



# MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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## WINTER MORNING'S DIARY

*By Sister M. Beverly, HSM*

### **5:00 AM Ringggggg...**

Time to get up. This is admittedly the hardest thing I do all day long. 5 AM seems really early to me, but then I admit to being the world's greatest sleepy head. Two things (besides sheer grace) get me up—wanting to pray and needing to eat.

So I am up now, trying to be awake enough to pray Office of Readings in my living room/private chapel in Holy Family House where I live. I am always heartened by the fact that my friend, Father Mark, who is a Trappist monk and has been a hermit for almost 50 years, has been up praying since 1:30 AM. Mind you, this is a concession to being elderly. During his younger years, he used to get up at 1 AM! Most of his Trappist brethren at the monastery in Oregon are up by 2 or 3 AM for their own private prayer time. Their first community choral prayer, called Vigils or Matins, is at 4:15 AM. This corresponds to my Office of Readings which I am now trying to pray.

**5:30 AM Breakfast.** I read the weekly English paper from the Vatican, L'Osservatore Romano, while I am eating. The Pope's homilies at daily Mass are a good way to get to know his heart and mind. I am slowly learning about and from our new Holy Father. I consider this *lectio divina* because, of course, the Pope is commenting on Scripture. He just finished a Wednesday audience series of teachings on the Church. Since I have been teaching classes on Biblical Images pertaining to the Church at Nazareth Retreat House in Boise, this is a great support and encouragement for me that I am following the leading of the Holy Spirit in my selection of study topics.



*Rev. Geoff Cole, pastor for the Assembly of God Church in Council, Idaho took these stunning photos on December 17, 2013. Pastor Cole had carefully calculated when the full moon would rise over Council Mountain and had his tripod and camera set up early that evening waiting for that event. This photo shows the sunlight in the west illuminating the chapel and the pine tree and bushes covered with hoarfrost.*

**6:00 AM Private prayer.** This is the time when I make my Morning Offering, praying for the intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Then I pray the chaplet of Divine Mercy for the intentions of those who have asked me to pray for them, for whom I have promised to pray, or for those who need my prayers. I pray the Divine Mercy novena continuously, finishing one series of nine days and beginning again. I think of my responsibilities for the day and decide what I will do for work. One thing I will not run out of is work! It is a matter of staying focused and disciplined and doing the next thing necessary.

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**6:30 AM Getting washed and ready for the day.** I am from the Midwest and a cultural characteristic of transplants like me is that we are obsessed with the weather. (In Illinois, weather can be dramatic and dangerous.) I guess this is the reason I love having an all-weather radio. I listen to it at this time of day to hear about what to expect, especially if I will be out and about, driving to Mass, for instance.

**6:45 AM Prayer in chapel.** This is easily the best part of my day. I spend the first hour or so in contemplation. At this time of year, I am praying wearing my coat with a hood, waiting for the chapel to heat up.

**7:55 AM Angelus.** Now that it is winter, I have to bundle up in a down parka and snow boots to go outside to ring the bell. This also gives me a chance to briefly experience the weather for myself. Years ago, I would have been walking a half a mile down from my hermitage to chapel, no matter what the weather was like. Life is comparatively easy for me now in my "old age", living next to chapel.

**8:00 AM Holy Communion and Lauds.** Most importantly for my prayer time back in chapel, I receive Holy Communion. In the absence of a chaplain, this is a rare privilege granted to me by the Bishop of Boise. It is my spiritual food and inner strength for the day. I make my thanksgiving and pray Lauds to conclude this precious time of prayer. I have a real sense that I am not alone. God, Our Lady, St. Joseph, and all the angels and saints accompany me. I do not see them, of course, but their presence is very felt.

**8:15 AM Playing the piano.** This is one activity during my day which is completely optional but one of the things I enjoy as recreation. I am very much a beginner, so in order to play at all I have to concentrate and that is very relaxing. Secondly, I love the sound of the piano and God gave us an ancient baby grand for the chapel some years ago. My music is very simple but the sounds from the instrument are beautiful. I have also found out that this is good



*Pastor Geoff Cole's photo is of the sun setting behind the chapel bell tower. He remembered that the winter fog was rolling in as he looked to the west. I have lived here for almost thirty years and I have never seen such a stunning image.*

physical therapy for my shoulders, arms and hands. So much of my work is manual, so having strong hands is important.

**8:30 AM Internet communications.** I turn on the computer to see who has written to me. If it is something that can be answered briefly, I respond to emails now. Longer correspondence and lengthier business matters I take care of during the work period of the day.

**8:45 AM Second breakfast.** I have read J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings so many times I have it mostly memorized. One thing it has taught me is that I am part hobbit. Hobbits like to have two or three breakfasts, if possible, and that's me for sure! So here I am eating again. This time I am reading The National Catholic Register which keeps me reliably informed of world and U.S. news from the perspective of the Church. After I finish eating, I take my cup of hot black tea to the living room and continue reading from another source. This is when I try to read something more serious. For several months I had been reading In Him Alone Is Our Hope: the

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Church According to the Heart of Pope Francis. This was a retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola which Cardinal Bergoglio gave to the Spanish bishops some years before he was elected Pope. It gives a rich insight into his mind and heart, even if it is difficult reading. When Pope Francis published his first Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, I put the book aside and began reading and studying this beautiful document. I am reading it with a yellow highlighter, so I can refer back to sentences which have struck me. I am about half way through with E.G. It gives me a lot about which to think and pray.

**9:30 AM Terce/Midmorning Prayer.** I am still in my reading/praying chair in the living room. Now it is time to pray the first little hour of the day. Sometimes I linger in prayer a little longer and pray a rosary, especially when I know I will not be able to drive to Mesa for the mail and go for a walk while saying the rosary in the afternoon. Other times I just do a little crocheting because it is peaceful and enjoyable. I am always working on the baby booties which I make to sell. I am getting interiorly ready to begin my work day at 10 AM.

**Epilogue:** What I have narrated above is my usual routine for morning prayer. Today is Sunday, February 9, 2014. I have a greater concern about the weather because I hope to drive out for Mass and we had another snow storm last night which dumped about 3 inches of new snow. At 5 AM, I am on the phone asking my Indian Valley neighbor, Bob Armitage, to plow the road today. I hate to ask him to work on Sunday. He wishes he did not have to do it because he has a community commitment and cannot afford the time this morning. He does not go to church himself but he realizes how important this is for me, so he agrees to work so that the road is passable for me later this afternoon when I need to drive to Cambridge for Mass. This is one of the many examples of the goodness and kindness of our neighbors.



*This is THE photo Pastor Geoff Cole was waiting for on December 17, 2013. When the moon first rises, it seems so huge. This awesome photo reminds me of a poem I wrote many years ago:*

Winter is the silence of nature;  
The Eucharist is the silence of God.  
*God bless you, Pastor Cole, for these memorable photographic gifts!*

**Prologue:** I will finish my description of the morning by telling of a nocturnal prayer period. Some time between midnight and 3 AM, I try to pray. I do not do this every night. I just follow an inner inspiration. Sometimes the prayer is very short, five or ten minutes; sometimes it can be prolonged up to an hour or more. I leave everything completely up to the Lord. For some reason, I think of this as “the night before” and not part of the new day. However, since technically it is an early morning prayer time, I have given this section the caption “Prologue”.

I will close by assuring you of my prayers for you and humbly ask your prayers for me that I may be faithful to my vocation of prayer and penance.

In the antiphon (cf. Lk. 5:16; 6:12) for the Benedictus at Lauds this morning there is a fitting image of what the hermit life is all about and a constant invitation and inspiration to me:

**“Jesus rose early in the morning and went out to a place of solitude, and there he prayed.”**