

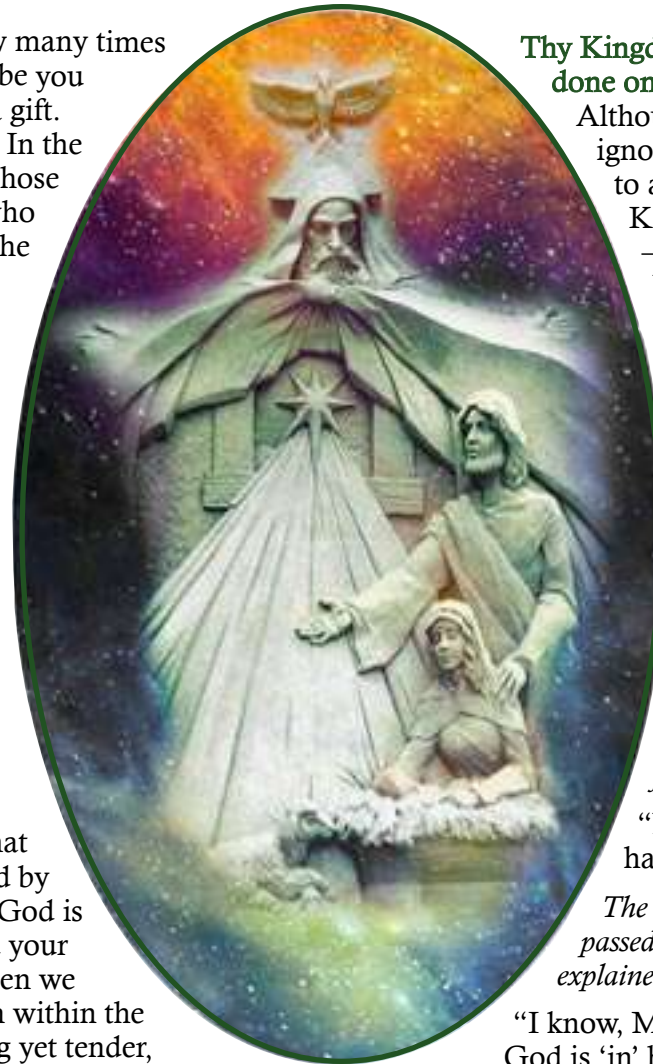
## CHRISTMAS IS FOR CHILDREN.

*To those who received Jesus, who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God. Jn. 1:12*

Christmas is for children. How many times have you heard this said? Maybe you have even said, "I don't need a gift. Christmas is for the children!" In the Gospel of John, we read, "to those who received Jesus, to those who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God." Jn 1:12 Perhaps, we will change our minds about needing gifts as we discover within the Our Father, gifts that prepare the children of God to receive his 'Ultimate Gift'.

Together let's unwrap the multilayers of the "Our Father." Don't tear off the paper too quickly or you will miss the first gift, the word **"our."** Not my or your father but our Father. We know that Jesus is the Son of God by nature, but St. Paul explains that we "are all the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus". Gal. 3:26 God is Christ's Father, my Father and your Father. We are never alone when we pray the Lord's Prayer. Hidden within the name **'Father'** are all the strong yet tender, sheltering and providing, wise or witty qualities of the best of human father, since God is the Source of all true Fatherhood.

As we continue and pray, **who art in heaven hallowed be Thy name**, we find the gift of the Name. Not just any name but an intimate, personal, relational name. Knowing a person's name allows us to call, even a stranger, and get their attention. But "because you are sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying out 'Abba! Father!'" Aramaic for daddy!" Gal: 4:6



*The Son  
of God became  
the son of Mary  
so that all who believe  
and receive him  
could become children  
of God and with him  
pray 'Our Father.'*

**Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

Although the world largely ignores God, Jesus proclaimed to all who would listen, "The Kingdom of God is at hand – literally within reach." What is really within our reach? Perhaps a four-year-old 'theologian' can give us some insight.

*One day little Joseph stopped playing to ask his mother a question,*

"Mama, is heaven bigger than God or is God bigger than heaven?"

*Caught off guard by such a profound question from a four-year-old, she said,*

"Mama's not sure, Joe. I have to think about that."

*The boy returned to his play. Time passed then, almost in passing, he explained.*

"I know, Mama. God 'is' biggest and God is 'in' heaven, right?"

*His mother agreed and Joseph continued.*

"If God is *in* heaven and God is 'biggest' then God *is* Heaven."

If God is 'heaven' and "the Lord is near to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" Ps. 145:18 then, the answer to our question is clear. True prayer to our Father brings the Presence of our Abba within reach!



**Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** Jesus came to earth to show us the Father and reveal his perfect will. “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure, *his will*, to give you the kingdom. The nations of the world strive after earthly goods, and your Father knows that you need them, but, strive for his kingdom, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Cf. Lk. 12: 32, 30-31

Then, with this assurance, we ask our Father to: **Give us this day our daily bread.** When we ask the Lord to receive enough ‘bread for each day’ we hear an echo of the Manna of the Exodus. It was the bread that came down from heaven, and was provided for only one day at a time. Ex. 16, Ps. 78:24 Recall , also, how Jesus, referring to the Holy Eucharist, said of himself, “I am the Bread that comes down from heaven. Anyone who eats this Bread would live forever.” Cf. Jn. 6: 51-5



**Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.** Here, as we ask for mercy, Jesus expects us, with gratitude and grace to extend that mercy to others. He assures us that, “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But, if you do not forgive, you will not be forgiven.” Cf. Matt. 6: 14-15 Why? “Because, the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and he chastises every son or daughter whom he acknowledges.” Heb. 12:6

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the Evil One. Amen.** Every person is tempted by the world, the flesh and the devil. Overcoming the world and the flesh can develop maturity, increase virtue and strengthen our dependence on the goodness and grace

of God. But Jesus stresses that we must pray to be spared from the direct temptations and wiles of the Evil One.

On the night before he died, Jesus said to Peter. “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your own faith may not fail. And once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers.” Lk. 22:31-32

Saint Peter was tempted and, out of fear, denied Christ three times. After his Resurrection Christ asked three times, “Peter do you love me?” Each time Peter answered, “Lord you know that I love you.” “Feed my sheep,” was Christ’s reply. Peter failed, wept like a child, and turned back to Christ and later strengthened his brothers – Christ’s sheep.

This is why the Son of God became the son of Mary. So that all who believe and receive him could pray with him ‘Our Father.’ Yes, Christmas *is* for children.” And our Ultimate Gift? *“Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”* 1 Jn. 3:2



## SISTER RANI’S FIRST FEAST DAY

*Rejoice in the Lord again I say rejoice.* Phil 4:4



What a great joy it is for a Community to celebrate God’s gift of a Prioress. In 2024 we were doubly blessed. In June we dedicated a day in gratitude to Sr. Mary Peter. In August we honored our newly elected Prioress, Sr. Rani with songs, poetry, Bingo and a skit.

Sr. Mary of the Compassion read a poem that was very touching. Sr. Mary of the Immaculate Conception’s delight at winning a game of Bingo brought joy to all.

Songs were sung from the sublime, *On Eagle’s Wings* to the hilarious, *Old McDonald Had A Farm*.

Sisters, also, performed, a benefactor-written short story turned skit, about a beautiful, yet proud, Begonia plant who learned true humility from the garden flowers: the Aloe, Rosemary, Fern and Rose Bush. Whom she had eyed with skepticism, discovering that their beauty came not from their appearance but from their, willingness to share their gifts.





## 21ST CENTURY EXAMINATION OF OUR BELL TOWER "FACE-LIFT"

*Glorify the LORD with me; together let us praise his Name. Cf. Ps 34:3*

March 1966

"ECHOES"

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### LIFE IN THE CLOISTER ...

### Toll Out The Old - Ring In The New



There will be two old friends waiting to welcome us when we move to Middlebelt and 13 Mile Road next summer. Joseph and Dominic are already installed in regal splendor in the modernistic tower of our new Monastery after having undergone a "face-lifting" and wiring for operation by electricity.

Our two bells look so small up there that one would scarcely suspect that Joseph weighs 500 lbs. and is 108 inches in circumference. Little brother, Dominic is only 100 lbs. and 48 inches in circumference.

Aug. 27th, the day of their removal from this Monastery, was a rather melancholy day. Their departure, although the first harbinger of the attainment of our long awaited goal of moving, was at the same time a sobering reminder that the day was now fast approaching when we, too, would have to bid farewell to our beloved Monastery here on Oakland. For some Sisters this will mean leaving their home of 30, 40, and 50 years -- years filled with holy memories, both happy and sad.

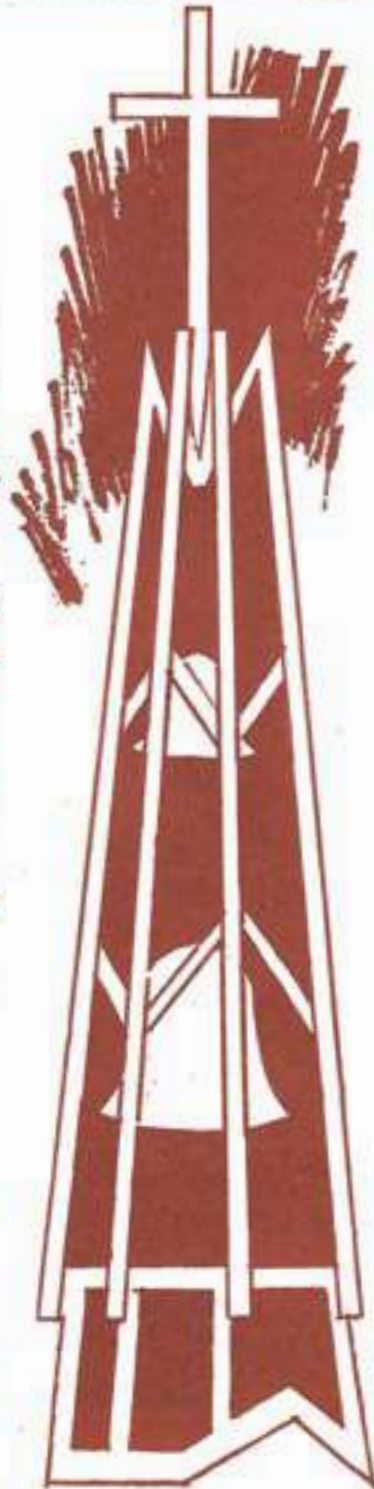
Joseph and Dominic, too, seemed loath to leave their post of duty where, for over fifty years they had faithfully summoned the community to prayer and other monastic duties. Their removal required the work of two men for ten hours. Every so often in the process of removal the bells would emit a protesting "bong". At recreation that evening some Sisters remarked that it almost seemed as though we had had a funeral.

To see the bells at close range was the desire of each nun. Only one of our number, our Prioress, Mother Mary of Jesus, was a member of the community when Joseph and Dominic were originally instal-

led in 1909. Happily Divine Providence was on our side. Just as the men were preparing to haul the bells out to the truck, a terrific electrical storm broke. Anxious to finish the job, nevertheless unwilling to risk handling the metal in such weather, they decided to leave them overnight. Thus we were able to examine the bells to our heart's content. Each bell, we discovered, had an inscription. On the large bell were the words:

JOSEPH MARY (its "baptismal" name) VIRGINIE (baptismal name of the foundress, Mother Mary Emmanuel). Below this was the apt scriptural verse: "Seven times a day I will praise Thee", (words referring to the seven times the bell calls the nuns to the Divine Office), and "Benedicamus Domino". (Let us praise the Lord.) The small bell was inscribed: DOMINIC MARIE MARGUERITE (the last two names are those of the twin daughters of the donors) and "Deo Gratias" (Thanks be to God.)

The next morning the problem confronting the two men, a father and son team, was how to lift the larger bell onto the truck. They decided to attach a pulley to a tree limb, hoist the bell up and then drive the truck under and lower the bell into it. While Joseph was suspended on the tree limb, one of the men struck it with his wrench. Its loud, clear tone reverberated over the entire Monastery like a last sad farewell. Now, as we go about our "bell-less" days we are consoled by the thought that they are not gone forever; they have only gone on ahead.



The Bell Tower that stood ready to receive our bells in 1966 was sorely in need of a facelift. Fifty-eight years of Michigan weather had taken its toll.

This year we contracted a painting company that was up to the challenge. Armed with a roller on a very long pole the painter climbed a ladder and battled strong winds to get the job done.

A young friend offered us a birds-eye view of their handywork. Using a drone, which hovered and flitted like a remote-controlled hummingbird, he took both video and still photos of the newly painted tower.

Now Joseph Mary and Dominic Marie can call the Nuns to glorify God for another Fifty years.





BOWL TOURNAMENT FOUR WINNERS ~ MANY DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES



‘No brag just fact!’ In all humility, we are just the best. All in good fun Sr. Maria Pia, Sr. Mary Rani, Sr. Mary Francis and Sr. Mary Elizabeth celebrate their winning scores.

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Sr. Maria Pia	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100
Sr. Mary Rani	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100
Sr. Mary Francis	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100
Sr. Mary Elizabeth	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100



Sr. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, with Sr. Clara Marie, aims for a strike.



Sr. Mary Elizabeth’s game winning form on display.



Sr. Mary Emmanuel, with characteristic optimism, cheers before her ball hits the pins.



Sr. Mary Pauline , with characteristic confidence, wills her ball into the strike zone.

OUR CHRISTMAS NOVENA ~ DECEMBER 16 ~24  
Come and join us for Mass and Evening Prayer

From December 16th through December 24th all are welcome to join in our Christmas Novena offered for our friends and benefactors.

On each of these nine days, the daily public schedule will be:

**Holy Mass** with the Novena Prayer - 7:15 AM.

Our doors will open for Mass at 7:00AM, close at 2:30 PM and reopen at 4:00 PM

**Evening Prayer / Vespers** - 4:30 PM.

On Sunday, December 22nd: **Evening Prayer** - 4:10 PM  
with the Rosary, Novena Prayer  
and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

On Christmas Eve: **Evening Prayer** - 4:15 PM  
Our Chapel will close immediately following Vespers and reopen at 11:30 PM for Midnight Mass.



Intentions: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please check here if no acknowledgment needed ☐

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please join us as we celebrate:

**Christmas Midnight Mass**  
Our doors will open at 11:30 PM

**Christmas Morning Mass - 9:30 AM**  
Our doors will open at 9:00 AM

**New Year’s Day Holy Mass 9:30 AM**  
Our doors will open at 9:00 AM

So that all the sisters can be together for dinner on Christmas and New Year’s Day, our doors will close at 12:00 Noon.

If you are unable to be with us for Holy Mass during this Novena, please join us in spirit by reciting the Christmas novena prayer at home.

**Holy Advent and Blessed Christmas**  
to you and all whom you love.

Novena Prayer

Wipe away, Infant Jesus, the tears of children! Embrace the sick and the elderly! Move men to lay down their arms and to draw close in a universal embrace of peace! Invite the peoples, O merciful Jesus, to tear down the walls created by poverty and unemployment, by ignorance and indifference, by discrimination and intolerance. It is you, O Divine Child of Bethlehem, who save us, freeing us from sin. It is you who are the true and only Savior, whom humanity often searches for with uncertainty. God of peace, gift of peace for all humanity, come to live in the heart of every individual and of every family. Be our peace and our joy! Amen.

Pope Saint John Paul II  
(Urbi et Orbi 12/25/1994)



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Donate on-line via PayPal or “Givng”  
Prayer Line: 248-626-8253

*Joyous Christmas!*  
*May the Christ Child fill your hearts*  
*and your homes with his Love and Peace.*

*Mass Schedule on page 7*  
All are welcome to our wonderful Giftshop.  
Open Monday thru Saturday  
from 8:15 AM until 2:30 PM

When you come *remember* to pay Jesus a visit in our Chapel  
to offer a gift of prayer for all those on your shopping list!



*You may donate on-line via PayPal at [www.opnuns-fh.org](http://www.opnuns-fh.org) - And please consider remembering us in your will.*

FLOWERS OF THE HOLY NIGHT



Legend has it that a Mexican girl named Pepita was sad because she was too poor to buy any flowers to present to baby Jesus on Christmas Eve. But as she walked sadly to the church that night, an angel appeared and told her to pick some of the weeds by the side of the road. Pepita wept. But her cousin Pedro encouraged her saying.

**"I am sure, Pepita, that even the most humble gift, if given in love, will be acceptable in His eyes".**

When Pepita brought her weeds into the church and placed them by the manger, they became radiant, changing into beautiful scarlet poinsettias flowers. The Mexican people call them “flowers of the Holy Night.”

Cf. The Miracle of the First Poinsettia, A Mexican Christmas Story, written by Joanne Oppenheim Illustrated by Fabian Negrin