**Augustinian Monks of the Primitive Observance**

**Mother of the Good Shepherd Monastery**

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The Solemnity of All Saints

Tuesday November 1, 2016

Dear Family and Friends,

Praised be Jesus Christ!

It is imperative that I begin this letter to you today with my deepest thanks to you for your most kind letters, emails and telephone calls assuring me of your love and prayers during my illness. I am totally convinced that it was through your prayers, and the intercession of the Blessed Mother, and Blessed Father Seelos that I was free from that most agonizing and debilitating pain. Though I never want to go down that path again, it did deepen my understanding of our participation in the redemptive suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. Late last month I did see a spine surgeon, and we both felt surgery was not the way to go at this time.

One of the reasons I don’t want spine surgery is my older brother Edward, who has the same disease as I do, had spine surgery at Georgetown Medical Center on July 22 of this year. The following day as he begin to walk, he had a stroke, followed a few days later by a second one. Thank God he survived, but it did leave him with paralysis on the left side of his body. At the time I am writing, he is still far from home in a rehab center in Washington, D. C., where he is learning how to walk again and to use his left hand and arm. My brother has been blind in one eye for most of his life, and the doctors discovered he has lost some of his peripheral vision in his only good eye. I would deeply appreciate your prayers for him during this very trying time in his life. I would also please ask you to keep his wife Bonnie and his daughters in your prayers. They have been at his side every day since his strokes.

On another subject, Hurricane Matthew wasn’t pleasant at all! Thank God--and truly we know it was God who helped us--we did not have a direct hit from the storm. We were very blessed not to have any damage at all; however, from 4:45 on Friday morning October 7th until 3:45 Monday afternoon October 10th, we had no water, air, telephone or internet. A generator is certainly next on our list for the Monastery.

On the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we obtained our occupancy certificate for our new Monastery. We shall ever be grateful to Franzi Schmidt for remembering us in her will. Her generosity enabled us to finish the Chapel and to build our new home. May God reward her abundantly for her love.

Eternal Rest

On Sunday, May 22, 2016, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, and also our feast of St. Rita, our dear beloved friend Marysia L. Reilly fell asleep in the Lord. I first met Marysia when I was the chaplain at St. Joseph’s Center in Scranton and she was a social worker with the adoption part of the Center’s ministry. Marysia drove me to many of my appointments with bishops, abbots and others when planning this foundation. Marysia also was one of the four women who drove with me to Worcester, Massachusetts, when I arrived at our first monastery. Sister Marian Denise Walsh, I.H.M., Liz Dorrance and Mary Rose Kennedy were the others, and now all are with the Lord. Please remember Marysia in your prayers, and I am confident she will pray for you.

Raffle

We are holding another raffle, and once again the first prize is a vacation: 3 nights and 4 days in a one- or two-bedroom time-share resort, here in Florida or in some other states, depending on availability. Second prize will be a $100-gift certificate to Bed, Bath & Beyond. Third prize is 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. The drawing will be on Gaudete Sunday, December 11.

Holy Souls

November 2nd is the commemoration of the Holy Souls. Your beloved deceased will be remembered in a special Mass on that day in our Chapel, and in our prayers and Masses throughout the month of November. If you wish to send us their names we will place them before our Altar in our Chapel.

Being a realist, I am sure I won't get another newsletter out before the New Year, so please know you and yours will be in all our prayers, Masses and sacrifices during the upcoming Advent and Christmas season. I wish to share with you a quote from Saint Alphonsus Liquori:

**"Many prophets and kings desired to see what you see"**

Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), Bishop and Doctor of the Church
Third meditation for the Octave of Christmas

Let us think of how, after so many centuries, so many sighs and prayers, the Christ, whom neither the patriarchs nor the prophets had seen, “the Desire of all nations” (Hg 2,7 Vg.), the Desire of the eternal hills, our Savior, has at last come. “He is born to us, given to us” (Is 9,5). The Son of God became small to give us his greatness; he gave himself to us that we might give ourselves to him; he has come to show his love for us that we might answer with our own. Let us then receive him lovingly, let us love him and turn to him in all our needs...

Jesus came in the form of a child to show us his earnest desire to fill us with his gifts. For “in him dwell all the treasures” (Col 2,3); his heavenly Father “has entrusted all things into his hands” (Jn 3,35; 13,3). Do we want light? He has come to enlighten us. Do we want strength to resist our foes? He has come to strengthen us. Do we want forgiveness and healing? He has come to pardon and save us. Finally, do we want the greatest gift of all, the gift of divine love? He has come to inflame our hearts. This is the reason above all why he became a child: he wished to show himself to us in so poor and lowly a state in order to... banish all fear and better win our love... All children stir up the love of those who see them, so who would not love with particular tenderness a God whom he beholds as a tiny infant, nourished with a little milk, shivering with cold, poor, despised, neglected, weeping and moaning on the straw of a manger? The sight caused Saint Francis to exclaim: “Let us love this Babe of Bethlehem!” O come, Christian souls! Come and love a God become a child, become poor for your sakes, a God who is all love, who has come down from heaven to give himself wholly to us.

As we come to the end of this beautiful year of Mercy, that will close on the Solemnity of Christ our King, Sunday, November 20, please know that we are praying for you and your loved ones that all may share in the abundance of the Lord’s mercy so lavishly given to each one of us.

May Mary, the Mother of Mercy, always be near you, and always intercede for you with her Son.

Faithfully yours in JMJ,

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