



Monastery Bells

Life with the Cloistered Dominican Nuns

Fall 2018

In the house of the Lord ... all the days of her life

On June 4, 1948, the solemnity of the Sacred Heart, an eighteen year old girl professed her first vows to serve God as a Dominican nun. Seventy years later, Sister Mary Veronica is still serving Him.

Rita Inez Poskey was sixteen when she entered the Monastery of the Infant Jesus, founded only the year before, in 1945. She was the first postulant to enter and persevere, and also the first vocation from East Texas. Since the Monastery was still in its foundation days, things were much different than they are today. The nuns lived in an old converted farmhouse and in order to be self-sufficient, they raised their own food and kept farm animals. Sister's first job in the monastery was looking after the various animals, including milking the cow!



After making her first vows, Sister became the monastery cook. Since she had never cooked before, she determinedly set out to learn, by reading every cookbook she could find. This research helped her become the talented cook and amazing baker that she is today. Sister worked in the Altar Bread department for a time, sending communion hosts to many parishes all over Texas and elsewhere. But to the people who visit here, she is best known for her service in the guest area. For years, Sister worked in the sacristy. She also took care of the chaplain and visitors. She was the "face of the monastery", a smiling, welcoming presence to everyone who came to the Monastery, for whatever reason, providing refreshments, a sympathetic ear, and solid practical advice. Today she continues to work part time in the kitchen and enjoys gardening.

The Mass for Sister's 70th Jubilee was celebrated on June 2, 2018—a votive Mass of the Sacred Heart, reflecting her lifelong devotion to this symbol of Jesus' love for the world. The chief celebrant was Bishop Eduardo Nevares, auxiliary of Phoenix, AZ. Sister first met the future Bishop when he was fourteen, and their relationship has deepened over the years. Fr. Brian Pierce, OP, another priest who attributes his vocation to the prayers of the nuns, gave a stirring homily. "Sister Mary Veronica, some of your people were among the earliest Catholics in this part of East Texas. You are the daughter and granddaughter and great-granddaughter



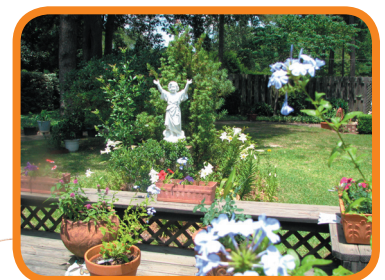
of immigrants who sowed the seed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this beautiful garden...Those seeds, sowed by your ancestors, have borne fruit not only in your own life as a contemplative nun, but in the lives of Catholics all across East Texas. Your faithful journey these 70 years is an incredible gift and witness to the Church of East Texas and a mystical gift to the universal Church. You help us to understand what it means to follow Christ—to give all—as a living Eucharistic witness to God's kingdom."

The Jubilee Mass was concelebrated by Fr. John Lydon, OP, the Monastery chaplain; Fr. Ron Foshage, MS; Fr. Francis O'Dowd; Fr. Joseph Lourdasamy; and Fr. Nelson Munoz. Afterward, there was a reception in our Gate Parlor, where the attendees who filled the chapel to capacity came to greet our jubilarian and visit with the community. A delicious luncheon was provided by Sister's niece and other family members.

Sister Mary Veronica keeps all the needs of our world in her prayers, often reminding the rest of the community about them in the intercessory prayers at Morning and Evening Prayer. And when she wakes up in the middle of the night, she prays a Rosary. "I feel like someone is in need," she says. As Fr. Brian Pierce noted in his homily, "Our Dominican nuns are kind of like first responders. Their prayers reach the lost sheep long before we do—and in ways that only God can understand."

Sister Mary Veronica was raised in a missionary church, within a missionary diocese, and she has a missionary heart, open wide to all the needs of the world just like the Sacred Heart of Jesus Whom she loves. And yes, she is currently looking forward to her 75th jubilee in 2023.

"If God wills," she laughs.



View of Sister's garden from Infirmary

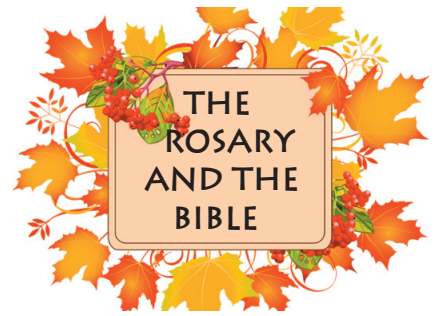
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MONASTERY OF THE INFANT JESUS

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October is the month dedicated to the Rosary. According to tradition, when Dominic was preaching against the Albigensian heresy, and feeling somewhat discouraged, Mary appeared to him and offered this form of prayer. Over the years, the method has evolved, but even in Dominic's time he used the rosary to preach the mysteries of salvation. And where are these mysteries found? In the Bible. So the rosary and the Bible are intertwined.



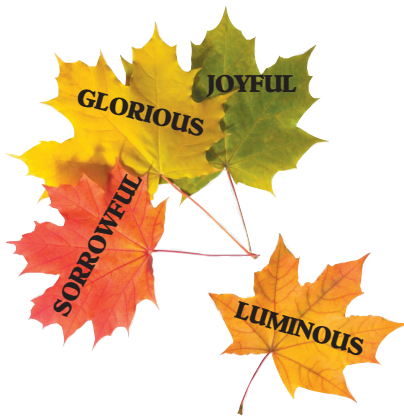
A priest-friend has offered the following reflection:

There is something so wonderfully comforting and uplifting when we fervently pray the Holy Rosary and beg God for the graces we need to walk this beautiful life with the Lord Jesus. By remembering those specific moments and theological teachings, we prepare for the bright promise of tomorrow and the wisdom we so desperately need. Now it is time for us to go even deeper.

Last year, during a prayer procession, Pope Francis referred to the rosary, noting that, "Praying the rosary does not remove us from the problems of life. On the contrary, it demands that we immerse ourselves in the history of each day, so as to grasp the signs of Christ's presence in our midst." What a beautiful and insightful thought! Not only do we hold the rosary close and assured in our hands but we also hold the mysteries close to our heart and ask God for the strength to imitate them. This takes us to the topic of the "scriptural rosary," which may or may not be as familiar to people as the traditional rosary. The rosary, of course, is always based on Scripture, with each of its mysteries coming from the Gospels and events in the lives of Mary and her Son, Jesus; The Nativity, the Agony in the Garden and the Resurrection are just three of the mysteries. While praying each decade (ten beads of Hail Mary prayers, along with an Our Father and "Glory Be," one reflects on these instances in the Bible. (Two mysteries: the Assumption and Coronation of the Blessed Virgin do not have direct scriptural texts, but have been doctrines of the church since ancient times.)



However, as anyone who regularly prays the rosary knows, it can be difficult to maintain focus during each decade. As someone once wrote, "Yet often we find our minds wandering off when praying this special prayer. ... Most people find themselves thinking of more mundane matters (like work, sports, relationships and such) rather than heavenly mysteries."



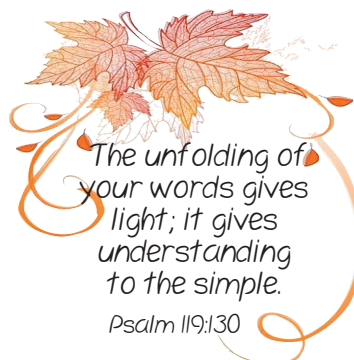
This is why various "scriptural rosaries" developed: to help us focus. In "scriptural rosaries," each Hail Mary prayer (one rosary bead) in each mystery is accompanied by a scripture verse. For example, one suggested verse for the first bead of the Annunciation Mystery is Isaiah 9:2: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; ..."

This type of rosary will certainly help one focus and may work very well with group prayer of the rosary. However, at other times, the traditional style of the rosary may work even better. The rosary, which developed out of the daily praying of the 150 psalms in ancient monasteries, has also become a form of contemplative prayer. Its repetition of Hail Mary, Our Father and Glory Be, serve to place us in a state of quiet and meditation that relaxes us, places us in God's presence, and helps to pray as Mary did: "pondering all these things in her heart" (Lk 2:19)

For a complete guide to the Scriptural Rosary and a free download booklet provided by the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus, please refer to this address: <https://www.kofc.org/en/resources/cis/cis319.pdf>

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