

# From the Foot of the Cross



The Passionist Nuns of Saint Joseph Monastery in the Diocese of Owensboro KY

Advent 2014

*Lo, I Have Come to Do Your Will, O God.*



*We adore You, O Jesus our Redeemer!  
We love to gaze at Your Face and contemplate Your mysteries!*

In the above depiction of the Nativity, we notice that Mary and Joseph and the Magi are all gazing at the Face of the Infant Messiah. The insightful artist has placed the crucifixion scene off to the side, as a brilliant reminder that “the redemptive Passion was the very reason for His Incarnation” (cf Catholic Catechism quote in the side bar).

United with the Heart of Mary, the Mother of God, we spend our lives keeping our gaze on Christ in a living liturgy of adoration and intercession. Passionist Nuns are dedicated to a continual prayerful pondering of the total mystery of Christ—His Life, Passion and Death. We do this as we carry out the ordinary activities of our daily monastic routine, in the light and sometimes in the “darkness” of the Father’s plan to redeem the world. The Passion Sign we wear over our hearts is meant to reveal what is engraved within our hearts—the loving memory of Christ’s Passion and His entire mystery.

With the tenderness of Christ, we gaze also at the Mystical Body of Christ journeying through history, and we try to bear in our hearts the sufferings and anxieties of all who seek the help of our intercession before the loving Face of God. The Church teaches that our hidden way of life thus becomes “a mysterious source of apostolic fruitfulness and blessing for the Christian community and for the whole world” (cf Verbi Sponsa, Vatican document on Enclosure, 1999).

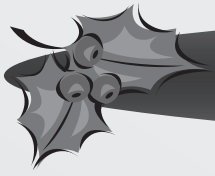
We also invite you to keep your gaze on Jesus, the Redeemer of the world, in whom the riddle of human suffering reveals its redemptive meaning.

FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH #606—607

*“The Son of God, who came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him who sent him, said on coming into the world, ‘Lo, I have come to do your will, O God.’ From the first moment of his Incarnation, the Son embraces the Father’s plan of divine salvation.... This desire to embrace his Father’s plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus’ whole life, for his redemptive Passion was the very reason for his Incarnation.”*



**This desire of His human will, this ardent longing of His human Heart never ceased day or night, and it reached its culmination in that final, magnificent act of Sacrifice He accomplished on the altar of the cross.**



# Becoming signs of the love of God for the

## Celebrating the Year of Consecrated Life with the Church!

The Church is calling everyone to renew their faith in and appreciation of the vocation to consecrated life during this special year. Our community has already begun to focus on a personal and community deepening of the joy, meaning and goal of our cloistered Passionist vocation. Through prayer and study as well as community sharing, we want the oil in our lamps always to be brimming full, and the flames in our hearts to be burning brightly.

We also want to share our joy with you! Various Nuns will be contributing articles about consecrated Passionist life in our newsletter such as Sr. Cecilia Maria's article below. We plan to put articles on our website [www.passionistnuns.org](http://www.passionistnuns.org), in our diocesan newspaper, and also on our radio station, WJOR-LP, Whitesville 93.1 FM. By frequently checking out our website and vocation blog and sending links to others, you can help us spread the joy of the good news of cloistered Passionist life! Maybe you will be responsible for a young woman becoming a Passionist.

This year, beginning on November 30, the first Sunday of Advent, Pope Francis has called the whole Church to observe a "Year of Consecrated Life." What a wonderful opportunity for us all to reflect upon the beauty, power, and gift of consecrated life! What is it? Why does it exist? How is it related to the whole Church? And what distinguishes our Passionist contemplative life from the many other forms of consecrated life? In this newsletter, we begin what we pray will be a grace-filled year of pondering these questions.

As we begin our meditations on consecrated life specifically, let us look first at who we are as human persons. When God created the human race – when He created each of us individually – He created us to be His spouse. What dignity each human being



has! God loves us so much that He created each man and woman on the face of the earth to be His bride! That is why Jesus calls heaven a "wedding banquet" – for all eternity, we will be celebrating our marriage with God Himself. The Church calls this love of God "the universal call to holiness." No matter what our particular state of life is, we are each called to become so holy, so united with God that we become His spouse.

Most people follow this universal call to holiness through the vocation of matrimony, which is itself a beautiful image of the love between God and the Church. But throughout the centuries, God has asked some men and women to be consecrated to Him alone and, thus, to live their eternal vocation already here on earth. Through the profession of their "marriage vows," the "evangelical counsels" of poverty, chastity, and obedience, these consecrated souls conform their lives as closely as possible to the earthly life of Jesus, their divine Bridegroom. Joyfully returning love for Love, they give themselves entirely to Him and to His work on earth. As they do so, their lives become powerful signs to the whole world, proclaiming what each person is created



WAKE UP THE  
— 2015 Year of Consecrated Life —

## Prayer for of Consecrated

O God, throughout the centuries, you have called women to pursue lives of holiness through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

During this Year of Consecrated Life, we give you our courageous witness. Your models of inspiration and holiness teach us more perfect offerings to you.

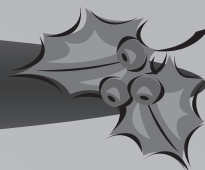
Continue to enrich our lives by calling forth sons and daughters who, having found the great price, treasure you in Heaven above all things.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Son, who lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.





*The world is at the very heart of our vocation.*



## the Year ated Life

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Jesus Christ, your  
reigns with you  
Holy Spirit, one  
ver. Amen.



Our  
community  
immensely  
enjoyed an  
autumn visit  
from our  
Shepherd  
**Most Rev.  
William F.  
Medley**



for: eternal happiness in the  
spousal embrace of God.

Becoming signs of the love  
of God for the world is at  
the very heart of our Pas-  
sionist contemplative voca-  
tion. Not only do we profess  
the three evangelical coun-  
sels, but we profess a vow  
“to promote devotion to  
and grateful remembrance

of the Passion and Death of Je-  
sus Christ and to express it in our  
style of life.” It was in His Pas-  
sion, Death, and Resurrection  
that the Son of God consummat-  
ed His marriage to His Bride, the  
Church! “God so loved the world  
that He gave His only-begotten  
Son...” (Jn. 3:16). As Passionist  
brides of Christ, we live out our  
consecration on Calvary, in the  
atmosphere of Christ’s sacrificial  
love, offering ourselves in union  
with our Crucified Spouse to the  
Father for the sake of the whole  
world.

By our lives of prayer and sacri-  
fice, cloistered here at the foot  
of the Cross, we strive to teach  
all people about the God who  
loves them so much that He  
came to earth and died, just so  
that He could lead them back  
into His Kingdom as His radiant,  
spotless Bride.

***“Drawn by the Holy Spirit, the  
Passionist Nuns profess the evan-  
gelical counsels in the Church to  
intensify their baptismal conse-  
cration and to unite themselves  
in a special way to the Church  
and to her Mystery. Voluntarily  
and lovingly they oblige them-  
selves “to follow Christ who,  
virginal and poor, redeemed and  
sanctified men by obedience un-  
to death on the cross.*”**



***“Consecrated therefore as  
“brides of the Crucified by the  
holy vows,” they live solely for  
Christ and for His Body, which  
is the Church.”***

(Constitutions of the Passionist Nuns, #9;  
cf. Lumen Gentium #43-46)



# Celebrating a Life Totally Given to Christ



Here Sister is pictured in her rose covered carriage as the community gathers for the skit.



At the end of the skit, Sister is crowned Queen for a day in Heaven's Rose Garden. The troublesome rabbit promises to eat from heavenly meadows instead of the roses!



Saint Therese (Sr. Cecilia Maria) poses with our two Thereses: Srs. Mary Therese and Therese Marie.

Lots of fun and laughter, along with some tears of gratitude, marked our private community Gaudeamus in honor of this year's Golden Jubilarian, Sr. Mary Therese. Besides her many other gifts, Sister is notorious for her battles with renegade rabbits in her flower garden. Using this theme, the younger sisters performed a magnificent skit depicting earthly efforts to maintain rabbit-free gardens at the monastery, and the

heavenly rewards that will follow for one who not only became expert at chasing rabbits but was also faithful for over a half century to her contemplative life centered on the love of Jesus Crucified. Even her patroness, Saint Therese, made an appearance during the skit, in full Carmelite habit thanks to our dear friends, the Carmelites of the Divine Heart of Jesus.

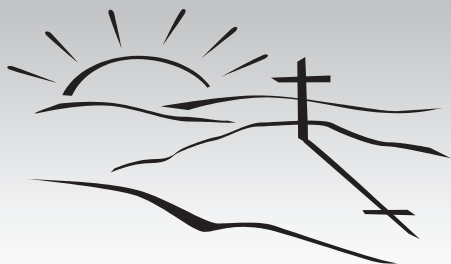
## Sharing the Fruits of Our Passionist Life

Please consider bringing a group for a visit to learn about Passionist life and meet some of the sisters. Our visits range from a few hours for younger groups to a couple days for young adults. The group at left participated in our Vocation Day in July and the families at right visited us from Louisville, KY. We also had a Nun Run for an overnight visit from Chardon, OH.





# *A Loving Remembrance of Our Deceased*



SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER, SR. MARIE MICHAEL'S FAMILY SUFFERED THE LOSS OF A BROTHER AND A SISTER LESS THAN TWO WEEKS APART. PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR THE LIVING AND DECEASED MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILY!

## **JOSEPH A. AULL**

Sr. Marie Michael's youngest brother, Joseph A. Aull, went home to God suddenly on September 24 of this year. Born January 7, 1938, in Kottsville, Kentucky to Michael "Harry" and Mary Pauline Aull, Joe was the 14th in a family of 15 children. When he died, he was the retired Executive Vice-President of Triad Mining Inc. Over the years, Joe's kindness and great generosity touched many lives, including our own Passionist community, particularly at the time of our relocation. For our Sister Marie Michael, it was Joe's loving kindness that always stood out to her from childhood on. She particularly remembers her little brother's loving endurance of "Millie's" (Sr. Marie Michael) poor culinary arts!

He was indeed a very beloved husband to his wife of 57 years, Lena Hartz Aull. Joe was preceded in death by a son, Joey Aull, and seven brothers and sisters, Jack Aull, Jim Aull, Sister Margaret Joseph Aull, O.S.U., Elizabeth Miller, Beverly Clark, Thomas Charles Aull, and Hazel Ruth Aull. His sister, Mary Thomasine "Tommie" Higdon, died 11 days later. Joe is survived by his wife, Lena; a son, Tim (Lisa) Aull; four daughters, Lisa (Jerry) Huffman, Jackie (Mike) Mize, Terri (John) Wick, and Vickie (Kevin) Insko; a daughter-in-law, Audrey Aull; nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren; two brothers, Bill Aull and Bob Aull; and five sisters, Sister Naomi Aull, O.S.U., of the Mt. St. Joseph Ursulines, Sister Marie Michael Aull, C.P., Joy Dunn, and Anna Carolyn "Cricket" Lyddane.



## **MARY THOMASINE "TOMMIE" HIGDON**



Less than two weeks after the family gave Joe Aull back to God, their oldest living sibling, Mary Thomasine "Tommie" Higdon, 97, passed away on October 4, 2014, at home. She was the 2nd child born to Harry and Mary Pauline Aull. When she was born on August 16, 1917, she had only one sister, Elizabeth "Jakie". Tommie loved dancing, cooking, talking with her friends at Fern Terra, and most of all spending time with her large and loving family. She tried never to miss a family visit with Sr. Marie Michael here at the monastery, and would usually be right up front with her cheerful and engaging conversation. Sr. Marie Michael cherishes memories of Tommie being a "Miss Clean-Up" at their home as they were growing up.

She was preceded in death by a great grand-child Brandon Higdon and eight brothers and sisters, (named above in Joe's article). She is survived by two sons, Gerald Michael (Judy) Higdon, and Donald Ray (Tracy) Higdon; three daughters, Janice (Bennie) Payne, Pam Shelton (Kyle Henderson) and Margaret (Jeff) Stuart; 12 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren; as well as the close family members listed above in Joe's article.



## *Pray About Making a Retreat in 2015*



The Year of Consecrated Life is a time of not only learning about religious life and discerning if you have a vocation to consecrated life, but it is also a time to spend with consecrated men and women and to pray together with them. We want to invite you to consider making a solitude or group retreat in our guest house. A new brochure is available if you would like to spread the good news of our guest house where many people who are thirsting for a deeper relationship with God come for solitude and prayer, with the option of joining the Nuns for Holy Mass and Liturgy of the Hours.

# FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS



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## Merry Christmas



*May all the world wake up  
to the love of the Redeemer, come in the Flesh.  
O come let us adore, love and worship Him!*

Dear Family and Friends,

This issue of our newsletter brings you our earnest prayers and heartfelt best wishes for a holy and joyous Christmas celebration. At a time when our religious freedoms are in jeopardy, we would do well to make greater use of the many spiritual opportunities the Church offers us for keeping this Advent/Christmas season in a truly Christian way. Taking part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation services at your parish; pondering the daily Mass readings which are a rich banquet for the soul; inviting others to attend Mass and Eucharistic adoration with you, as well as reaching out to others through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy — all of these prepare our hearts to receive an abundance of the sanctifying graces of Christmas.

The ancient Christian invocation, "Come Lord Jesus," is a wonderful heart prayer to repeat during this entire season, as we invite Christ into our hearts, families, home, our nation and the entire world.

As we near the end of 2014, we thank you once again for the countless ways you help us carry on our Passionist contemplative vocation. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

*Mother Catherine Marie and the Passionist Nuns*

**Please remember us in your Will and help continue our Contemplative Passionist Mission**