

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Come to Bethlehem!



Dear Friend:

Christmas 2011

What do we mean when we say that someone is faithful? Many things – steadfast, trustworthy, true. These are qualities instinctively admired, yet if we are honest we know how difficult such a stance can be, how much it can cost. It does not take a lot of living to learn that we cannot manage this by ourselves. Scripture tells us that God is faithful – and herein lies our hope. God understands and has compassion on our wavering, hesitancy and fickleness. He invites us to bestow the same compassion on one another. We celebrate at this season the Lord's immense fidelity – our joy and triumph in the midst of all of life's uncertainties. His faithfulness is the source of ours.

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!

Come and behold him, born the King of angels,

O come let us adore him – Christ the Lord!



Sr Mary David

Abbot Robert

We celebrated a special instance of fidelity this year – 50 years of monastic vows for our Sr Mary David. This Golden Jubilee coincided with her 80th birthday – so we had a grand celebration of joyful thanksgiving, joined by Abbot Robert of Holy Cross Abbey and some of our brothers. Sr Mary David is a transplanted northerner (Boston!) who has become a staunch southerner. She is also one of the foundresses of Our Lady of the Angels, and has been the fix-it Sister here for decades. So it was a special joy for us to fix up a special time of jubilation for her this year.

Sr Kathy

An unusual occurrence of 2011 was the time spent in *La bell' Italia* by three of us! Sr Kathy was in Rome and Assisi in the spring, for a monastic studies program which brought together 30 monks and nuns from all over the world. Along

with academic endeavors, they visited many early Christian and monastic sites, rich in history and tradition. It was a wonderful opportunity, and Sr Kathy made the most of it! Then in September, Mother Marion and Sr Barbara traveled to Assisi for the General Chapter of our Order, held every three years. They too profited from their immersion in the atmosphere of that holy place. Now everyone is happily home and looking forward to celebrating Christmas together.



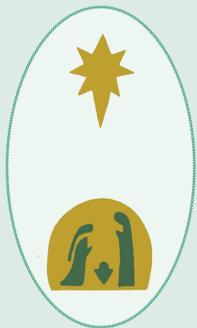
The annual observance of a national day for volunteering has been called “Make a Difference Day.” And we can attest to the difference made by the amazing crew of volunteers who joined us on a Saturday morning in October! They raked leaves, pulled weeds, spread mulch, packed cheese, and a host of other helpful tasks – and even provided lunch! We are grateful beyond measure to these good neighbors and to all who are so generous to our community.



Sr Maria

People often ask us just what goes on all day long in monasteries. Well, prayer, of course – that is the main focus. But in order to support and express this life of prayer, much else also goes on! There is meal-preparing, clothes-washing, cheese-making, lawn-mowing, phone-answering, etc. And for the special joy and delight of many of us, there is gardening! Getting one’s hands in God’s good earth is very therapeutic – and quite an adventure – from the sowing of the seed to the reaping of the harvest of fruits, veggies and flowers. In between, of course, there is the gardener’s staple: weeding. And all of this is a wonderful parable of the spiritual life! This brings us back to the reflections on fidelity with which this letter began. Patience and perseverance are key here, just as they are for the gardener. We cannot hurry growth in nature, nor in ourselves or others. Such patience requires a large amount of trust in the One who alone can give the increase. We pray for an abundance of trust and joy for you in this holy season and throughout the coming year.

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



*Srs Sophy, Mary David,
Joanna, Maria, Jan,
Mother Marion, Srs
Linda, Kay, Barbara,
Francis, Kathy, Claire*

