Fall 2020

At Ephesus

Abbey of Our Lady of Ephesus
Gower, MO

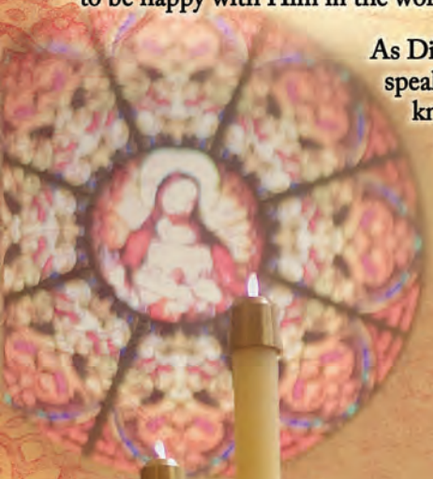
Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles

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 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 insurpassable 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 Carribean. Thankfully, his family in England was able to join us through livestream.
At left, Father offers his first Mass.

First Professions

of Sister Martina and Sister Maria Stella

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.)

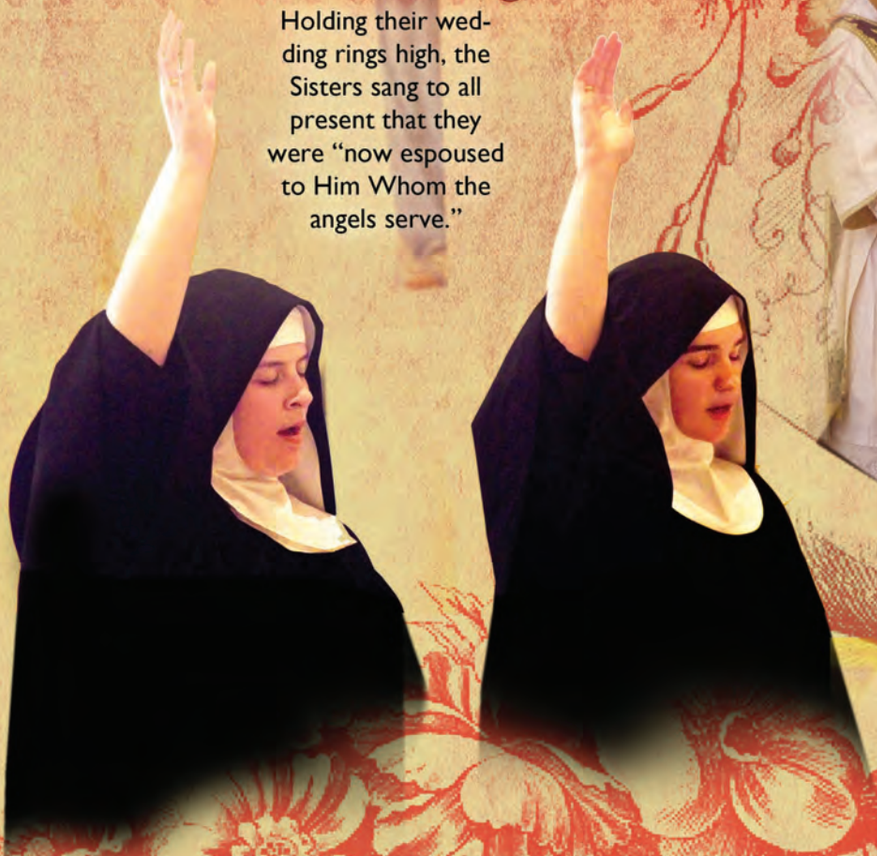
The postulants approached the altar to have their hair cut (above) then returned in their black tunics to receive the remaining parts of their habit, the candle and new names (bottom, left and right.)

Special thanks to Bishop Finn and Fr. Matthew McCarthy, FSSP and Fr, Daniel Heenan FSSP 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.

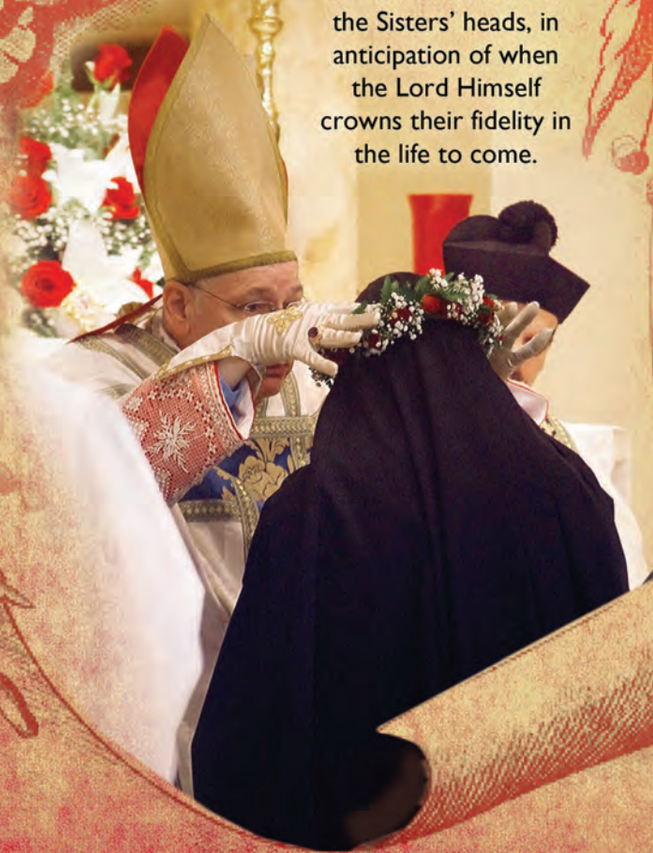
August 22nd 2020

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 newly professed receive Communion.



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 posess."

Cutting a beautiful cake by Anna Araque.

First Professions

of Sister Mary Petra and Sister Veronica

The Sisters prepare before Mass. St. Joseph's church in Springfield hosted our sisters of St. Joseph's monastery in Ava.

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

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

Investiture
of Sister Gemma Rose

Sister approaches the altar (above) to have her hair cut (right) and receive her new name (above right.)

Congratulations to our brave pioneers in southern Missouri! May the Lord grant increase in grace and in number.

(Continued from page 1)

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

The new Saint Joseph's Guest House!

Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles
8005 NW 316th Street
Gower, MO 64454

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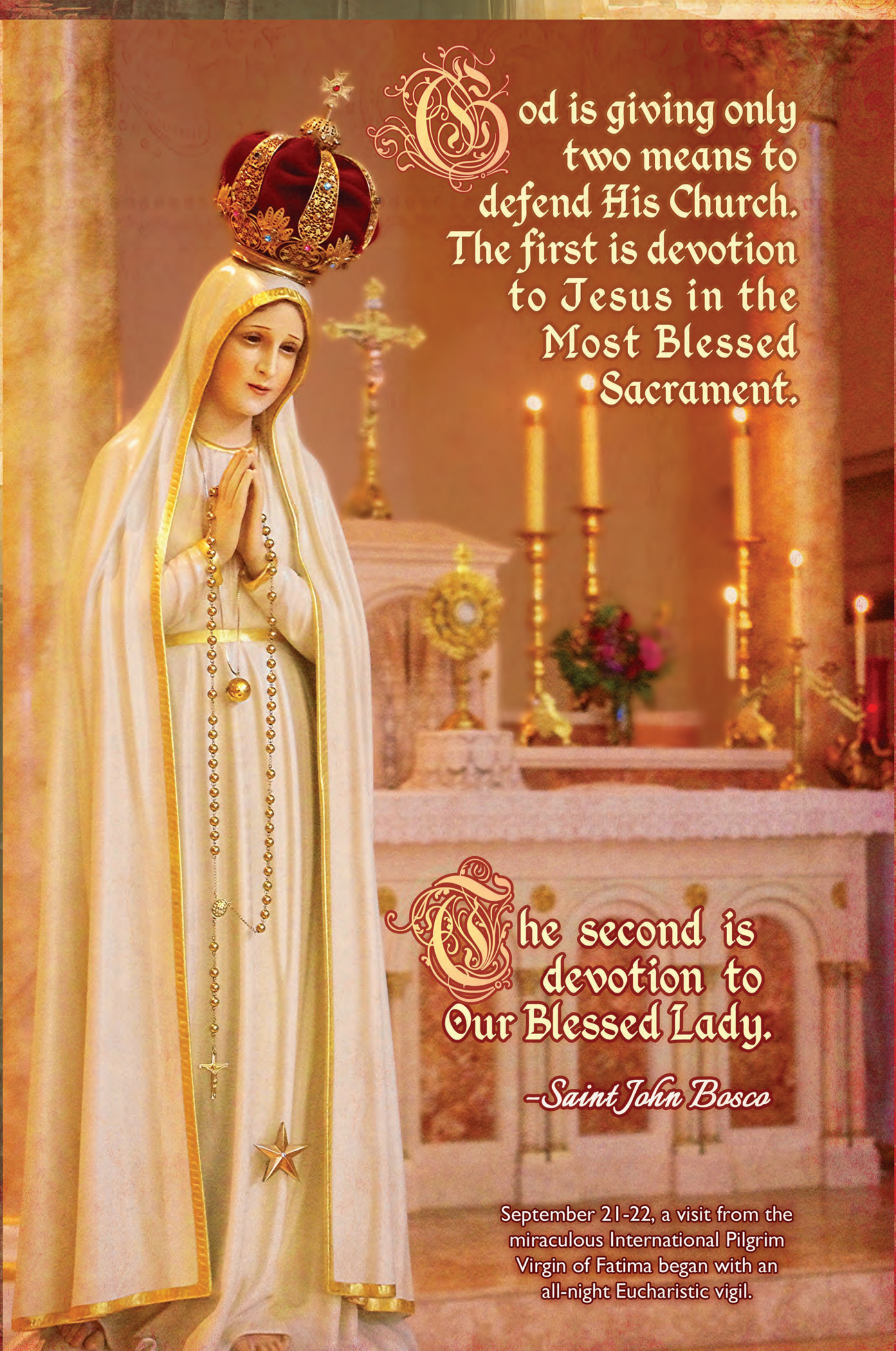
Our first ceremony in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau.



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.