

Abbey of Our
Lady of Ephesus
Gower, MO

JULY 2021

At Ephesus

BENEDICTINES OF MARY, QUEEN OF APOSTLES

Hats off to our
neighbors and
local officials
who closed Mac
Road for our
safety!



Dear Family, Friends and Benefactors,

We want to begin by thanking you for all the support, prayers and concern that flooded the Abbey since the unfortunate incidents that took place here during Lent. For those of you who aren't on our e-mail list or have not heard from news stories, there was a series of shootings here at the Abbey in Gower over a period of a few weeks. In the final incident, a bullet from a high-powered rifle entered into my cell several feet from my bed, passed through an interior wall, and was finally stopped by a shower wall. Thanks be to God and His holy angels, no one was hurt. And in spite of the many shots fired, not even a window

was broken. Our local law enforcement took immediate action, and the investigation continues. Please join us in praying for the soul of the person or persons who showed such animosity toward Our Lord, even firing shots directly at the church.

With the generous response of so many, we quickly raised the funds to build a wall across the front of the property (though we still await the construction due to delays in manufacturing.) Our neighbors, quite upset about the incident, suggested and supported the idea of closing the portion of Mac Road that runs alongside our property, which has unfortunately been the site of many other incidents of harassment over the past ten years. The petition to the county commissioners was successful, and has brought a tremendous amount of peace, as the Sisters now carry out their outdoor duties with much greater privacy.

All these incidents have led us to a greater reflection on the blessings of Christian forgiveness, our

One of our
neighbors
invites us to
pick delicious
cherries each
year from her
property.



Sr. Tarcisia's brother, Joseph, came with his vintage tractor to help with the baling in front of the Abbey... seemingly one of the few places that John Deeres and Kubotas can get along!



Corpus Christi

The newly ordained Fr. Joseph Dalimata, FSSP celebrated a First Mass and led our Eucharistic procession over a carefully crafted bed of flower petals spread before the feet of Our Lord.



The first Masses of Fr. Thu Truong, FSSP, Fr. Garrett King, Fr. Benjamin Armentrout (below left) and Fr. John Audino, FSSP, (below right) at Ephesus occasioned reunions with many friends, especially our favorite aspiring NFL star, James Augustine Butker (above).



"Our vocation is not to go forth and reap in Our Father's fields. Jesus does not say to us: "Look down and reap the harvest." Our mission is even more sublime. "Lift up your eyes and see," saith our Divine Master, "see how in Heaven there are empty thrones. It is for you to fill them....You are as Moses praying on the mountain, so ask Me for labourers and they shall be sent. I only await a prayer, a sigh! Is not the apostolate of prayer – so to speak – higher than that of the spoken word? It is for us by prayer to train workers who will spread the glad tidings of the Gospel and who will save countless souls – the souls to whom we shall be the spiritual Mothers." –St. Therese of Lisieux



"Somebody's sleeping in my bed!" A stray cat showed up at the Abbey, winning several hearts. She made herself at home to the chagrin of our dog, Josie.

Mother Abbess named the cat "Callie," and later found out that it belonged to our neighbors', who had given her the same name! Our neighbors let us keep her, so each morning, Sisters see Callie waiting for the fountain of Our Lady of Ephesus to be turned on so she can bat the streams of water coming from her hands.



freedoms, our vocations, and our very lives. Again we were reminded to "stay spiritually safe," and also "keep death daily before our eyes," as St. Benedict exhorts in his Holy Rule. Of course, we do not take a cavalier attitude toward death. We do what we must, and take the precaution of constructing the security fence, but our interior peace remains.

The incident also made us appreciate some of the liberties we have as Americans, religion, free speech, self-defense etc. But what became more apparent to us is that freedoms we cherish are completely dependent upon God's law. When that is gone, it is harder to defend our freedoms, as there is no moral compass. But our area is blessed by a deeply Christian population that understands this. The order that God wills in society and in our souls are among the truths we daily strive to contemplate, united at the feet of Our Lord in the spirit of St. Mary Magdalen. This loving contemplative gaze, along with fervent intercessory prayer for priests and all souls, fills our hearts with a peace and joy the world cannot give!



Our hoop houses keep us eating healthy greens year round, but the Sisters enjoy treats like St. Anthony's bread on his feast (right)



Know that, despite the "news" of the shootings, there are at the same time a multitude of ordinary incidents and hours of quiet prayer that fill our days and keep us at rest at the feet of Our Lord. Fortunately, the incident has neither robbed us of deep sleep, nor has it stopped young women from inquiring after our way of life. The first of many entering the Abbey this year has already arrived, and a few more will try their vocations at Ava. We will be just about full to capacity in both houses! We would be especially grateful if you would join your prayers to ours for the lifting of the religious visa suspension for two European candidates awaiting entry.

Our dear friend of many years, Fr. Michael Barone, journeyed from Newark to give a course on the liturgical development of the Mass and Office of the Sacred Heart. We hope to have him return for more classes in the future!



The situation is more pressing down south, so a beautiful 350 acre parcel was purchased within the precincts of Ava, so that the sacraments will still be made available to the Catholic population of that area. It is real gift from God, with an ideal "cloistered area" ready for immediate construction. We are all very excited to be building again!

So a wall goes up at Gower, and left-over funds will go to begin building the walls of a new church and monastery in Ava. Know that we count on your support more than ever, as



we'll need a roof and a floor to go with those walls! Your generosity will allow still more women to approach the altar of God, in order to belong to Him alone. Our own first professed, novices and postulants are preparing for their upcoming ceremonies, which we hope to share with you next time.

Until then, thank you for keeping us at the feet of our Savior, where we continue to pray for you all. May He reward your kindness and goodness to us at all times!

In His Merciful Heart,

Mother Cecilia, OSB

Above: Cool mornings are ideal for weeding! At right: Faithful guard dogs Josie and Bella pose with Sisters along the cleared path along the front road. We are ready to put up the great wall of Gower!



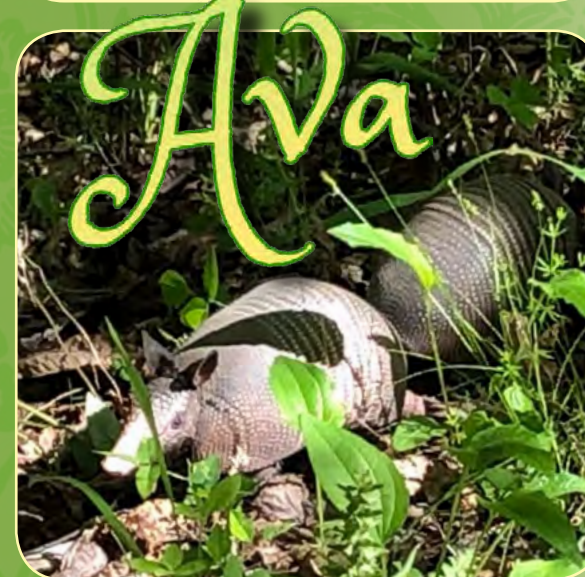
Hiking is the favorite recreation activity of our Ava Sisters, which requires some cooling off from time to time! Their adventures include a bonfire, spelunking and armadillo sightings as well! (Opposite)



News from



Our Ava Sisters help shorten the waiting list for House of Ephesus vestments.



As space in the St. Joseph's Monastery chapel is limited (as seen on Rogation Day, top right) the Sisters transport sacristy items each Sunday to a local hall, affectionately known as "The Jamboree" to accommodate the faithful of the area who come for Mass. They recently witnessed the first Communion of one young neighbor, who then offered the crown to Our Lady at the annual May crowning. We hope to soon construct a church to more worthily host the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on the new property (see next page.)

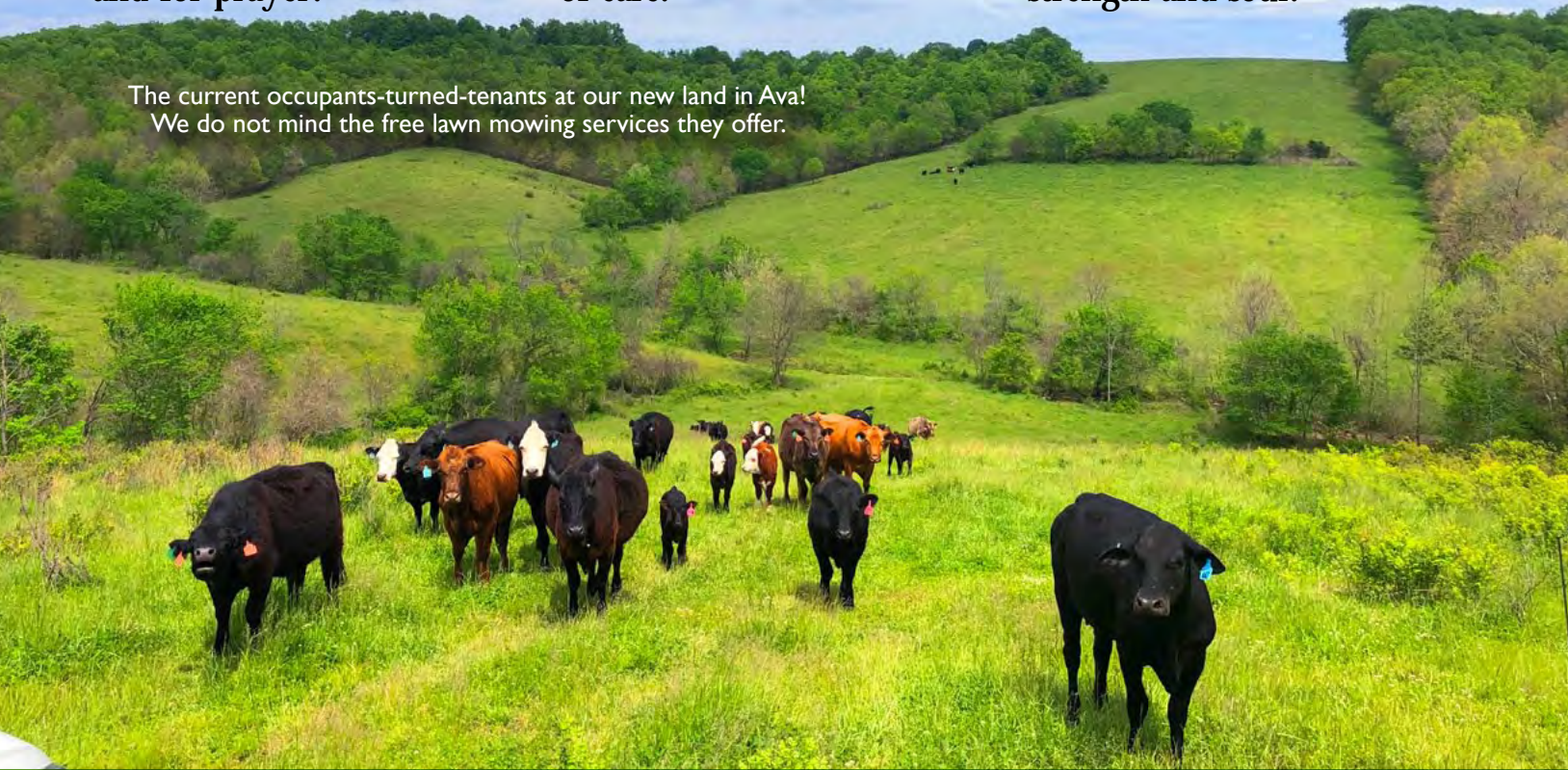


This is the land
For which we've longed
For labor
and for prayer!

Here we shall stand
Beside the wronged
Throughout this world
of care.

This is the land
Where we shall love
With heart, mind,
strength and soul!

The current occupants-turned-tenants at our new land in Ava!
We do not mind the free lawn mowing services they offer.



Holding the hand
Of God's Sweet Dove
Who leads us to our goal!

Let us thank God
For all His gifts!
For choosing us to be

Here on this sod
Until He lifts
Us to eternity!
-Sr. Wilhelmina



Above: The Sisters explore the site of their future monastery. Though dogs are their only animals now (left) the cows now pastured on the land remind the Sisters that they will soon have their own, as well as plenty of room to farm.



Mother Abbess and Sr. Marie-Bernarde (in black) surprised the Sisters, beating them to the property to celebrate the closing. The property is now ours, temporarily rented to the former ranching owner until we build, which will be soon. So with your help, we begin again!



BENEDICTINES OF MARY, QUEEN OF APOSTLES
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Mary has chosen the best part, which will not be taken from her. Let us study, then, too, in possessing what no one can take away from us, by listening not to distracted, but attentive: for it happens at the very grain of the heavenly word to be stolen, if it is sown along the road. Be, like Mary, animated by the desire for wisdom: this is a greater, more perfect work. *-St. Ambrose*

