the more perfect

way to love Him was found in trustful surrender and abandonment to whatever He willed. She preferred what God chose for her throughout her life, seeing Him in even the most mundane and prosaic circumstances.

The following words from Father Jean Pierre de Caussade's book, *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, bring to this spirituality a simple clarity: "Would to God that...all men could know how very easy it would be for them to arrive at a high degree of sanctity. They would only have to fulfil the simple duties of Christianity and of their state of life; to embrace with submission the crosses belonging to that state, and to submit with faith and love to the designs of Providence in all those things that have to be done or suffered...This is the spirituality of all ages and of every state." We need only to turn to the Holy Family on Christmas night for inspiration in this way of abandonment.



A bit of entertainment for Mother Cecilia's first anniversary as Prioress.

On that cold night when Our Lord was born in a cave in utter poverty, Our Lady and St. Joseph could have said to God with great bitterness in their hearts, "How could you allow these dire conditions to surround the birth of Your only Son? Don't we deserve better? Doesn't *He* deserve better? If only things were different." But this is not what they thought. They saw God's loving hand in *all* things. May we strive, with God's grace, to always imitate their immovable faith and trust in His loving Providence.

Mindful of that Providence, please know how deeply grateful we are to you, the treasured instruments of God's Providence towards us, who by your spiritual and material support allow us to continue living our Benedictine vocations, through which we receive so many unmerited graces. The joyful anticipation of Advent will soon fill our hearts. During those peaceful and prayerful days, know that you will be especially remembered as we contemplate and adore the beloved Bridegroom of our souls, preparing once again to welcome Him into our hearts as Mary did so lovingly that first night in Bethlehem.

On the First Saturday of every month, our community Mass is offered for you and your intentions, and we promise many prayers of petition and thanksgiving for you every day. We will be asking the blessing of the Christ Child on all of you especially at Midnight Mass. May Jesus, Mary and Joseph lead us through this year and each coming year until we are safely home with them.

In His Merciful Heart,

*Mother Cecilia OSB*

Mother Cecilia, OSB  
Prioress, and Sisters



Sr. Judith Marie explains the construction of Gina's first surplice while JoAnna gives Sr. Tarcisia a hand with winter storage.



Rosie rests amidst the spoils.

The Sisters gleaned the corn from our adjoining property.

A Continuation of "Mary's Silence" from *The Virtues of Mary* by Fr. L. Lanzoni

The Gospel mentions seven occasions only on which the Virgin Mother spoke. We are told but little of her early years prior to the angel's embassy, and not one word was spoken by her during all those years is recorded. Then Joseph is a prey to cruel anguish on her account, and is minded to put her away, but Mary is silent. At Bethlehem are heard the voices of the angels and of the shepherds, but Mary does not speak. During the flight into Egypt, she is full of solicitude for her child and intent on saving Him from His enemies, but she is silent. For the space of three years her Divine Son bears His good tidings from town to town and from village to village, while Mary communes in her own heart and keeps silent. Jesus speaks from His cross on Calvary, Mary is silent. These seven times of silence are full of eloquence to him who lovingly ponders on their mystery, and they may be arranged in the following order: 1) *The Silence of peace*, which conceals from the world



Mary's early years, until she receives Gabriel's message. 2) *The Silence of mystery*, namely the secrecy which Mary observed concerning her divine conception, even with St. Joseph. 3) *The Silence of meditation*, in which Mary gave birth to her Son and afterwards offered Him in the Temple of God for all mankind. 4) *The Silence of humility*, during the time of exile in Egypt and afterwards in the humble home of Nazareth, where Mary lived, as it were, buried in concealment with her Divine Son till the commencement of His Public Ministry. 5) *The Silence of constancy*, in which Mary remained during her Son's preaching. 6) *Heroic Silence*, with which she gazed on Jesus as He went on His way to Calvary, and again while she stood beneath the Cross, and finally at His burial. 7) *Blissful silence*, in which she received with delight, but without making a boast of them before men, the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost the Comforter on the Day of Pentecost.