

BENEDICTINES OF MARY,  
QUEEN OF APOSTLES  
GOWER, MO - AVA, MO  
EVANSVILLE, IN - COLWICH, UK

FALL 2025

# At Ephesus

Dear Family Friends and Benefactors,

A most blessed autumn to you all! We pray it has been as full of graces for you as for us! The recent weeks and months have seen new entrances, elections, the joint celebrations of solemn professions of Sisters at Ephesus and St. Mary's, joint first professions and investitures for Ephesus and St. Anne's, first professions and investitures at St. Joseph's, and a solemn profession taking place while this newsletter is at the printers! Pictures from that ceremony will be posted online. We are so grateful for God's goodness in all He has done for us, and the continued hope He gives for the future in so many beautiful new vocations!

Herding the goats of Colwich.



Happy Birthday, Blessed Mother! Sr. Stephen blows out a birthday candle at Ava, while the Sisters do the same at Evansville (below.)



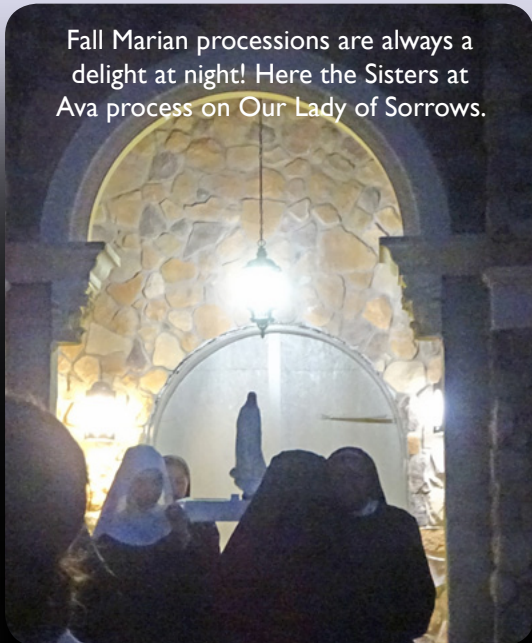
Now unfortunately, with this marvelous growth comes financial strain, a topic that I try not to let weigh too much on my heart. I hesitate to write this, as I know we're a bit like a broken record - and I am deeply saddened when someone writes an unhappy message saying that all we do is ask for money. How I wish we did not have to! But so many more do understand that by supporting those who have made the sacrifice of their lives for love of the Lord, for the Church, for the salvation of souls, you are uniting yourselves to this hidden, but vitally important work, and will be so rewarded by our good God.

We are blessed with our own produce, dairy, eggs and some meat to help keep our food bills very low (less than \$1 per Sister per day!) and we strive to live frugally in all areas, as St. Benedict would have it. Our vestment and music sales also help to pay the basic bills, but we still struggle. At present, we continue to pay off the remaining debt on St. Joseph's Priory in Ava, while still trying to find the means to finish the payments for our new houses in Evansville and England.

It is really remarkable that we have come so far with only a couple six-digit donations over the years. It is a testament to the faith of so many, you who have given what you could over time. Please know that our gratitude is boundless! Our community has been able to expand thanks to the generosity of many souls, rather than monumental gifts from just a few, and there is something inherently beautiful about that. So many generous hearts make up our "extended family," if you will, and enable womens' traditional monastic life to flourish! But of course, we would happily and grateful accept any of those bigger gifts that some of you may just have the means to offer!

Please support us as you are able, and most especially, pray with us, that we can be set in a better place by the end of the year, poised to move forward on the completion of St. Joseph's Priory church and other future projects, rather than focusing so much on catching up, trying to stay above water because of needed expansion - we are now about 90 Sisters! We have absolute faith that the Lord will help us through our growing pains, through the instrumentality of all of you. And in the meantime, please do not forget our deep gratitude and many prayers for you and all of the intentions in your hearts.

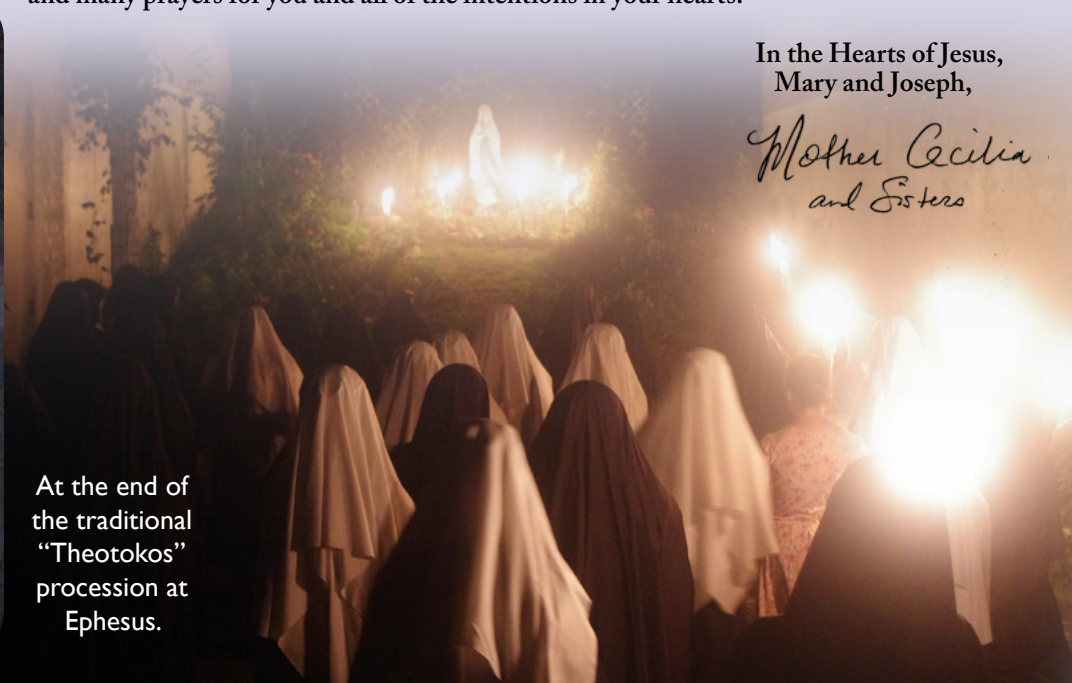
Fall Marian processions are always a delight at night! Here the Sisters at Ava process on Our Lady of Sorrows.



In the Hearts of Jesus,  
Mary and Joseph,

*Mother Cecilia  
and Sisters*

At the end of  
the traditional  
"Theotokos"  
procession at  
Ephesus.







The newly professed receive the black veils.



The newly shorn Sr. Raphael Marie retires to change into her habit



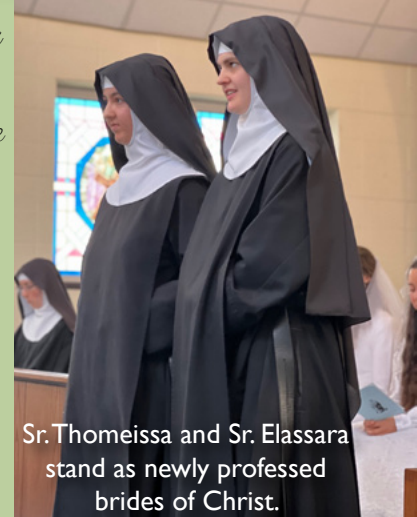
# *Saint Joseph's Priory* FIRST PROFESSIONS & INVESTITURES



*Sr. Ellassara & Sr. Thomeissa  
Novices Sr. Marie Austina,  
Sr. Raphael Marie, Sr. Leonie  
& Sr. Miriam Ruth.*



Sr. Ellassara congratulated by her parents.



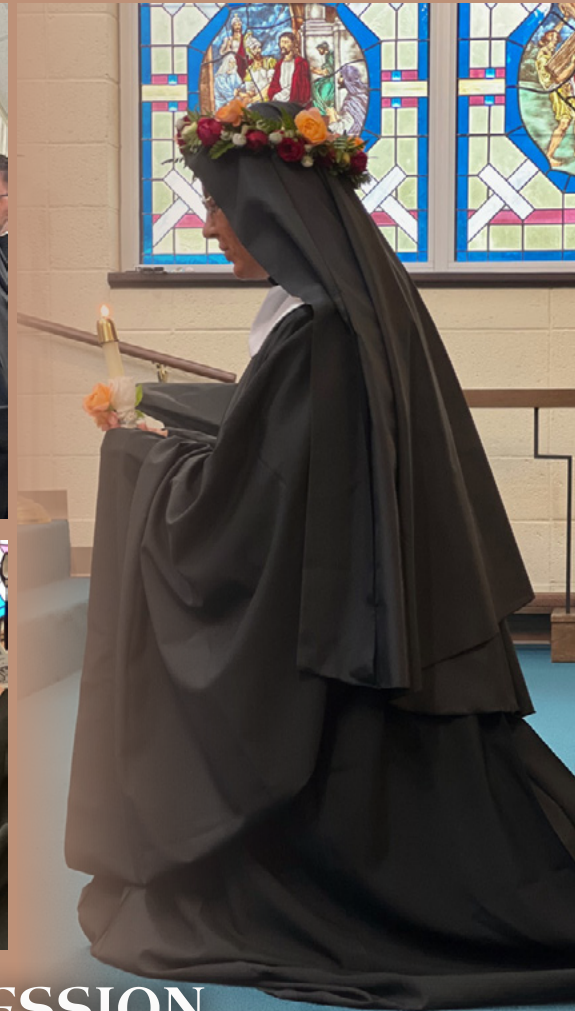
Sr. Thomeissa and Sr. Ellassara stand as newly professed brides of Christ.

*October 13, 2025*



We are most grateful to Fr. Peirano and the parishioners at St. Leo's parish in Ava for graciously hosting us, and look forward to the time when ceremonies can take place in the monastery church.





*Sr. Gemma Rose's*

# SOLEMN PROFESSION

*October 18, 2025  
Ava, MO*



The Litany of Saints is chanted while  
Sister is covered by the funeral pall  
to signify her death to the world.





*Sr. Anastasia, Sr. Daniela & Sr. Katarina's*  
**SOLEMN PROFESSION**

The Bishop blesses  
and confers the wedding ring  
with the words "I espouse  
you to Jesus Christ."



*September 20, 2025*



Mother Abbess  
escorts each of the  
professed to her  
new choir stall.



Bishop Finn congratulates the  
Sisters following the Mass



The joy is exuberant after  
these beautiful ceremonies!





*Sr. Antonea and Sr. Concetta's*  
**FIRST PROFESSION**  
*September 27, 2025*



The Bishop  
admonishes the  
professurae.



Chanting the  
ancient Suscipe.



The newly veiled  
professed!





# INVESTITURES

*of Sr. Felicity, Sr. Maura,  
Sr. Martha, Sr. Nathaniela,  
Sr. Timothea and Sr. Renée*



The Bishop  
cuts the  
novices'  
hair.



Bishop  
Johnston  
blesses  
the new  
novices.



Special thanks  
to Mom Araque  
for the cake and  
Miriam Bauer for  
photos!





Sr. Lois receives the miraculous medal - our first postulant at Colwich!



Double trouble! British blood Sisters, Sr. Josephine and Sr. Mary Solana, back in an English kitchen!



Faithful dogs, Bianca and Banjo, keep the milkers company and the foxes at bay.



Sr. Emmanuel tidies near the old convent wall and gate.



The greenhouse still bears fruit!



Painting is a perpetual project!



The Jordan Sisters were able to reconnect with a childhood friend, the newly ordained Canon Joseph McCowen who offered a first Mass in Preston, about an hour north of Colwich.





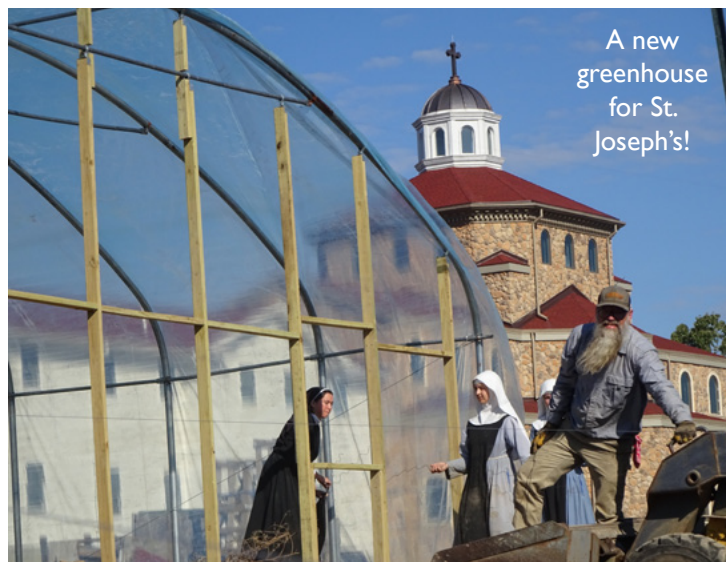


WORK

AROUND  
THE  
HOUSES



The sewing room stays busy at St. Anne's.



A new greenhouse for St. Joseph's!



Candidates learn to make apple cider with the abundant harvest at Ephesus



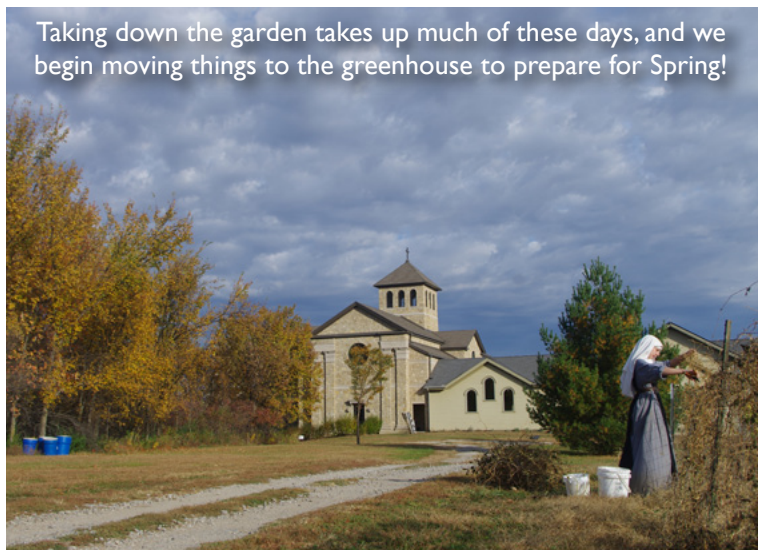
*Ad Multos Annos*

The community at Ephesus gathered for a group photo after Bishop Johnston confirmed Mother Abbess Cecilia's re-election on October 13.





Sr. Daniela greets our new recruits for the Ephesus barn crew.



Taking down the garden takes up much of these days, and we begin moving things to the greenhouse to prepare for Spring!



*Tu es Sacerdos*



We were privileged to have a first Mass with the newly ordained Fr. Toan Cao, FSSP on October 28, the feast of the Apostles Simon and Jude.







**I** know not with what praise to extol thee, O Mary, since thou didst bear in thy womb the very One Whom the heavens cannot contain. Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, Rejoice a thousand times!

—LITTLE CROWN OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY



The Blessed Mother was saluted with fireworks after a rosary procession of thanksgiving on October 13.