

# Monastery Bells

## Life with the Cloistered Dominican Nuns



Fall 2017

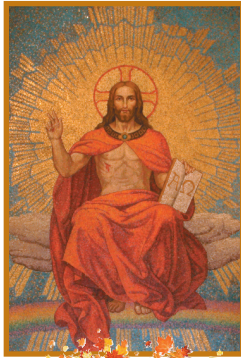
*For now we see in a mirror dimly...*



Sister Mary John of the Precious Blood went to meet her Lord after a short illness on July 14, 2017. Sister was from Houston, TX. She used to joke that she was born a Dominican as she attended Dominican schools from grammar through college. However, it was only in college that she learned that a cloistered branch of the Dominican Order existed. She entered our monastery in 1963, making her Solemn Profession in 1967. In her 54 years in the monastery, Sister served our community in many ways: as cook; running the embroidery machines; as assistant bursar and sub-Prioress. Sister was in charge of maintenance for many of these years and knew our buildings (and machinery) inside and out. She would follow workmen around, watch and ask questions. And she endeared herself to many of them by her eagerness to learn. Sister also guided the community as prioress for four terms (12 years). Her final assignment was in our guild department where she corresponded with our benefactors and those writing to request our prayers.

Sister was keenly aware of the Dominican Order both nationally and internationally serving terms as vice president and president of the Conference of Dominican Nuns (an organization formed for mutual support of our monasteries in this region) and then as first president, when its status was changed to an "Association".

Sister Mary John's interests were many and varied. She learned to play the violin from Sister Mary Lucy and they would often add beauty to our liturgical celebrations with their accompaniments. Sister loved Sibelius and Tennessee Ernie Ford. She was interested in quantum physics and the Theory of Relativity. She was a passionate John Henry Cardinal Newman fan and was attracted to theology from an early age. Sister was very devoted to the liturgy and spent hours, for many years, planning the hymns to reflect the readings for daily Mass. She was an avid reader and, therefore a good conversationalist. Known for her sense of humor and her quick wit, she could be very entertaining. Sister accepted her final illness "philosophically", with calm and with peace. May she now rest eternally in that peace.

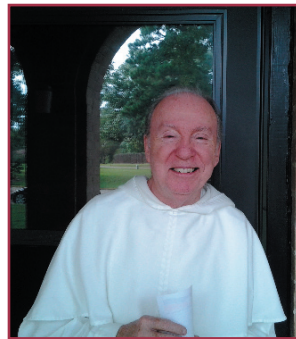


*...but then face to face. 1 Cor. 13:12*



*Moved by the Spirit*

We are very pleased to welcome Father John Lydon, O.P. to Lufkin and to our monastery. Father was born and raised in Philadelphia, PA. In high school, while perusing an array of literature on religious life given to him by the IHM Sister-librarian, he was immediately attracted to the Dominican charism. Eventually, as a member of the Dominican Laity, assisting the poor and meeting and praying with the Dominican friars, his desire to discern a religious vocation was re-ignited. He joined the Dominicans of the Southern Province and was ordained in 1999. He has spent most of his ministry serving as a chaplain at various universities in Texas and New Orleans. During this time, Father John had the privilege of accompanying students on mission trips to Haiti and Honduras. He has also journeyed to Nicaragua with doctors, and supported them in their medical mission. Father John holds a treasury of experiences and lessons from his missionary work. We are always delighted to hear his missionary accounts woven into his beautiful daily homilies. He recently reflected, "The mission of preaching is the essence of Dominican life and being with others in proclaiming the Word is the Gospel life." We thank God for sending Father to be our Chaplain and for the gift of his loving and joyful presence among us.



*Something happened to our mailing list!*

WE HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD TO RESTORE IT. WE ARE SORRY FOR ANY MIS-SENT ISSUES. (YOU CAN ALSO FIND MONASTERY BELLS ON OUR WEBSITE.)



LUFKIN, TX 75904

1501 LOTUS LANE

MONASTERY OF THE INFANT JESUS

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## Another branch...bearing fruit!

*In response to our questions about what attracted him to the Dominican Laity and what types of ministry they've been engaged in, Dr. Matthew Rowley, the prior of the St. Thomas Aquinas chapter here in Lufkin, shared these reflections.*

"In 1997, I was attending daily Mass on a regular basis at the monastery. I think this must have come to the attention of the nuns. They don't miss much! One of the sisters must have told the Laity's Moderator about my "secret". Lufkin's Third Order Dominican group was in its fledgling stages at that point and the Moderator approached me and a friend about joining. I was initially attracted to the Dominican Order because of its reputation for being interested in study. As a doctor, I was rather accustomed to reading, attending lectures and learning in general. So naturally it wasn't that difficult to just switch the focus of my attention from medicine to the Gospel.

Over the years the Laity have been involved in teaching as catechists, hospitality for the Monastery and working with Habitat for Humanity. We have also supported the Buckner Family Place financially. Our chapter's most recent focus of ministry has been on care of the sick and elderly in nursing homes. I think we chose this because of one of our members. She has a small family and so after suffering a brain injury a few years ago needed us to spend time with her to help in her recovery. Since that happened, we have started to visit Southland Nursing Home as a group on a monthly basis.

I would encourage anyone who is searching for something more in their spiritual life to consider joining the Dominican Order as a lay person. I can say without any hesitation that for me (next to my family) it has been one of God's greatest blessings. If you go in deep, what you will receive in return is more than you can ever imagine. One more thing that I would like to add is that the Dominican Third Order has a rich tradition. Looking back on our history you find great saints like St. Catherine of Siena, Saint Rose of Lima, St. Louis De Montfort and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. That's pretty good company!"

*(Thanks, Dr. Rowley. We think our Laity is good company, too!)*



## A day in the life of a bursar



In past issues we have shared about our monastic work. We would now like to highlight the role of the bursar in our community. According to our Constitutions, "the bursar of the monastery administers its temporal goods under the direction of the prioress" and "she should be occupied with faithfully and prudently preserving and dispensing the goods of the monastery." The bursar sees to the "true and reasonable needs of the nuns," pays all our monthly bills, processes all revenue coming into the monastery and makes sure our employees receive their weekly paycheck. She also prepares a monthly and yearly report.



The bursar's main concern is to see to the necessary needs for the daily life of the nuns. She usually keeps a supply of items such as toiletries, cleaning and paper products, light bulbs, and other household items on hand in her "bursar's closet". What is not bought in our local stores can be ordered online and shipped to the monastery.

Because the bursar faithfully administers the temporal goods of the monastery, this frees the rest of the community from becoming preoccupied with such things. Our vow of poverty prohibits a private life, so a Sister in our monastery has no personal spending money. Everything she needs, from a Band-Aid to major surgery, is taken from a common resource.

We are so grateful for the help, kindness and generosity of all of our benefactors, which allow us to live out our vocation of intercessory prayer for the needs of the world. At the end of every recreation, the community prays: "Providence can provide, Providence did provide, Providence will provide, O good and provident God, hear our prayers and grant our petitions". We know that He hears our prayers and we pray that He will grant you every spiritual and temporal blessing.

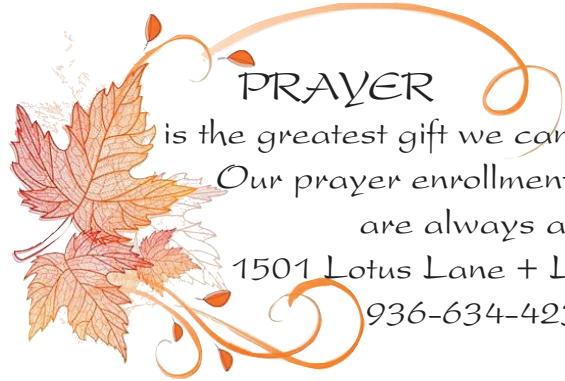
### PRAYER

is the greatest gift we can give to one another.

Our prayer enrollments (card or folder)  
are always available.

1501 Lotus Lane + Lufkin TX 75904

936-634-4233



We are grateful to those who checked on us and prayed for us during Hurricane Harvey.

We continue to pray and implore God's mercy for all the victims who have suffered devastation and loss during the recent storms.

