



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

2150 Hermitage Lane Mesa, Idaho 83643-5005

Website: www.marymount-hermitage.org

Tel. (208) 256-4354

E-mail: marymount@ctcweb.net

Volume 38, No. 12

December, 2021

KISSING THE FACE OF GOD



“This painting was first inspired by a song that I heard one day. Sometimes, hearing one phrase is all it takes, and then a flood of inspiration follows. The phrase ‘kissing the face of God’ immediately struck me with this powerful image of Mary and the Baby Jesus. It is an image that we have seen depicted many times, but never simply as a

mother and her child with real tenderness.

I started to contemplate the awesome privilege that Mary was given being able to hold God in her arms, but also keeping in mind that He was still her baby. This cute little child whom she bore was also God in the flesh, and yet, she cuddled and kissed Him, just as all mothers do with their babies. This thought propelled me right into this painting, which I wanted to be a very human representation of divinity. My prayer is that the viewer will be struck, as I am, with the amazing way that God chose to send His Son into this world—in pure humility.”

By Morgan Weistling on his website: www.morganweistling.com

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

I usually receive this image on a Christmas card every year, often more than once. It is one of my favorites. The artist beautifully and successfully shows the tender love of Mary for her Child, who is both God and man, divine and human. An awesome privilege indeed to cuddle God as we do with babies!

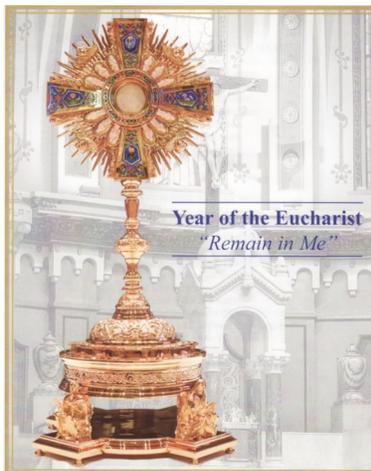
I have had the two images on this page in front of me as I pray in my house oratory these Advent days. I feel deeply that there is a direct correlation. That has been my meditation. Here is a confession: I am not finished with my meditation. I am sure there is more, something much deeper, to come, but, for now, all I can do is tell you how I have started. I offer some thoughts and questions, for you as much as for myself. Likely each of us will go in a distinctly personal direction. So much the better. This is where I am now in my meditation...

Mary received her newborn Son into her hands to love and treasure Him. When I receive communion, I also receive Jesus into my hands to love and treasure Him. Years ago, I decided to lightly touch my lips to the host before consuming it. I kiss Jesus to say “I love you” in a non-verbal way. I want to receive Him as my Beloved and as the Bread of Life.

When Mary held up her Son to gaze into His eyes and smile at Him, she was also worshipping Him as the Son of God. Who better than she knew who His real Father was? There is an old joke which is also very true: “Mary is the only Jewish mother who can truly say, ‘My Son is divine!’” And what about me? When I gaze on Jesus, visible as a white host in the

monstrance on the altar, do I worship Him in the depths of my heart and mind? There are times I am moved to say, “You are so beautiful!” I do not see Him as in a vision, but, with the eyes of faith, I can sense His Presence hidden to outward appearances.

God the Father asked the Virgin of Nazareth to be the mother of the



Continued on page 2

KISSING THE FACE OF GOD

(Continued from page one)

Messiah. She not only accepted His Son open-heartedly to be *her* Son, but she said *Yes* to allowing all that would happen to her and change her life because of this. Mary's *Fiat* in faith was *Yes* to all that He would ask of her in the future. And me? I am afraid of the unknown, of the risk of suffering, of pain in all its forms. When I receive Jesus in communion, do I readily and willing surrender to Him more and more each day? Do I believe that: "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me," as St. Paul writes? (Phil. 4:13) Jesus comes to strengthen in me the supernatural life I first received in baptism. I really ask myself if I am growing in grace and virtue which He desires for me or does fear hold me back from complete surrender to Him? I do not want to give lip service that He is Lord, when my heart is far from Him. "I do believe; help my unbelief!" (Mk. 9:24)

Mary was always present to Jesus as a child, as a young man, as an itinerant preacher, on the cross as our dying Savior. Presence is the greatest gift we can give anyone, especially when they are suffering and dying. Jesus is present to me in the Blessed Sacrament, in the aloneness of the tabernacle. Where am I? Too busy to visit Him? Too preoccupied to spend time with Him? Unable to be vulnerable and allow myself to be loved as His beloved? Mary is always pointing to Jesus. May Our Mother help us all to be present to Jesus in all the depths of love which He desires to give and receive.

In conclusion, this is only a modest start. It is up to you to complete your own meditation on "Kissing the Face of God". May Our Lady of Tenderness help us.



MEMORIALS

PHYLLIS ROSEAN

by James Rosean, Streamwood, IL

THOMAS HIXSON

by Arlie Hixson, Council, ID and
Father Philip Wells, Anderson, CA

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Father Bill McCann

For more than five months now, I have resided at Marymount Hermitage with the desire to encounter the Lord in a more contemplative form of living. "Be still and know that I am God," declares the psalmist. (Ps. 46:10)

The Church recognizes the contemplative life, characterized by silence and solitude, as a great blessing to the Body of Christ. As with any vocation though, there are challenges as well as great blessings. In silence and solitude, there is no place to hide nor distractions to divert our attention from our own radical interior poverty as we stand before God. That can be scary.

So, after many years of busy pastoral work as a diocesan priest, the Lord has provided the circumstances that allow me to pursue this longing to seek Him in silence and solitude. The conditions for this are perfect at Marymount. I reside in a small, simple hermitage surrounded by the natural beauty of the high desert encircled by nearby mountains. The daily routine includes Mass with usually a few people in attendance. We also pray together the Liturgy of the Hours for morning (Lauds) and evening (Vespers). I appreciate this bit of structure.

I also like to spend time with spiritual reading. As a busy pastor, time for a spiritual reading was greatly limited. It has been such a blessing to have much more time to read Scripture, the writings of the saints, and even some great classical works of literature.

That's a brief summary of my life at Marymount.

*One thing I have asked of the Lord, that will I seek;
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,*

To behold the beauty of the Lord... (Ps. 27:4)

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

Father Bill McCann and I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in the Lord. May Our Prince of Peace bring His Presence to our troubled world, so full of suffering and confusion. May His Kingdom of Truth and Love be established. We ask your prayers for us and promise our prayers for you, especially at daily Mass.

You should have received a post card in the U.S. mail, if you are on the mailing list. We are writing to many of you during this holy season to thank you for your friendship & gifts. God bless you and your loved ones always in His Name: Emmanuel, God-with-us.

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. 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!