



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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“IT IS GOD’S MONEY!”

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

Prologue:

Email correspondence...lightly edited for clarity...

November 29, 2016

“Dear Sister Beverly, Donnaclaire and I are just preparing for some Christmas meetings we have coming up, and just seemed to think of you and especially of the wonderful times we enjoyed sharing Christmas eve [Midnight Mass] with you at the Hermitage. It’s been awhile since we stopped by to visit Sister Rebecca [Mary], but we will sure find time soon. We are just reading your November newsletter on the Internet and are looking at some of the pictures you have included. We are still here in Hillsboro, [Oregon]...Bill and Donnaclaire”

November 30, 2016

“Dear Mr. Bill, So wonderful to hear from you and get all your family news...Give my love to Donnaclaire. We always remember you two making our Christmas here so special by your presence. I am more and more happily ensconced in the [modular] house you helped us buy [fifteen years ago]. One of the best decisions we ever made! Now please pray that we are able to build the new library [called Mercy House]. We desperately need this building and I am hoping the money for it will come in during the Christmas season. Thanks for your friendship and spiritual support. God bless you!
Much love and prayers always, SMB”

Archival Story:

November 30, 2016

“Really great to hear back from you as well. I can recall when you only answered the phone on Wednesdays, and your computer was over at the Nourse’s house...As for the ages [past], I remember well the times when we planned and built your ‘home’. It started on the day that the two of you walked into my office and declared, “We don’t have any money but we have faith. We need a new house since Sister Rebecca [Mary]



Mercy House: proposed new library and house of hospitality. Goal: \$213,000. Donations to date: \$50,000.

slipped and fell in the snow [walking from her hermitage to the chapel]. We need to live closer to chapel.”

A bit later, I suggested ways to fund the project. We discussed the contact mailings you had, which was about 2,500 individuals [at the time]. So, I noted that it would take \$30 apiece from all your contacts to raise the \$75,000 that you needed. You wanted to wait and send out a note with your newsletter, using your bulk mailing permit, but I suggested that you write a separate letter, which you did (even sent a copy to my daughter for her editing... she raised funds regularly [in her business]). Also, I suggested that the letter be sent out separately and addressed to each personally. You told me that your budget was limited and the stamps cost \$100, but that you would do it. This was the late spring, and I remember you calling me about the end of June saying, “Envelopes with money are coming in,” and you already had over \$50,000, but the money seemed to be slowing up.

I said to do another mailing, telling of the amount you had and what more was needed,

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so you sent out another mailing. You finally had about \$90,000, even had some extra...you wanted to trade cars...also, wanted a garage and a hallway between the house and the chapel. Back in late June, I brought Donna Claire with me to your place. We had samples and swatches. We spent most of a day picking out paint colors, carpet, bathroom tile, light fixtures, shingles, outside paint colors. Then you wrote a check for \$5,000 to have the factory start construction.

A few weeks later, we went together to the factory in Caldwell [Idaho] to see the house under construction. We walked through the factory. Workers were eager to see you two and your ‘special house’. You wrote a check for the balance of the house, \$60,000 or so. Sister Rebecca was too nervous about such a huge sum of money and would not get out of the car to go into the office. You wrote the check and took it to the office manager. You handed her the check and told her ‘Be careful with this, because it is God’s money!!!’ You really impressed the entire factory and office!!!! So, if you want to raise the library money, use that example. Mail out a special request to each of your supporters. Suggest the amount you will need from each. Have faith that they will respond. P.S. Donna Claire says ‘Hi!!’ ...Think of you often. Bill”



Holy Family House Sept. 2015 when it was being re-shingled. Part of the garage is visible to the left of this photo. The modular which “Mr. Bill” helped us buy.

Epilogue:

As those of you who are on our mailing list know, I have indeed already done this for Mercy House: library and house of hospitality. Last week the Christmas post cards were mailed, so I have done two mailings this year. When Mr. Bill wrote me these suggestions, I made the sad discovery that Donna Claire and Bill Blankinship, at their new Hillsboro home, were not on our mailing list and had not received the July letter in the US mail about the library. (I quickly hand-addressed a post card for them, so they would at least get that.) After Mr. Bill read about the project online, he assured me he would be sending their check soon. I received their kind donation yesterday, December 5, 2016.

Who is “Bill”? Here is our version of finding the salesman who would help us get our house, the one we have always called, “The House that Love built”(shown in photo below left). Sister Rebecca Mary and I had visited a few modular companies located in a certain section of Fruitland, Idaho. Nobody seemed to want to talk with us and were not very helpful or friendly. We wondered what we were doing wrong. We felt discouraged. When we walked through the front door of the company where Mr. Blankinship was manning the front desk, he got up, walked out into the hallway with a warm and welcoming smile, shook our hands, asked what we needed and listened to all that we had to say. He made us feel that we had just made a new friend. Indeed we had! He said to call him “Bill,” but we never could. He had such a dignified, gracious manner that we always called him “Mr. Bill.” After we had known him for awhile, he admitted that when he first saw us (wearing our poor, denim religious habits), he said to himself, “These Sisters need a house and do not have any money. I am going to make sure they get one and I will not take a commission, so the cost will be less for them.” He had befriended us before we even opened our mouths.

Mr. Bill is ex-military and was doing salesman work for the modular company mainly for fun, as a way to meet people in his retirement. At the time we met him, Mr. Bill was also available as a substitute teacher for the public high school in Ontario,

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“IT IS GOD’S MONEY!” (from page 2)

Oregon. He is an avid historian and this record of events fifteen years ago shows this. I describe this account as “archival” because the original email, which I printed out, will be permanently kept in the Marymount Hermitage archives.

Donna Claire Blankinship is a retired teacher. She publicly and strongly advocated for real books in an actual library, both in schools and in the public library in Ontario when the modern push was for everything to be digital only. As teachers, both Mr. Bill and Donna Claire are enthusiastic supporters for building a new library which will be available to many in our poor corner of rural Idaho.

In writing to me, Mr. Bill gave us a precious and poignant piece of our history. It could not have come at a better or more consoling time. I told Mr. Bill that I felt the Holy Spirit inspired him to search his memory and write this out for us. God bless him, his wife, Donna Claire, and all our benefactors and friends who have made Marymount Hermitage possible all these years and given us and others a beautiful, peaceful place to pray and, hopefully, contribute more faith and peace to a hurting, lost and violent world. God be praised for all his mercies to us. Whether for “the House that Love built” or Mercy House, it IS His money after all!



The garage is between Holy Family House and the chapel. Having lived for 20 years in my hermitage without a garage to protect the car especially in winter, this feels like a great luxury to me. Coming home from chores in town, pressing the garage door opener, Sister Rebecca Mary often used to tease me saying, “You enjoy that don’t you?!” Indeed I did and still do!

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

As mentioned above, the annual Christmas post cards were mailed last week. Please visit the website to see the Library News, which is an update on Mercy House. Thank you for your prayers that this project will be fully funded and ground-breaking can occur as early as possible next spring, 2017.

We have concluded the Year of Mercy with the closing of the Jubilee Year doors. As Bishop Peter Christensen noted in his homily at the Boise Cathedral on November 20, 2016, “the Door of Mercy is never closed. God’s mercy is always extended to us, especially in the sacrament of reconciliation.” In a video message named “A Pedagogy of Mercy” to the Continental Mercy Celebration in Bogota, Colombia last August, Pope Francis said, “We have been asked to celebrate the way God has treated each of us and all his people.” I will give this complete quote on the website in the Library News section.

Merry Christmas and God bless you from us “Marymountaineers”. Much love, Sister M. Beverly

MEMORIALS

In the charity of your prayers, please remember the souls of our friends and benefactors who have died recently:



Father Arnie Miller
Darwin Schweitzer
Thelma Louise Spivey

Donations have been made to Marymount Hermitage in honor of these deceased loved ones:

John Ballard
by Lillian Ballard
Michael McPheters

by Carol McPheters
Ted Mulberry
by Nora Mulberry

Bart Russo
by Debra Russo

Ken & Sarah Schwartz
by Sue & Rod Linja