

At Ephesus

Dear Family, Friends and Benefactors,

These greetings in the Lord come with our prayer that you have all received many graces so far this Lent, and that it continues to be a fruitful journey, drawing us all more closely to our loving Lord. For He, the Bridegroom of our souls, has gone before us to Calvary with footprints marked by Blood, and calls each of us so lovingly to follow after Him, so that we may partake of the glory He has prepared for us in the life beyond the veil. May it be a journey of fervent faith and love for us all, that Christ's light may truly shine in and through our souls!

Our monastic lives have continued on serenely and peacefully in our two houses since last we wrote. The Christmas season has drawn to a happy close, the brave young crocuses have risen out of the bare earth, the first to realize that spring is upon us, and the grounds are furrowed and prepared for the new life that will be sowed therein. We are so privileged to be able to continue singing the praises of God through the



Our Mexican Sister Daniela explains the piñata on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

changing seasons, each liturgical season having its own particular beauty, just like each of the four seasons. We are so grateful to have two houses chanting the Divine praises in unison, with one heart and one soul from this rather remote corner of the globe! The new postulants have been learning the ropes quickly, and look forward to receiving the holy habit of our order this summer, if all continues to go well!

Our foundation Sisters look forward with particular joy to the groundbreaking of their monastery in Ava this summer. Plans are moving ahead quickly! It is a monumental task ahead of us, as it will not be the gradual construction process we have known at Gower, but an all-encompassing and very expensive project, mainly due to inflation and the rising cost of supplies. But we take a leap of faith, trusting in the good God and St. Joseph to financially see the project through before the task becomes a near impossibility! We have no choice with our continued and steady growth - a wonderful "problem" to have! So we fly to St. Joseph once more with great confidence, seeing how well he provided for our construction needs here at the Abbey. We also remind him he has an obligation to build his own house, the monastery of St. Joseph. Please lend him a hand in the construction, that a new house of God may rise up in the Ozark mountains!

In closing, and with advanced thanks to God for all His benefits, we wish you all a blessed remainder of Lent and Holy Week, and a most joyful and glorious Easter to follow! You remain always in the hearts and prayers of each Sister.

In the Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph,

Mother Cecilia, OSB

Mother Abbess Cecilia and Sisters

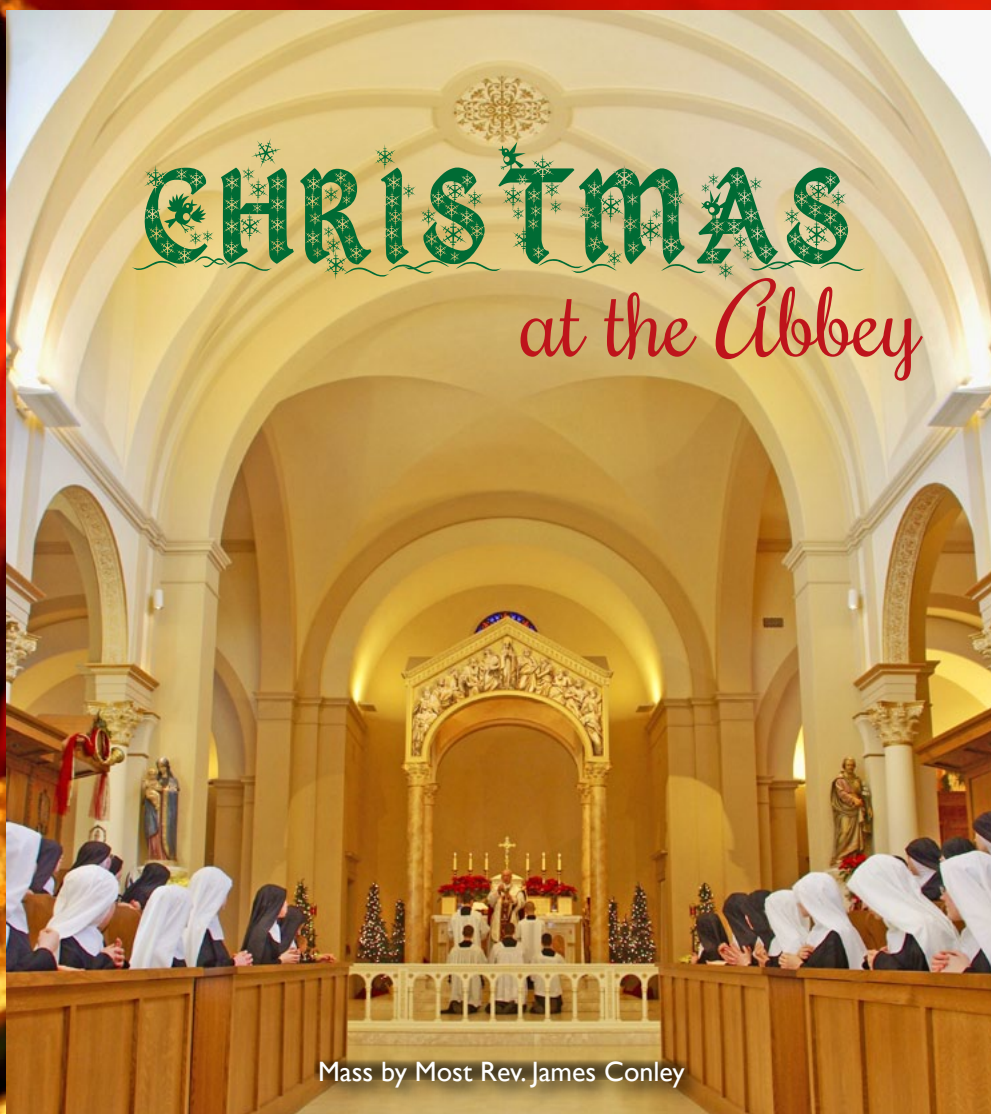




The Holy Innocents' meal,
elegantly prepared by the Novitiate



A prayer before the creche



CHRISTMAS

at the Abbey

Mass by Most Rev. James Conley



Baking
cookies!



Our many faithful altar servers
at Midnight Mass



Candlemas at the Abbey

...and at Ava



Christmas Caroling



Our three
postulants at
Ava: Sr. Grace,
Sr. Aulani, and
Sr. Amy



Fr. Jambon offers a Christmastide Mass.



Candlemas at Ava



Sr. Benedicta mounted her brother's lift to clean the church windows.



Beating Winter Blues



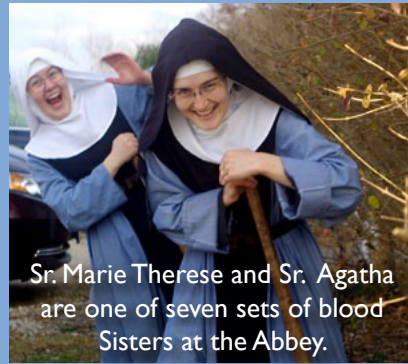
Winter months are great for wood chipping in order to cover the Abbey paths.



Members of the novitiate gather around a snow bear they artfully crafted.



Sr. Collette inspects homemade candles, the product of donations of candle stubs!



Sr. Marie Therese and Sr. Agatha are one of seven sets of blood Sisters at the Abbey.

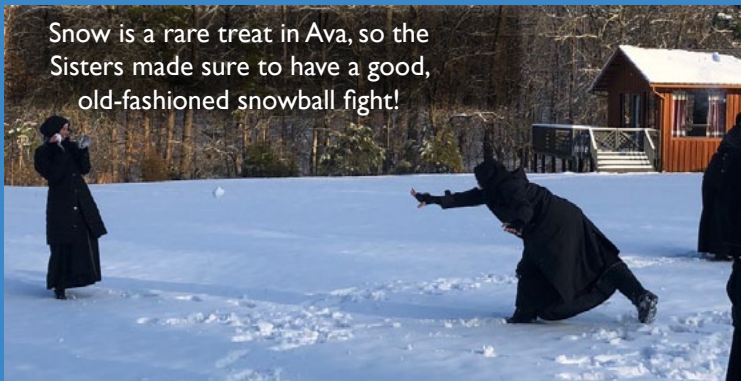


Sr. Felicity and Sr. Caroline weed the medicinal and fragrant Sweet Annie.



The warmth of the cows takes the bite out of the cold!





Snow is a rare treat in Ava, so the Sisters made sure to have a good, old-fashioned snowball fight!



The burial of the Alleluia before Septuagesima, an event mourned by the Sisters in Ava.



A mailbox is installed on the new property, at the site of the new monastery



A Christmastide picnic on the new property.



Scouting out the neighboring property, and getting the lay of the land.



Saint Joseph's Monastery in Ava, Missouri

*Construction begins this summer --
Your support is greatly appreciated!*



