



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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Contemplative in Action

By Father Christopher Viscardi, S.J.

As a Jesuit, living as a “contemplative in action” is a very familiar phrase, but it is also a constant challenge. Priestly ministry among the Hispanic immigrant community, along with the pastoral and teaching ministry at Spring Hill College, keep me as engaged and on-call as many of our graduates who are now struggling to combine healthy family lives with the demands of their professions or of corporate America. And so the words of our superior general, Fr. Nicolas, after last year’s international gathering of Jesuit leaders at Nairobi, caught my attention: “...one of the primary challenges facing the Society today is that of *recovering the spirit of silence.*”

So it was a special blessing for me to be able to make my annual retreat this year at Marymount Hermitage. In the early Church, outside the great city of Alexandria were the hermitages of the desert of Egypt. Outside the great city of Rome, Benedict took refuge in the mountains of Subiaco. At Marymount I found the same kind of solitude that is so necessary to nourish the spirit of silence. For those who have not yet been, it offers 100 acres in the high desert ranch country. Even in the heat of July, the mornings were cool and inviting. Hiking up and down the slopes was always blessed with the sudden appearance of deer sprinting away in the other direction or of fawns running after each other in long circles. Nights without the glow of urban lights offered a wonderful show of the stars and planets of God’s creation. My own hermitage, with its kitchenette, half bath, bed and living room, was both comfortable and prayerful. When I arrived I found a Bible on the table, opened to John 15. The

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words that drew me that first day would stay with me for the entire week: Dwell in my love.

The prayerful rhythm of Marymount also nourished for me the spirit of silence: daily Mass, morning and evening prayer and two nights of adoration and benediction. The minimal structure and the community of prayer helped enrich the quality of solitude that filled the rest of the day. As Fr. Nicolas said to his fellow Jesuits, when calling for a recovery of the spirit of silence, “I am thinking of the hearts of our men. We all need a place inside ourselves where there is no noise, where the voice of the Spirit of God can speak to us, softly and gently ...we need the ability to become ourselves silence, emptiness, an open space that the Word of God can fill and the Spirit of God can set on fire for the good of others and of the Church.”

What I found in my week at Marymount and what Fr. Nicolas recommends to Jesuits is certainly a profound need for all men and women of faith, especially those who are committed to ministering in the Church. As a true hermitage, Marymount brings a living witness to the whole Church of the need for nourishing and/or recovering the spirit of silence—not only the absence of external noises, but the silence of the heart that we can continue to carry with us in our busy and active lives of service. May God continue to bless Marymount’s ministry of witness with abundant fruits in the life of the Church and in the community of the Hermit Sisters of Mary.

July 24, 2013

Feast of St. Sharbel Makhlof, Lebanese hermit priest

Renewal and Retreat

By Sister M. Beverly, H.S.M.

July and August bring memories of the great grace of living under vows. On August 15, I always renew the consecration I originally made to God with the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon almost 50 years ago. On July 13, I renew the hermit vows made to Bishop Treinen, the Bishop of Boise in 1988, which deepened my original consecration. Last year in July, Father John Gathungu kindly permitted me to renew my vows publicly at Mass in Our Lady of the Lake Church, McCall, Idaho. This year on August 15, I will renew my vows publicly at Mass in All Saints Church, Lewiston, Idaho at the kind invitation of the



Sister Mary Beverly publicly renews her vows as a canonical hermit of the Diocese of Boise at Mass at Our Lady of the Lake Church, McCall, Idaho in July, 2012.



Sister Mary Ellen Hanson, SSMO, a retired nurse from Beaverton, Oregon, was on retreat while Father Viscardi, S.J. was here June 29-July 6, 2013. Sister and I appreciated the privilege of daily Mass and Father’s profound homilies. Sister Mary Ellen’s retreat was something of a home-coming since she was here about 8 years ago on a year-long sabbatical in the same hermitage dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi.

pastor, Father Brad Neely. Even as a hermit, there are some days I need a visible community with which to celebrate this sacred connection to the universal Church.

Late August is also the time I make my annual 8-day retreat at the Trappist Abbey of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Lafayette, Oregon. I remember over thirty years ago, my mother remarking with a laugh, “...a hermit on retreat?” Since I live a life of prayer, solitude and silence, I suppose it does sound strange. But everyone needs a break and being with a contemplative community and experiencing the monks’ deep faith, prayer and sacrifice is a spiritual support to me. I ask prayers for myself to receive all the graces God intends for me and to be faithful to my vocation.

The new chapel of Our Lady of Guadalupe Trappist Abbey in Oregon was built with faith, peace and beauty. As you approach the Abbey, the bay windows of the chapel are nearest you, framing the tabernacle. In faith, it is Jesus Himself welcoming you.



The MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER is published by Marymount Hermitage, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation in the State of Idaho. The Hermit Sisters of Mary are a canonically approved, Catholic community of women hermits, following the Rule of St. Benedict. The newsletter is published each month by the 15th on our website only. The purpose of the newsletter is to share the spirituality and material progress of Marymount Hermitage. Please pray that we may be faithful to our way of life in prayer and penance, solitude and silence for the sake of the Church and the world. Any donations are sincerely appreciated and are tax-deductible. Thank you in advance to those who have remembered Marymount Hermitage in their wills. God bless you!