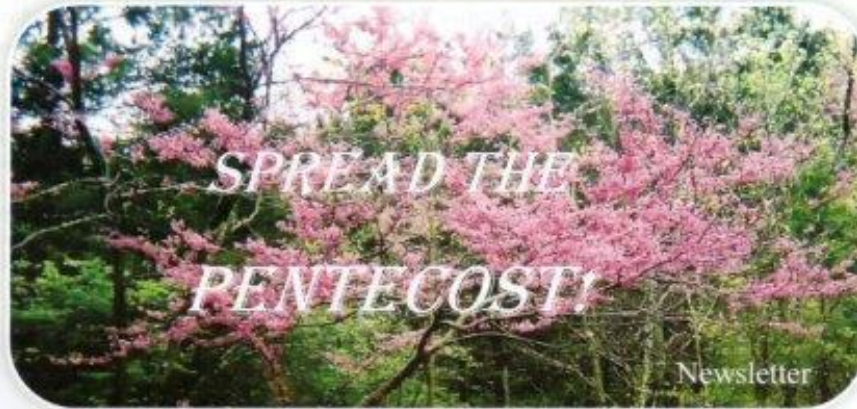


Spring 2017

The Society of Our Mother of Peace

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Dear Friends,

SOLITARY PRAYER

It would almost be unthinkable to talk about this subject and not focus first on Jesus. There is no record of Jesus praying in the temple of Jerusalem but there are abundant references to His praying in solitude—just to mention the first: Mt. 4:1-2 "... Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit ... and after fasting 40 days and 40 nights He was hungry."

Solitary prayer speaks of entering into the real thing: contact with God. It speaks of leaving (at least by focus) everything else but God, in order to put one's whole attention on Him. The earliest monastic history takes us into the desert to be alone with God, and all writing about prayer is directed toward fostering a person's total involvement with God alone. But even as we use the word "total", we need to say that "contact" with God is the beginning and point from which development takes place: we have to be free enough in heart and head to let God be our All. Heaven is precisely that: God is perceived (seen) as He really is: infinite Goodness, infinite Loveableness, infinite Holiness drawing us into Himself: "... that they all may be one, even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You ..." (John 17:21). Solitary prayer is urging one to be in contact with God alone, the One who is All and craves to be our All. How blest is one who enters into such prayer – enters into God!

Blessed Feast of Pentecost to you all!

"BLOOD-CLOTS" NEED NOT APPLY

As one hymn has it:

"We're going with Jesus, walking together
Over the path He has trod;
And up every mountain, down every valley
We walk along with God."

I am increasingly convinced that our personal striving to live out Christ is absolutely APOSTOLIC. By our Baptism into Christ and, hence, into the Mystical Body, we are all intimately CONNECTED. So that whatever good we do, we are "life" to the whole Body just as in every sin we commit, we are like "blood clots" in the Body.

The 24/7 conscious effort to be "life" for the Body is a response to God's good grace to turn from self to fix our focus on being Christ in the here-and-now, and this FAITH-CHOICE ripples beyond ourselves to our brothers and sisters, our fellow sojourners, in the Kingdom.

Thus by an angry word checked, an impure thought nipped-in-the-bud, the "flame of gossip" frozen in its track, a suffering offered up, forgiveness given, a thankful heart expressed, we channel similar graces to others. This urges us to be SAINTS drawing souls to Jesus!

This came home to me during my last visit to Nigeria. On the way to an Adoration Chapel, I was accosted by a six-year-old boy with his school bag strapped on his back. I thought he would want to take my hand as many children do but that was not his interest. He had something to share, but not being conversant with the language I just awkwardly shook his small hand instead and continued on my way. Ushered into an already full chapel, I was given a seat in the back. But what to my surprise, in a few moments, the little boy made his way in.

As I was seated, he now had greater access to draw very near (practically in my face) and earnestly attempted to impart his most desired message. But I was at a loss to understand. One kind woman saw our predicament and took the boy aside to inquire. Then he left as quickly as he came. This was his special delivery: "I want to go to Heaven! And I want to follow you to Heaven!"

I was deeply touched. A renewed and heightened sense of RESPONSIBILITY accompanies me: **LIVE CHRIST**, for others are following!

Fr. John Hansen, S.M.P.

The First Profession of Vows at Mother of Grace Solitude, Nigeria



In creating man and woman in his image and likeness, God placed in us a hunger which only He can fully satisfy. Given this longing that He placed in our hearts, God calls us to a whole-hearted, living and loving relationship with Himself. He says to us that we should love the Lord our God with all our "heart", "mind", "soul" and "strength". This invitation of love is for all Christians. But in a special way, Religious, through the evangelical vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, embody man's deepest longing for communion with God in a most concrete way. On March 23, 2017, Sr. Mary Teresa Andrew (on the left) and Sr. Joan Marie Muoneke made their first profession of vows, through which they manifested their desire to seek communion with God in a more radical way, that is, to find their sole delight in God and His Holy Will.

The Diaconate Ordination of Brother Isidore Udoh, S.M.P.



This is the picture of Bishop Donatus Ogun and the newly ordained deacons. Br. Isidore is the first person from the on right



Br. Isidore with the priests and brothers in our community.

With deep gratitude to God and in the joy of the Risen Lord, we celebrate our Brother Isidore Udoh being ordained to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate on April 20, 2017 by Most Rev. Dr. Donatus Ogun, Bishop of Uromi Diocese in Edo State Nigeria. Brother Isidore was ordained along with some of the seminarians of the diocese. This is a blessing to our Nigerian Community and to our Community as a whole as it adds to those of our personnel who devote themselves to the service of God, in seeking holiness of life and helping in the formation of younger vocations. So we ask God to bestow His choicest graces on our new deacon, Br. Isidore.

The Diaconate Ordination of Brother Bernard Aberion, S.M.P.



The picture of Br. Bernard at the laying on of hands by Bishop Rice.



By the mercy of God, one month after Br. Isidore was ordained a deacon, Br. Bernard Aberion was ordained to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate on May 20, 2017, by Most Rev. Edward Rice, the Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, at our Solitude, Mary the Font. It was a joyful event and celebration for us. Our chapel was filled with the presence of many friends and Associates of our Community. In his homily, which was directed to Br. Bernard, Bishop Rice expressed the point that it is God who calls each person to follow Him, and some people in a special way as ordained ministers. Also that our self-offering to God should be fruitful through acts of faith, hope and charity toward God and loving outreach to our brothers and sisters. We pray for Br. Bernard during this year of transitional diaconate as he ministers the love of God to hungry and searching souls.

Retreat: Trailer Available for Couples

In the past, we have received some requests from married couples who would like to make their retreats together. Since we did not have such a facility to accommodate them at that time, they could not have the opportunity to make a retreat with us in a single building. By the mercy of God, we now have a trailer, which was donated to us by one of our Lay Members. The trailer has two individual rooms with a common bathroom. It has a living room with a dining room. If you wish to inquire, call Mary the Font Solitude, at 636-677-3235 or send an email at smpvocations@gmail.com.

