



MONASTERY BELLS

LIFE WITH THE CLOISTERED DOMINICAN NUNS

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FALL 2013

MONASTERY OF THE INFANT JESUS

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LUFKIN, TX 75904



Indeed we call blessed those who have persevered. James 5:11



Sister Mary Agnes of Jesus Fitzpatrick, O.P., died on April 12, 2013 at the age of 90. She began her monastic life as a transfer sister from the Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine (now the Dominican Sisters of Peace) in 1955. She served our community in numerous capacities, including time sewing in our Cloistered Workshop, taking care of maintenance and workmen, helping in the Altar Bread department, assuming roles as bursar, sub-prioress and prioress, and most recently giving her devoted service in the Infant Jesus Guild, where she answered letters and prepared enrollments. She was known in the community for her kindness to all and her enjoyment of a good game of canasta! Above all, she was a woman of prayer, who spent her days interceding for the world. May she rest in peace!



You whom I have called my servant . . . Isaiah 41:9

Our community held its triennial prioral election on July 16, 2013, and we elected Sr. Maria Guadalupe of Jesus Crucified Lemus, O.P. as our prioress for the next three years. Sister was born and raised in Mexico City and came to the United States to learn English at Dominican College in Houston. Once in Texas, she also learned about our monastery and entered in 1965. Sister has worn many hats (veils!). She has worked in the Cloistered Workshop, Guild and Altar Bread departments and the guest area. She's been sacristan, community cook, novice directress and sub-prioress. We are grateful that she has now accepted this new challenge.



Bishop Strickland and Sr. Maria Guadalupe

Make your call and election firm. . . 2 Peter 1:10

In Dominican monasteries, a prioress is elected (or sometimes, re-elected) every three years. The process is entirely democratic, and the Bishop of the diocese (or his representative) comes to preside over the election. We were privileged to have Bishop Joseph E. Strickland, the bishop of our Tyler diocese, come for our election this year.



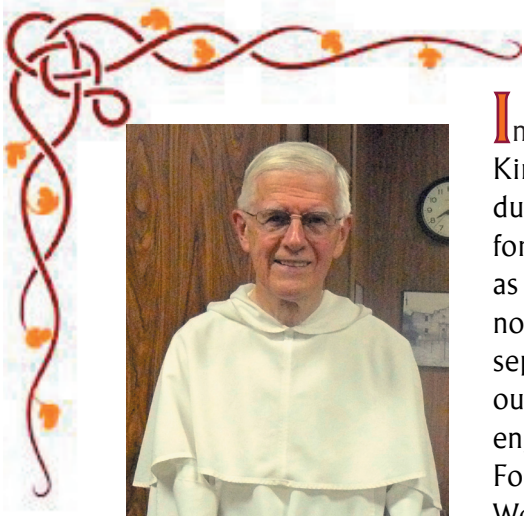
On the morning of the election, the Mass of the Holy Spirit is celebrated in the monastery chapel and at a suitable time the solemnly professed nuns gather in the chapel for the election. Each nun is given a ballot, and she writes the name of the nun she wishes to elect on it. The ballot is then folded in half, and the nuns proceed toward the voting urn in order of religious profession to cast their ballots. The tellers for the election and the bishop count the ballots to ensure the proper number were cast, then open each ballot and record the name each nun has written. Usually an absolute majority is needed to ensure the election of a nun as prioress. Once this has happened, the bishop announces the name of the nun who has been elected, and asks her, "Do you accept?" After she does so, the bishop confirms the election. Meanwhile, the postulants, novices, and nuns in simple vows have been waiting more or less patiently in the community room, praying the rosary for the success of the election. After the election has been confirmed and everything is in order, a bell summons these sisters to the chapel and the monastery chaplain is usually invited into the outside chapel to hear the announcement of the new prioress. Following this, each sister goes up to give her new prioress the kiss of peace and assure her of her obedience and prayers. When this is completed, the nuns usually assemble in the community room for a treat to celebrate the momentous occasion—maybe ice cream!



**Congratulations
Sr. Maria Guadalupe!
Our prayers are
always with you.**



A new prioral term usually brings new assignments, since everything tends to get shaken up by the election! For example, Sr. Maria Guadalupe had been serving as novice directress, so she had to appoint someone else for this job. She also made several changes in the various departments of the monastery, adding nuns here, subtracting nuns there, and generally configuring all our duties. A new beginning for all!



Here I am. You called me. 1 Samuel 3:5



In addition to our new prioress, we also have a new chaplain! Fr. Art Kirwin, O.P. began his two-year term at our monastery in July. Fr. Art's duties here at the monastery include celebrating Mass and Benediction for the nuns each day, administering other sacraments as needed (such as anointing the sick and the dying), and even teaching classes in the novitiate. Father lives in the chaplain's apartment, which is in a separate part of our monastery. He was appointed by the provincial of our Dominican province, Fr. Chris Eggleton, O.P. In his spare time Fr. Art enjoys doing prison ministry and preaching to support CFCA (Christian Foundation for Children and Aging), a Christian sponsorship program. Welcome, Fr. Art!

The way of truth I have chosen. Psalm 119:30

Back in 2010, we began hosting the Monastic Theological Studies Program at our monastery. At that time it was a trial program sponsored by the Association of Monasteries of Nuns of the Order of Preachers in the United States, and no one was sure how it would work out. However, after four years, we can say it was a great help to all the sisters who participated in it. This year, the sister-students enjoyed classes on Church History with Fr. John Vidmar, O.P., and the art of disputation according to St. Thomas Aquinas with Drs. Teodora and Margherita Rossi from the Angelicum in Rome. We had several Lufkin sisters participating in the four-year course, as well as one from the monastery in Farmington Hills, MI and three from the monastery in Summit, NJ.

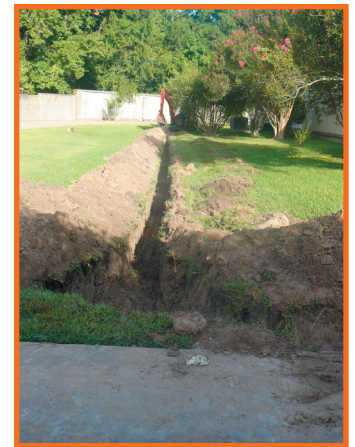


He who calls us is trustworthy... 1 Thessalonians 5:24



The generators were installed successfully in May and they have come into use at least four times since then. We are so grateful to all who helped make this project a reality here at the Monastery! In August we discovered a leak in the main gas line which led to a monumental digging project: all around the laundry building and behind the main building and even under the road, using a drilling device called a "mole" which saved us from having to tear up our

road! For six days, while the gas line was being repaired, we tried our best to get along without gas stoves, hot water, and other conveniences. At least it happened during the summer, so a cold shower didn't feel too bad! But we were all grateful when the leaks were fixed and things returned to normal. Blessed be God for his loving providence!



The gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. Romans 11:29



Fr. Green

Fr. Paul Philibert, O.P. left us for his new assignment in June, and so we were without a regular chaplain for over a month. Fortunately, several Dominican friars stepped up to help us. We really enjoyed the presence of Frs. Austin Green, Tom Condon, Marty lott, and R.B. Williams, who acted as substitute

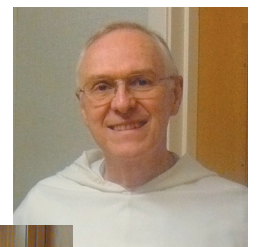


Fr. Condon

chaplains at various times during the summer. We extend an open invitation to all friars who would like to come and visit us—you are most welcome!



Fr. Williams



Fr. lott

"MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN." Matthew 22:14

Many call on God, but too few choose him. In our day, when so much emphasis is on the "freedom of choice" and the "right to choose", why not make the best choice? CHOOSE JESUS! He alone will unfailingly show us the path to life.

