MONASTERY BELLS

Life with the cloistered Dominican nuns

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





The Master Comes to Visit

On November 2, 2024, Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner, III, O.P., Master of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), accompanied by Fr. Jordan Turano, O.P., his Socius for the United States, stopped by the Monastery as they visited the American Southern Dominican Province. Fr. Gerard is the 88th Master of the Order, the 87th successor of St. Dominic, and the first Asian to hold this position. He is the seventh Master of the Order to visit the Monastery; beginning in 1972, every Master has visited us. He and Fr. Jordan lunched with the Monastery's chaplain, Fr. R.B. Williams, O.P., and then came inside to meet the community. He spoke a bit about himself, his family, and his history in the Order as well as the current state of the Dominican Order throughout the world. He listened to the history of this monastery, and then asked each Sister for what she was most thankful. Many mentioned their gratitude to their parents and others who had helped them along their vocational journey. It being All Souls' Day, Fr. Gerard wanted to visit the Monastery's cemetery where he prayed for all the deceased nuns of the community. After that, he had a quick tour of the Monastery.

It is a long and eventful journey for a nun to reach her Golden Jubilee of Religious Profession. It begins on the day of her first (or temporary) profession. During those years she experiences many laughs and tears, duties and surprises. This year we have been celebrating the Golden Jubilee of our Prioress, Sister Mary Margaret. The day began with a beautiful Mass celebrated by our longtime friend, Bishop Eduardo Nevares, Auxiliary Bishop of Phoenix, AZ. Our confessor of almost 40 years, Fr. Ron Foshage, M.S., joined the bishop and our chaplain, Fr. R. B. Williams, O.P., in celebrating the Jubilee Mass. The day truly was a celebration of the "local" community and many Apostolic Dominican Sisters represented by the Vietnamese Sisters from Houston, our Sisters from Puerto Rico (see next page), and the Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. Many friends and relatives of Sister Mary Margaret joined in from far and near. These included all her siblings (sister Sherry, brothers Jim and Mike) from Washington, Arizona and Missouri. It had been 40 years since they were all together as a family. (see photo below) As always, we can never be grateful enough for our wonderful friends who continually reach out to us from the generous goodness of their hearts. One of these friends in particular, Doug Russell and his special team, provided all of us and our many guests with a grilled hamburger dinner following the liturgy. Other people brought cookies and cake; some offered to decorate. Guests could pick them up and eat at the tables provided. Even our Texas weather could not have been more beautiful!









Another Jubilee – Dominican Fatima Sisters –



It is a very special experience for us to have a community of Dominican Apostolic Sisters with us in the diocese. The Dominican Sisters of Fatima came from Puerto Rico in 2014, and they often come to our monastery for retreat days or of special festive occasions. Originally there were six, but now only 3 and we hope they continue ministering to our Spanish-speaking people for a long time. Their congregation was founded in 1949, so last year they celebrated their 75th anniversary. We had a little music for them by the Sisters in our Novitiate. Their special charism is the evangelization of families, as well as praying and sacrificing for priests as requested by Our Lady of



Meeting Our Young Dominican Brothers

February 8 brought a visit of this year's class of Dominican Novices (friars in formation) from the Southern Province along with their Novice Master, Fr. Francis Orozco, O.P. They are a delightful group of young men from varied backgrounds. Time will tell how they put their many talents of nature and grace at the service of the Gospel. It is a venerable tradition to serve pizza to the novices when they visit. However, this year, due to various circumstances and perhaps as a mark of divine predilection, they got barbecue. (Lufkin is known for its barbecue.) As there were some native Texans in the group just hankering for barbecue it proved most fortuitous. We joked that maybe one of them would come back and be our chaplain someday. God willing, they'll come back to visit us someday as fully professed Dominican priests!



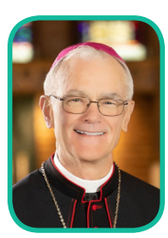


Forming Dominican Nuns

Our Sister Mary Rose had been trying since last October to have a meeting of the Formation Committee of our Association of Dominican Monasteries, but it kept being postponed. Finally, in mid-March the four Sisters met at our monastery. In addition to the two Sisters from Lufkin (Sister Mary Rose and Sister Mary Jeremiah), one came from the East coast (Sister Judith Miryam from Summit, NJ) and the other from the West coast (Sister Joseph Marie from Menlo Park, CA). It must have been God's-time because the meeting was excellent and we covered the agenda ... and then some.

The North American Association of Dominican Monasteries is comprised of six U.S. Dominican monasteries and two Dominican monasteries in Canada. Each year the Association sponsors a meeting for prioresses; a meeting for novice mistresses (those responsible for training women who wish to become nuns); and a study program for those Sisters from the Association monasteries who are in temporary vows. It also offers help to the bursars (treasurers) from the member monasteries and provides resources for ongoing study for those nuns in final vows. The Formation Committee was tasked with revising the plan for the course of studies from the time a woman enters the monastery through her vowed life to bring it into accord with current Church documents. It also discussed the various meetings and programs that the Association sponsors for the training of our nuns.

A New Shepherd Comes to us



Bishop Gregory Kelly comes to the Tyler Diocese from being an Auxiliary Bishop in the Dallas Diocese. The Bishop was in Lufkin to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with the people of St. Patrick Parish, and took the extra time to stop by and meet us. We had been without a bishop for over a year and Bishop Kelly has now been in the diocese for less than a month, so we were pleasantly surprised that he came so soon. It was a delightful occasion and we enjoyed his sense of humor.



Christ is clothed in Majesty and Glory!

May our Risen Lord

fill your life with Hope and Joy!