

At Ephesus

A morning mist
envelops the Abbey

Dear Family, Friends and Benefactors,

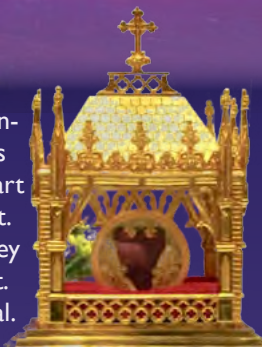
A blessed Paschaltide to each and every one of you, though by the time you receive this we will be closer to Pentecost! If ever we had an excuse for the tardiness of this newsletter, I hope this one will do: on April 28, Divine Mercy Sunday and the feast of our secondary patron, St. Louis Marie de Montfort, we said goodbye to the Sisters setting out to begin our first daughter house! When the search for our first foundation was on, we first headed down to a little town called Ava, Missouri, where Bishop Edward Rice met us and showed us a very large house that had become available. It is situated in the beauty of the Ozarks, at the foot of a hill that is "crying for a monastery." We thanked our dear friend for his paternal charity, and it was indeed extremely difficult to turn it down in favor of Bishop Morlino's offer. The community agreed that Ava would be first on the waiting list for a foundation as soon as we were able to send Sisters to the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. (This is the former Diocese of our own Bishop Johnston!)

Plans moved forward toward Madison, but when Bishop Morlino suddenly and unexpectedly passed to eternity, our foundational compass turned south again. We remain very grateful to the Diocese of Madison for all they had done in preparation for the cancelled move, and if our welcome is still extant when we are again ready to make a foundation, we will happily resume plans to go north, according to God's will!

Our Lent was an arduous one, filled with both the typical trials in addition to the extensive preparations. The Lenten austerities had two major interruptions for two landmarks of our dear Sister Wilhelmina: her Diamond Jubilee (75 years in vows) and her 95th birthday!

We enjoyed a truly glorious Easter octave, made all the more beautiful by the presence of our dear Redemptorist brothers of Papa Stron-say (newly ordained Deacons!) It was also surely enhanced by the approaching good-byes. The pain of separation was far more acute than anything we had anticipated, but the fruits are well worth it. Our Savior Himself said that mothers forget their pain for joy that a child is born into the world, and so too for our foundation.

Below: Sister Jean-Marie venerates the incorrupt heart of her patron, St. Jean-Marie Vianney March 19th at St. Joseph Cathedral.



SACRED
HEART
NOVENA
OF MASSES
June 28-July 6
ENROLL AT
benedictinesofmary.org

A unique opportunity to **DOUBLE YOUR DONATION!!**

An anonymous donor has stepped forward to offer the community a matching gift of \$500,000 if the equivalent can be raised by November.

Your contributions will go towards the purchase of the house and general support of our Sisters in Ava, and will assist us in our future goal of a guesthouse for laity here at the Abbey!



Sr. Wilhelmina makes her Communion thanksgiving at the Mass commemorating her on her 75th anniversary of vows March 9th. She was applauded upon her entry to her party that evening, after which a Te Deum was sung in the church for her years of loving service.



*Our Lady smiles on youthful nuns,
She loves them well.
Our Lady's smile like sunshine floods
Each convent cell,
But fondest falls Our Lady's smile
Where old nuns dwell;
Old nuns whose hearts are young with love
For Mary's Son,
Old nuns whose prayers for faltering souls
Have victory won,
Old nuns whose lives are beautiful
With service done.
Their love a loveless world has saved
From God's dread rod,
The paths where sorrow walks with sin
Their feet have trod,
The knees have worn the flags that pave
The house of God.
Our Lady smiles on youthful nuns,
She loves them well;
Our Lady's smile like sunshine floods
Each convent cell;
But fondest falls Our Lady's smile
Where old nuns dwell. -J. Hayes-*



Another wonderful festivity took place on April 13th when Sister celebrated her 95th birthday! We remain so grateful to God that our most beloved Sister gives us such a beautiful example of fidelity!

Sr. Wilhelmina reacts with astonishment as a novice presents her with a large bowl of her favorite: homemade ICE CREAM!



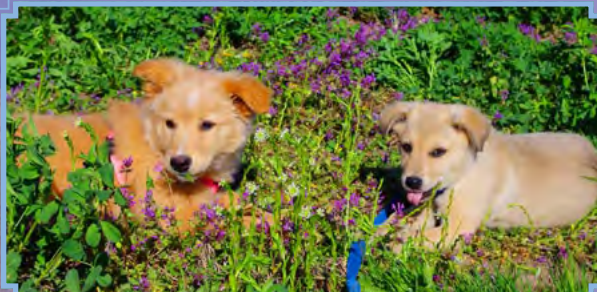
SPRING THINGS

One of our barn cats had two kittens, complete with a Benedictine habit!

The Sisters undertook construction of a squash tunnel and greenhouse using recycled construction materials.



New rescue puppies Josie (left) and Bella (right) have found a happy home with us, and we are equally happy to have them!



The Sisters are nearly finished! Here's hoping for no more pesky squash bugs, raccoons, possum or deer invasions!



HOLY WEEK 2019

The Palm Sunday procession



Below: "Veneremur cernui," the end of the Holy Thursday Eucharistic procession to the altar of repose, where Sisters took turns consoling Our Lord until midnight.





The veneration of the Cross at the Solemn Afternoon Liturgy of Good Friday.



Above: Tenebræ Below: Compline following the evening liturgies



Above: The blessing of the Easter Fire.

Below Left: "Lumen Christi" is chanted as the tricereio is brought in.

Below Right: The Prophecies





Above: A cautionary song warned future Ava postulants what *not* to do. Below: A Haydn concert Above: A comical goodbye "Bom-Irish blessing"

FOND FAREWELLS



Above: The foundresses did their own skit about approaching trials. Above right: The Sisters receive Mother Abbess' blessing before the send-off.



NEW BEGINNING



Bishop Rice of Springfield–Cape Girardeau blessed our new monastery before the first Mass, and gave a beautiful welcome to Mother Abbess and the foundresses. Another Sister has joined these Sisters to make a happy home of seven...for now!

THE FOUNDING OF THE MONASTERY OF SAINT JOSEPH, AVA, MISSOURI



Father Joseph Kelly and Father Jeffery Jambon assist the Bishop in the blessing before Mass.





Our "Not-so-Little House in the Ozarks" built into the side of a hill amidst beautiful country made famous by Laura Ingalls Wilder, who wrote her books in nearby Mansfield.



(continued from page 1)

We have every hope that God is glorified in His new dwelling place just north of the Arkansas border. There seven voices are raised heavenward in the chanting of the Divine Office night and day — a true blessing for our community, the local church and the Church at large!

Our heroic little band of foundresses have been heartily welcomed, and so many generous souls have helped them settle in. The only things that have not been so heartily welcoming have been the weather, disturbed chimney swifts entering through the fireplace, and the local armadillo population! But the Sisters set to work under the guidance of their holy patron, St. Joseph, to make a little replica of Ephesus down south, and to "civilize" the wildness of the beauty surrounding them.

Please pray for our pioneers, and for us too. The Sisters are sorely missed in choir and everywhere at the Abbey, but we know that God will continue to bless us as we rely on your prayerful support. Please know of our prayers too, as always!

In His Merciful Heart,

*Mother Cecilia, OSB
CpBears*

MONASTERY OF
SAINT JOSEPH
RR5 BOX 438
AVA, MO 65608

The first night in Ava, an F1 tornado touched down in a nine mile path ending within a quarter of a mile of our monastery! It was a dramatic welcome in which our angels worked overtime! Thankfully, there was only slight damage to the house, though our neighbors were not quite as fortunate in dealing with uprooted trees.



IT WOULD BE
EASIER TO
SEPARATE LIGHT
FROM THE SUN
THAN MARY
FROM JESUS.

~ St. Louis Marie de Montfort

