



From the Desk of
Sr. Katherine Caldwell, TOR
Reverend Mother

December 2011

Christmas Greeting: Celebrating Mercy Made Incarnate *“Open Wide the Doors to Christ”*

Dear Family and Friends:

Having just celebrated the blessing of our new Divine Mercy Image and the first celebration of Blessed John Paul's Feast Day on October 22nd, my heart and mind is full of joy and gratitude, a perfect prelude to the joyful Christmas carol, for Christmas is the song of God's Mercy made Incarnate. As I ponder the words from the inagual address of Blessed John Paul, **Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors to Christ**, I find myself desiring to open even wider the doors of my heart. I know that the wider open I am and the deeper I allow Him into my heart, the more humble and tender I experience His love. Christmas is a wonderful time to ponder God's humble Love and we get a glimpse of this as we ponder Jesus as a Babe.

John Paul's Christmas message from 2002 captures the heart of what I desire to express to you:

"Christmas is a mystery of love! The love of the Father, who has sent into the world his only-begotten Son, to bestow on us the gift of his own life (cf. 1 Jn 4:8-9). The love of "God-with-us", Emmanuel, who came to earth in order to die on the Cross. In the cold stable, wrapped in silence, the Virgin Mother, with prophetic intuition, already tastes the violent drama of Calvary, the traumatic struggle between darkness and light, between death and life, between hatred and love. The Prince of Peace, born today in Bethlehem, will give his life on Golgotha, so that love may reign on earth."



This humble love of God is beyond human comprehension, for who could imagine that the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe, would not only humble Himself to come to us as a Babe, but He also lovingly becomes utterly vulnerable and poor on the Cross for our salvation. Why would our God do this? Purely out of Love for He is Love and He desires for us the Greatest Good; Himself for all eternity. Thus, He does not count the cost in restoring us to Himself. God is so great—Almighty—that He does not need to appear BIG for **the weakness of God is stronger than men.**" As we pray in the opening prayer for Mass on the twenty-sixth Sunday: **"God, you show your almighty power above all in your mercy and forgiveness. . ."**

As we prepare for and celebrate the Christmas season, let us make this prayer of John Paul's our own: "Adorable mystery of the Incarnate Word! Together with you, O Virgin Mother, may we stop and reflect at the manger where the Child lies, to share your own amazement at the immense "condescension" of God. Grant us your own eyes, O Mary, that we may understand the mystery hidden within the frail limbs of your Son. Teach us to recognize his face in the children of every race and culture. Help us to be credible witnesses of his message of peace and love, so that the men and women of our own time, still torn by conflicts and unspeakable violence, may also recognize in the Child cradled in your arms the one Savior of the world, the endless source of that true peace for which every heart profoundly yearns."

Celebrating His Love,

Sr. Katherine Caldwell, TOR

Partners in Making Known God's Merciful Love

Day of Recollection: Living the Mission of Mercy



Words cannot express the joy I felt on Saturday, October 22nd when we had over 150 people join us to celebrate the first feast day of Blessed John Paul II and the blessing of the new Divine Mercy Image in Father of Mercy Chapel. Bishop Zubik, from the

Diocese of Pittsburgh, celebrated the opening Mass and blessing of the Image. In his homily he shared about the merciful gaze he felt as he encountered Pope John Paul II for the first time. Fr. Bob McCreary, O.F.M. Cap. challenged us to live more fully the key elements of mercy in our daily lives and shared touching stories about people who had done this in marvelous ways. As our guests departed so many thanked us for a graced day and we could sense that something very special had happened that day. It was not one particular aspect of the day that made it special. I believe that we were changed by celebrating the Eucharist, by hearing the inspiring words, and by adoring our Lord together. Together we experienced mercy, were bonded in mercy and were sent forth to be mercy. I felt as if our mission to make known God's merciful love took another step forward as we felt united with so many others who share the same mission. We were encouraged by the results of the survey to find that many of those participating in the Day of Recollection are interested in collaborating more fully with us in our mission.

Paul and Paulette Kardos: Partners in Spreading God's Mercy



We had the blessing to first meet Paulette and to experience her goodness when she changed her plans so that she could guide us through the holy places and holy doors in Rome during the year of the Jubilee. Paulette expressed, *"I think a great gift was that I was able to include the Sisters in the invitation to join me at Pope John Paul II's private Mass. Their gift to me was the friendship and spiritual bond that was formed during those days and still continues. So when the opportunity was presented to*

give the Divine Mercy Image for Father of Mercy Chapel, we saw it as a privilege for we knew JP II's message of praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet would be fulfilled daily by these holy sisters and those who will enter this Chapel. Their place is truly Franciscan, and their chapel is filled with the peace and love of the Lord and His Image of Divine Mercy has a place of honor there. JP II's message: prayer, evangelize, conversion, ministering to the poor are all being lived by the TOR Sisters...may we all have the grace to join with them and live the message of Divine Mercy and that of the Mercy Pope, Blessed John Paul II." We are so grateful to Paul and Paulette for providing such a graced Image of Divine Mercy. We know that our mission to make known God's merciful love is only possible through being united with others in love and fellowship.



Paul & Paulette Kardos pictured with Mr. Siarka (right) of Poland standing in front of the school and monument they sponsored in honor of Blessed John Paul II

Partners in Prayer

As many of you know, it is a blessing for us to be able to pray for our family, friends and benefactors. We also have been blessed by so many of you who pray for us and those to whom we minister, so I thought I would share one of these blessings. Helen Peterson, Alex Hart's mom, brought me a beautiful Christmas afghan that she made to be raffled off for the benefit of the people whom we serve in the downtown Steubenville area. However, the raffle that she has in mind is no ordinary one. The only cost for a raffle ticket is the submission of a prayer intention. In this way, the people that we minister to will know that they are truly loved by having Helen, her friends, and the TOR Sisters pray for them. The raffle will be drawn at the LAMP Christmas party where we will also give the people an opportunity to share answered prayers so as to increase the faith of all those involved and to give glory to God's unfathomable mercy.

LAMP is a breakfast and catechetical ministry serving the poor in downtown Steubenville.



Mercy Manifest in Our Beautiful Candidates

Katie's Story:

My new life as a candidate for the TOR sisters might seem like anything but ordinary. But, during the last few months, I've come to love the simplicity in the rhythm of prayer and work at our motherhouse.

After graduating from Franciscan University of Steubenville in 2010, the Lord led me here to Toronto. I was drawn by the joy of all the sisters, their love for Christ crucified, and my own desire to give my life to Him. Since I arrived, I have experienced that joy and that love and have been able to share it with my sisters and everyone I encounter in ministry. I love visiting the elderly and bringing Jesus to them in the Eucharist, but I also bring His joy and His love just by smiling and talking with them. Love doesn't have to be given in big packages or through heroic deeds. We just need to say Yes to the Lord in the little things each day.



See full vocation stories on our website www.torsisters.org

Malbri's Story:

I feel abundantly blessed to be living at Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery. My move here from Northern New Jersey in Mid August was eased by the sisters' love and hospitality. I've had so much fun getting to know them and spending time with them, whether over dinner, over an intense game of ultimate Frisbee, or while ministering to the poor and the elderly. Living with the sisters I'm able to soak up the benefits of their edifying witness as well as their spirit of excellence and magnanimity. The monastery provides a space of privileged silence that enables me to empty my mind and heart of unnecessary distractions in order to continuously be available to our Lord and listen to Him. Before joining the community my desire was to know our Lord in a more profound way, to be more intimately united to Him, and to grow in my love for Him. Already, in a short period of time, I've experienced the Lord

fulfilling the desire of my heart. In being lavished by our Lord's personal love for me and encountering Him in a deeper way here I find myself surrendering in trust to our God who is in control.

Anna's Story:

In August I began my vocation with the TOR Sisters and I couldn't be happier or more thankful for this gift. My journey to the religious life has been a gradual one, marked over and over again by the Lord persistently speaking to me through the questions and encouragements of different people in my life, and most of all, in and through the silence of Eucharistic adoration. I was blessed to attend Franciscan University of Steubenville where both my mind and my soul were nourished in countless ways as my faith life continued to grow. In the years since college, the Lord continued to walk with me and placed in my life situations and people who would continue to encourage me in my vocation discernment.

By the grace of God I have been able to respond to this call. Jesus tells His disciples that "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain." (John 15:16) What a blessing it now is to make a return of this love back to the Lord each day in so many little ways: through my tasks at the Motherhouse, through ministry at Weirton Geriatric Nursing Home, during time spent together with my sisters, and in the silence of prayer and adoration. In each of these ways I am blessed to continue to meet the Lord and listen more deeply as He continues to call me to Himself.

Partners in Mission by Supporting Our Sisters (S.O.S)

Last month we sent out a special edition of our newsletter through which we shared about our spirituality, charisms and mission and about ways that you may want to prayerfully consider becoming partners in our mission by joining us in spiritual enrichment programs, by volunteering your time, by praying with and for us, and by making financial contributions.

At this time, I would like to highlight how important "end of the year" gifts are for our financial well being. These gifts are essential because they make up 49% of our annual donations. As mentioned in our last newsletter, it costs approximately \$14,000 to cover the total living expenses for each sister per year. With thirty-one sisters, we have a substantial operating budget, and with more than half of our sisters still either in training or working among the poor, we have to rely on the generosity of donors to assist us. We continue to make progress in our fundraising efforts. Since my last fundraising update, we have raised half of the additional \$50,000 needed to break even. This means that we still need an additional \$25,000 more than we ordinarily receive at this time of the year. We are so grateful to all those who make our life and mission possible.

Sr. Katherine Caldwell, TOR

Franciscan Sisters, T.O.R.

of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother
PO Box 1042, Steubenville, OH 43952

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mailer's Choice



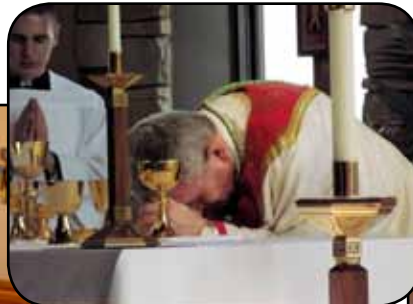
"To make known God's Merciful Love..."

Wishing you a blessed and joyous
Advent and Christmas!

www.torsisters.org

Day of Recollection

October 22, 2011



"I am still
floating after
the beautiful
Saturday you
gave me."

- Nancy Kenny



"This was a
very uplifting
experience. Thank
you for opening
your doors & being
so welcoming."

- Jennifer Sullivan



"Your 'city on the hill' is Holy Ground!
Just being here to pray with you
refreshes our spirits. Thank you!"

- Dave & Sue Carlson



"Thank you so much for the beautiful
Day of Recollection. My son, David,
and I found such peace in your
beautiful chapel and grounds."

- Lynn Vietmeier