



MONASTERY BELLS

LIFE WITH THE CLOISTERED DOMINICAN NUNS

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Winter 2013

MONASTERY OF THE INFANT JESUS

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“God has healing in store for you...” (Tobit 5:10)

The Monastery of the Infant Jesus is a family—in fact, we address each other as “Sister”—and as in every family we help our new members learn our ways, care for our sick, and value our elderly. In our Fall 2012 issue of “Monastery Bells” we mentioned our need for a generator to supply power for the infirmary and walk-in freezer. We thought you might enjoy hearing more about our infirmary in this issue.



The infirmary has a nurse’s station, a pharmacy area, special walk-in bathtub, and six rooms available for sisters who are recovering from surgery or need special care because of age or illness. There is a deck outside of the infirmary rooms where wheelchairs can be rolled. Over the years we have tried to beautify the yard outside, so the Sisters will have a pleasant view. There’s even a waterfall.

Our monastery is all on one level, making it easy for sisters to visit the library, refectory, community room and chapel. Where we have steps, we also have ramps, which allow access for wheelchairs or scooters.



To find out more about what goes on in the infirmary, we decided to interview the two sisters who offer primary care to our infirmary residents, Sr. Maria Rosario and Sr. Marie Augustine. Sr. Marie Augustine is also the main cook for the infirmary kitchen, where she takes care of sisters with special dietary needs.

“More precious than gold is health and well being...” (Sirach 30:15)

Monastery Bells: How did you acquire the medical knowledge and skills needed to work in the infirmary?

Sr. Maria Rosario: I learned from experience. I’ve worked in the infirmary off and on for sixteen years. The Sisters who worked in the infirmary before me passed down health and medical information. I learned from medical professionals as well. A nurse taught me how to give injections using an orange, and a sister (a former nurse) gave me further instructions. Now I give all the flu shots in the monastery, as well as vitamin shots, allergy shots... You name it!



Sr. Marie Augustine: Home Health and Hospice have taught me many things.

Sr. Maria Rosario: We have a small library of medical reference books in the infirmary, and that helps, but probably more and more we will use the Internet.



Monastery Bells: What kind of things do you do as infirmarian?

Sr. Maria Rosario: Everything! I take sisters to the doctor, help them to bathe, check blood pressure, take temperatures, make appointments, give out and order the medications, mop the floors, make beds... Sr. Marie Augustine is a big help with all these things. She is my right hand.



RAFFLE 2013 Take time to enter our 2013 raffle by filling out and returning the tickets. You can also enter online by emailing your entry to nuns@lufkintxnuns.com. And if you’d like to see the prizes, look in our Gallery at lufkintxnuns.org.

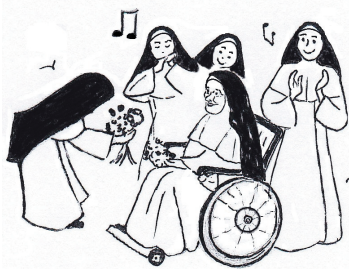
Monastery Bells: Sr. Marie Augustine, what do you do in the diet kitchen?



Sr. Marie Augustine: For those sisters who can eat the regular meals provided by the kitchen, I just pick up what they need. I make sure they have a protein, a starch, a vegetable, all in the right amounts. Some sisters have special dietary needs and I prepare meals for them myself.

Monastery Bells: Do you have any outside help in the infirmary?

Sr. Maria Rosario: We have two night sitters—lay women who come in to attend to the sisters' needs during the night. One works four days a week and the other works three days a week. We also use Home Health for some sisters.



They will come out as often as we need them, nurses and therapists alike. We also use Hospice when needed. The doctors from Home Health or Hospice can help advise what to do in specific cases. We have a lot of resources and can care for our sisters here at home. We have everything we need here, and most important, the sisters can come to visit the infirm sisters easily, talk with them, entertain them with stories, music, singing, laughter, and so on.

Sr. Marie Augustine: Home Health is available to help the sister get better so she can return to her regular life in the monastery. They work on exercises, therapy for the sister, things like that. For sisters who are dying, we call Hospice. They provide medical equipment, pain medicine, everything you need, and they tell you how and when to use these things. You can call them even in the middle of the night and they will send out a nurse to evaluate the situation and contact the doctor if it is necessary.

Monastery Bells: What do you like most about working in the infirmary?

Sr. Maria Rosario: It's a ministry to the sisters, and through them we minister to Christ. It's a special call, caring for the whole person, body and soul.



Sr. Marie Augustine: It's a joy for me...a blessing. Taking care of your sisters is a prayer, too. I think of the parable of the Good Samaritan—how he stopped what he was doing and went out of his way to help this injured man, a stranger. He cleaned his wounds, took him to an inn where he could recover, and came back to check on him and settle the debts the man owed. That is what infirmary work is like.



Monastery Bells: What would you like our readers to know about the infirmary?

Sr. Maria Rosario: The infirmary is situated in such a way that we can easily take sisters to Mass or prayers. If they are bedridden, they can stay in their hospital beds and be rolled into the oratory for Mass. Priests can come inside for the anointing of the sick, to hear confessions, and to offer spiritual direction, things like that. We are very fortunate in this.

Sr. Marie Augustine: Patience is the most important thing. When one is sick or elderly or both, it is easy to become frightened or tense. You need patience to respond at these moments with understanding and love, to comfort them. You have to love them and be really patient.

Monastery Bells: If you could make some changes in the infirmary, what would they be?

Sr. Maria Rosario: We really need a generator in case the power goes out, because when our sisters have special medical equipment, they need electrical power at all times. For example last year we had two sisters who needed things like oxygen, a feeding tube, beds powered by electricity, all this—and one day the power went out for several hours. If we had a generator, we could avoid these very difficult situations.

Monastery Bells: We are very grateful to those who have already contributed to our generator fund. May God bless you for your kindness as He has blessed us in the care we receive!

"Let it be done to me according to your word." Lk. 1:38 Mary heard God's will and accepted it. With that simple "Yes", God's plan for our salvation was effected. And how do we participate in the continuation of that plan? By our simple "Yes" to God's will as it manifests itself in our lives. "Yes" to an illness or infirmity. "Yes" to misfortune. "Yes" to the limitations of old age. "Yes" to lending a hand. "Yes" to a sacrifice. Can we really help to save the world in this way? Simply, yes!



BLOSSOMS

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