

THE ROSARY PILGRIM

MONASTERY OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

Dominican Nuns of Summit, New Jersey

SPRING

2023



EASTER GREETINGS IN THE RISEN LORD!

As we celebrate the joy of the Resurrection this Easter season, we have much to rejoice in, both in death and new life. Our Sister Maria Agnes of the Good Shepherd passed to eternal life on March 18th of this year. While we mourn her passing and miss her presence, we know that eternal life with God is the goal we spend our lives striving for, and rejoice with her, praying that she is now beholding the vision of God who is love and life. We have also been blessed with new life since our last newsletter, with the arrival of a new postulant, now the youngest in the community, the arrival of a transfer sister who is now the oldest in our community, and the election of a new prioress. May God be praised!



Sr. Natalie



Sr. Mary Agnes, OP



Sr. Joseph Maria with Fr. Bill Holt, OP

NEW SISTERS, NEW PRIORESS

SINCE our last newsletter in the Fall, we've received two new additions to our community, and elected a new prioress! In October, Sister Natalie entered the monastery to begin her postulancy. Sr. Natalie is from Florida but attended school in New York, where she just graduated from Columbia with a PhD in Chemistry. Her father and brother traveled up to New Jersey to attend her entrance, and she brought quite a crowd of friends with her as well!

At the end of November, we received another addition to our community, as we welcomed Sister Mary Agnes of the Infant Jesus Baudo, OP from the Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary (yes, the same name!) in Heath, Ohio. Sr. Mary

Agnes is 90 years young and says that you are never too old for a new adventure! Sr. Mary Agnes has been a wonderful addition to our community.

In December, Sister Mary Martin's term of office as prioress came to a close and the community elected Sister Joseph Maria of the Holy Family, OP as our new prioress on December 10th. Sr. Joseph Maria served our community as novice mistress for six years prior to her election as prioress. When a new prioress is elected, she makes new appointments to the various responsibilities around the monastery, so Sisters were eager to find out what they would be doing for the next 3 years! As the saying goes, 'variety is the spice of life,' so while it takes a bit to get adjusted to new assignments, it is also a great blessing to be able to take on new charges and perhaps even discover new talents. Sr. Denise Marie was appointed as subprioress, and Sr. Mary Magdalene as our new novice mistress.

A SERIES OF TEMPORARY CHAPLAINS

Towards the end of last year, our chaplain Fr. Gregory Salomone, OP began experiencing health difficulties which prevented him from offering Mass for us and was reassigned to a Dominican house in Ohio. We are so grateful for his dedicated service to us for more than 10 years. Our new permanent chaplain will not arrive until July, so in the meantime, we have been blessed by the generosity of the diocesan priests and Dominican friars who have made real sacrifices to make sure that we have Mass every day. While we are looking forward to the stability of our permanent chaplain's arrival, it has really been a blessing to have so many different priests coming and saying Mass for us, getting to visit with some of them in the parlor who stayed for a longer time with us, and hearing their excellent preaching. We'd like to thank *Bishop Elias Lorenzo, OSB, Msgr. Robert Coleman, Msgr. Gerard McCarren, Msgr. Robert Harahan, Fr. Terry Coonan, Fr. Michael Barone, Fr. Lynx Soliman, Fr. Thomas McCreesh, OP, Fr. James Ritch, OP, Fr. Jordan McConway, OP, Fr. Albert Duggan, OP, Fr. Andrew Hofer, OP, Fr. Patrick Briscoe, OP, Fr. Bruno-Thomas Mercier des Rochettes, OP, Fr. Bernard Knapke, OP, Fr. Damian Day, OP, Fr. Philip Nolan, OP, Fr. Marc Bellion, OP, Fr. Jonathan Kalisch, OP, Fr. Ambrose Little, OP, Fr. Ignatius Schweitzer, OP, Fr. Bill Holt, OP, Fr. John Devaney, OP, Fr. Peter Martyr Yungwirth, OP, Fr. Darren Pierre, OP, and Fr. Dominic Bump, OP who is with us now until the end of May!*

BLUE-HAIRED 'TRUE-BLUE' JOB

We bet you probably didn't know that the biblical Job had blue hair! Well, maybe he didn't really, but the puppet show that the Novitiate sisters put on for us in February featured a blue-haired puppet! We had been listening in the refectory to an excellent set of lectures on Job, which must have inspired the Sisters to creativity. A sign put up a few days ahead of time invited us to a production of "Job: A Philosophical Exploration of Suffering and Evil as Told by a Whimsical Puppet Show." They only had one boy puppet, so Job's three friends were girls in this rendition! We learned in the puppet show that Job really did have it all before his afflictions: he drove the "latest model camel" (with 3,000 to choose from). But God knew that Job would be faithfully 'true-blue' — after all, he had blue hair.



SISTER MARIA AGNES OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, O.P. (1931-2023)



“Good Shepherd” called her to himself on the eve of Laetare Sunday, and as we sang the entrance antiphon the next morning, we couldn’t help thinking of Sister as we sang, “Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, all you who love her! Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her.”

Sr. Maria Agnes was born Nelya S. Karasig on January 2, 1931 in Malolos, Bulacan, in the Philippines. Her parents, Jose Domingo Karasig and Cornelia Santiago Karasig, were both writers and Sister inherited from them a love for the written word. She also had a strong gift for music, being trained as a concert pianist. She converted to the Catholic faith while in college and felt drawn to the religious life. She graduated from the University of the Philippines, Quezon City, with a degree in liberal arts before entering the Congregation of Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena in 1954, a community of teaching Sisters in the Philippines. She made first profession of vows on July 15, 1956 and final profession on May 31, 1961. During her time in the congregation she taught high school English, Spanish and religion and was a college instructor in theology, Spanish and music.



In August of 1973 she transferred here to the Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary, Summit, NJ in order to fulfill her long-held desire for the contemplative life. She made solemn vows in the monastery on March 19, 1977. Just a few months later, in August of 1977, she returned to the Philippines with four other nuns to found a monastery of Dominican nuns there. She supported the foundation for several years before returning to here to the monastery in Summit, feeling called to make this her permanent home. On November 3, 1994, she became an American citizen. In 2003 the Cainta community elected her their prioress and she returned to the Philippines for three years to lead the sisters in living out their vocation.

In our monastery, Sr. Maria Agnes served as librarian, archivist, chantress and organist, as well as doing a myriad of odd jobs with great generosity. She had an incredible memory, playing all of her piano pieces from memory, including many she learned in childhood, and had an amazing ability to recall people she met decades ago with the precise date and circumstances of their meeting! Very gifted intellectually, she loved to learn and study, and was always eager to ask



questions whenever lecturers came to us. Even towards the end of her life as she became more and more physically limited, she wanted to help the other sisters, whether preparing vegetables in the kitchen or folding laundry as she was able. She suffered from severe spinal stenosis which caused her to become increasingly bent over, and in constant pain. She offered this continual suffering up for the souls in purgatory and all the many other intentions which she carried in her heart. She would say that the doctors always wanted to make her completely pain-free, but we have to suffer in this life - we can’t be completely without pain, with nothing to offer to God. Please join us in praying for the happy repose of her soul!



RESTORING THE ROSARY SHRINE GROTTO

We've recently begun a project to restore the historic grotto built at the very beginnings of our monastery's history, at the time of the very first Rosary Pilgrimage in 1921. This grotto was the site of pilgrimages with crowds of thousands of faithful from across the country, and the Sisters received a number of reports of miracles received after praying in the grotto. However, after the building of our permanent monastery, pilgrims began to come to pray in the monastery chapel instead, and the grotto began to become run-down and neglected. Originally located just outside the enclosure wall, in 1991 when a section of the wall near the grotto needed repair, the wall was moved to bring the grotto inside the enclosure so that the Sisters could use it as a space for private prayer. But the effects of time and humidity continued to work on the grotto, and its condition has deteriorated to the point that we are no longer able to use it as a space for prayer.

In 2018 when we held an open house for the dedication of the new addition to the monastery, some friends of the monastery came across the Grotto and, hearing about its history, approached the community about beginning a project to restore the Grotto to save its history and to allow us to use it once again as a place of prayer. They hope to raise the money to begin the project soon! You can learn more about the project here: summitdominicans.org/grotto-restoration



*Would you consider making a contribution to the project?
To donate to the Grotto Restoration Project, you can make
out a check to:*

*Dominican Nuns
543 Springfield Ave
Summit, NJ 07901*

with "Grotto Restoration" in the memo line.



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