Monastery Bells

Life with Cloistered Dominican Nuns

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Fall 2026

MONASTERY OF THE INFANT JESUS 1501 LOTUS LANE LUFKIN, TX 75904

CALLED – AND FAITHFUL



On August 15 we joyfully celebrated the 50th anniversary of Sister Maria Cabrini's Solemn Profession. Members of Sister's family joined our community for this memorable occasion, along with Sr. Marcelline Koch, O.P., from Springfield, Illinois, and friends who made a surprise visit from California. Their presence made the day an especially beautiful expression of gratitude, love, and fellowship.



Sister Maria Cabrini was born and raised in Yucaipa, California. After graduating from high school, she entered the Springfield Dominican Sisters in 1959. As her vocation deepened, she felt called to a religious life devoted entirely to prayer. Trusting that call, she entered our monastery in 1972.



Sister Maria Cabrini has generously shared her gifts with the community throughout the years, especially as Prioress and Novice Directress. Through each ministry, her faithful presence, creativity, and loving care have blessed us all.

May the joy of this occasion remain with her, and may God continue to bless her with peace and grace.



At our community celebration on August 22, singing the Jubilee song for Sr. Maria Cabrini

THE FINAL CALL



Sister Miriam of the Precious Blood, O.P. died on March 19, 2026, after 68 years of dedicated religious service. Born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1937, she initially trained as a registered nurse before joining the Maryknoll Missionary Sisters in 1958. Seeking a more contemplative life, she was admitted to the Dominican Monastery in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1960. Never losing her missionary spirit, however, she volunteered to help at Corpus Christi Monastery in Nairobi, Kenya from 1978 to 1981. From there, she joined our community, as the La Crosse Monastery had re-located. In 1999, she helped to found Queen of Peace Monastery, now located in Upper Squamish Valley, BC, Canada. With her characteristic humor, she often remarked, "Join the cloister. See the world."

Sister held various positions in our community, including sacristan, librarian, and organist. For many years she also worked in our Guild, answering mail and creating beautiful prayer enrollments. She dearly loved and treasured our families and friends and greatly enjoyed corresponding with them.

We will miss Sister's wonderful sense of humor and community spirit. As a special tribute, at Sister's burial, the Deep East Texas Nurse Honor Guard performed a traditional graveside ceremony to honor her nursing legacy.



On May 13, 2026, Sister Martin Marie of the Eucharist, O.P., entered eternal life at the age of 80. Sister was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1946. She studied psychology, reflexology, and homeopathic medicine, and worked in the culinary industry before converting to Catholicism in 1976. Two years later, she entered religious life with the Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary at the Monastery of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

A woman of diverse talents and profound generosity, Sister Martin Marie served in numerous capacities, including sub-prioress, infirmarian, secretary, sacristan, librarian, and cook. An accomplished artist, she blessed her community with her skills in calligraphy, metalwork, painting, and fine needlework.

Following the closure of the Lancaster monastery, Sister formally transferred here in 2022. Despite her failing health, Sister channeled her artistic abilities into a vibrant crochet ministry, crafting countless unique blankets, scarves and hats for community gifts and our raffle. She possessed a rare gift for lasting friendship, maintaining a lifelong network of prayerful support and correspondence.

Sister Martin Marie is remembered for her deep devotion, her untiring service, and her unyielding openness to God's will. It was fitting that the friend who introduced Sister to the Catholic faith, and his wife, were here to lay her to rest, blessed with the rites of the Church. We rejoice in the goal she has at last attained.

CALLED TO ENCOURAGE



In June, we were blessed with a delightful two-day vist from Fr. Cristóbal Torres Iglesias, O.P., General Promoter of the the Nuns of the Dominican Order. Although Father belongs to our Southern Province, we had not met him before, so we were especially happy to welcome him. He joined us for Mass, prayers, meals, recreation, and several community meetings. We enjoyed hearing about his visits to other Dominican monasteries, along with his wonderful stories about his experiences in the Order. His charming sense of humor, and easy-going spirit quickly became evident. These qualities proved very helpful as a series of maintenance mishaps occurred, including an air conditioner condenser exploding and a fire in our large clothes dryer. Just another monotonous day at the monastery.

CALLED TO SERVE

The Catholic Catechism teaches that "the call" is God's loving initiative inviting every person to know, love, and serve Him, entering into a lifelong covenant of faith and prayer. The following is a sampling of the many visitors we've had this year and the different stages of their call.



"Come, follow me..." Discernment and training are important when following God's call. We had two joyful visits: with some of the newer seminarians from our diocese; and with the novices from our Southern Province. Their enthusiam and zeal were inspiring!



"You are a priest forever..." As he promised, Fr. Martin Del Valle, O.P. returned to say Mass for us and to give us his first blessing.





"Go, preach..." We were very fortunate to have Fr. Don Goergen, O.P. for our retreat master, focusing on Dominican prayer. It was a restful, grace-filled time.











"Go out to all the world..." As a response to the disaster of Hurricane Mitch, which devastated Honduras in October 1998, our diocese and that of San Angelo entered into a "Covenant of Partnership" with the diocese of San Pedro Sula. This year marks the 25th annniversary of that bond. To honor this occasion, a delegation of bishops, priests, and lay persons, visited our diocese. Our monastery was included in that tour. Although our time together was brief, it left a lasting impression in our hearts.

"I chose you and appointed you..." We were delighted to learn that Fr. John Gomez, Vicar General of our Diocese, was selected as the Bishop of Laredo.
In the past, Father has helped us with immigration issues, recently became our confessor, and spent a few days of retreat here before leaving for Laredo. We will miss Father's presence in our diocese but send him our prayers and warmest "¡Felicidades!".

UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS

Two groups of women spent a day of retreat at our monastery: the ladies of Sacred Heart Parish in Nacodoches and





the Catholic Daughters of Lufkin and Longview.



Fr. Christian Corona recently led a group of young adults from Tyler on a trip to the monastery. He hopes the experience introduces more youth to our unique way of life.

