

*The world in solemn stillness lay*

*to hear the angels sing...*



Dear Friend:

*Christmas 2010*

Stillness is not a quality highly regarded by many in our contemporary culture. Like its companion, silence, it seems to be feared, or viewed as a threat by society at large. Witness the din of background noise in shopping mall and waiting room, in restaurant and repair shop. To say nothing of the omnipresent cell phone and I-pod!

Why is this? Each person may have a different answer – or perhaps no answer at all – but hopefully some sense of nostalgia for something missing, and perhaps an intuition that silence could be a life-giving element in our lives. Each one of us can choose to make a difference here. There is a healing value in freely-chosen stillness and silence. It is as necessary to authentic human life as breathing. It alone enables us to truly listen to ourselves and to one another – and to hear the angels sing.

*It came upon a midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold.  
“Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven’s all-gracious King.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.*

Over the years we have been blessed with wonderful friends and neighbors. Many of these worship with us, and their presence is greatly valued. On a lovely autumn Saturday this year a large group came to help out on our grounds – weeding and mulching, edging and raking, washing windows and a variety of other much-needed tasks. How grateful we are!



A major focus for our community this year has been attention to the promotion of vocations. We want to make better known this monastic way of life we value so highly. Hopefully our new website (*coming soon!*) will help to do this, and we have other outreach programs planned. A religious vocation is a special call from God to a person, and as such it is a great mystery. But God most often works through other human persons and circumstances – and we want to be ready and available channels of grace to those whom the Lord may be calling here.



Vocational discernment is not an easy task. Young persons need guidance in this regard – and an awareness of the many possibilities for self-gift within the Christian life. We invite you to encourage young women interested in monastic life to be in contact with us. Our website is [www.olamonastery.org](http://www.olamonastery.org). The email address for vocational information is [vocations@olamonastery.org](mailto:vocations@olamonastery.org).



There were no community jubilees this year, but we did celebrate the 20th anniversary of Monastery Country Cheese! We began the endeavor of cheese-making as our means of self-support in November 1990. Over the years it has also become a ministry. Most of the cheese orders come through the mail and often include a request for prayers. We take seriously all the intentions that are entrusted to us, and we carry them in our hearts before the Lord.



*Sr. Maria came to us from Spain this year, and has entered with zest and zeal into our life, including the cheese-making!*

We also celebrated the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the log cabin on our property, which was our first home here. This dwelling was erected in 1810 by local settlers, and it is a parable in wood and stone of community effort, support and sharing of resources. The six foundresses of our community lived, prayed and worked in the cabin for 22 months while our monastery was being constructed. They often wondered about the many lives that the hand-hewn walls and beams had sheltered during its long history. The cabin became a holy place for them, and now guests and retreatants find there an atmosphere of quiet prayer.

*Silence and stillness, peace on the earth, good will to men. May your Christmas season be a time for quiet reflection on the gift of God bestowed on us in Christ. And may the joy this brings be yours throughout the coming year.*

The Sisters of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery  
Crozet, Virginia



*Srs Barbara (with Amber),  
Mary David, Francis,  
Maria, Kathy, Jan, Sophy,  
Claire, Kay (with Jesse),  
Mother Marion*

