

Letters from the Valley of Our Lady

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Saint Michael the Archangel Parish,

Beginning this week we will have a special column in our parish bulletin from the Cistercian Nuns of the Valley of Our Lady Monastery. The sisters currently reside in Prairie Du Sac living a life of faith and prayer and we will have the opportunity to have them for mass in the coming year. But before then, we have the privilege to receive a series of their letters from the sisters that will help us learn about their life and background. I ask you to please take the time to read and learn about the Cistercian Nuns and especially about their life of devotion to Christ Our Lord and the Blessed Mother.

Father Chahm Gahng

Part 1: Intro to contemplative life:

People often ask us: What do you do all day? The simple answer is this: We pray and we work, all for the love and glory of God. Just as a physical body has a heart, so too the Mystical Body of Christ, His Church, has a heart. This heart is the life of contemplative prayer, a conduit of graces that helps all the other members of the Body remain alive and well. Although all the baptized are called to intimate union with God in prayer, He also invites some of His children to dedicate their entire lives to loving Him specifically in and through this way of prayer.

To embrace this life of prayer is a gift and a grace, but it also demands great sacrifice. In His infinitely wise and gracious providence, God calls certain people to forego the natural joys of family life and a career and give themselves entirely to seeking Him alone and above all things, to praising Him on behalf of His people, and to interceding with Him for the needs of all.

This vocation to pray without ceasing, perhaps more necessary today than ever before, is a hidden one. Every once in a while, however, an extraordinary need might bring it into the spotlight. And currently, our community is in extraordinary need.

For over 60 years, we have lived in buildings never intended to be a permanent monastery, buildings that are increasingly insufficient, unsafe, and unhealthy. With the blessing and support of our recently deceased Bishop Morlino and of our acting administrator, Msgr. James Bartylla, we are asking the members of the Diocese of Madison to help us build, at long last, a new monastery, where our life of contemplative prayer can continue to flourish, for the good of the Diocese, the Church, and the world.

To that end, and with gratitude to Fr. Chahm for this opportunity, we are hoping to share with you over the coming weeks and months a bit about our vocation, our need, and how you might be able to participate with us in this work of building a new monastery for the glory of God. As we follow in the footsteps of our mother and exemplar, Mary, quietly preparing our hearts for the joy of Christmas, we invite you to reflect with us on the importance of prayer, of union with God, of giving Him always and in all things a simple "Yes" as Mary did.

With our gratitude and prayers,

Cistercian Nuns of Valley of Our Lady Monastery