

Notre Dame Priory Newsletter

MAY 2018

QUODCUMQUE DIXERIT VOBIS FACITE

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Clothing of Br Maximilian Mary

A NEW POSTULANT, A NEW NOVICE AND LOTS OF WATER....

The month of May brought many blessings. No surprise, it's the month of Our Blessed Lady. The 13th marked the first anniversary of the consecration of the community to the Immaculate Heart. The day before that, we were blessed with yet another novice: Dominic Swan was clothed with the holy habit of St Benedict and given the name of Brother Maximilian Mary (after St Maximilian Kolbe). Brother was joined on this happy occasion by his mother, two of his sisters and his brother. There were also a number of other friends of the community, and David and Elisabeth Daintree once again provided the setting for a fraternal gathering afterwards.

Three days earlier saw the entry as postulant of James Morrison, originally from Auckland, NZ. James, who had just finished his three-month aspirancy, is the only



New Zealander to date in the community. With the clothing of Br Maximilian, that leaves James as our only postulant at this stage. He is not entirely alone however, as we also have two other men at present working through aspirancy. We hope to introduce them to you in due course.



It would appear *someone* was not happy with these events, as they were preceded by some rather unpleasant experiences coming from the weather. Early that same week, excessively strong winds across Tasmania gave rise to red alerts. Given the precarious nature of our present accommodations, we decided to play it safe, and so a whole afternoon was spent strapping down caravans and demountables. As it turned out, we didn't get the worst of the winds,



and by the time the work was done, the wind fell... only to return later...

We didn't get the worst of the torrential rains either. You may have heard about the flooding of Hobart, second driest capital of Australia.... Well, up here in good ol' Rhyndaston we got away with the beginnings of a river that ran from the gate entrance to the chapel. It was wet everywhere – even the chapel started to leak!

This unexpected downpour right through the middle of our "cloister" precipitated Fr Prior's command for the purchase of gumboots. Speaking of Fr Prior, he had to seek refuge for the night from his leaky caravan, on... his office floor! In the end, however, the waters abated, and things got back to usual. End result: full water tanks... for the moment...

Brother Chronicler



JESUS MARIA JOSEPH

**I am come to cast fire on the earth,
and what will I, but that it be kindled?**

Lk 12:49

**Exhortation given by Father Prior at the clothing ceremony for
Brother Maximilian Mary (Dominic Swan)
St Patrick's Church, Colebrook, 12 May 2018,
Saturday after the Ascension, Our Lady Queen of the Apostles,
vigil of 101st anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady of Fatima**

My Dear Son,

Nothing happens by accident: everything happens exactly when it is determined by Divine Providence. One year ago tomorrow we were consecrating the community to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the very same day she was receiving the homage of all of Tasmania through our dear Archbishop. Nine months ago, on the vigil of her glorious Assumption, you knocked at the door of the monastery to be received as an aspirant, and subsequently a postulant. Today, in this month of Mary and on the feast of Mary Queen of the Apostles, you ask to be received as a novice and don the monastic habit.

We find ourselves liturgically in the octave of the Ascension of Our Lord, the mystery in which we contemplate the glorification of the humanity of the Saviour at the right hand of the Father. The great lesson of the Ascension is expressed by our holy Father St Benedict at the end of the prologue: "By persevering in His teaching in the monastery until death, we shall share by patience in the sufferings of Christ, that we may deserve to be partakers also of His Kingdom". That is the bottom line of what monastic life is about: taking part in the sufferings of Christ, being assimilated to Him in His passion, with the hope, that is to say, the firm conviction, that we shall be admitted into the glory of His eternal realm in the Heavens. The theological virtue of hope is indeed the great grace of the Ascension. As the light of this mystery illuminates this liturgical season, may it enlighten every day of your monastic life, transforming even the dark days into a mysterious and pacifying radiance.

From the celestial throne where she takes part in the triumph of her Son, the Queen of Heaven is smiling down upon you today, offering you a special share in her maternal protection. She, the Queen of Heaven, is also the Queen of the Apostles, and it was around her that the apostolic college was united in prayer during those ten days that separated the Ascension from the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. What a beautiful thought that she is the one who unites our small community in prayer each day, obtaining for each of us the graces of which we stand in need in order to tread the path Jesus Our Lord has marked out for us! Today you will receive a most eloquent sign of her protection in the holy habit which, please God, will accompany you to your final resting place. May she give you to taste the joy of her presence, that sweet maternal presence which makes all that is bitter sweet.

Perhaps we can go a bit further and decipher in these two celebrations a providential sign for your own life: the Ascension, that is, the glorified Christ, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Many are the saints who have followed Jesus and enjoyed the closeness of Mary in their lives. Outstanding among them we can mention St Alphonsus Liguori, St Louis de Montfort, St Maximilian Kolbe. The latter penned this moving act of consecration to her that just might set the tone for your monastic life:

O Immaculata, Queen of Heaven and earth, refuge of sinners and our most loving Mother, God has willed to entrust the entire order of mercy to thee. I, N., a repentant sinner, cast myself at thy feet humbly imploring thee to take me with all that I am and have, wholly to thyself as thy possession and property. Please make of me, of all my powers of soul and body, of my whole life, death, and eternity, whatever most pleases thee. If it pleases thee, use all that I am and have without reserve, wholly to accomplish what was said of thee: "She will crush your head," and, "Thou alone hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world."

Let me be a fit instrument in thine immaculate and merciful hands for introducing and increasing thy glory to the maximum in all the many strayed and indifferent souls, and thus help extend as far as possible the blessed kingdom of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. For wherever thou dost enter, thou obtainest the grace of conversion and growth in holiness, since it is through thy hands that all graces come to us from the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Amen.

Belonging entirely to the Mother of Christ, being an instrument in the hands of the Immaculata to bring many souls back to God and contribute to the glorification of Jesus and Mary through the spreading of the truth and the overcoming of error and darkness: is that not a practical realisation of the double tension we find in the feast of the Ascension: having our hearts with Christ in Heaven while using up every drop of energy on earth to bring souls to Him? What more fascinating destiny could one want or desire? And it is ours.

We know of course that such a program meets with resistance. Did not the Beloved Disciple tell us in his Gospel that the "light shone in the darkness but the darkness did not comprehend it" (Jn 1:5)? Did not the Lord Himself complain in the same Gospel that "the light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than the light: for their works were evil" (Jn 3:19)? But we also know that this battle takes place in our very heart. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn famously wrote that "the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being". This thought was already largely present in our Christian tradition. St Maximilian, for example, wrote, "No one in the world can change Truth. What we can do and should do is to seek truth and to serve it when we have found it. The real conflict is the inner conflict. Beyond armies of occupation and the hecatombs of extermination camps, there are two irreconcilable enemies in the depth of every soul: good and evil, sin and love. And what use are the victories on the battlefield if we are ourselves are defeated in our innermost personal selves?" St Maximilian would win that battle. Configured to Christ through an austere religious life, he would eventually give the ultimate witness to the Light and offer his life as a sacrifice for it.

In the monastery, we are well equipped to follow in his footsteps and take part in Christ's triumph over the world, the flesh and the devil. If we remember that "love lives through sacrifice and is nourished by giving" and that "without sacrifice, there is no love" (St. Maximilian Kolbe), we are, as it were, anointed for combat and prepared for what awaits us. The victory, my son, will be yours if you stay close to the Immaculate Virgin, if she holds your hand and if you hold her hand every day of your life. "Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did." (St Maximilian)

Fr Pius Mary Noonan, O.S.B.

Update from the Priory

Beloved Friends,

The month of Mary brings us some of the most cherished feast days: Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, sometimes Corpus Christi.... The succession of feasts gives us a foretaste of the heavenly homeland to which we aspire. The marvelous richness of our liturgy is such that we have hardly begun to delve into the treasures contained in one feast that we have to move on to the next — fortunately we will have all eternity to immerse ourselves in the ocean of divine marvels which we hardly skim over in this ephemeral earthly existence.



At the moment, we find ourselves basking in the radiance of the Holy Spirit celebrated during the great octave of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is revealed to us as Love personified, as the inextinguishable fire that consumes all our impurities and sets us aflame with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. And so we turn towards the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, asking Him to guide our every thought and decision concerning the purchase of Hardwick House. We continue to seek ways of making this acquisition a reality.

A recent step in that direction was the formation of a Financial Advisory Committee to assist me in the task of overseeing all the material aspects of the community, its assets and prospects for the future. The committee is composed of several good, competent friends of the community who are in a position to give me solid advice. This is also a reassurance for our donors, as we are very conscious of our accountability to all who send us donations. The committee will help us make sure the funds are properly used and that the community's capital is protected. We have likewise created a corporate trustee called Saint Regina Limited for the Our Lady of Cana and Saint Joseph Trust (who is the official owner of all our assets). As of this writing, we still need to find around AUD \$ 800,000 to complete the purchase, and this by 19 June.



As I entrust all this to your prayerful consideration, I would like to say once again that you, your loved ones both living and deceased, and all your intentions are remembered by our community in prayer throughout each day of our monastic life. The one and only reason we are here is to give our lives to God and save souls. Your contributions, both material and spiritual, help us accomplish that. May Mary the Mother of God bless you always. The community remembered you at our recent pilgrimage to St Mary's Cathedral in Hobart on the feast of Mary Help of Christians. We renewed our consecration to her there and entrusted to her all the intentions of our friends and benefactors.

Under her immaculate mantle,

Father Prior

To keep up with Notre Dame Priory, visit our website at www.notredamemonastery.org
To contact us, please send an email to: info@notredamemonastery.org

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