



Queen of Peace Monastery





Dear friends and family,

Happy Easter and Pentecost! We hope that you are all well and staying safe. We are praying with you and for you as we live this global pandemic together. Due to our enclosure, our life of prayer, work and study continues largely unaffected. We are very grateful to friends and volunteers who help with our groceries, mail and other practical needs. This lets us self-quarantine as much as possible to protect the members of our community who are most at risk.

Our self-quarantine was interrupted during the Easter Octave, however, when an out-of-control wildfire forced us and other Valley residents to evacuate on very short notice. Most sisters left immediately, while two stayed a bit longer to help our friend Daniel hose down the roofs and begin to set up an outdoor sprinkler system. As our cars merged onto the highway south, we were greeted by signs saying, "Stay safe, stay home, COVID-19." Catastrophe come with humour, at least in retrospect! We were graciously received at St. Joseph's parish by Fr. Rey, the Knights of Columbus and our local Augustinian sisters (all of us staying at a two-meter distance). The parish became our home base for the next four days, with some sisters sleeping in the church and others at a

hotel provided by the Red Cross. We prayed the liturgy of the hours together, served as the guest choir for the parish's livestream Mass, and feasted the Resurrection in our temporary "refectory" (aka the parish's religious education classroom) (*above*). When we returned home, we were amazed to see that the fire stopped just at our western property line, leaving our monastery unharmed. However, three of our neighbours lost their homes and others suffered property damage. Thanks be to God, no lives were lost. We are so touched by the kindness of all those we met, and deeply grateful for the heroism of the firefighters and volunteers who battled the blaze.

Like the rest of the world, we don't know when life will get back to "normal," or what the new normal will be. What we do know, in faith, is that Jesus has conquered death and hell. He is Emmanuel, God-with-us, raised from the dead. In the Body of Christ, we are never distant; we are simply waiting to be physically together again. Let us remain united in prayer with our father St. Dominic, who also lived and preached in uncertain times. *Noli timere!*

Blessings,
your sisters at Queen of Peace Monastery



January

After a week with enough snow to go sledding, we celebrated Epiphany with the crowning of our “two kings” (the third found her bean in the leftover *Galette des Rois* the next day), accompanied by a duet on clarinet and violin. On January 6, we bid “adieu” to Archbishop-emeritus Ramón Arguelles (Lipa, Philippines), who had been our chaplain for the past 14 months. In honour of his Marian spirituality, the novitiate performed a skit: can you guess all these apparitions and titles of Our Lady? (Answers on the next page).



After his departure, we were blessed by the help of two diocesan priests, Fr. John Tritschler and Fr. Andrew L’Heureux. They took turns saying Mass for us, and could also often be found in work boots, helping our employee Ron in the shop and forest. Thank-you, fathers!

February

Our celebration of Candlemas on February 2 was preceded by an unexpected “tridium”—a 60-hour power outage, thanks to a mud slide further up the Squamish Valley! By the third day, the gentle rustling of parkas and thud of hiking books could be heard in the choir as sisters tried to stay warm. It was a strong reminder to pray for those in our world who don’t enjoy the securities we take for granted, especially migrants and refugees.



In the midst of this adventure, we were happy to welcome Sonia Awa Gisenya as a postulant for the first Vespers of the Presentation of our Lord. Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, Sonia joins us most recently from Alberta. We commend her courage in living her first three days in the monastery without light, heat or running water!



March

As we entered Lent, the weather watch began: when would it be warm enough to plant our flower and vegetable gardens? Some said the Annunciation, others the feast of St. Joseph. Meanwhile, we uncovered the tulips, planted the dahlias, and prayed that the wild salmonberry flowers would bloom in time for the Easter Vigil.



Mid-March brought the arrival of Msgr. Jerry Desmond, a retired priest of the diocese of Kamloops, B.C. An avid skier and mountain biker, he gamely weathered the initial isolation of COVID-19 with us. After learning that our celebrant for Holy Week was unable to cross the closed USA/Canada border, Msgr. Desmond generously agreed to stay and celebrate the Paschal Triduum with us.

April

We began Holy Week with Palm Sunday, mindful of so many of our brothers and sisters who cannot physically be together this year to celebrate these mysteries of our faith. We remembered you in prayer, especially as we gathered around the Paschal fire at the beginning of the Easter Vigil.



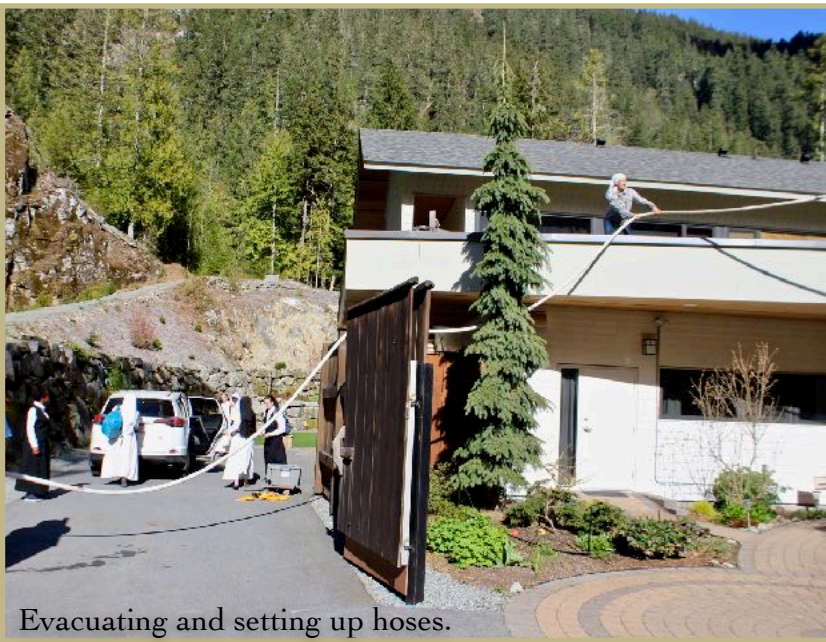
On April 15, we evacuated due to a wildfire in our valley (see photos, *right*). The firefighters used our north field as a base for their crews and helicopters. We were happy to be of service to the community, and it gave us some extra security too. We returned home to find that spring had arrived: apple and pear trees in full flower, fresh pea shoots, and swallows looping outside the chapel windows.



Construction on our hydro-electricity project continues, with a load of heavy pipe arriving on April 24. On the feast of St. Catherine of Siena, April 29, we celebrated a Rosary vigil after Compline to pray with the rest of the Dominican Family for an end to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Our guesthouse is currently closed due to the virus, as is our public chapel, so it may be a quieter summer than usual. Fr. Pierre Leblond, O.P. joined us on May 1, and will serve as our chaplain for the foreseeable future (after a 14-day quarantine). The trails are still open, though, and the novitiate is looking forward to hiking in the mountains around our monastery. And, of course, the bears are always with us: we saw this year's first on April 15.



Evacuating and setting up hoses.



Along the Squamish Valley Road.



The view from our driveway as we evacuated.



Just past our south field.



Safely home and touring the equipment (no, we didn't fly in it)





Chapter talk at our Mandatum on Holy Thursday, by Sr. Claire, O.P.

Through the powerful door of the liturgy, we will enter another kind of time, and we will truly live these most Holy days with our Lord. We will follow Him step by step, hour by hour. We will stay with him in prayer as He agonizes. We will witness His betrayal, condemnation and flogging. We will walk the way of the cross and see Him falling. With Mary, our hearts will be pierced as we witness our Beloved Friend's crucifixion, His death on the Cross and the coldness of the tomb. We will behold the emptiness of the whole world in His absence.

But today, Jesus has knelt down and washed your feet. Jesus is on his knees as your servant. By this, He says "I want to serve you. I want you to experience the immense respect which I have for you." Jesus touches our feet with great tenderness and reveals something—our dignity. He says that each one of us is cherished, is beloved. He asks us to love one another, and He demonstrates what this might mean. By washing their feet, He takes care of the bodies of his disciples.

This year, we think of all the doctors and caregivers around the world who, wrapped their hospital gowns, whether they know it or not, are following Jesus' example. We are grateful and we ask that all these people be given the strength of love, as they serve and try to save lives. We pray that those who accompany the dying may communicate, by their respectful touch and their caring presence, the dignity and value of every human life.

In this morning's reading at Matins, Melito of Sardis speaks how our Lord endured every kind of suffering in all those who foreshadowed Him. In Abel He was slain, in Isaac He was bound, in the Passover lamb He was sacrificed. I would venture to say that Christ endures the suffering of those coming after Him. He suffers today with those who are dying of the virus. Like the crucified one, their lungs are filling up and they are suffocating.

This year, at the foot of the cross, we will be with Jesus and all those who are dying. By our faith hope and love, we will accompany them all the way to the "blessed night" where, *"the darkness which overspread the whole world is chased away by the splendour of our eternal King. The blessed night in which Christ broke the chains of death"* (Exultet).

Scripture texts take on new meanings in these difficult times... (Jn 20:16 - 17)



Canadian friends :

who wish to contribute can receive
Income Tax receipts by sending your cheques to:
Queen of Peace Monastery
Box 1745
Garibaldi Highlands, B.C.
V0N 1T0 CANADA
Cheque Memo: **Queen of Peace Monastery**



American friends :

who wish to give **over \$200.00** can receive Income
Tax receipts by sending your cheques to:
Blessed Sacrament Monastery
29575 Middlebelt Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-2311 USA
Cheque Memo: **Queen of Peace Monastery**