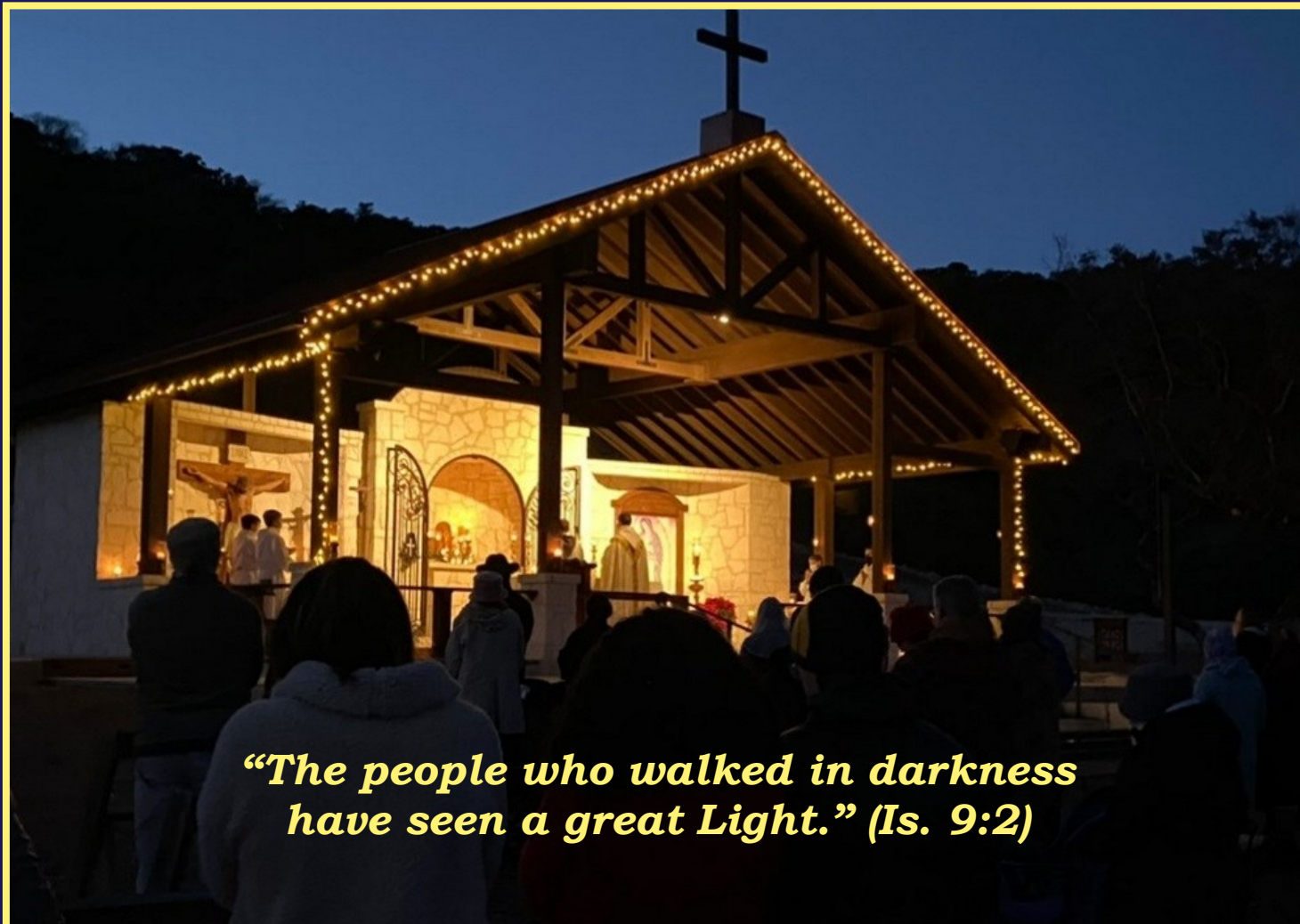


Mission
of
Divine Mercy

Advent 2022



“And the Light shines on in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome It...”
Jn 1:5



***“The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great Light.” (Is. 9:2)***

StMartha—What A Game-Changer!

Debbie was exhausted and her nerve endings frayed. She and her siblings were in the process of moving their elderly parents to Texas, so that they could be close to their adult children. Both parents had health issues and one parent was exhibiting signs of dementia. Debbie’s job was to have her parent’s new house ready so that it felt like home the moment they walked in: filled with the familiar, everything in its place, and cupboards stocked with their favorite foods. Great idea, but there had already been many unforeseen problems and the moving van was yet to arrive.

She was making a quick stop at the grocery store when she ran into Mother Magdalene in the parking lot. The whole story came tumbling out.

Mother Magdalene was quiet for a moment and then said, “Why don’t you pray to St. Martha. I always call on her for anything around the house. She understands and always helps me. I just say, ‘St. Martha, for the sake of Jesus, help me!’”

Two months later Debbie came upon an MDM staff member in another shopping center. “I have been wanting to tell Mother Magdalene just what a difference her advice made. What a game changer! I went home and told my husband and friend about asking for St. Martha’s help and from then on she was our go-to Intercessor. When things got crazy we would remind each other to call on St. Martha. We even had a #StMartha! It was amazing. We could really feel her help. Everyone should know to call on St. Martha!”

With Christmas approaching should we get #StMartha trending ? ♦

WARRIORS OF LIGHT



As we were praying about this newsletter one theme seemed to come to the fore: “Light bearers.”

And then we came across a very moving account* of a young Italian boy, Manuel Foderà who died in 2010 at the age of nine after suffering from cancer for five years. But during those years he drew very close to Jesus and Mary and, according to his spiritual director, appears to have had many conversations with them. According to this priest: “*I asked him if he saw Jesus face to face and he answered me by saying that he felt His voice in his heart.*”

And then this passage caught our eye:

*One day, after Communion, Manuel asked Jesus what he could give Him for Christmas and Jesus answered, “**Always show My joy to others. Be a warrior of light in the midst of darkness.**”*

Imagine if you asked Jesus this same question and He replied specifically to you:

*I am asking you to be My Warrior of Light
so that My Grace and My Light can spring
forth from your heart for all my children
who are dying in darkness,
while thirsting for Light.*

*Be My little Warrior of Light,
who by your fidelity, love, and trust,
repair the offense, the rebellion
of the one who had been created
to be the bearer of My Light
among My Holy Angels,
but who turned himself into complete,
absolute darkness.
And relentlessly tries to surround and
suffocate My children with that same
darkness.*

*When you try to live according
to My Will for you,
I can take everything in your life and make it
bear fruit—and Light—for others.*

*You will not be alone, My Light bearer,
My Warrior of Light.
You will be united with My heavenly army,
And with all My children who are still being
purified and healed,
and with all My little warriors on earth,
united in this great Work of Mercy:
**the Reconquest of each heart created
by Me.**
**This is the complete victory of Light
over darkness.***

This Advent may we take up the challenge of bringing Christ’s Light to others and become Warriors of Light combatting the darkness. ♦

*Manuel Foderà: *The Warrior of Light*
by Sister Maria Carmen Checa, SHM
H.M. Magazine July 31, 2020

ADVENT MEMORIES FROM MY CHILDHOOD...

When I was little and one of a houseful of six children, I remember pouring over the Christmas editions of the Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs with their mesmerizing arrays of toys and gifts. From these hundreds of toys, we were each allowed to pick three possible gift ideas for Santa to consider bringing.

It was hard to beat the power and pull of mysterious wrapped presents and Christmas stockings, but Mom did her best to find ways to help us experience and participate in the spirit of Advent. I share them here in case they spark ideas or memories of your own.

At the beginning of Advent, Mom would get the figures of Mary, Joseph, and the donkey from our Nativity Set and she would place them at the far end of the mantle over the fireplace. And each day one of the younger children would get to move the trio ahead by an inch or two. Mom was trying to impress upon us that the journey to Bethlehem was a long and arduous one for the Holy Couple, not a series of Christmas parties. And it was our task to not only move them along, but also pray for them—especially the Expectant Mother—on their long journey. Moving the figurines was a good visible reminder for us of the spiritual journey of Advent, not that we kids thought of it in those terms. In the last week of Advent, the stable would appear on a table at the other end of the mantle. It would gradually become populated with sheep and shepherds, a cow and angels. On Christmas Eve the Holy Couple was placed in the stable, and on Christmas Day the Infant could be found in the manger.

Another idea that I remember from a Christmas when I must have been about five years old involved supplying straw for the Infant. For some reason Mom had some straw, maybe from a packing crate. She challenged us to do at least one extra good deed each day, something beyond what we would normally do, and if we did, we could put one piece of straw in the manger where Jesus would eventually

lie. The idea being that the more good deeds we did, the softer the bed for Jesus. I'm not sure that my older siblings were persuaded by this idea, but somehow it particularly appealed to me and I found lots of simple, and maybe suspect, deeds that allowed me to put lots of straw in the manger.

The presence of an Advent wreath is the



one tradition that existed in childhood and has continued at our house to this day. Mom would make one by cutting fresh greens from evergreens in our yard and weaving the branches together around a simple metal frame. Sometimes, if she was fortunate, Mom would find the requisite three purple and one pink candles. But more often than not, she would only find white tapers that she would distinguish with purple or pink bows made from ribbon.

When I was raising my own family, our

house had a large front window that was very visible from the street. For a few years, at the suggestion of my brother, I put large pink and purple candles and greenery in my front windows, where people going past the house could see it. At sundown I would light the appropriate candles and let them burn through the evening. I'm not sure if the passersby understood the significance, but it was my small effort to give a Christian witness in a secular world. Today I just purchase a nice small evergreen wreath from the farmer's market down the road.

But back to childhood. We would all gather around the wreath at night after the Rosary and take turns getting to light the candles. Dad would read from the little green paper pamphlet that offered a different prayer for

each week. There were two lines that always struck my heart. ***"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." (Is. 9:2)*** And ***"In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us." (Lk 1:78-79)***

There in the darkness, gathered with my family around the Advent wreath, I could picture myself among those people looking toward the light. I may have had little idea of the real meaning of those words, but hearing them spoken in the resonant tones of my earthly father's voice, they somehow spoke to me of a Heavenly Father and deep love and a great mystery.

And they still do. ♦

Emily Jebbia

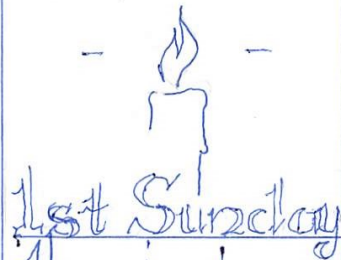
***"In the tender compassion of our God,
the Dawn from on High shall break upon us."
(Lk 1:78-79)***



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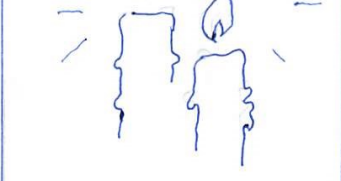
For your
refrigerator
door ♦

27



1st Sunday

4



2nd Sunday

11



3rd Sunday

18



4th Sunday

25



became flesh

28 St.
Catherine



5

Isaiah
35:1-10

12



Our Lady
of Guadalupe

19 O Root



of Jesse's Stem

26



St. Stephen

29

Isaiah
11:1-10

6



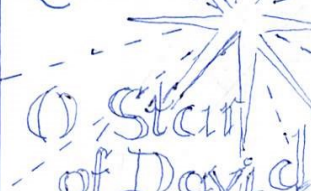
St. Nicholas

13



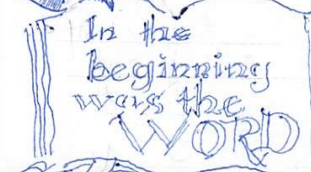
St. Lucy

20



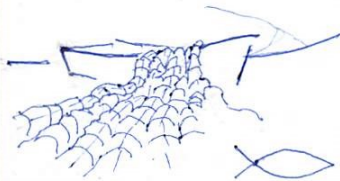
O Star
of David

27



St. John
Evangelist

30 St. Andrew



1

Isaiah
26:1-6



1st Friday

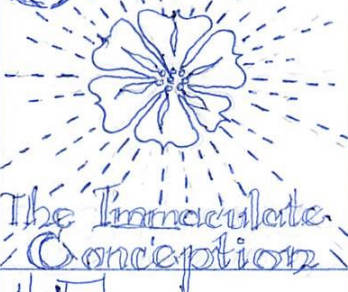


1st Saturday

7

Isaiah
40:25-31

8



The Immaculate
Conception

9 St. Juan
Diego



10

Sirach
48:1-11

14 St. John
of the Cross



15

Isaiah
34:1-10

16

Isaiah
36:1-8

17 Wisdom



of God Most High

21

O Radiant
Dawn

22 King



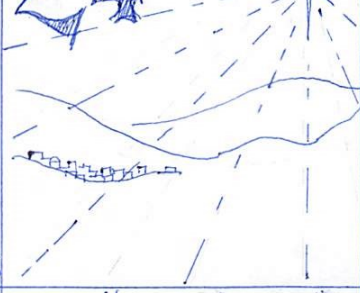
of the Nations

23



Emmanuel
God with us

24

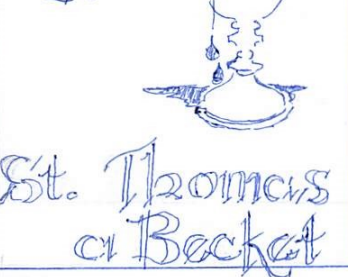


28



Holy Innocents

29



St. Thomas
a Becket

30



the
Holy Family

31



Vigil of the
Solemnity
of MARY the
Mother of God

A Harlem Christmas Story

Intro from Mother Magdalene

I first met Catherine DeHueck Doherty in 1973 when I traveled to Madonna House in Combermere, Ontario. Catherine was in her mid-seventies at the time. She was an appealing and formidable woman. She had a deep 'whiskey voice' flavored by the cadences of her Russian homeland, and a silver braid of hair that wrapped around her head like a crown. She had an earthy practicality, a good sense of humor, and a mystical sense of God. She was in fact a mystic.

Fleeing Russia after the Communist Revolution, she had immigrated to Canada where she survived—initially just above starvation level—working a series of back-breaking, low paying jobs. Later, finding work with the Chattaqua Lecture Bureau she emerged as a well paid and successful career woman; but that was not to last.

All this was given up when she surrendered to an interior call from the Lord to give up what she had and to become completely His, serving Him in His Poor.

This was during the Great Depression when a multitude of men - hungry, heartsick, weary - were crisscrossing North America looking for work. Catherine acquired a storefront in a poor area of Toronto and opened her first Friendship House; eventually there would be several more including one in Harlem. Here these men could find a hot meal, a steaming cup of coffee, conversation or companionable silence, or simply a quiet corner where one could sit for a while by the old cast iron stove. The front door of each Friendship House was always painted blue in honor of Our Lady. Hence the Blue Door Stories like the one that follows....



*I*t was a sort of upside-down affair that came floating through my memory when I began to write this story. The memory was of a Christmas night. It seemed upside down because no one came through the Blue Door that night in Harlem.

I had just closed it behind the last of our bunch. We staff had much to finish up before Midnight Mass. That's when I met the strange trio that I most assuredly did meet that night. They did not go through the Blue Door but, somehow – and don't ask me how – the Blue Door was certainly involved.

It was a perfectly natural meeting too, nothing miraculous about it or about anything that followed. It was a nice meeting, one that made Christmas Mass a little more joyous and the meditations that followed a little more profound.

Just as I was leaving, and had turned from locking the Blue Door (which had given me some trouble that night I confess – the key stuck or something) I was confronted by a very handsome black man and his wife, who was holding a baby in her arms. I could not see the baby's face. It was all bundled up against the raw New York wind that was blowing into a gale.

Very politely, the man lifted his hat and, in the soft accents of the deep South, he told me that he and his wife were lost in this big city. They had just gotten off the train. He was a carpenter, hoping

If you would like to read more about Catherine, there are many other stories available through Madonna House Publications. And we are most grateful to them for sharing her with us.

If you are interested, we have one other Catherine story in our Lent 2009 newsletter which you can find on our website.

to get a better job than the one he had had in the little village they came from. But, with one thing and another, they had been delayed en route. They didn't have any money, that is, not quite enough for a night's lodging. Perhaps I could tell them where to go, what to do, and to whom they might apply for help.

Having said his piece, he stood relaxed, politely and silently waiting for my answer. His wife, who had not said a word, just smiled at me once or twice. She stood as confident and as still as he, sure that I was just the person to help them.

Before my mind's eye came a vision of the telephone. I almost turned back and opened the Blue Door to try and contact some social agency that would attend to their wants. Then I looked at my wristwatch. It was almost 11 o'clock, and on Christmas Eve! Whom could I find at this time? And where? And if I did, this poor family would have to brave strange subways. I could, of course, send them by taxi. I did have a few extra dollars in my purse – wonder of wonders. But the Family Shelters of New York separate families sometimes, because of lack of room.

Lack of room! Christmas Eve! Man, woman, child! It all suddenly hit me right between the eyes. Of course, I knew it was *just a coincidence*. Nice, in a way. But so many people came to Friendship House just for this kind of help and information. No, this was not the time to send such a family anywhere. This was the time to offer them personal hospitality, if for no other reason than to atone for the hospitality that was not given almost 2,000 years ago.

Of course! Why hadn't I thought of it before! There was what the staff workers of Friendship House called the hermitage, that is, my room. It was so many things in one. It had a desk, a bed, a gas stove complete with oven, and a refrigerator of sorts given by the management, which even worked sometimes. The room also contained a sink and a full-size laundry tub. Yet, all in all, it was a cozy place, especially that night. I had been given a tinsel Christmas tree about six inches high. It was a far cry indeed from my lofty, native Russian firs, so stately in their majestic beauty.

The little tree, nevertheless, was nice, very nice. I had placed under it a miniature crib. I had intended to place the Infant into it when I came back from Mass. Yes, the room was spic and span, and very, very, cozy. Why not invite the couple to spend the night there? Tomorrow I could contact the needed agencies.

No sooner thought than done. My strange couple was still silent, courteously waiting for an

answer that surely must have seemed to them a long time in coming. But they showed no signs of impatience.

Slowly, and for some inexplicable reason rather diffidently, I invited them into the hermitage, apologizing for its humbleness and its being many things in one. Their smiles broadened. The woman straightened herself and somehow looked taller as she pressed the child closer to her. The man voiced his thanks and proceeded to follow me.

Thus we walked the three rather long blocks that separated the Blue Door from my quarters. No one said a word. Yet, the silence was companionable.

Once in the room I made them as comfortable as I could. The baby, finally out of its wrappings, was lovely. I had not heard it cry. The man said it was a boy, their firstborn. I made them coffee, fried some eggs, set the table, and then told them I would peek in after Mass.

It was one of the most beautiful Masses I ever participated in. The thought of my three pilgrims snug in the cozy room probably made it so. Personal hospitality to strangers, to Christ, warms him who gives it so much that it is a blessing itself.

The Mass over, I rushed back to my room. To my astonishment I found the front door ajar. That is never done in Harlem where one uses several locks just in case—as is the case wherever there is tension from poverty and segregation. I pushed the door open. The room was empty.

The dishes had been washed and stacked away, each where it belonged. No signs of occupancy were left whatsoever. The Infant I had meant to put into its tiny crib under my tinsel tree was already there, and a candle was lit in my window! ♦

Catherine de Hueck Doherty, *Not Without Parables: Stories of Yesterday, Today and Eternity* (Madonna House Publications, 2007)

The New Convent: Slowly But Surely



In our eagerness to see our new convent rising on Shepherds' Hill we are reminded of the farmer who plants a seed, looking forward to the day when it produces fruit, but knowing that the important initial activity goes on out of sight.

Since our last update on the convent, we have created a road into the site and have cleared a big empty space on the top of Shepherds' Hill. That feels like progress!

The Sisters have worked diligently with an architect to design a simple, efficient, and attractive convent for eight women. It will be the first time in MDM's 21 years that we have a purpose-built living space for the Community; that is, a structure that is designed specifically for the living of religious life. Up through the current day we have always lived in make-do residential housing, and we have been very grateful for a roof over our heads. But in a future issue we would like to delve into what makes a home for a religious community different from that of a family, or a simple boarding house.

At the end of October, Peter and the Sisters met with Kevin Butschek of Shandera Homes, who has built most of the structures on the Mission property. He indicated that he could begin as soon as he got the final drawings from the architect. We had hoped to have these drawings by the time the newsletter went to

print, but a review of the final drawings suggested a change that would improve the ground floor layout. And as everyone knows, better to make the changes while they are still just on paper!

A lot of prayer has gone into the planning of this convent. We have asked God to help us decide on the when, where, how and how many. And even though the economy is rocky, we sense that this is the time to which God has led us for the building of the convent. We look forward to having the Sisters situated safely within the grounds of the Mission and with room to grow. We would be very grateful if you would keep this project in your prayers. ♦



From Peter:

Although we hoped to defray the cost of the convent by the eventual sale of the Sisters' current house and property, with its great view of Canyon Lake, the rising cost of construction means that we will need to raise extra money. I realize that these are hard times for many people, but if any of our friends feel that they can make an additional donation toward the convent, it would be greatly appreciated. ♦

In Their Own Words: EWJ Retreatants

Thanks be to God, this past September we were able to hold our first **Encounter With Jesus** retreat since the late winter of 2020 when fear of Covid brought everything to a screeching halt. Two *Encounters* for women, one English and one Spanish, have been held so far, with the men's English scheduled for December and a men's Spanish in January. Registrations have filled up within the first few hours of being opened.

Below are remarks from Input sheets filled out at the end of the last two retreats. We will let the retreatants speak for themselves.

It was both what I expected, and what I did not expect at all. But it was exactly what I needed. – Ruth

God showed me that He has never left my side, but I have left His side at times. - Georgina

After Fr. John Mary's explanation this morning, I will never see the Crucifix above the altar the same way during Mass.- Caroline

The small size of the retreat is so welcoming and not overwhelming. - Anonymous

It was my first experience of being SILENT for three days. I liked it a lot. It was a relief! Also, great to take a break from I-phone and I-pad. – Catherine

Loved it all—especially the Adoration times. Loved the way all the talks, activities and silence led to the great crescendo of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Like climbing God's Holy Mountain. Oh yes, I loved the hiking too! - Mona

What aspects seemed good? That it was always my choice. - Anon

What aspects seemed good? The silence, the reverence, the deliberate and thoughtful arrangements – from the atmosphere in the dorm, the music, the facilities, the natural beauty of the land, and especially the religious staff and volunteers. However, Jesus and Mary's Presence topped it all. – Anonymous

I like that there was no pressure to talk about oneself, except with the Lord. - Elizabeth

The peaceful natural surroundings are a real asset. Being able to walk in nature made it very easy for me to be silent. – K

May God multiply all blessings for all you did for us during the retreat and with the grace of God we can feel His Presence and the Presence of our beloved Mother Mary. Those were unforgettable and sublime days that we spent in the beautiful Mission of Divine Mercy. ~ Maria

I came here a very sad and lost widow looking for a purpose in my life without my beloved. I still don't know it, but I learned to wait on God's will for my next chapter. I am leaving here with a grateful heart. - Arcelia

On Friday, in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I felt like a little girl in need of her Papa, unable to control my pain, and I asked Him to help me heal myself and to heal my soul in need of His love, and so it was. ~ Obdulia

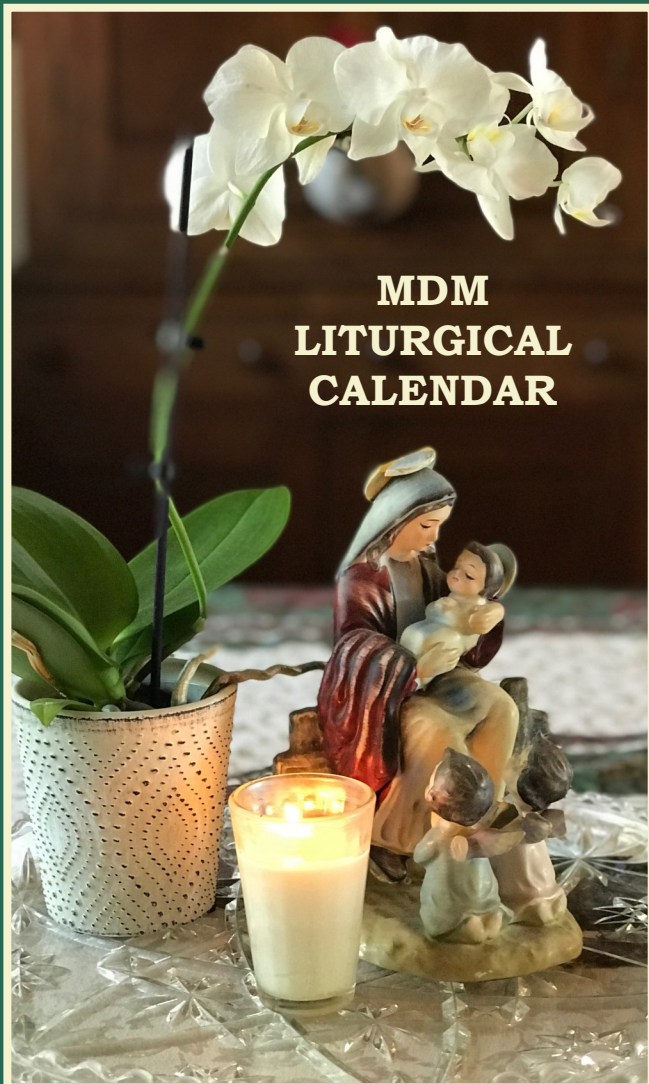
The silence is very enriching, separating myself with My Lord and leaving behind those internal and external noises that distract me. I came to fill my emptiness because the struggles and conversion are every day. Only with Him do I have the strength to move forward, as long as God gives me life. ~ Carolina ♦



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*Mission grounds and office are closed the week of
December 26-30 except for scheduled Masses
and Holy Hours.*

DEC 24, SAT: 8:00 AM - MORNING MASS
9:00 PM - VIGIL MASS OF THE NATIVITY

**DEC 25, SUN: 8:30 AM - MASS OF THE SHEPHERDS
OF BETHLEHEM**
Quiet Mass; without a choir

DEC 28, WED: 11:30 AM - MASS:
Feast of the Holy Innocents

DEC 29, THUR: 7:00 PM -
HOLY HOUR OF ADORATION

DEC 30, FRI: 11:30 AM - MASS:
Feast of the Holy Family

DEC 31, SAT: 8:00 AM - MASS
9:00 PM - HOLY HOUR OF ADORATION

JAN 1, SUN: 10:00 AM - MASS:
SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

JAN 4, WED: 11:30 AM - MASS

JAN 5, THUR: 7:00 PM - HOLY HOUR
concluding with Prayer for Healing

JAN 6, FRI: 11:30 AM - MASS -First Friday

JAN 7, SAT: 8:00 AM - MASS- First Saturday,
followed by Blessing of Scapulars

JAN 8, SUN: 10:00 AM - MASS: EPIPHANY OF THE LORD