



# MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

2150 Hermitage Lane Mesa, Idaho 83643-5005

Website: [www.marymount-hermitage.org](http://www.marymount-hermitage.org)

Tel. (208) 256-4354

E-mail: [marymount@ctcweb.net](mailto:marymount@ctcweb.net)

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## FEBRUARY IS FOR FLOWERS

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

You are perhaps picturing snow and hoarfrost and sub-zero temperatures at Marymount Hermitage and wondering how this could include flowers. Your picture is accurate. However, all last spring and summer I picked, dried and pressed flowers. I now have a cupboard full of boxes for my winter work making flower cards. Flowers in February are such a joy! Sometimes people wonder what, as a hermit, I do for fun. It's kind of hard to admit that what I do for fun is actually my work. Perhaps a better way to express it is that what I do for fun turns into a marketable product. I like the creativity of making flower cards and so far have sold every one I have made. Apparently, others like the flower cards too!

There are actually two kinds of flower cards. All begin as REAL flower cards. Then the best of the best become printed flower cards. Last year I printed enough cards for two years' worth of sales. I will probably not have to make a big production of printing again this year. It is quite a laborious process actually, but fun in a different sort of way. One of the aspects of this type of work is keeping the website current. Since it was initiated some years ago, I have deleted some printed flower cards and added many others. The work on the website will occupy some of my time this winter hopefully. [Check out the **Gift Shop** to see examples of the flower cards.]

**February is for fire.** I am keeping the woodstove in my house going night and day. We have had a long stretch of arctic temperatures and, while the fire saves on propane for the furnace, it also gives me such a comfy, cozy house in which to pray and work, read and rest. In the old days, I could help with the wood-splitting and chop all my own kindling. Now, I



*This is one of the flower cards I made recently. The calendula is the only domesticated flower; the others are all wildflowers.*

rely on the help of my stalwart neighbor, Craig Sova, to bring firewood into the house when he is here hand-shoveling the snow. What I love about the fire is all the memories it brings back from the years I was beginning my life as a hermit. I was living in eastern Oregon in a very small hermitage with only a woodstove for heat. The discipline of keeping logs on the fire and having a necessary reason to be up at night taught me to pray at night and this was very formative. I have come to love praying at night and thank God for his great grace which has helped me develop this habit over these many years since 1979.

**February is for finances.** From the sublime to the mundane! This time of year, I am closing the accounts for the previous calendar year. I am accountable to the Bishop of Boise for our finances, among other things, and so one aspect of my work is to create a Year-end Report which I send to him. Our Board of Directors and advisors also receive this annual report. I would like to thank our friends and benefactors who donated to Marymount Hermitage last year, especially at Christmas time. I really de-

pend on your generous assistance. I thank in particular those who send money monthly. It is a help in creating a workable budget. One aspect of this digital newsletter is that I do not list the names of the benefactors of Marymount Hermitage nor do I intend to post the financial report here. Any benefactor is welcome to request the 2012 Year-end Report. I will be glad to send it to you. Financial transparency is incumbent upon any non-profit corporation. I am also happy to supply anyone with a receipt for donations which are tax deductible. Mass is offered once a month for the benefactors of Marymount Hermitage.

**The Flowering of Love.** The Desert Fathers were the hermits of the deserts of Egypt and the Holy Land in the third and fourth centuries. Abba Anthony of Egypt is our great patron. I would like to relate a story which comes from the Desert Father tradition but is actually from Greece. The setting, rather than a desert, is a monastery and surrounding hermitages built on a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. This is the story told in my own words:

A young man came to an old Abba to learn how to become a hermit. As each day unfolded, he thought he understood the way of prayer and work,

fasting and silence. But every night before dark, the old Abba, without a word, would lead the novice to the edge of the cliff and there they would sit together watching the sun set over the water.

After some weeks, the young man said, "Abba, I think I understand every discipline except one. Why do we watch the sunset every night? What are we doing?"

"Ah, my son," the Abba replied, "we are gathering fuel for the fire."

May the experience of beauty in your life help you to gather "fuel for the fire" which will help you to pray with greater ardor and attention. Let's pray daily for each other. God bless you!



## READERS WRITE...

*E-mail sent January 9, 2013:*

I very much enjoyed reading the newsletter today. All that was talked about captured the beauty of the area and your kind and loving heart. Seeing Father Hugh [Feiss, OSB] and Father Rob [Cook] in the chapel brought tears to my eyes. [The chapel] has always been such a special place for me. So peaceful and tranquil.

The one thing I heard this summer when driving [into the Hermitage property] and standing outside the chapel was the meadowlarks. It reminds me of my childhood. I remember waking each morning to hear them whistling. It is such a lovely sound.

I am hoping to make a retreat this coming late summer alone. Pray that all will come together for me to make it happen.

...Thank you for being who you are and for the journey you chose in life (and Sister Rebecca Mary) that many of us have been able to learn from,

feel and see the beauty of God's grace. May God continue to bless you and may Our Blessed Mother Mary protect you always.

Mary Rodriguez  
Boise, ID

*Sister M. Beverly responds...*

I would like to thank Mary and the many others who sent such kind and encouraging e-mails in response to the Christmas newsletter. One of the reasons I selected Mary's letter for publication was to remind you that retreats at Marymount Hermitage are always a possibility. There are five hermitages and I almost never have a "full house". Just call or e-mail the dates you are requesting and I will confirm your retreat plans. Priests come on retreat for free while Marymount is without a chaplain. You can download an application form from the RETREAT section of the website and mail it in with a \$50 deposit.

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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 on 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!

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