



MONASTERY BELLS

LIFE WITH THE CLOISTERED DOMINICAN NUNS

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Spring 2013

MONASTERY OF THE INFANT JESUS

1501 LOTUS LANE

LUFKIN, TX 75904

I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of his people...Psalm 116:14



On February 2, 2013, Sr. Bernadette Marie of the Sacred Heart made her first profession of vows in our community for three years. This commitment is the culmination of almost three years of formation—ten months as a postulant and two years as a novice. Dominicans traditionally make only one vow at their profession—that of obedience—because the promise to be poor and chaste is included in this single vow. In our Order, the vows are made into the hands of the Prioress—following a medieval custom where the vassal pledges allegiance to the lord—while the Sister making profession holds the Constitutions of the Order. During the ceremony, the novice also exchanges her white veil for the black veil of a professed nun, and has her scapular blessed. She then becomes fully incorporated into the Order of Preachers.



We spoke with Sr. Bernadette Marie to find out more of her thoughts on this new step she has taken in the formation process.



Monastery Bells: Sister, what does profession mean to you?

Sr. Bernadette Marie: It means I'm giving myself to Christ by the making of a vow, promising to belong to Him and only Him. This way I may follow Christ more closely by living in poverty, chastity and obedience.

Monastery Bells: Do you think you have changed since making profession?

Sr. Bernadette Marie: Well, I certainly don't feel any different. If only all of my defects and shortcomings suddenly disappeared once that black veil was put on my head! But I still have to do battle against self-love, self-will and pride, et cetera. This will be a life-long battle. My hope is that I've changed in some ways since my arrival at this monastery three years ago.



Monastery Bells: What jobs have you had at the monastery? Is there a particular job you would like to have or a place you might enjoy working?

Sr. Bernadette Marie: Since my postulancy I've helped in the laundry, kitchen, clothes room, print shop, altar bread department, and guild. I've enjoyed working in all these departments, but there are still other departments



I've yet to work in, so I wouldn't want to pick a favorite yet. I would have to say that wherever my superiors put me to work, that is where I want to be.

Monastery Bells: What was your favorite and/or most helpful class in preparing for profession, and why?

Sr. Bernadette Marie: My favorite class was probably the class on Sacred Scripture. Salvation history is exciting stuff! However, what was most helpful in preparing for my profession was definitely classes on Vocation and on the Constitutions of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers. These classes taught me what it means to be consecrated and what is the surest path to holiness: Follow the Rule and Constitutions of the Order.



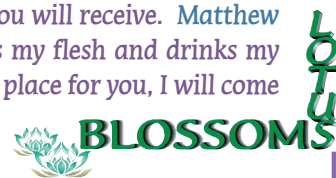
You indeed, O God, have accepted my vows..... Psalm 61:6



On November 28, 2012, our new bishop for the diocese of Tyler, Joseph E. Strickland, was ordained. Bishop Strickland is a native Texan, born in Fredericksburg, and raised in Atlanta, Texas. He was ordained a priest for the diocese of Dallas in 1985, and joined the new diocese of Tyler when it was formed in 1987. He has been a good friend of the monastery for many years and we are happy that he was chosen to be the fourth bishop of Tyler. Bishop has come twice to visit us and celebrate Mass since his ordination: once in December 2012 and again for Sr. Bernadette Marie's first profession. We hope to see him often and we pray God will bless his ministry abundantly!

A vow is a promise to God. But God has made many promises to us as well...**Jeremiah 7:23**—I will be your God and you shall be my people. **Matthew 21:22**—Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive. **Matthew 28:20**—Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age. **John 6:54**—Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. **John 14:3**—If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.

If we place our trust in Him, He will never fail us. I promise!



Fulfill what you have vowed... Ecclesiastes 5:3

February 2 is the World Day for Consecrated Life. This year the bishop suggested that the religious of the diocese gather here at the monastery, giving us an opportunity to know each other better. This worked out perfectly, for what better way was there to celebrate this day than by witnessing someone consecrate herself to God? After Sr. Bernadette Marie's profession ceremony, the religious were able to spend some time in quiet reflection, followed by a delicious meal which was provided by the Bishop (for us, too!). Then we were able to recreate together. A wonderful time was had by all and there are plans to meet again.



Confirming Promises

On February 23, Reverend Jamie Lea, a Methodist minister in Mont Belvieu, TX, brought his confirmation class to visit our monastery—as he has been doing almost every year since 1998! The confirmation students had many interesting questions and we were delighted to find that we have some religious practices in common, especially the cycles of the liturgical year (Advent, Lent, etc.) They also told us some of the things they are learning in class, which are similar to what we study. Although there are some important differences between Catholics and Methodists, it was good to see what we have in common as Christian believers, as well. Jesus is Lord of all of us! Alleluia!

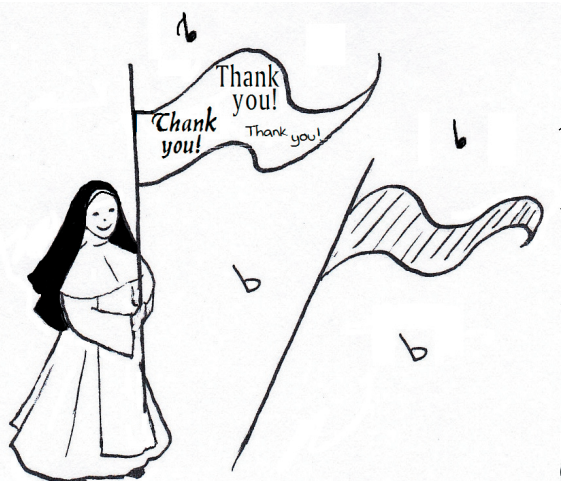


Now the power of Easter has burst upon us with the resurrection of Christ. Now we find in ourselves a strength which is not our own, and which is freely given to us whenever we need it, raising us above the Law, giving us a new law which is hidden in Christ: the law of His merciful love for us. Now we no longer strive to be good because we have to, because it is a duty, but because our joy is to please Him who has given all His love to us! Now our life is full of meaning!

Thomas Merton



During this Easter season may you experience the joy of pleasing our Risen Lord and attain the fullness of life.



We are overwhelmed by the generous response to our raffle and generator project. We promise to keep you all in our grateful prayers!

