



# MONASTERY BELLS

LIFE WITH THE CLOISTERED DOMINICAN NUNS

Website: [www.lufkintxnuns.org](http://www.lufkintxnuns.org)

Blog: <http://lufkintxcontemplativenunsop.blogspot.com>

Email: [nuns@lufkintxnuns.com](mailto:nuns@lufkintxnuns.com)

Spring 2014

MONASTERY OF THE INFANT JESUS

1501 LOTUS LANE

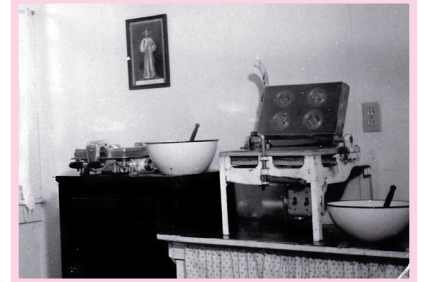
LUFKIN, TX 75904

*"Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord." (Col. 3:23)*



1st Altar Bread Department

In the last issue of the Monastery Bells we explained about the closing of our Cloistered Workshop and how we are trying to enhance our work in the Infant Jesus Guild. In this issue, we continue our meditation on work as we contemplate Christ's greatest work which is the institution of the Eucharist. The sisters have shared in this work through the years, first through the baking of, and later through the distribution of, altar breads.



Batter is ready for baking



Not long after the foundation of the Monastery, the sisters began baking altar breads using equipment shipped down from Detroit. Since the equipment could not fit into the confines of the old farmhouse that served as our monastery at the time, an existing garage was converted



More room in the "new" building

for this purpose. There the sisters prepared the batter and poured it on the baker. The result was a large rectangular sheet of hosts with embossed crosses on top. Then the sheets were carefully dampened to facilitate cutting the hosts into small circles, and to prevent breaking. (Later a humidifier was designed and built by one of the nuns.) Finally, the hosts were packed and shipped to the parishes. It was quite a process! God blessed the work, and within ten years a new building was constructed to house the growing altar bread department.



Packaging and mailing



However, sometime before 1963, the sisters decided to stop baking altar breads. It was difficult to maintain good baking conditions, and hard to compete with commercial host-making companies. The work shifted from altar bread production to altar bread distribution. This work has been going on steadily and continues to be an important source of income for the monastery to this day.



*"Take courage and set to work." (1 Chron. 28:10)*



Altar Breads

Right now the Altar Bread department serves about 150 churches and religious houses in 5 states. Some of the churches receive altar breads on a monthly basis, while others order them when needed. The sisters in the Altar Bread department strive to help churches by accommodating their various needs through shipping preferences (U.S. Mail, FedEx, etc.) or in adjusting the quantity of altar breads. Some of the churches may not need a full box of altar breads, and the sisters are happy to open a box and repackage the hosts so that the church may receive the exact amount they need. In addition to the traditional Cavanaugh altar breads, we also distribute low-gluten hosts to churches who request them. If you know a parish looking for a way to support religious life and receive quality altar breads with excellent service, please contact us!



Preparing a shipment



"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:12) The letter to the Hebrews continues this thought: "It was fitting that God...should make their leader in the work of salvation perfect through suffering." (2:10) The practice of "offering up" something during Lent is not obsolete. It is a continuation of that "work of salvation" that Jesus accomplished through suffering. And even more... "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body...the church. (Col.1:24)

Suffering. Salvation. Joy. The Paschal Mystery in our lives.



*"...fellow worker in preaching the Gospel of Christ..." 1 Thes.3:2*



Fr. Austin with Sisters after the retreat

Fr. Gerald Austin, O.P. preached our annual retreat in October of last year. His conferences, given with great zeal and energy, focused on the liturgy and sacraments—especially Baptism and the Eucharist. He clarified the role of “priesthood of the faithful” which elicits our full participation in the Mass. His enthusiastic reflections were both challenging and refreshing. We all benefited from Father’s many years of experience in teaching and preaching these ideas!



Fr. Daley giving his presentation

Just a week after our retreat in October, Fr. Brian Daley, S.J., from the University of Notre Dame, came to give us a series of lectures on Patristics—that is, the study of the Fathers of the Church. He focused on Mary in the writings of the Fathers, and his sources ranged from St. Augustine to the Syriac Fathers, especially St. Ephrem. In addition to his formal lectures, Father met with the community twice to discuss various points, which arose during his talks. Father is a very kind man as well as a great scholar, and it was wonderful to have him visit our monastery.



*Therefore, my beloved brothers, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord. 1 Cor.15:58*

Fr. Michael Demkovich, O.P. made a brief stop at our monastery recently as he tours the country promoting the International Dominican Foundation. This Foundation supports three very important institutions of study sponsored by the Dominican Order—the Ecole Biblique of Jerusalem, the Angelicum in Rome, and the Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies in Cairo. These institutions foster biblical scholarship, theological study, and inter-religious dialogue among other things. You can visit their website at [www.InternationalDominicanFoundation.org](http://www.InternationalDominicanFoundation.org). It was a joy to have Fr. Michael with us, even for such a short time, and we encourage any of our brothers and sisters passing through to stop in and say hello!



Fr. Michael



Sr. Maria Guadalupe and Fr. Brian

Fr. Brian Pierce, O.P., a native Texan, is a long time friend of ours, but we welcomed him in an official capacity this past December as he made his last visit to our monastery as the Promoter for the Nuns of the Order of Preachers. Father gave us a beautiful commentary on a letter written by the Master of the Dominican Order (Fr. Bruno Cadore, O.P.) and also discussed news about the other Dominican monasteries around the world. Fr. Brian has completed his time as Promoter, but we hope he will continue to visit us! We are very grateful for his six years of service and dedication to the nuns. Now we look forward to meeting the new Promoter, Fr. Cesar Valero, O.P. from Spain.



Sr. Irma de los Angeles

Sr. Irma comes to our monastery on a three-year temporary transfer from her Dominican monastery in Puebla, Mexico. We are so pleased to have her with us. Sr. Irma’s joyful spirit is a great asset—and so are her many artistic talents! She is currently working hard to improve her command of the English language and gets more proficient every day, with the help of a long-time friend who is tutoring her. Soon after Sister’s arrival, we had what was for Lufkin a big snow (about an inch!)—and this was Sr. Irma’s first experience of snow! What a lovely welcome!



# CHRIST JESUS, VICTOR!

May CHRIST, RISEN and GLORIOUS,  
TRANSFORM YOUR LIVES  
with his saving love this EASTER.

