



Bearing gifts, we traverse afar

Christmas 2017

Dear Friend,

These words from a much-loved Christmas carol are ever pertinent in our day – when so many persons must be on the move, in exile, seeking refuge and hospitality – but at the same time, bearing gifts of their unique culture and life experience to contribute to those who welcome them.

Our community has also received some special gifts this past year. In March, Mother Marion Risetto completed 25 years of faithful generous service as our Superior. During these years, many major construction projects were conceived, planned and brought to a happy conclusion – and even more importantly, our community was built up and brought to a place of spiritual flourishing. We are grateful beyond words for Mother Marion’s wisdom and love!



On March 21 we elected Mother Kathy Ullrich as our new Prioress. She entered our community in 2001 and made her final vows in 2009. Mother Kathy has served as Vocation Director and Novice Director and also as cellarer, gardener and all-round handy woman! She brings to her new responsibilities a deep love of the monastic life and of each Sister in the community – and a wonderful sense of humor. In September, Mother Kathy attended the General Chapter of our Order in Italy, during which they had a private audience with Pope Francis. We share with you her meeting with him!



May 1st marked the 30th anniversary of the foundation of our monastery. How much has happened since that day when the six foundresses drove onto the property, climbed the hillside, and sang their first hymn and psalms in the open pasture where our monastery now stands!

Yet another celebration this year was the Diamond Jubilee of Profession of our Sr Claire – a day of rejoicing and gratitude for her loving fidelity during the past 60 years.

On July 21, our community experienced the passing to eternal life of one of our foundresses, Sr Mary David DeFeo. We were privileged to have cared for her here in the monastery during her final illness, with the help of a wonderful hospice team and the assistance of many friends. This was the first death at Our Lady of the Angels, and Sr Mary David is the 'good seed' – God's own grain of wheat – now planted and at rest in our new cemetery.



It was from the communal deepening and strengthening of this experience that we came to the Dedication of the new church by Bishop Richard B Higgins on August 2, 2017 – surely one of the most beautiful celebrations in our history. We happily share with you here the photos of some of the highlights of this joyful day.



Our community will be forever grateful to all who have been a part of our life here especially during this past year by your faithful friendship and generosity. We hold you in our hearts and in our prayers. May the coming celebration of Christmas bring you much joy and a share in God's own peace.

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