

Abbey of
Our Lady of Ephesus
Gower, Missouri

WINTER 2019

At Ephesus

BENEDICTINES OF MARY, QUEEN OF APOSTLES

Dear Family, Friends and Benefactors,

Thank you all for our beautiful new church!

We send to each of you our warmest greetings during this coldest, snowiest month of the year. Though the various snowfalls this winter have added a lovely, pure white blanket atop the Missouri clay, even our northerners are looking forward to warmer days and bluer skies! How grateful we are to the good God that this is not the kind of winter we experienced last year during the church construction. It never would have been finished in time! The weather outside has made things all the more cozy inside, especially during this Christmas season, which we are sure to make last through the Feast of the Purification, February 2nd. You will see from the pictures inside just how lovely our new church looks adorned in her Christmas attire.

But I am getting ahead of myself! Autumn began with our annual retreat, led by Bishop Athanasius Schneider. We have kept in contact over the years, but his visit was actually the first time we had met in person! His retreat conferences were truly born of a contemplative heart, and we were grateful to be the recipients of such sublime reflections.

Our candidates finished arriving toward the end of retreat, and thus began their monastic life on sure footing. After completing their initiation, eight nervous, black-clad postulants approached the altar rail on November 22nd to receive their Miraculous Medals from Fr. Paul Check, a friend of many years. May God grant them all perseverance!

A few days later, we received the devastating news that our beloved Bishop Robert Morlino went to his eternal reward, and this only ten weeks after he conferred the abbatial blessing and re-

ceived first vows of two of our sisters. The paternal affection of Bishop Morlino was known to so many, and we were unable to refuse his kind invitation to come to his Diocese to make our first foundation! With the shock of his death, we were forced back to the drawing board of foundation plans. A Requiem Mass was chanted in his honor with deep emotion, as we joined so many others who are deeply grieving the loss of such a clear voice of truth in our country and amidst such confused times. It seemed a great blessing that the good Bishop passed away in the month of the Holy Souls so that we could remember his soul and how strongly he objected to funeral "canonization ceremonies." He will always be remembered through the wooden cross he gave to me, which now hangs just below my choir stall coat of arms carved by Brother Bernard Marie of Clear Creek and featured in our last newsletter. The good Bishop shall also be perpetually remembered

at the altar through the exquisite missal stand made by Rick Murphey as a Christmas gift, inscribed with the Bishop's name. In our prayers for him, we also trust that he will intercede for our expansion, and trust that the Lord will continue to assist and guide us. Hopefully, we will be able to fill in more details in our Spring newsletter! In the interim, we certainly did not protest the prospect of another Christmas "all together!"

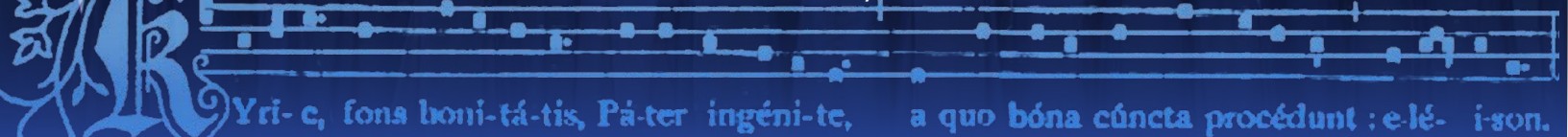
Our very first *Rorate* Mass on December 15th was unforgettable—truly one of the most stunning Masses of the year. Begun before the rising of the sun, and lit only by candlelight, Mass is chanted in honor of Our Lady on a Saturday during Advent. We hope to continue this tradition for many years to come. The splendor of this Mass was a liturgical preamble to the candlelight procession into Midnight Mass, and to the most beautiful Christmas we have ever known.

Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.

The end of our Christ the King procession



At the close of our community retreat in October



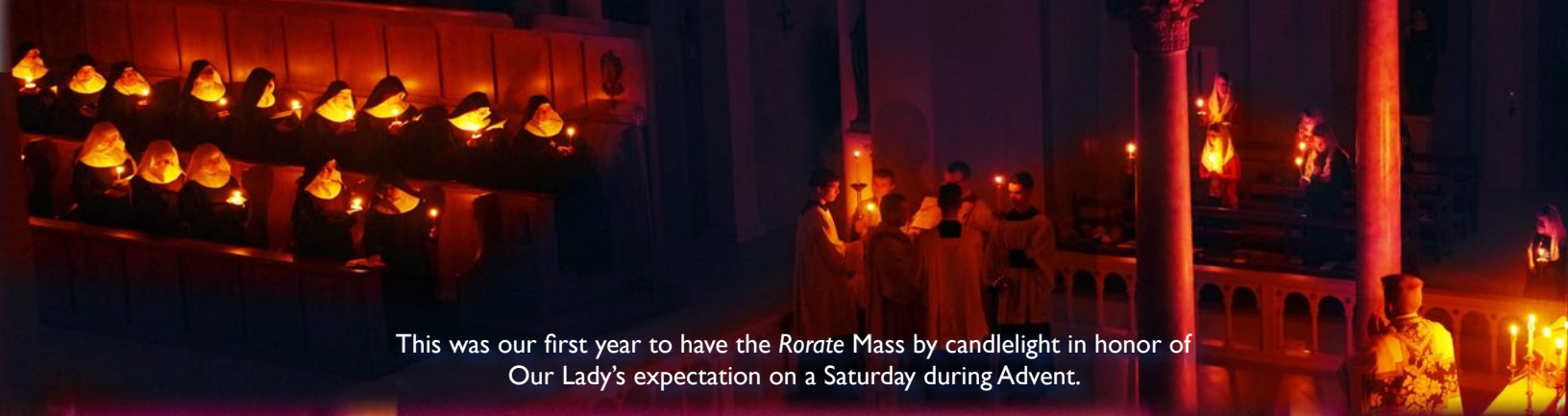
An unstoppable volunteer crew framed up our barn in one day and still had time to clear property! A second round returned to finish the barn that now houses our tractors and other equipment.



On St. Cecilia's Day, which was also Thanksgiving, eight candidates became postulants: Sr. Sarah (Minnesota) Sr. Joëlle (Holland) Sr. Angela (Oregon) Sr. Katherine (Nebraska) Sr. Cicely (Kentucky) Sr. Rosemarie (Ontario) Sr. Charis (Maine) and Sr. Veronica Anne (Ohio).



Our first secular oblates make their promises before Mother Abbess as Sr. Faustina, Sr. Theresa, Sr. Louise Benedicta, Sr. Mary Rita, Sr. Julian, Sr. Angela Marie, Sr. Josepha, Sr. Mary Mechtilde and Sr. Mary Benedict. We are happy to welcome them into our "extended family."



This was our first year to have the Rorate Mass by candlelight in honor of Our Lady's expectation on a Saturday during Advent.



Oráte caéli dé-super, et núbes plú- ant jústum. Conso-lámini, pópule m





N Béthlehem Judæ násci- tur ex Ma-rí- a Vírgi-ne fac- tus ho- mo.

Top: Mother Abbess sings the Christmas Martyrology on the morning of December 24th.
Left: Scaling the heights in preparing the baldachin on Christmas Eve. Above right: Sisters visit the creche after Compline. Above left and below: Chanting Midnight Mass in our new church.

Fr. Carney celebrates
Midnight Mass

Thanks to all of your generosity, we have been able to make our final payments on the church! We continue to rely on your support for our day-to-day operating expenses, which are not negligible owing to our many Sisters and buildings to maintain.

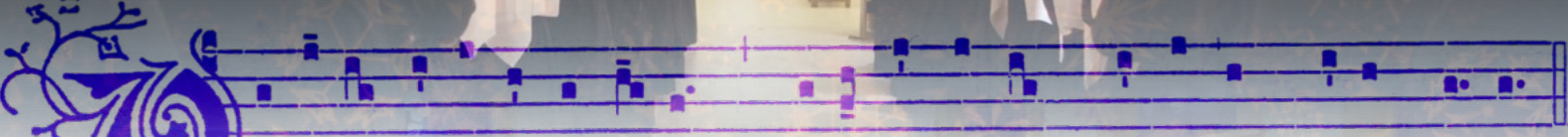


a-ti-vi-tas Dó-mi-ni nostri Jesu Chri-sti se-cúndum car-nem.

Above: Sr. Sophia and Sr. Philomena enjoy our meal together, and Mother Abbess wishes Sr. Wilhelmina a Merry Christmas! Right: Mother Abbess and Sr. Joëlle played Charpentier's "Te Deum" as the Sisters processed into Vespers on Christmas Day. Below: The Novitiate skit on Holy Innocents' Day


All night Adoration on New Year's Eve

Our newly-tiled *statio* is a peaceful place to recollect ourselves while waiting to process into the church.



Ení-te * adorémus é-um: qui a ípse est Dómi-nus Dé-us nóster.

The likewise newly-tiled Chapter House is now complete, and the community gathers to hear your intentions read each morning and to hear a spiritual work read each night.



Perennial heroes Paul and Jacob Villotti helped transform the former chapel into our new refectory (below.) They brought the dissembled high altar to our local parish, and reassembled it for use.

The postulants gang up on their Canadian cohort outside the new barn.



Sister Maria Battista
Is our tall Kenyan Sis-tah.
She sings a sweet song
As she goes along
Shoveling a winter wonderland!



When Sister Scholastica was putting the pictures together for this newsletter, I saw she had selected a picture of one of our dogs, Rosie, enjoying an early winter snow-fall. Upon seeing it, I had a strong feeling that we would need to include a sad bit of news before sending this off to the printer, as Rosie's health was quickly declining. Sure enough, our sweet dog closed her eyes for the last time on the Feast of Saint Agnes. She was a faithful and loyal companion to us for over 11 years, and will be dearly missed by both the Sisters, and her litter-mate, Sunny.

The sudden death of our future shepherd and even that of the little animal companion who served us so well sparked a reminder for all of us to "keep death daily before our eyes," as our Holy Father Benedict ad-jures us. This is certainly not out of a sense of morbidity, but rather, of our dignity and the immortality of our souls. Truly, we are meant to love the good God forever, and so this life takes on the element of a "practice run" that will determine our sharing in God's love and glory according to the measure of our love. So we persevere through this vale of tears (and snow) knowing that the smallest action, when united to the love of God, takes on infinite proportions. We thus anticipate the day when He shall wipe all tears from our eyes, and when all crea-

tion no longer groans for His coming, but reaches its full flowering through Him, Who is our life and Resurrection. Please know of all our prayers as we await that day together~

In the Merciful Heart of Jesus,

*Mother Cecilia, OSB
CtBears*

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver~
Sr. Maria Michaela of Michigan is no stranger to snow.



Sunny, on the left, is showing clearly that he is missing his sister, Rosie.



A mascot of "the Little Way!"

What's black & white & orange all over?
Sr. Tarcisia in our tractor, "Brother Phil!"



Epiphany blessings
with Fr. Ryan, FSSP



I-se-ri-córdi-as Dñi-ni in aeternum cantá-bo.



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8005 NW 316th Street
Gower, MO 64454



e-nedíctus es qui ámbu-las super pénnas vento-rum,

