



# Monastery Bells

## Life with the Cloistered Dominican Nuns

Spring 2017

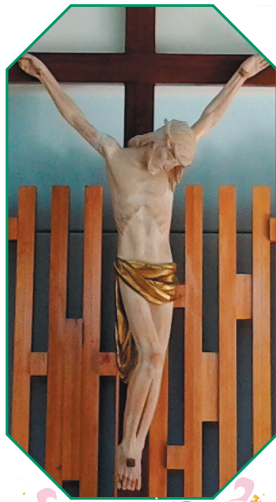
### Born to Eternal Life



On October 15, 2016, Sister Mary Anne of Jesus was called to her eternal reward. Since our Fall Monastery Bells had just been sent to the printers, we were not able to feature Sister at that time. We take this opportunity to do so now. Sister was born in Germany in 1927 and her family moved to the United States when she was one year old. They settled in Detroit, Michigan where she attended school. In 1944 Sister Mary Anne entered the Dominican Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament there. Only seven months later, when she was a novice, Sister, along with a group of other nuns from the Detroit monastery, came to Lufkin to found the Monastery of the Infant Jesus. She made her first profession of vows here on November 9, 1946 and her solemn profession in 1952. Sister served the community as Directress of Novices and Chantress. She made liturgical vestments and sewed habits for the Sisters. She was a talented artist and enjoyed various forms of crafts. Sister spent her final years at St. Dominic's Nursing Home in Houston. When it became clear that she was failing, Sister was brought back to the monastery, where, with the help of hospice she was lovingly cared for and where she died peacefully, surrounded by her sisters. May she rest in peace!



*"...call a solemn assembly." Joel 1:7*



In past issues of this newsletter, we have taken you to various areas of our Monastery: the infirmary, the chapel, the cemetery, places of work, etc. One other location, not well known, might also be of interest to our readers. That is the Chapter Hall. It is a room where meetings of the community (or "chapter") are conducted. In monastic life (particularly Benedictine) it was the place where the monks heard a chapter from the Rule and then, in the spirit of the passage heard, made the required decisions. The Chapter Hall was oriented toward the east. The abbot usually assembled the community in the morning after prayers to discuss the spiritual and material tasks and matters of the day. It was used for exhortations of the superior, the correction of faults and for general business. It was also the room where elections and appointments and special ceremonies of the community took place.

In our Dominican monastery, chapter meetings are not always held in the Chapter Hall. There are two kinds of chapter meetings, regular and conventual, both oriented to the common good. At regular chapter we examine our fidelity to our Rule and Constitutions. The prioress may give a spiritual talk and offer suggestions on ways to improve. Any sister may acknowledge failures against the common life or mention something for which she is grateful, which helps to build up community. At conventual chapter meetings we discuss the business of the community and areas which need consensus to move forward.

There are special chapter gatherings, such as clothing ceremonies, certain votings and annual financial reports. Two chapters are unique: one is held on December 24th to proclaim the birth of Jesus and another on March 24 in preparation for the feast of the Annunciation. Usually one of the younger Sisters gives a sermon on a corresponding theme to the feast. There is a time of silence and certain prayers are said. On January 1 we also welcome the New Year with another chapter. The prioress gives a talk, patrons and prayer intentions for the year are passed out and we give everyone the kiss of peace.



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MONASTERY OF THE INFANT JESUS

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The Annunciation begins when “the angel Gabriel was sent from God... to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph.” From this, we learn that God has already prepared Mary for this extraordinary calling... She is not alone. God has already given her Joseph, who will take care of and protect her and Jesus when they need him... God is always watching over us and guiding us towards what He knows is best for us. As it says in Jeremiah, “For I know well the plans I have in mind for you...plans for your welfare, not for woe; plans to give you a future full of hope.”

excerpt from our Annunciation Chapter sermon by our novice



In February, Dr. Matthew Rowley brought the altar servers from St. Andrew's Parish along with some parent chaperones to visit with a few Sisters. Dr. Rowley is the prior of our St. Thomas Aquinas Chapter of Dominican Laity and is also in charge of training the altar servers at St. Andrew's. The altar servers ranged in age from grade school through college. Many had siblings or parents who also served. They introduced themselves and told a little about themselves. Then the Sisters fielded questions from them about religious life. The servers concluded their field trip by joining us for Midday Prayer and then going out to get

pizza. This visit was a first of its kind and we hope it will continue.

*“Whoever welcomes you  
welcomes me.” Mt. 10:40*



Shortly after the servers' visit we welcomed a group of parishioners from Venerable Antonio Margil Church in Alto, Texas, which is near Lufkin. The group ranged in age from middle school to college freshmen and were accompanied by our Dominican Sisters who are on mission here in our diocese from Puerto Rico. Their questions covered many aspects of our life. We enjoyed getting to know them and they left with the assurance that we would keep them in our prayers.

The RCIA from both parishes also try to meet with us once a year. This is a wonderful opportunity to acquaint them with our monastic life and to support and encourage them with our prayers.



*He has broken the bonds of death.*

*Alleluia!*

*May the light of His glory  
shine on you this Easter season!*



## PRAYER

is the greatest gift we can give to one another.  
Our prayer enrollments (card or folder)  
are always available.

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