**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**

Thursday of the Third Week of Easter

19 April 2018

Dear Friends and Family,

Christ is risen, Alleluia!

Praised be Jesus Christ!

This first newsletter of 2018 has been a long time in the making! It’s hard to believe that winter has passed, Lent has passed, and we are now in Eastertide and remembering the day thirteen years ago that Pope Benedict was elected. Even in Florida we sure felt the cold of this winter. One could almost expect that snow would fall. The one blessing down here is that a cold spell only lasts for a few days and then we are back to moderate temperatures. The first memory that I am able to recall is from a winter long ago and far away when my family lived on Williams Street in Plains, Pennsylvania. We lived only one house away from the railroad tracks, and my mother had put me on a sled; I still can see in my mind’s eye the back of her coat, and her gloved hands holding the two ropes attached to the sled as she pulled me along. I believe my brother Edward was walking alongside of my mother—after all, he was a big boy of about seven years old! Many such memories fill my mind and heart of winter days and nights of old. They fill me with such warm feelings, but I sure am glad I no longer need to shovel snow!

**Family**

Speaking about my brother, February 4th was the one-year anniversary since he has fallen asleep in the Lord. My sister-in-law, Bonnie, who in many ways is more like a sister to me, along with my two nieces, Susanna Rose, and Caryn Elizabeth, and Susanna’s husband, Oscar, came to the Monastery that week end so we could all be together for the first anniversary. In these days when family life is questioned and in so many ways is even under attack, it is wonderful to be blessed with a family that is united and supportive of one another. On Sunday, February 4, we offered the 9:00 A.M. Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for my brother Edward. After the Mass we proceeded to St. Joseph’s House to have breakfast with our friends. As you know, we do not leave the Monastery very often, but since it has been 4 years since my family came to DeLand, we all went to Blue Springs Park. The manatees winter there, and my family got to see about 12 manatees, some of them really showing off for the spectators and even doing belly rolls to please all the bystanders. The weather cooperated completely, for it was a dry sunny day about 75 degrees!

**Visitors**

In these first months of 2018 we have already several visitors in addition to the visit from my family. Our good friend Randy Fritz stayed in St. Patrick’s Hermitage for a week and a half. He was such a blessing to us, cutting down trees that were a potential hazard and cutting up the logs for future use in our fireplace. We are looking forward to another visit from Randy in June. The next to bless our Monastery was Father Peter G. Gori, O.S.A. Father Peter has been a long-time friend of mine ever since my graduate days at Catholic University, and a friend of our Monastery at its very beginning. He came to make a retreat, and it was delightful to spend some time with him. Friends from New York also came and stayed from Holy Saturday until Divine Mercy Sunday; it was good to see Susan and Neal once again. This coming Sunday Brother Eugene DeLauro, from the Sons of Mary, in Framingham MA, will be with us for a week.

**Volunteers**

With both deep gratitude and also sadness we wish to publicly thank Dan and Martha O’Brien for their years of service to our Oratory. Dan and Martha came each Saturday to clean the extern chapel in preparation for Sunday’s Mass. They are now retiring from their ministry here due to the weakness that comes to all of us as we age. Please keep Dan, Martha and their family in your good prayers, thanking God for their selfless service to us.

**A good friend**

One of our dearest friends and most generous benefactors, Mrs. Doris M. Doyle, has fallen asleep in the Lord. On Saturday morning, March 3, the commemoration of our American Saint Catherine Drexel, I spoke of her life and gift to the Church during our morning Mass. I also told some personal stories about St. Catherine, told to me by a dear friend who belonged to the community Mother Drexel founded, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Doris was a professed Sister for nearly 30 years when she left to care for her aging parents. Talking about Doris made me think and pray for her all that morning. Doris for a good number of years has suffered from dementia, and so I have been bereft of talking directly with her for some time. It was that very evening that I received a telephone call from her nephew Larry, informing me that his Aunt Doris died very peacefully that morning, the feast of her beloved mother and foundress. I know that it was St. Catherine herself who escorted dear Doris into her eternal home. Please remember Doris and all her family and friends who mourn her death. May eternal rest be granted unto her, O Lord.

**Novice**

At Vespers on the 7th of April, the vigil of Mercy Sunday, we clothed a novice in the Augustinian habit. Brother Augustine Mary, of the Merciful Heart of Jesus, had been a postulant in our community for some time and asked to become a novice. Thus begins his novitiate, a lengthy period of entering more deeply into the spiritual life of an Augustinian monk before possibly requesting to take his first temporary vows. Soon you will be able to see pictures of the ceremony on YouTube. Please keep Brother Augustine in your prayers as hebegins his monastic life with us.

**Raffle**

One never would have predicted the outcome of our last raffle drawing on the First Sunday of Advent! The second prize (an Olive Garden gift certificate) was won by Carol Bowman who lives here in DeLand and who always enters our drawings and has watched her friends and neighbors win from time to time but has never before won anything herself. Even more unlikely, the first and third prizes (a gas card and a gift certificate to Omaha Steaks) were won by the same person, Monica DiGiandomenico, who lives in Virginia.

Our new raffle prizes: First prize, 3 nights and four days in a vacation resort. Once again Dr. Fritz has kindly donated this gift, and the winner will be put in touch with Dr. Fritz to choose the right place. Some of the possible places are in Florida, Texas, Missouri, Tennessee, Vermont, Wisconsin, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina, Arizona, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Virginia. If you are the winner, please contact Dr. Fritz right away to find out what is available.

Our second prize is a $100 gift card to Bed, Bath and Beyond. The third prize is a $50.00 gas card. The drawing will take place on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, May 27, 2018. As usual, we are enclosing a sheet of tickets, which you are welcome to duplicate. If possible, please do cut the tickets yourself as it is very helpful to us. Please remember to write your name and contact information on each ticket. We ask a donation of $3 per ticket or $5 for two.

**Updates**

You can now find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MotherOfTheGoodShepherdMonastery](http://www.facebook.com/MotherOfTheGoodShepherdMonastery); soon you will be able to follow us on Twitter @augustinianmonk or view our YouTube channel, also to be called augustinianmonk.

**Prayers**

We remember you especially in our prayers during our solemn novena to our beloved protector St. Joseph in March, in our novena to Divine Mercy, beginning on Good Friday every year and leading up to Divine Mercy Sunday, the Second Sunday of Easter, which this year was April 8. This year we will celebrate our 30th annual solemn novena to St. Rita of Cascia, the Saint of the Impossible. Once again we shall unite ourselves with you during St. Rita’s novena, May 14 to her feast on Monday May 22. We have a new prayer to Saint Rita which we use in the novena:

Glorious St. Rita, patroness of those in need/ your intercession with our Lord is most powerful./ Through the favors obtained by your prayers/ you have been called “Advocate of hopeless and even impossible cases”/ St. Rita, humble and pure; patient and compassionate lover of Christ Crucified!/ We have confidence that everyone who has recourse to you, will find comfort and relief./ Listen to our petitions and show your power with God in our behalf./ Obtain our petitions for us/ if they are for the greater honor of God, and for our good./ We promise, if our petitions are granted,/ to make known your favor, and to glorify God for His gift./ relying on your power with the merciful Savior, we ask of you….St. Rita of Cascia, pray for us.

Also on the 13th of May we will pray for all mothers, living and deceased, and on the 17th of June for all fathers, living and deceased. If you would like, you are invited to send us their names.

As we celebrate this Easter Season, we wish to assure you of our prayers for you and yours. May our Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus, through the prayers of His beloved Mother Mary, pour out the Holy Spirit anew into your heart.

In Jesus, Mary and Joseph,

I am,

Very Rev. Father A. M. Seamus of Jesus, O.S.A.Prim., Abbot