

God's Quilt...



Mission of Divine Mercy

Fall 2022

GOD'S QUILT

This summer Sister Amapola put the final stitch in her homemade quilt. It would become a gift for a childhood friend who is now raising her own family.

When Covid shut down our MDM apostolates two and a half years ago, Sister decided to start a new quilt. Both sides of the quilt are made completely from scraps. The colorful design on the front includes scraps that date back to the Queen of Peace girls' camps and their apron-making projects in the first decade of the Mission. The white cloth – no surprise – comes from the mountain of scraps generated by the many habits we have sewn.

Just scraps, the leftovers from other projects, gathering dust on the sewing room floor. Bound for the waste basket. But in the hands of a skillful and patient seamstress they are transformed. They become an integral part of something much bigger; something beautiful and durable and lasting, that gives warmth and comfort throughout the seasons of one's life.

We may feel like scraps ourselves— used up; spent; with no apparent value. Bound for the waste basket.

But when we surrender our “scrappiness” **to Jesus and to His Mother** then They transform us.

If we simply call out to Her, Mary will stoop down and gather us off the sewing room floor. She will dust us off and smooth us out and place us in the Hands and Heart of Her Son, Who will reveal to us **our unsuspected and startlingly powerful role in the Infinite Design of the Father.**

Even the Divine Quilt-Maker uses Scraps. ♦

ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

RETREATS

September 8-11
Women/English

October 6-9
Women/Spanish

December 8-11
Men/English

January 26-29
Men/Spanish



(New little Shrine
near Brother's
workshop)

MDM EVENTS

Saturday, September 24
Morning Reflection
on St. Faustina (English)
by Bro. Mikael

Saturday, October 22
Morning Reflection
on St. Faustina (Spanish)
by Bro. Mikael

November 2- Feast of All Souls
Mass at 11:30 AM
followed by blessing
of new memorials
Mass at 6:30 PM

Saturday, November 5
Deanery Assembly at
Sts. Peter and Paul Parish
(Includes a presentation on the Eu-
charist by Fr. John Mary)

Sunday, November 20
MDM Anniversary

“Rest In Me”

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) Who among us does not feel weary and burdened? Who doesn’t want to take up Jesus’ sweet offer of “rest”?

Ultimately, the “rest” that our being desires and pines for is the rest that will only come in Eternity, when we experience the fullness of God’s Love. And if that is the case, then during our time on earth, during our short life span, we will never truly satisfy this desire for profound rest.

Nevertheless, the Scriptures tell us that the Lord wants us to *also* be able to rest here on earth. It was so important that right from the beginning He established the Sabbath Day as a day of sacred rest. “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work...” (Deuteronomy 5:12). We often think of God commanding us to do more. Here, on the contrary, He is leading us to rest.

And each day He has established a “rest” for our bodies and minds—sleep. Sleep is a wonderful gift to us from our Creator. But even this rest, as many can attest, can be difficult to experience.

So, each week we are given Sunday as a day of Sacred Rest. And each night we are invited to refresh our bodies with sleep. But what does Jesus mean by telling us to rest *in Him*?

How do we rest in Him?

With the following reflection we do not claim to answer this question fully, but we do hope to offer some insights that, when put into practice, can help you to find the rest that only He can offer.

TURN YOUR GAZE TO JESUS *Rest For Your Mind*

First of all, when Jesus says, “Rest in Me,” He does not mean that all our worries will fall away and that we will be completely renewed. That is what awaits us in Eternity.



Our lives are full of so many distractions that turn our thoughts away from God. And these distractions cause our mind to be anxious. They make us *restless*.

Jesus urges us to ***turn our gaze on Him, even if only for a few seconds, in order to find rest.***

Turning our gaze to Jesus can be literal and spiritual. Having images, icons, statues and crucifixes in our home and work areas can remind us and help us to turn our thoughts to Jesus throughout the day. So can the repetition of brief prayers, like “Jesus, I trust in You,” or “Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on Me.”

This simple act of *faith*, turning our gaze to Jesus throughout the day, even for a few moments, can ease our anxiety and give rest to *our mind*.

REMEMBER HIS LOVE FOR YOU *Rest for Your Heart*

But our *heart* also needs to rest. How?

By **remembering His love for you—for you personally.**

Every human life has its own tale of a heart that gets wounded and exhausted in looking for love, and in trying to love other human beings. It is our personal experience.

But Jesus also offers each of us a personal experience of ***His love for us***. Yes, we know (or should know) that the greatest manifestation of His love for each of us was His death on the Cross. But sometimes that degree of love is almost more than we can fathom. So take a moment, take several moments, **to remember all the different graces, blessings and signs that He has given to you personally. It is in this moment, when you think of Jesus’ love for you—personal, individual, absolute, never-ending, all understanding, that your heart can truly rest.**

REMEMBER WHO JESUS IS AND WHAT HE WANTS TO DO FOR YOU *Rest For Your Soul*

Our *souls* need rest too. The enemy is very persistent in trying to exhaust our souls by placing in our minds and hearts so many fears, questions, and doubts. He plays cruelly with our feelings and emotions.

For this reason, it is important—no, it is **NECESSARY**—to remind ourselves of **WHO JESUS IS: JESUS IS OUR CAPTAIN, OUR KING, OUR ALMIGHTY, ETERNAL GOD**. It is He Whom we serve and He Who reigns and conquers. And He watches over each of us as a father watches over his children.

Remember what He has done for you in the past, but **also trust that He has plans for your future.**

“For I know the plans I have for you...plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

This act of *hope* helps our souls rest.

So when Jesus says, “Rest in Me,” think that He is reminding you to:

“Look at Me. Remember My Love for you. Remember Who I am, and that I have plans for your future.”

Then rest in that Love. Find the rest that only He can provide.

Jesus, I trust in You. ♦

APPARITION?

When the Community arrived in New Braunfels at the end of 2001 they were still in their old tan habits. Those were busy times; and it wasn’t until the summer of 2004 that they managed to transition into the new blue and white colors of MDM.

Shortly after that Mother Magdalene was at Walmart going slowly down the cookware aisle when a little three-year old girl rounded the corner, stopped dead in her tracks, stared for a moment and asked, **“Are you Mary?”**

Now Mother Magdalene stopped, turned to look at the little girl, and began to smile. **“No,” she replied, “but I know Her, and we’re good friends....”** ♦



St. Joseph Workshop is temporarily halting production in order to move to a new location. Previously located in an old shed behind the Brothers' House, the workshop is moving to this old metal barn on Mission property.



While in need of some rehabilitation, the new location will provide much needed space. However, Brother Mikael is quick to caution us that the new location may have drawbacks that they can't fully anticipate; at the Mission one never knows....

TWO NUNS WALK INTO AN IHOP...

by Mother Magdalene

For me it was both comical and moving. We had slipped into an IHOP in Abilene for what we thought would be a thirty-minute breakfast. We left there an hour and a half later....

Sister Amapola and I were beginning the second day of our return trip from New Mexico. She had not slept well and had been awake for a few hours already. As we left the motel and drove down a commercial strip at 8:30 in the morning, she informed me that she was *really hungry*. So when I spotted the IHOP I zipped right into a parking space.

"We can be in and out in thirty minutes."

It was breakfast time and the place was pretty full. We sat down in the first empty booth that we saw and waited for our server. He turned out to be an easy-going Catholic guy from New Orleans who had an uncle that was a Monsignor; he didn't seem to be thrown by the sight of two Nuns in full habit. He visited with us for a few minutes, took our order, then soon returned with that great invention – the American Diner Breakfast. Ahhh.... Minimal conversation; serious eating.

Our server had swung around once to re-fill our coffee cups, and then as we began to finish up he started over with our check. But as he reached our table he was suddenly facing a pretty young mother in a denim miniskirt with three young daughters in tow. She was asking if she could pay for our breakfast. No, he smiled, that wouldn't be possible because someone else had already done that! *Gracias a Dios!*

But we scarcely had time to register that and to express our thanks before the mother turned to us, asked if we could pray for them, and then dropped to her knees with her three girls in front of our table.

Hmm, what is the protocol for blessings in an IHOP? (Meanwhile servers were skillfully making their way up and down the aisle, dodging each other and our little group as they shouldered big trays of breakfast orders.)

So an earnest but *brief* prayer was offered to Our Blessed Mother on their behalf. Then they rose from their knees. The mother talked with us a few minutes longer, accepted an MDM card Sister Amapola had offered her, and they left.

We had just turned back to our breakfast when suddenly someone else was at our table. A sweet-faced woman from across the aisle apologized for interrupting us but asked if she could talk with us for a moment. We invited her to have a seat and listened to her story. She had just moved to Abilene to be with an adult child who was going through a hard time. But now she was finding it very hard to adjust, was feeling isolated and lonely, and was wondering if she'd made a huge mistake. She was a woman of faith, but this new situation was extremely painful. So the three of us talked for a while about suffering, about Jesus' love in the midst of that suffering, and about seeking the Father's Will in our lives. Eventually she stood up, thanked us, and departed, having also received an MDM card from Sister Amapola.

Just a few bites left to finish up...but it was not to be.

A rather rough looking older gentleman, a military veteran, stood looking down at us and said he wanted to ask us a couple of questions. "Certainly, sir, would you like to sit down?" No, he said he was fine, so he simply went down on one knee and propped his arms up on our table. He had a lot on his mind. He was profoundly discouraged about the situation of our country, was strongly pro-life, and was sensing more and more that there was a biblically apocalyptic dimension to the state of what the world was living. Again we listened and visited with him; again servers slipped in and out around us; and again before he departed Sister gave him an MDM card.

At this point when he stood up, *we* stood up and quickly scooted out the door.

Our breakfast had its comical moments. The servers were no doubt relieved to see us exit, leaving their aisles blessedly free of further impediments. But in truth, the whole situation was deeply moving. *People are hungry for God. No. More than hungry. They are starving for Him!* Sometimes without even realizing it.

The people in the IHOP didn't know us personally; they weren't seeking us. But the habit says GOD. And, when they see it, it's as if they suddenly recognize the Voice of a Father that

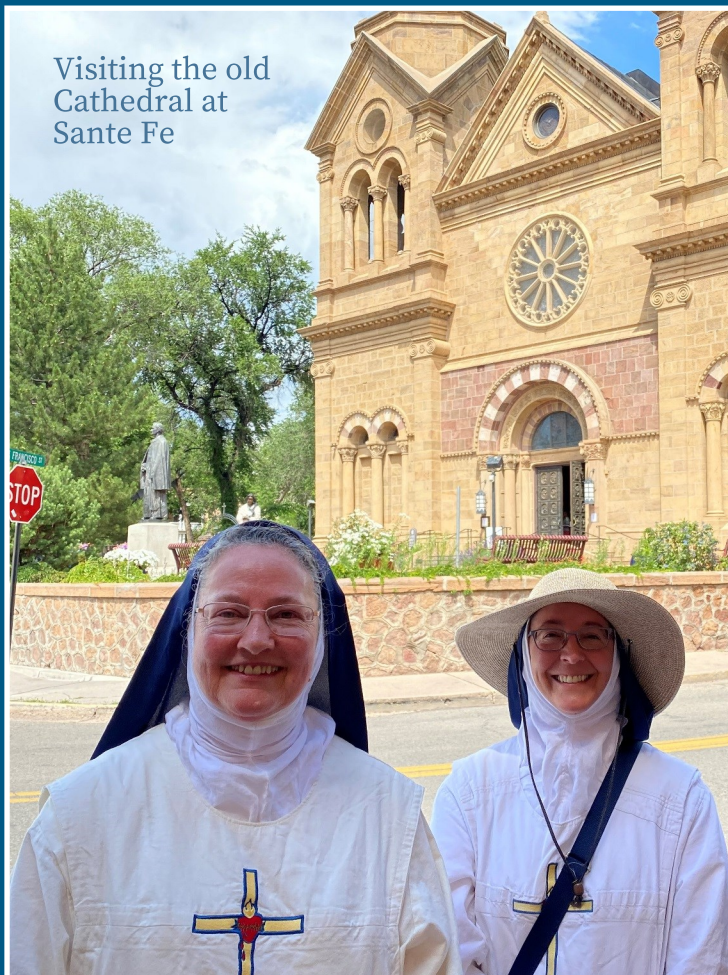
they didn't know they had lost; and they find themselves overwhelmed with longing for Him.

This was just one instance of something that is happening with growing frequency when we are in public places. There was the woman at the Dollar General in New Mexico who came after us as we left and asked us for prayers. "I've been off meth for 12 years, but I just can't kick the alcohol."

We have been in these habits for almost twenty years, and habits always draw attention. But there is a growing intensity, whether for good or for ill, in the response to religious signs in the public arena. Any perceived neutrality is evaporating and lines are being aggressively drawn.

More and more I believe all of us – both in and out of habits – are going to be called upon to give hope to the hopeless, help to the helpless, and to be Instruments of the Father's Love for all those we encounter.

***Come, Shepherd of Israel,
and ransom the Flock
which You have chosen!***



Visiting the old
Cathedral at
Santa Fe



GRATITUDE

Summer at the Mission usually brings two conditions: drought and fewer donations. Water and finances are perennial concerns. We try to use both of them wisely and sparingly, cutting back where we can. But we also pray and trust God that the rains will return and the needed support will be there.

This year we can once again thank God for the rains that finally returned at the end of August. And we especially thank Him for all of you who have continued to support the Mission of Divine Mercy, despite the difficult times.



Your help is deeply, deeply appreciated. ◆

BOB WILLIAMS PASSES THE TORCH TO KEN BATES



The Mission is experiencing a changing of the guard. After many years of hard labor in the fields of the Lord here at the Mission, Bob Williams, our volunteer “Coordinator of Volunteers,” has decided it is time to step away—from the labor—but fortunately not from the Mission. As a good leader, and knowing this day was coming, Bob had his eyes open for his replacement, and he found a willing volunteer in the person of Ken Bates.

As has been said many times before, the Mission depends heavily on volunteers. Over the years, with skills honed during his time in the Air Force, Bob Williams helped to organize and mobilize an expanding group of dependable volunteers who faithfully responded to his calls. This is the foundation on which Ken will build.

Ken and his wife Deana have been friends of MDM since the Community’s early days at Sts. Peter and Paul. The younger of their two sons, Dustin, was a member of the St. Michael Squadron, and also took part in the St. Gabriel Institute. Ken is employed at Rush Enterprises where he is a data base administrator.

In his new volunteer position at the Mission, Ken will oversee the coordination of volunteer groups and team leaders. When people sign up to volunteer here at the Mission, he will be their first contact and, as he describes it, “help triage to see where they best fit in.”

Helping Ken to make that initial contact is the goal of another project the Mission has recently put in place. Making the best use of our volunteers requires good people skills and a good data

base. But until recently we were lacking the data base.

In the past, someone might tell a staff person or Community member that they would like to volunteer at the Mission. Unfortunately, some of those offers would get lost because we didn’t have a good way to capture their information, or match peoples’ skills with available jobs. Add to that the need to manage all of the “safe environment” regulations that are required by the archdiocese.

But thanks to a new process that Susannah has developed and put in place, potential volunteers can sign up on the website and list all their areas of interest. In this way we have a record that doesn’t get lost down the memory hole.

Ken believes that having one gathering spot for volunteer information will make it easier to do his job well. “As someone who has been a volunteer here at the Mission, I know how important it is to respond in a timely manner to someone who contacts us and says that they want to volunteer.”

When asked why he was willing to take on this new volunteer position, Ken responded, “The MDM Community has been there for us over the years to help us through some difficult moments, including when our oldest son and later a grandchild had life threatening accidents. The Community’s prayers, and the prayers of our friends at the Mission really helped to sustain us through those experiences. I feel like this is a way that I can give back. And beyond that, I find that I enjoy interacting with the people who come to the Mission. They are just really nice people to be round.”

Good to have you on board, Ken! ♦





FROM THE DESK OF PETER: NEW CONVENT UPDATE

In late June Sister Amapola and I met with the architect and the builder. With that meeting we were close to finalizing the exact location and design of the new convent.

And as we go to print, we will soon be witnessing one clear sign of progress: the creation of the road into the building site and the clearing and preparation of the site itself. It will be very encouraging to see this taking place. We wish to thank Marcus Ethridge of M.C. Ethridge Co. for providing the equipment and personnel to make this happen.

In the meantime, we are giving consideration to some alternative building techniques that have been suggested to us by friends of the Mission. While these alternative techniques might delay the building phase, they could prove to reduce building costs and costs associated with maintenance and utilities, while also being more environmentally friendly.

We ask you to please keep our convent building project in your prayers. Thank you. ♦

WELCOMING BACK OUR EWJ

Our first *Encounter With Jesus* retreats since the spring of 2020 begin this fall, and are scheduled to continue through the winter and next spring. Being able to finally resume the *Encounters* feels as if we are fully expanding our lungs for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic.

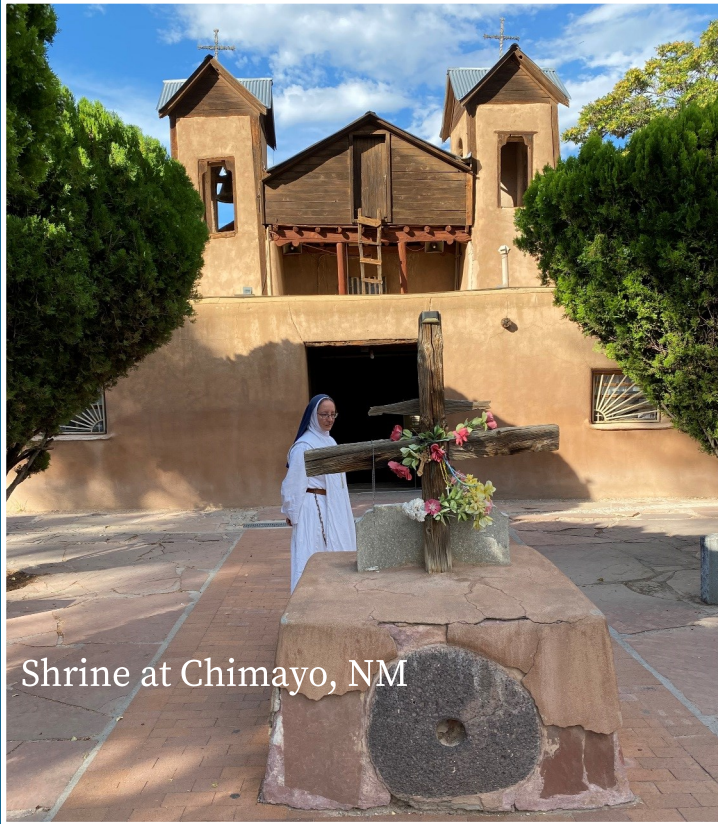
Evidently many others have also been waiting for the retreats to begin as the first two *Encounters* (Women's/English and Women's/Spanish) filled up within hours of the registration being opened. Registration for the Men's/English will open up on October 7 and Men's/ Spanish on November 25.

For those who are unfamiliar with the *EWJ*, it is a four-day silent retreat that offers people the opportunity of a living encounter with Our Lord Jesus present in the Eucharist. It introduces the retreatants to silent prayer and Eucharistic Adoration in a way that is adapted to today's situation. The retreats were developed by MDM and are only offered at the Mission.

To learn more about the *EWJ* and to read some of the reflections from those who have made the retreat, please go to our website: missionofdivinemercy.org. ♦

JULY SABBATICAL

by Mother Magdalene



Shrine at Chimayo, NM

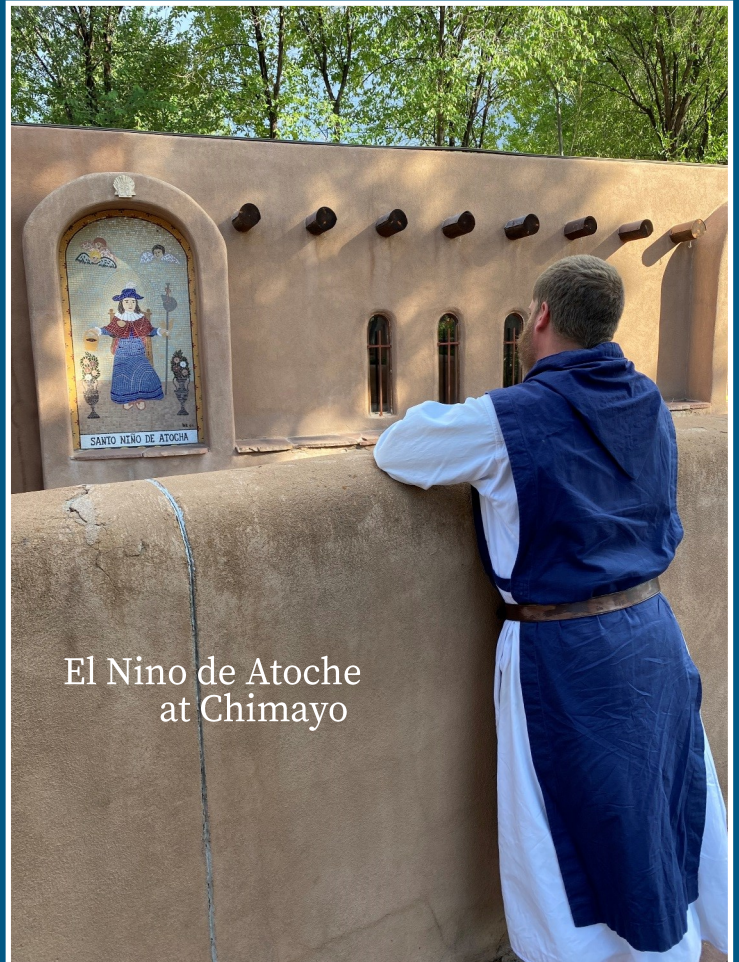
For six years now the Lord has made it possible, through the generosity of a very kind friend, for our Community to spend some time each summer in a mountain home in the scenic northeastern corner of New Mexico. It was especially appreciated this year when Texas was experiencing one of its hottest summers on record.

Susannah remained in Texas for some special family events, and **Raymundo** held the fort at the Brothers' house. But six of us were able to go.

Temperatures there tend to range from the 40s at night to the 70s during the day. The air is clear and fresh with a regular afternoon thunder shower that builds behind the steep pine-covered mountains. Usually the first part of the day is left unscheduled so people can rest and relax. Around four o'clock a crew begins to gather in the kitchen to get some supper started. Mass is offered at five o'clock. Supper follows, and then there is usually a film or board games, and finally the *Salve Regina*.



Kicking
back



El Nino de Atoche
at Chimayo

Father would interrupt his work about three times a day to stride out along the meadow of the wide mountain valley; **Peter** would head out to a practice facility near a mountain lake to work on his golf game for a few hours; **Br. Daniel** would take off before dawn to fish in the Cimmaron River; and **Br. Mikael** set up an outdoor study on the back porch where he could read philosophy against the backdrop of the Carson National Forest.

Sister Amapola was able to make a special trip to a small neighborhood of Catholic families in a rural area outside Gallup, NM, to visit a childhood friend and her family.

And in addition to some very *gentle* walks – because it always takes me the first several days to adjust to the thinner air at that elevation – **I** was able to take a day trip through Taos and down the scenic Rio Grande River Valley. I am impressed each year by the vastness, history, and beauty of that rugged terrain. Our summer visits to NM have been wonderful respites for our Community. *Give thanks to the Lord for He is good and His Mercy endures forever....* ♦





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