

JOYOUS TIDINGS

Volume 1
Issue 2

MAY 2015

Joyful Servants of the Cross

The congregation of the Joyful Servants of the Cross publishes this monthly newsletter as a way to document its own journey in history, and as a means to communicate to any who would be interested the activities of our group. We hope that reading this may be a source of blessing and peace in your life.

*Spreading Joy, Hope and
Peace to the waiting world.*

WELCOME ONCE AGAIN

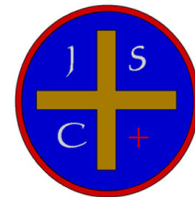
It is hard to believe that it has been an entire year since the last JSC Newsletter was published. Where did the time go? Many things have happened in that time; many adjustments, many hours of prayer, reflection and action in establishing ourselves in our new Virginia home. But obviously the Spirit moved me to run across the first issue of this newsletter and inspired me to carry its message forward. I even lost the original MS Publisher document used in making the first one, so hence we have an entirely new look for this

second issue, and hopefully many issues beyond.

The watchword for every issue will be “welcome” and hopes of joy, hope and peace. We want you to find in our publication an entirely positive publication, filled with safe and reliable Catholic information that is so needed in a world where lines and truths are blurred beyond recognition in many regards. We commit ourselves to providing helpful and useful spiritual information that will help you in our own decision making process on how best to live your own life of faith!

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **JSC** is for real people, leading real lives
- **JSC** prayer commitment is minimal with maximal results
- **JSC** needs ordinary people like you — to be a part of our extraordinary group



THE URGE TO PLANT, THE URGE TO SOW

Today is the beginning of May: the Springtime month when everything is screaming “new birth” “growth” “plant-me” “let me grow, grow, grow.” It ends the long and oft-times bitter struggle of a season of cold, and dark and death. It is the perfect time to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus—from whom all new life and growth derives its impetus. All creation participates in his resurrection: make no mistake about that. So, now, it is only natural to enter enthusiastically in the sowing, planting, cultivating and tending new plants, flowers, bushes, trees and green growth.

We offer a prayer of blessing on all who tend indoor plants, outdoor gardens, and in a special way those who plant the crops for the foods we eat. May an abundance of harvest be a sign of God’s favor on your work—duly given on this first day of May, the feast of St. Joseph the Worker. There is a God-given right to work, as we are charged to “lovingly subdue the earth...cultivate the earth and take care of it.”

In This Issue

- Our Rule Explained
- New Titles ,Old Jobs
- Favors Granted
- Marian Devotion
- Fr. Superior’s Msg
- “Jacob’s Ladder”

THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT—OUR GROUND

St. Benedict of Nursia—b. 480. d. 534 at Monte Cassino in a monastery that he founded. St. Benedict is considered the Father of Western Monasticism. Men have always had a thirst to seek and find God, and they were willing to follow the lead of any who seemed to know what they were doing in this regard. St. Benedict was such a leader who was willing to share his insights with those who would listen and let what they heard make a difference in their way of life.

He, of course, wrote his famed “Rule” as a guide to be adhered to by those who came to the houses that he set up.

He called it a “little course” that hopefully was not too irksome or burdensome. His chief desire was for men to live together, for life, bound by a vow of “stability” so that they could work out the natural tensions and strains that come from such a decision—with the grace of the Holy Spirit that would work everything out for everyone who trusted in Him and totally detached themselves from their own will, wishes and ways.

Mutual obedience and respect were the hallmarks of monastic life. Humility was a virtue to be sought and practiced as soon as possible. He talked about real humility and holiness as opposed to the kind that is easily talked about but never

really out into practice. It is much better to actually be humble and holy, than to merely talk about it.

The obedience talked about by St. Benedict of course is always modeled after the very obedience of Christ himself, who always listened for his Father’s voice in all circumstances and then immediately went about fulfilling the Father’s wishes pronto. A monk was to do the same at the bidding of the Father Superior who represented Christ Himself and His Father in the monastery. This is a foreign idea in our modern world—a seeming “blind obedience” - but it is actually blind at all—the version vision of God is in charge!



NEW TITLES—SAME JOBS

Since the previous and first installment of this newsletter there has been a change in terminology in the leadership of our monastery. This first issue told of how the chief servant in the group was known as the “Abbot” - a name derived from the Rule of St. Benedict itself.— which relates the role of the Superior of the House as “Abba” “Father” - and helpmate to his “sons” the monks. The second in command was known as the “Prior.”

At the time of our 9th anniversary last

June 29, we two, the founders of the group decided to change the terminology to reflect a more equal sharing of responsibility—and so we are now known as **Father Superior**, and **Brother Superior**: since I am a priest, and Richard is a brother. The fullness of the servant role and of responsibility for the group still rests with me, as Father Superior, but so far the change has brought about a deeper sense of brotherly love and service. It is easier to encourage each other to be the best monk we can when we are both



SELECTION FROM OUR COMMUNITY PRAYERS

MORNING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for awakening our sleeping spirits, and bringing us into Your light this day. Thank You for transforming us by the renewal of our minds. Thank You for pouring out Your Spirit on us, and revealing Your Word to us. Thank You for giving Your angels charge over us in all our ways. Thank you for our faith in You and that from our innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. Thank You for directing our minds and hearts into the love of the Father and the steadfastness of all Your ways. Fill us to overflowing with Your life and love, our Lord and King, Jesus Christ. Amen.



PRAYER FAVORS GRANTED—"The Power of Prayer"

I have asked Brother Superior, who is in charge of "prayer-lists and intentions" to document for us some petitions sent out to God, and answers obtained. He has told me that he would like to begin this new column with the following information concerning St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina.



Padre Pio's Prayer for Trust and Confidence

O Lord we ask for a boundless confidence and trust in Your Divine Mercy, and the courage to accept the crosses and sufferings which bring immense goodness to our souls and that of Your Church

Help us to love you with a pure and contrite heart, and to humble ourselves beneath Your Cross. As we climb the mountain of holiness, carrying our cross that leads to Heavenly glory.

May we receive you with great faith and love in Holy Communion, and allow you to act in us your desire, for your greater Glory.

O Jesus, most adorable heart and eternal fountain of Divine Love, may our prayer find favor before the Divine Majesty

PADRE PIO COUNSELS ON PRAYER

"Pray with perseverance, trust and a serene and calm mind"

"Pray, hope and don't worry. Worry is useless; God is merciful and will hear your prayer."

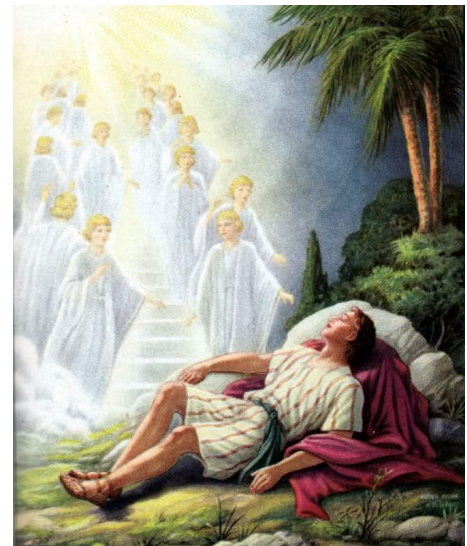
"Prayer is the best weapon we have; it is the key that opens God's Heart."

THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A MEMBER WITH US?

From our Modified Rule, the levels of membership begins:

The reception of members begins at the INQUIRER-SEEKER LEVEL. This level is open to anyone at all who wants to find out about us, learn our ways and to try implementing some of them into their lives – to see if it in any way "fits."

The duties of an "inquirer-seeker" is to examine printed and online information about our group and then to begin to experiment with putting into practice some of the spiritual principles found in the material. Also, a good way is to talk with one of us about how it is that we live out the Rule—what is it that keeps us united and going as a congregation!



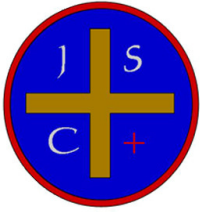
A MONK IS ALWAYS SEEKING WHAT PERTAINS TO HEAVENLY REALITIES.....



As Joyful Servants of the Cross, we have a genuine, filial devotion to the Blessed Mother of God. We know that she cares about not only us, but for those for whom we intercede and pray for as a part of our apostolic work. She is ever ready to offer a mother's tenderness and sweetness to any who are ill, wounded, or suffering in any way. Mary stood by the Cross of Jesus her Son, and watched such untold agony; she is happy to do the same for us whole are members of the real and Mystical Body of His Son as members of his Church.

"Hail, Mary! The Lord is with you! Blessed are you among all women. Pray for us now—and at the hour of our death. Amen."

This story from the Bible is about Jacob. If you don't remember he had a twin brother named Esau who he tricked out of his blessing from his father Isaac. Even though they were twins, Esau was born first so he should've received the special blessing from his father, not Jacob.



*Spreading
Joy, Hope and
Peace where it is
most needed...*

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FATHER SUPERIOR'S MONTHLY MESSAGE—5/15

In my last monthly message—a year ago—I wrote about “the will of God” - or more precisely, the monk as one whose primary interest is “seeking God and his will.” For the monk it is only in such pursuit and attainment that he finds fulfillment and peace. It is also in this way that he has something to give others in the way prescribed in the Holy Rule.

I would like to expound a bit further on this “will of God” as it can be at times a vague and general thing that is hard to nail down. Why does God want me to do at any given moment; what is his will for me NOW?

This is an excellent question: and the habit of posing that question periodically throughout the day is actually a key way to really discovering what it is!

The will of God always has to do with 3 things: 1)giving glory to God; 2) proving love for God by loving others that God places in our way during the day; 3) keeping our faith in Jesus strong and vibrant. These three things work together—and can be a full time job if they are used as a filter through which all thoughts, words and deeds are passed throughout the day.

And so, God wants you to think about him often and give him praise and glory! The purpose for which God created man was to consciously and lovingly give him worship and glory—after all he is God—from whom everything comes.

And if we don't love others, while saying we love God, we are liars. God loves

everyone and wants us to do the same. Anything less is missing the whole point.

And lastly God's will has to do with our keeping the flame of faith alive and brightly burning in our souls—our hearts, and our minds! Our belief that Jesus is the Divine Son of God, and our Brother and Friend makes everything make sense; and it will lead us safely through the trials of this life, to the shores of everlasting happiness in heaven.

Jacob and his mother Rebekah tricked Isaac by making Jacob seem hairy like his brother Esau. Since Isaac could barely see he wasn't able to tell who was ³ who. In the end Esau was very upset that he didn't receive the special blessing so he decided he would kill Jacob as soon as their father died.

It may seem very wrong that Jacob took Esau's blessing but it was supposed to happen this way. The Lord told Rebekah when she was pregnant that she had two nations inside of her, one would be stronger than the other and the older will serve the younger.

So even though Jacob wasn't originally supposed to receive the blessing, this is the way God wanted it to be.

Rebekah knew about Esau's plan to kill Jacob so she told him to get out of town until Esau wasn't so mad anymore.

So Jacob left. I'm thinking Jacob either walked or was riding a horse and at the end of a long day of traveling he decided to stop for the night.

TO BE CONTINUED.....

