

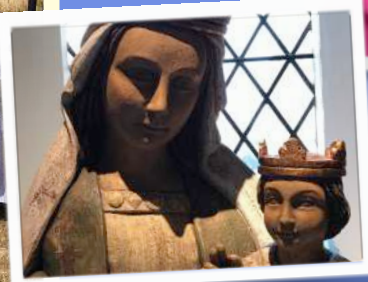
NOTRE DAME PRIORY

Newsletter

MARCH 2017

QUODCUMQUE DIXERIT FACITE

ISSUE ONE



*First Tasmanian
Benedictine Monastery
opens its doors.*

“AND THE MOTHER OF JESUS WAS THERE” (JOHN 2:1)

They have no wine... Do whatever He tells you (Jn 2:3)

Every now and then when I meet someone and we speak of the new foundation, I am asked if the monks will make wine. The pragmatic answer is something like: “Who knows? Possibly. Tasmania produces some excellent quality wines, and it might be worth looking into”. The enigmatic answer would be more like: “But monks *are* wine”. How is that? Well it all goes back to a certain wedding feast in a town called Cana of Galilee. And it just so happened that the Mother of Jesus was invited. And Jesus too was there with His disciples. You know the story, how the wine failed and, thanks to Our Lady's maternal intercession, the situation was saved for the newlyweds. But that is just the historical narrative. The reality is much, much deeper. St Augustine tells us that the best wine kept for last is the Gospel, which God reserved for these latter days.

On a personal level, I have always been struck by many aspects of the mysterious event commemorated on the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, which is the patronal feast of the new

community. For now, I will highlight just one. Jesus commands the jars to be filled with water, which was a perfectly hopeless way of meeting an embarrassing situation. It was actually a good way to make it more embarrassing still! There is no more wine, well, here's some good water!



In reality, the Saviour was here testing the faith of the servants and even more their obedience to what was seemingly a senseless command. They provide the many gallons of water that had to be drawn laboriously from the well. Their humble, apparently useless efforts, are what allows Jesus to perform the astounding miracle: the tasteless, insipid, fruitless efforts of human beings, are transformed by the Divine Word, and they become the sweet, delicious heart-mending and mind-

invigorating wine of Divine Love and Grace.

So what does this have to do with monks? Many years ago, faced with the continual requests for a traditional foundation, I turned to Our Lady, and I said to her, “Tell Jesus, ‘They have no monks!’”. Well, She heard that prayer and Jesus has allowed Himself to be moved. Tasmania now has its monks, and they, like the water of Cana, are perfectly incapable of satisfying anyone's desire for nourishing spiritual wine. But if the Divine Word steps into our lives, and hears the further prayers of His Mother, then we can hope that the monks of Notre Dame Priory will truly become men of His Sacred Heart, and that they will offer, with incessant praise and labour, the life and example for many souls who will come their way in the hope of finding God.

Thank you for praying for Notre Dame Priory. Pray that it may be firmly established and grow and prosper, and that all of its members may ever walk in the ways of salvation and perfection, drawing in their wake countless others souls who are thirsting for God.

Letter from Father Prior

Beloved Friends,

The Feast of the Chair of St Peter this year was a day filled with joy for so many of us. I was personally moved by so many expressions of kindness from all those who were able to attend our Foundation Day Mass at St Patrick's Church in Colebrook, as well as those of many others who could not be there in person. It was an amazing day that many of us thought would never become reality. And yet it has! Oftentimes we are tempted to think that God does not hear our prayers... and then one day we are surprised to see that He actually does. Many Australians have been praying for this foundation for many long years, and to each of them our gratitude is due. And now that we have actually begun, and that the doors of Notre Dame Priory are open, we have five excellent young men presently discerning their monastic vocation. Slowly but surely they are being initiated to what makes up the life of a monk: liturgical praise, personal prayer and study, intellectual and manual work, meals taken together while listening to the reading of good and solid books that form the mind and the heart, and moments of fraternal recreation taken together.



Thanks to the kindness of Archbishop Porteous we are temporarily established in a house recently renovated in preparation for our arrival. But the setting, picturesque as it is, set on the Derwent River, is not, in the long term, viable for monks who seek solitude and silence for themselves and their guests. At this stage we are in search of a large property for purchase on which we could build a traditional-style monastery, do a bit of farming, and have space for admiring God's creation in a healthy atmosphere conducive to prayer and recollection.

This month of March, we are praying the Litany of St Joseph each day in order to obtain his intercession, so that we may find the place Our Lady has chosen for us. Please pray with and for us, and don't hesitate to share any suggestions.

In the meantime, as we approach Easter, I would like to assure you of the prayers of our fledgling community. May the great saints we are honouring these days (St Patrick, St Joseph and St Benedict) bless and protect you and yours always.

Through Mary Immaculate,

Fr Pius Mary Noonan, O.S.B.

Donations:

If you desire to help the community establish itself, cheques made payable to "Notre Dame Priory" may be sent to:
Notre Dame Priory
3 Bay Road (post box on Lowelly)
Lindisfarne, Tasmania 7015, Australia

To donate via bank transfer:
Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Account name: Notre Dame Priory
BSB: 062-654
Account number: 1024 4562

To keep up with what's happening at
Notre Dame Priory, visit our website at www.notredamemonastery.org