

Chaplain's Corner

SEEKERS AND DOERS OF PEACE

Fr. Thomas A. Krosnicki, SVD

Pause a moment and count the places where there is great conflict in the world of our day. One quickly runs out of fingers on which to record them. Even the very cradle of Christianity, the birthplace of the Savior, and the land blessed by Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, can't be excluded from the list of hot spots of war and terrorism. Our own United States is involved too long in international conflicts and beyond anyone's desire. Right on our doorsteps, fatal shootings have marred the image of greater St. Louis as it celebrates its 250th birthday as a city and the 800th anniversary of the birth of King Louis, its saintly patron. And of course the situation in Ferguson, MO, covered by international news, divides communities, creates social strife, and hardens hearts already sealed too tightly by prejudice.



And yet this is the Christmas Season, a season to be marked by peace!

Mt. Grace convent has been referred to as an "oasis of peace" in a hostile world. Yes, sitting on College Hill it is just that—a secure space that enjoys its inner peace, tranquillity and contemplative serenity. Although hidden behind white-faced limestone walls, the community of Holy Spirit Sisters of Perpetual Adoration knows that such an atmosphere does not reign everywhere. Peace is illusive for too many; peace is a pursuit and goal not yet attained. Like a mantra, therefore, prayer for peace is a theme of the Sisters' daily lives for others. They not only witness peace; they are women who seek peace.

Their joyful lives of sacrifice are spent in hope—a hope that God will bless his people who seek and do peace.

With the recent beatification of Pope Paul VI, I recalled his timely exhortation to the General Assembly of the United Nations: *No more war; never again war. Peace, it is peace that must guide the destinies of people and of all mankind.* Those words, spoken nearly fifty years ago (Oct. 4, 1965), have gone unheeded to the constant peril of the world. We must continue his prayerful plea for peace in word and action for, as the nineteenth century poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote: *Piecemeal peace is poor peace. When, when, Peace, will you again, Peace?*

In this Christmas Season of absent peace, join the Sisters and beg for the gift of peace. May the peace that comes from Jesus be bedded within you, your home and family. And as a member of the Church, do not forget to be a bearer of peace. As Pope Francis has reminded us: *The Church proclaims "the Gospel of Peace" (Eph 2: 14)...and every Christian is to be a peacemaker (The Joy of the Gospel, 2013).* That is only possible if Jesus, the Father's Incarnate Message of Peace, lives among us and moves all to push back the barricades of divisiveness and then reach out with a handclasp of peace, strengthened by the Prince of Peace who speaks of peace to his people.

A peaceful Christmas and New Year to you!

**You and your loved ones
will be gratefully remembered
in our Advent and
Christmas Liturgies
December 16 to 24 and
December 26 to January 3
and in our
Eucharistic Celebrations
on Christmas Day.**

Mount Grace Newsletter

December 2014

Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters

www.mountgraceconvent.org

1438 E. Warne Ave

St. Louis, MO 63107



I will praise the Lord all my life. Psalm 146:2

Perpetual Vows



May 3 was a day of rejoicing and gladness as our **Sister Maria Epifania** received her ring and sealed her self-offering of love through her perpetual vows as a Holy Spirit Adoration Sister. The festive Mass was presided over by Auxiliary Bishop Edward Rice, who was also present at Sister's first profession of vows in 2009. Friends and family were able to attend the celebration to make Sister's joy complete,



Sister Maria Epifania is from Puerto Rico. After obtaining a degree in dentistry, she moved to North Carolina to work for the Public Health Department. She felt the stirrings of a call to something greater and after much searching and prayer, found our congregation on the Internet. After visiting our convents in Philadelphia and St. Louis, she stepped across the cloister boundary as a postulant on November 3, 2005. Sister has had a myriad of duties in the convent and currently serves as a portress, among other things. The joy she finds in her vocation is evident in her cheerful service and ready smile. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!



Sister Mary Gemma made her first profession of vows on May 21, 1954. Our whole community rejoiced in God's faithfulness to her as she celebrated the 60th anniversary of that special date on July 26. Sister renewed her vows again at a Mass presided over by her long-time friend, Fr. James MacNew, OSFS of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. A native of St. Louis, Sister Mary Gemma grew up in the neighborhood of Mount Grace. Her father died when she was six years old, and she learned at a young age about what things are important in life. She was attracted to the contemplative life and entered our congregation



after she graduated from high school. Sister Mary Gemma has been assigned to our convents in Philadelphia and Austin (now closed). She was the superior at Mount Grace for many years and currently serves as the assistant superior. Glory be to the Triune God for sixty years of vowed fidelity!

Diamond Jubilee: 60 years in vows

