



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE 40TH JUBILEE YEAR

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BE MINE

By Sister M. Beverly, HSM

Lent begins on February 14th. Ash Wednesday brings its own shock each year because it jars us out of our complacency, I suppose. However, this year it seems to do this even more. We did not have a Fourth Week of Advent. The Fourth Sunday of Advent was the same day as Christmas Eve, an unusual event. The Christmas season itself was short. Liturgically, we started Ordinary Time on January 9th and I was mentally still celebrating Christmas. Now here is Ash Wednesday already!

Lent is a time of spiritual renewal. As a hermit, I have five vows, one of which is the vow of conversion of life. What does that mean? In a nutshell, it is meant to embody the Desert Father spirituality, which sees every day as the beginning of one's life of conversion, of striving for holiness. There is a famous story of an old desert father, who was dying in the Egyptian desert. All his younger brother hermits were around him, praying and waiting, keeping vigil with him. Finally, one monk said to him, "Father, give us a word," hoping for vision of some heavenly reality. The venerable Abba only said, "Brothers, please pray for me that now I may make a beginning." This means, that on edge of eternity, the holy hermit only hoped to amend his life and begin to become holy. It is certainly an important and valid principle in the spiritual life. We are always only just making a beginning.

I was thinking of this when I made my last confession and asked my confessor to suggest something for me to do for Lent. I was wondering if I could do some kind of fasting that had to do with something other than food. He asked me if I use social media, but, of course, I do not. But I applied the idea to the use of the computer in general and the internet in particular. I used as an example: what do I do first thing in the morning? Turn on the computer to see if someone sent me an email, or first go before the Lord to pray? It is based on the essential question:

Am I seeking God first in my life? I AM seeking God, but is He first?

Along with this awareness, I have recorded what will be three segments of teaching for Salt & Light Radio to be broadcast Feb. 9, 16 and 23, to begin a new series. The topic is Jesus the Bridegroom. This is

O THOU SOUL,

*most beautiful
of creatures,
who longest to know
where thy Beloved is,
thou art thyself
that very tabernacle
where He dwells.*

Saint John of the Cross

the title of the second book by Dr. Brant Pitre and is a Scriptural study of Jesus as the Bridegroom of the Church. The Old Testament book, which provides the development of the theme, is the Song of Songs. If you were to read it straight through, just as a book, not pausing in short sections to meditate on it, you would see that the main event in the story is the Bride seeking her Beloved.

So seeking, searching, longing for the Lord, has been much on my mind. I ask myself, "Do I do as the Bride did?" My vow of conversion of life is meant to help me find and overcome all the ways God is not first in my life. I really believe that in the spiritual life, one of the most important aspects is asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten me. If I do not have some radical new insight, I will just keep on as I always do, being unaware, unob-servant and unconverted. The Holy Spirit also helps me to avoid the trap of thinking I will be converted all at once. Human nature being what it is, this is impossible. Just one new insight, just one small beginning, just one small step: this is the way forward. Think here of the "little way" of St. Therese of Lisieux. It is the way of humility, for we would not want to fall into the trap of being proud of our holiness! No, before God, I am always a sinner. I am always beginning.

Continued on page 2

BE MINE... (Continued from page 1)

February 14th in our country is Valentine's Day. Heart Day. Is Jesus my Valentine? Am I seeking Him? And what does my Valentine most want from me? Me. My heart. Is it wholly His? What keeps me from the surrender, which would make my heart



completely His? "Jesus, I trust in you to accomplish in my heart and life all that you desire. Make me the saint you created me to be. Most holy Trinity, it is your work for you are the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier."

Jesus says to me, "Be mine." What does He say to you this Heart Day?

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Sister M. Beverly, HSM

SCHEDULING A RETREAT: It is not too early to begin finding a date for a solitary retreat for yourself this year. I actually have people who schedule their annual retreat a year in advance. With only four of the five hermitages currently available, the calendar fills up quickly, especially in the spring. Come when you can! You are always welcome. See the website for the steps on how to apply for a retreat.

WINTER CHALLENGES: Snow is a normal winter chore, but frozen pipes, which happen more rarely, were a problem again this winter. Some of the hermitages are more vulnerable when we have below zero temperatures. Our record cold was minus 9 degrees for several nights! Each building also had some odd event which complicated the protection of the crawl spaces. In my old hermitage, a rabbit gnawed a hole to crawl underneath the building. The hole allowed the strong north wind to freeze the pea trap in the shower stall. This set of circumstances was a first for me! What next?! I tend to restrict reservations for retreat during the winter time because I cannot be sure the road will be open and passable or buildings ready for use.

THE YEAR 2024: This year, as the masthead of this newsletter shows, and which was on the Christmas postcard, is the 40th Jubilee for Marymount Hermitage.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Bishop Peter Christensen, Bishop of Boise, will offer a public Mass for us some day in September or October. TBA. Besides this, Father Bill McCann and I both have unusual events on our personal calendars. I plan to be gone for two weeks in July for visiting family and friends and to attend the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, IN. I am not planning on hosting any Days of Pilgrimage this year for these reasons, and for other reasons, either uncertainties yet, or news to be publically announced as soon as possible. I will miss you pilgrims, but I do look forward to the Days of Pilgrimage resuming in 2025, God willing.

PRAYERS NEEDED: One new prayer intention for us, as U.S. citizens, should be a fair resolution to the new federal immigration regulation which would, in effect, evict foreign priests and religious from our country, even though they have been working legally for years to obtain their green cards. The "uncertainty" I mentioned above was because of this new circumstance and it may negatively impact one of our Day of Pilgrimage priest presenters. Please pray for protection for the Church and our religious workers from this unjust new law.

BOARD MEMBERS: Last month I thanked local workers, who are such a help to me in the maintenance of Marymount Hermitage. Another group of people, whom I want to publicly thank, are those who serve on the Board of Directors for the non-profit. Sister Michael Francine Duncan is the Superior General of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon, in Beaverton, OR. This is the community from which Sister Rebecca Mary and I came and from which we left to found Marymount Hermitage and begin life as canonical hermits of the Diocese of Boise. Joanne Wood, of McCall, ID, an accountant, has been on the Board the longest and has the advantage of knowing the details of our history. Michael Wack, of Warsaw, IN, who is an engineer, recently replaced Mike Nourse after his untimely passing on Sept. 2, 2022. This year we are adding a new Board Member, Deacon Derrick O'Neill from Boise, who is a lawyer and also works in the Cathedral parish. I am pleased that Derrick is willing to serve and ask God to bless him and his wife Patricia and their family. Derrick is replacing Bill Bader, who died tragically and suddenly on June 26, 2022. Our next in-person Board Meeting is scheduled for May 29, 2024.

I am well again after my illness, thanks to your prayers and good wishes for me. God bless you!

IN MEMORIAM
MICHAEL E. NOURSE
by Ceara M. Nourse, Mesa, ID

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!