**Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance**

**Mother of the Good Shepherd Monastery**

2075 Mercers Fernery Road

DeLand, FL 32720

Tel: (386) 736-4321

Email: monks@augustinianmonks.com

www:augustinianmonks.com

Feast of our Lady of Fatima

May 13, 2016

Dear Family and Friends,

Christ is risen, alleluia! Truly He is risen alleluia!

Easter truly is the feast I love the most and look forward to every year. The Easter Vigil above all is the highlight of the season for me and for our Monastery. This year, however, our Lord decided my celebration of the Easter Triduum would center not on the wondrous Vigil, but on our Lord’s passion and crucifixion. It all started about a week and a half before Holy Week. I started to have terrible pain in my lower back traveling to my right hip. The pain gradually began to increase, and when I visited my pain management doctor he wanted to give me a shot in the lower back, but I was in so much pain I could not get onto the table to have the injection. He did, however, give a shot in my right hip for bursitis.

Due to the severity of the pain I was not able to celebrate Passion/Palm Sunday Mass or the Easter Triduum. On Good Friday, near the time our Lord was on the cross, I was on the MRI table! Thank God I was able to celebrate Mass on Easter Sunday for the community and our friends, but Easter Monday I spent the whole day in bed in pain that I can only describe as excruciating. I was taking oxycodone pain pills every 4 hours, with 3 Advil every 4 hours in between. There was absolutely no relief at all. Truly, with all my heart I tried to unite my prayers with our Crucified Jesus, but the only prayers that I could recite at all were “My Jesus, mercy!”, and “My Jesus I trust in you!” As I was going through this, I held a crucifix in my hand, realizing our Lord suffered so much more for all of us. My brothers were so attentive and loving and kind to me, coming into my cell and praying by my bedside the Divine Office, rosary and Divine Mercy chaplet. They brought me Holy Communion and also placed the Blessed Sacrament in my cell for some time so I could be with the Lord. I thought of all those who were suffering with so much worse pain than I was, but honestly I couldn’t at that point think of how much more pain a body could endure. I passed through my mind and heart all those suffering for their faith, being beheaded, burned and crucified, I prayed for them and for all who asked our Monastery for prayers, and of course I lifted up all of you.

On Easter Tuesday I found out the diagnosis. It is an unusual cyst on the lumbar section of my spine between the 4th and 5th vertebrae. It is called a Tarlov Cyst, and it is pressing on all my nerves from that point down. The doctor increased my gabapentin (Neurontin), and thank God the pain gradually decreased to one that was manageable. I no longer take the oxycodone but still need the Advil. I am seeing a neurosurgeon toward the end of this month, so please keep that appointment in your prayers. I have placed all of this in the hands of our Blessed Mother, and have asked her and Blessed Father Seelos to restore my good health. After all, I have places to go and people to see, right?

**Construction**

We have run into a few obstacles with the construction of our Monastery, but thank God it looks like we may move in to our new home in about a month or a bit more. I keep imagining what it will be like to be in a real monastic cell again, instead of a closet!!! Please keep this all in your good prayers.

**A Pilgrim for the Monastery!**

If all goes as planned, our good friend, and, I may say, benefactor, Dr. Randy Fritz, will begin his walking pilgrimage on May 23rd from Saint Jean in France to the famous shrine of Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain. This pilgrimage to the tomb of the apostle, Saint James the Greater, was one of the well-known medieval pilgrimages and continues to this day as modern pilgrims still walk the path. The whole trip is more than 510 miles and will take Randy about 35 days if he can walk 15 miles every day. Randy has been vigilantly exercising to get in shape for this pilgrimage. Randy, by the way, will celebrate, on our feast of St. Rita, May 22, his 68th birthday.

Randy is doing this for his own spiritual growth, for those he carries in his heart, including us and all our friends, so he is doing it for you too. He is also doing it to raise funds for our Monastery. You will be able to check his progress and comments on our web site, where you may use Pay Pal if you would like to participate in the pilgrimage by making a donation to the Monastery. You may also contribute through the Go Fund Me site ([https://www.gofundme.com/237b9ys](http://mail.brighthouse.com/do/redirect?url=https%253A%252F%252Fwww.gofundme.com%252F237b9ys&hmac=436f9550dadcdfa75e17390146eb83da) ) or by sending a pledge or donation directly to the monastery mentioning that it is in honor of the pilgrimage. Any donation is most appreciated, and you might also want to consider making a pledge for each mile that Randy walks. There’s plenty of time to make a donation before the pilgrimage is complete!

**The Drawing**

The winner of the first prize in our most recent raffle was Cathy Clem, who won a one hundred-fifty-dollar gift card to Bed, Bath, & Beyond. Cheryl Crozier and Nancy Wachter won second prize, a seventy-five-dollar gas card, for their organization, H.E.L.P. Animals of Orange City, Florida. One of our famous Monastery alpaca mugs went to the third-place winner, Marcie McCarthy of DeLand.

**A New Raffle**

Again we are able to offer a vacation as first prize: 3 nights and 4 days in a one- or two-bedroom time-share resort, here if Florida or in some other states, depending on availability. Second prize will be a seventy-five dollar gas card and third prize a twenty-five dollar gas card. Once again we are enclosing a sheet of raffle tickets and ask a donation of $3 per ticket or just $5 for two tickets. Please make as many copies of the original sheet as you like, and be sure to include your name and contact information. Sunday, July 10, will be the date of the drawing.

This year our Saint Rita’s feast day (May 22nd) falls on Sunday, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. Although Saint Rita will not be observed liturgically this year, we will certainly mark the occasion, and tomorrow we begin our 28th annual solemn novena to Saint Rita. As you know, our Saint Rita has been given by the Church the wonderful title of Saint of the Impossible, and we have called on her many times to intercede for us in seemingly impossible situations. During her lifetime as a faithful daughter, wife, mother, widow and nun, her heart was always united in good times and bad to the Lord Jesus. Now crowned in glory with the saints in heaven, she continues her union with the Lord through her intercession for graces and requests that seem impossible. During this novena we shall be praying for all of you and for your special intentions and for your loved ones.

Though we daily remember all of you in our prayers, we especially prayed for all mothers on May 8th (Mother’s Day), when we offered Mass for all mothers, living and deceased,, and on June 19th (Father’s Day), the Mass offered in our Chapel will be for all fathers living and deceased. Again we are happy to place the names you send us before our Altar on those particular days.

Looking ahead at the busy schedules of those who help with getting the newsletter ready for mailing, I realize that you may not receive this for a couple of weeks, but be assured that you are remembered in all our prayers, and we ask you to join with us in praying for those who have requested our prayers and for all those in need of prayer.

Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the Apostles and all the Saints, may you receive an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit anew on you and yours this Pentecost Sunday.

Faithfully yours in JMJ,

I am,

Father A. M. Seamus of Jesus, O.S.A.Prim.