Dear Family, Friends and Benefactors,

Once again, we greet you and pray that our latest newsletter finds you well, though our greatest hope is not so much that you are physically well, though that is certainly always a blessing. Much more so, we pray that you are spiritually well, without a trace of fear from the many temptations to abandon the supernatural peace of soul the Lord is always desiring for us. For truly, this earthly life is simply a voyage to our true home, and there is no escaping the certainty of death. But it seems the strategy of many of the people holding the virtual megaphones is to scare us into an unnatural paralyzation with the prospect of death, so much so that we are willing to completely lock ourselves down and keep ourselves isolated from one another. The truth of the matter is, we are all going to die one day - perhaps tomorrow in a car accident, next year from a bad case of the flu, or in five years after a battle with cancer. We all desire to live forever, but too often our vision becomes limited to the short, transitory stage of our life on earth, rather than looking toward the life beyond the veil - the life that will last eternally! It seems like “stay safe” is the new send off for communications, like our grade school teachers’ exhortation before heading out for recess. We must, rather, stay spiritually safe, always ready to meet God, Whom we desire to know, love and serve in this world, in order to be happy with Him in the world to come, which has no end!

As Divine providence would have it, the situation provided us with the occasion of an unspeakable grace: that of hosting a priestly ordination here at the Abbey. Who could have known only two years ago when our beloved church was consecrated, that we would be able to provide a haven for the sacrament of holy orders! The Sons of the Most Holy Redeemer, based in Papa Stronsay, Scotland, had one plan after another evaporate, and the most unlikely option suddenly became the only feasible one. We were overjoyed!

The ordination of Fr. Martin Mary came as the climax of a whole chain of ceremonies here at the Abbey: two first professions, six investitures, and two solemn professions. One week later, more ceremonies of our daughter-house took place at St. Joseph’s Church in Springfield, Missouri.

On the Feast of St. Augustine, we had the unsurpassable joy of hosting an ordination at the Abbey. Our dear friend, Father Martin Mary, FSSR and his confreres were lockdown refugees who came by way of the Caribbean. Thankfully, his family in England was able to join us through livestream. At left, Father offers his first Mass.
Here come the brides! The postulants and novices processed into the church (above and far right). The postulants attended Mass at the back of the choir until called forward to receive the holy habit.

With an almost defiant air, Sr. Maria Stella and Sr. Martina “stood their ground” (left) when the Bishop told them they could freely leave. The two stated their resolve, and then read their charts of profession (bottom left and right).

at the Abbey
August 21st 2020
and Investitures
of Sister Rafaela, Sister Anastasia, Sister Daniela, Sister Josephine, Sister Katarina and Sister Maria Victoria

After signing their charts and singing the ancient Suscipe, a beaming set of newly-black-veiled professed made their way back to their places (above.)

The postulants approached the altar to have their hair cut (above) then returned in their black tunics to receive the remaining parts of their habit, the candle and new names (bottom left and right.)

Special thanks to Bishop Finn and Fr. Matthew McCarthy, ssrr and Fr. Daniel Heenan ssrr for assisting.

(Left to right) Since Sr. Maria Stella is from Germany, Sr. Anastasia from Kansas, Sr. Katarina from Lithuania, Sr. Daniela from Mexico, Sr. Rafaela from Austria, Sr. Maria Victoria from Poland, Sr. Josephine from England, and Sr. Martina from Florida, many family members were unable to come due to travel restrictions (and Sr. Martina’s family having a medical emergency.) But they were with us in spirit as the sisters joyfully offered their lives to God.
August 22nd 2020
Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Holding their wedding rings high, the Sisters sang to all present that they were “now espoused to Him Whom the angels serve.”

The Bishop placed crowns of flowers on the Sisters’ heads, in anticipation of when the Lord Himself crowns their fidelity in the life to come.

The Sisters chant again, “behold, that which I desired, I now possess.”

Cutting a beautiful cake by Anna Araque.

The newly professed receive Communion.
First Professions
of Sister Mary Petra and Sister Véronica


The profession charts were placed beneath the corporal of the altar, upon which Fr. Joseph Kelly offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The professurae and Bishop Rice exchanged smiles throughout. We were so grateful for Bishop Rice’s indefatigably cheerful presence, in spite of recent personal injustice and a family tragedy.

The chanting of the ancient Suscipe with outstretched arms. Note the outstretched arms of the Sacred Heart behind! Below: the profession chart is shown to Mother Abbess Cecilia.

Springfield, MO
September 5th 2020
Nor has that been the end of our blessings, as six candidates are entering the Abbey this fall, in spite of the visiting blackout of this year, and another two joining our house in Ava. We have no doubt that our dear Sr. Wilhelmina will see to the continued growth, both spiritually and numerically, within our ranks. We've received a great deal of positive feedback from the new book on her life, and her influence and beautiful example are reaching souls far and wide, thanks be to God! If you have not yet gotten a copy, we still have plenty of books available for sale.

Thanks are due to you as well, especially as we have now completed our new guest house at the Abbey. With your generous assistance, a large, ranch style house is now available to host silent lay retreatants as well as families. It has been booking up extremely quickly, demonstrating clearly the words of Saint Benedict, that monasteries are never without guests! We are so grateful that we can be a haven of prayer and silence tucked away in the northwest corner of rural Missouri. We owe so much to St. Joseph as well, and have decided to name the retreat house in his honor. We hope you will be able to stay sometime!

The liturgical year is now drawing to a close, and we look forward to the seasons of Advent and Christmas with holy joy and expectation, looking forward to all of the wonderful tidings that come to us at that time. May the good God bless you and keep you all — spiritually safe!

In His Merciful Heart,

Mother Cecilia, OSB

Mother Cecilia, Abbess and Sisters
God is giving only two means to defend His Church. The first is devotion to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The second is devotion to Our Blessed Lady.

—Saint John Bosco

September 21-22, a visit from the miraculous International Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima began with an all night Eucharistic vigil.