

Monastery of St. Clare

Spring 2020

May almighty God bless you. May God look upon you with mercy and give you peace.

Blessing of St. Clare

This is the day the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it!

These words from Easter ring out the joy and promise that is the essence of the Easter message. As we pray this wonderful Easter refrain and stand before the awesome and transforming power of God, it is possible if we are open to God's grace to be filled with the comforting love of the Risen Jesus who calls each of us by name. It is possible for each of us to respond to the Lord's invitation to walk with him in the way of love he taught us until at the end of our journey when we can enter the fullness of everlasting happiness.

The promise of Easter is not that our journey will be free from hard work or without doubt or fear. No, as Jesus showed us through his life, there can be painful experiences along the way. The promise of Easter does reassure us pain that and death are not the end. Jesus came to tell us through his life, death and resurrection that we can live on this earth without fear because he is the path to eternal life for us all. Jesus rose from the dead so that we can rise from the dead. This is how much we are loved.

May the mystery of the Lord's rising from the dead fill all our hearts with the certainty that nothing is impossible for God and God's gift of life and love will never end, for that is the glory and blessing of Easter. May you always be glad and rejoice in the Lord.

Sr. Marguerite



Your Poor Clare Sisters

Back row: Srs. Kathy Ann, Theresa, Maryann, Kathy, Mary, Claudia, Sharon, Nancy and Marguerite

Front row: Srs. Carolyn, Susanna, Bernadette, Annemarie and Rucia

Cat Feet

Many of you will know the Carl Sandburg poem “Fog.” Sandburg’s apt description of fog’s “little cat feet” stays in one’s memory, reemerging when the time is right, as it did for me last Sunday when we enjoyed a cool, billowy fog after the previous day’s snowfall.

Clearly, Sandburg knew something about the movements of fog and cats.

Here in the monastery, we are also coming to understand the soundless movement of cats, or, at least, the movement of one special feline. Her name is Ladybug, although we also refer to her as Lady Bug or “Lady.” (Poor Clares were originally known as “Poor Ladies.”)

Her movements are enchanting and thrilling. She is a jumper. She likes to play. She stretches languorously like a diva and then takes off in a flash the next moment. She guards her thoughts and intentions and keeps us guessing.

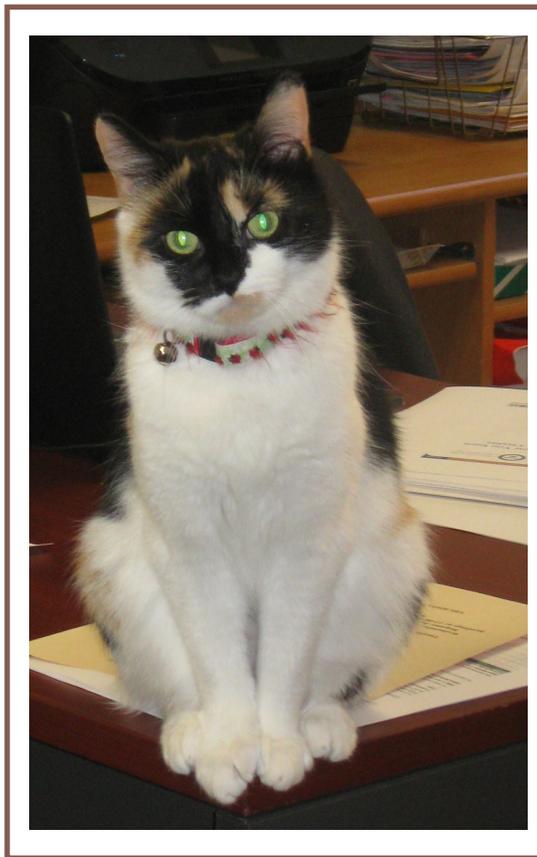
Our own movements, in contrast, are more predictable. She knows us better than we know her and can recognize each sister’s footsteps in the hall. In the silence of the early morning, the shuffle of feet and rustle of habits are not mysteries to her. With senses keener than ours, she anticipates our movements. She models the expectant waiting and listening of a contemplative.

We know that St. Clare had a cat, and a very attentive, obedient one at that. Shortly after Clare died, her sisters were interviewed as part

of the promotion of the Cause for her canonization. One of the sisters, Sr. Francesca, reported that when Clare was bedridden and unable to reach a towel that she needed, the cat brought it to her.¹ This incident appears among the accounts of the healings and miracles associated with Clare and is the reason why Clare is sometimes depicted with a cat.²

There is a lesson here for us, if we are willing to learn, as St. Francis did, from our fellow creatures. Do we listen with acuity and focused attention? Do we take the time to observe what is happening around us? How well do we know those with whom we live and work? How able are we to discern the movements of the Spirit in our lives and in others’ lives? Do we watch and wait for God in prayer? Indeed, do we know the sounds and movements of our God?

In sum, can we be alert for and attentive to God and to each other, or will opportunities for grace pass us by, retreating quietly and quickly like fog on little cat feet?



Lady Bug

Sr. Susanna

¹ “Ninth Witness,” in *Process of Canonization*, 9:8, in Armstrong, Regis J. (ed.), *The Lady: Clare of Assisi: Early Documents* (New York: New City Press, 2006), 177.

² See, for example, the icon, St. Clare of Assisi, written by Br. Robert Lentz.

*A Message From**Our Abbess**Sr. Carolyn Forgette, osc*

Dear Friends,

Once again, we live with not just the hope that Spring will be

coming, but that it has indeed arrived.

Spring, season of new life, reminds me of all the potential that is within each of us, if we but trust that we are being guided by God's Spirit and capable of so much good. Then take that leap of faith and act on it. That is what our sisters Marguerite and Claudia did when they followed the Spirit's lead that yes, their monastery in Memphis needed to close and believed that yes, God had something very good in store for them. These sisters have been part of our family for four plus months now. We have all been enriched by their presence and I believe they have been blessed not only by the Travelers Rest Poor Clares, but by YOU our extended family.

Some family news to share: This year is our 65th anniversary of being in South Carolina, and we plan to celebrate. March 1 is our founding day, a day on which we will quietly praise God for so much goodness to us. Our big celebration will be on August 11, the feast of St. Clare. You'll be hearing more about this as the time draws near. Stay tuned. And for some "extended family"

news: this is also the year of a big celebration in our Diocese of Charleston. It is our Bicentennial year!

Many of you have heard the sad news that our friars have had to withdraw from several of their missions due to the fewer number of friars. St. Anthony of Padua parish in Greenville, as well as St. Mary of the Angels parish in Anderson will be losing our brothers. Fr. David Phan who had been residing at the friary at St. Anthony's will be staying in the area continuing his mission among our Vietnamese brothers and sisters. This is very good news for us. In fact, Fr. David will be making his home right here on our property.

Our yearly financial report included in this letter is a statement of how generous you our benefactors have been. Without this support and even more your deep faith in us and in our life here, we would not be able to live the vocation each one of us so cherishes. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

With Spring and all its potential comes the glorious season of Easter. As we claim for ourselves Jesus' promise of new and everlasting life, we thank God daily that you are part of our family and we encourage you to remember and celebrate all the good of which you with God's Spirit are capable.

Blessings of God's love,

Your Sister

Carolyn

Development Ministry Report 2019 Year End Financial Summary

On March 1, 1955, our founding sisters came from Boston to bring our Poor Clare way of life to South Carolina. We celebrate their courage in making a new foundation, but we also remember our friends and benefactors whose belief in our life of prayer made this possible. As grateful stewards of

your resources we want to share with you a financial summary of 2019 and thank you for your generosity.

The first graph shows the sources of our development income. In our Spring Appeal we asked for assistance in getting a new oven and in replacing our leaking water heater. In our Fall Appeal, we shared with you our desire to replace some of our lighting with LED fixtures and for assistance with our yard maintenance. You came through again to help us meet these expenses. As in any household, there are regular maintenance repairs as well as those we plan. We have begun to have some rooms painted now that we have been here almost twelve years and we were also able to have our septic system maintained. Your generosity helps us to meet other expenses as well including our health and building insurance.

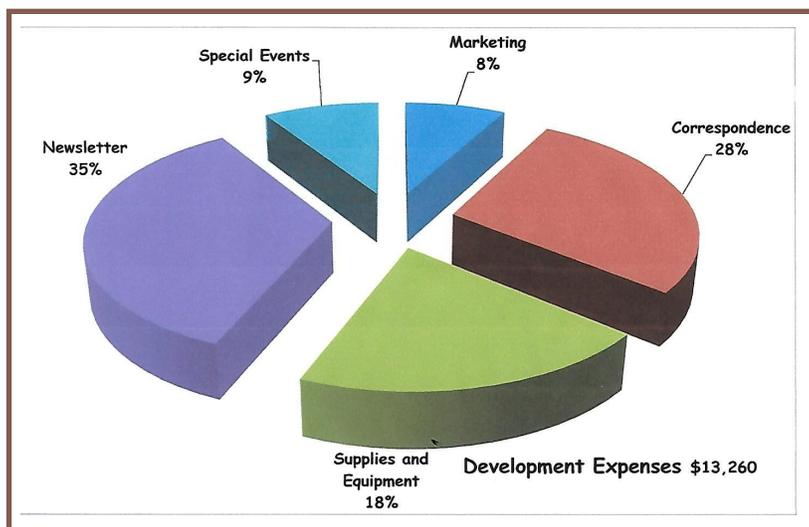
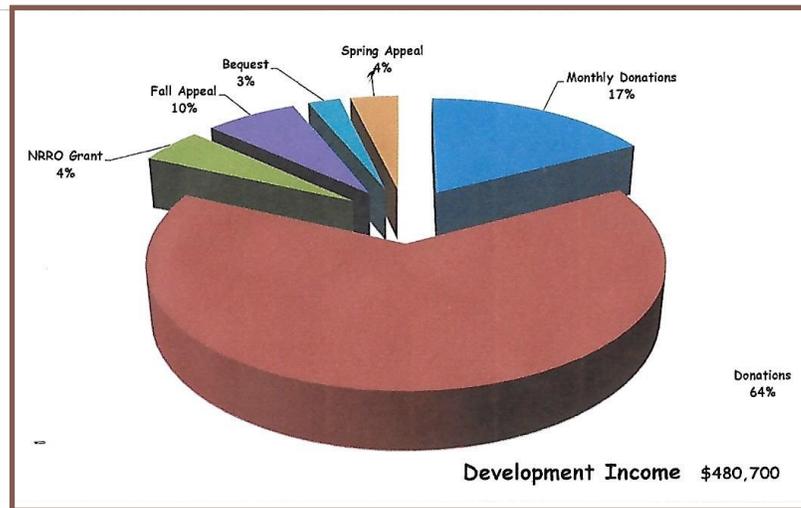
This second graph shows our development expenses are about 2.8%

of our income. Our volunteers in so many areas help us to keep these expenses low!

There is no way we can capture all last year held in terms of our relationships with you, our partners in grace. We are grateful you share with us what is happening in your lives and we know your prayers sustain us as do your gifts.

Gratefully,

Sr. Mary Connor, OSC and all your Poor Clare Sister



Our Spring Appeal

In our community for almost 50 years, our sisters have had the opportunity to make their private retreat in a hermitage on our property. We were able to move the Carceri, a simple manufactured home, from our old Monastery when we moved to Travelers Rest. It is aging and we are now in the process of preparing to replace it with an energy efficient Tiny House. A benefactor has given a donation to cover half the cost of the Tiny House. For our Spring Appeal we would ask your help to complete this project. There will also be the additional expenses for furnishings, the electric and plumbing hookups, a ramp and screening for the porch. Thank you and may God bless you for considering this!

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In February Fr. David Phan, OFM joined us for dinner and shared his life's story. He was born in Vietnam and after the fall of Saigon he fled the country at age 15 and came to America. He worked hard to bring his whole family, parents and 9 siblings here. By age 31 he was able to finally think about a religious vocation.

Fr. Patrick introduced us to Br. Stephen O'Kane, OFM, of the Province of Ireland, who is serving as General Visitor of Holy Name Province in anticipation of the Provincial Chapter taking place in June 2020.



In January we had to say good-bye to our dear friend Fr. Ryan Dela Pena, CRM who had traveled every Tuesday from Spartanburg, on his day off, to celebrate Eucharist with us.

Franciscan Monastery of St. Clare
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Since writing and printing our newsletter, Covid-19 is restricting movement throughout the United States. Because of this, we will not be having our prayer services open to the Public until it is safe to do so. We are not having our daily schedule of Eucharist as listed below. Your Poor Clare sisters gather for prayer several times a day and hold all our suffering sisters and brothers in our hearts.



Dearly beloved, may you always rejoice in the Lord
-St. Clare

Upcoming Events

Save the date!

1955 - 2020

The Poor Clares
will be celebrating
65 years in South Carolina
Eucharistic Celebration
Solemnity of St. Clare

August 11, 2020

Eucharist followed by light refreshments

9:00 AM



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

All are welcome.

MONDAY Eucharist 9:00 a.m.

TUESDAY Eucharist 9:00 a.m.

WEDNESDAY Eucharist 9:00 a.m.

THURSDAY Eucharist 9:00 a.m.

FRIDAY Eucharist 9:00 a.m.

Monday thru Friday if we do not have a priest we have a Communion Service.

SATURDAY

Communion Service 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Vigil Eucharist is usually at 4:30 p.m. but is sometimes at another time.