Monastery Bells

Life with Cloistered Dominican Nuns

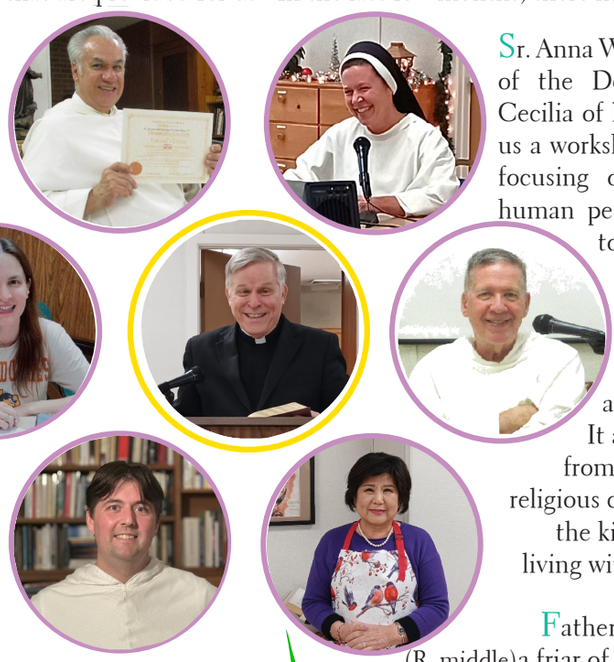
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Spring 2026

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

"He changes times and seasons....
He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning." Daniel 2:21

Spring is about SEEDS. It is about growth and new life. At the monastery, each day, seeds of the Word are scattered in our inner gardens. We find them in the Liturgy, in daily homilies, in the Church Fathers, in the readings or CDs in the refectory, in the books we peruse. But there are times when we need additional "watering" or "fertilizing". These come in the classes, conferences or lectures that are provided for us. In the last few months, there have been an abundance of these.



Our long-awaited visit from Father Fernando García, O.P., (L, top) Promoter of the Nuns for the Dominican Order, occurred on Nov. 3-5, 2025. We had a wonderful time sharing in a series of discussions on Dominican Contemplative Life and hearing his news about the other Dominican monasteries throughout the world. On his last evening with us, we had a grand Texas-style program for Father and bestowed on him honorary Texas Citizenship. We greatly appreciate Father Fernando's kindness to visit us, his gentle humor, as well as his valiant efforts to speak English to us.

Sr. Anna Wray, O.P., (R, top) a member of the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia of Nashville, TN, came to give us a workshop on Conflict Resolution, focusing on the philosophy of the human person, how people respond to conflict, and effective ways to interact with each other when there is a conflict. We enjoyed her talks and appreciated her realistic approach to problem-solving. It always helps us to get advice from someone who also lives in a religious community and understands the kinds of issues that arise from living with others in this special way.

Margaret Carlin (L,middle), a local Speech Pathologist and the biological sister of our Prioress, Sister Mary Rose, has been coming regularly to offer accent reduction lessons. She meets with Sisters individually and focuses on various aspects of speech, including pronunciation, intonation, stress patterns, and rhythm. Margaret's enthusiastic and encouraging approach fosters confidence and joy in learning in her students. We are very grateful to Margaret for generously volunteering to share her time and expertise.

Father Thomas McDermott, O.P., (R, middle)a friar of the Province of Saint Albert the Great, gave us a conference on the life and spirituality of Saint Catherine of Siena. He is the author of several books, including *Catherine of Siena: Spiritual Development in Her Life and Teaching*. He also has a website devoted to the mysticism of Catherine of Siena: drawnbylove.com. We greatly enjoyed his talks and meeting with him for recreation. He had many interesting stories to share about his first assignment in Lagos, Nigeria, which lasted 18 years.

Father James Dominic Rooney, O.P., a friar of the Province of Saint Albert the Great and an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Hong Kong Baptist University, gave us a fascinating lecture via Zoom. He spoke on the subject "Can Confusionists be Theists?" and various other topics, which was followed by a session for questions and comments. It was incredibly kind of him to accommodate the difference in our time zones, as the lecture began at 8:30 a.m. Texas time, which was 10:30 p.m. in Hong Kong.

Mrs. Faustina McPherson, (R. bottom)a retired art teacher from our local Catholic grade school, recently volunteered to give us art classes. Knowledgeable in various mediums, she has thus far introduced us to coil pottery and water coloring. This experience of learning something completely new and getting to work with our hands has nurtured our creative spirits and been a lot of fun.



We were blessed to receive a lovely visit and conference from Father Timothy Vaverek, (center) who is currently serving as pastor for Assumption Catholic Church in West, TX. Father spoke on the Sacrifice of Christ celebrated in the Mass and in the Christian Life using the passage from Philippians 2:5-11, where St. Paul urges believers to adopt the humble, self-sacrificial mindset of Jesus, who "emptied himself". We are grateful to Fr. Timothy for taking time out of his busy parish schedule and making the long trip from West to Lufkin.

To cultivate change you must first plant the seeds.



One of the most important things we do as nuns is to glorify God in song, whether it's singing hymns at Mass or chanting the Liturgy of the Hours. So we asked Dr. Deborah Dalton, a retired music professor, to give us voice lessons. She works with us both individually and as a group, providing us with all kinds of suggestions and techniques on how to improve the quality of our singing. We are grateful to Debbie, who is eager to help us develop our singing skills.

Anything is possible when you sow the seeds of love.

February 7 was a day of great rejoicing and fellowship at the monastery as we celebrated the World Day of Consecrated Life. This year the Religious of our diocese gathered here, granting us an opportunity to pray together and to get to know each other. The day began with a beautiful Mass with Bishop Gregory Kelly officiating. After the Mass, we had a delightful recreation with our guests, followed by a delicious meal provided by the Bishop. May God bless all the Religious who, through their various ministries and charisms, are a source of enrichment and growth for our diocese.



The seeds of kindness you plant today, will one day bloom in the hearts of all you touch.



On February 2, the actual World Day of Consecrated Life, the Catholic Daughters of America from the Ladies of LaSalette Court sweetened our day by hosting an ice cream social and presenting us with a gracious donation. They strive "to be helping hands where there is pain, poverty, sorrow or sickness." They embrace the principle of faith working through love. And we loved their ice cream!

To see things in the seed, that is genius. Lao Tzu

Every year we enjoy celebrating Tet, the Vietnamese variation on the Lunar New Year. It's a pre-Lenten festive occasion for our community to celebrate the cultural background of two of our sisters. This year was the Year of the Fire Horse, generally seen as a powerful, transformative, and energetic year full of opportunities for growth and action. As part of the entertainment, we divided into two teams: the white horses and the black horses, and played equestrian-themed games. Everyone is a winner and prizes are provided. It was a wonderful celebration and a great opportunity to grow in community. We look forward to next year!









"Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last,
the one who lives.
Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever.
Revelation 1:18

Easter Blessings!