

Monastery of St. Clare

Summer 2025

May almighty God bless you. May God look upon you with mercy and give you peace.
Blessing of St. Clare

Franciscan Anniversaries — and much to Celebrate!

Dear Friends,

We hope you are having some carefree summer days with family and friends, taking time to relax and enjoy God's beautiful creation!



M. Magdalena

We have some special Franciscan milestones to celebrate this year. One hundred fifty years ago, Mother Magdalena Bentivoglio, foundress of the Poor Clares in the U.S., arrived in New York with her blood sister, Sr. Constance. They were homeless, knew no English, were rejected by several Bishops who wanted teachers, and, with true grit, followed God's lead and eventually established a Poor Clare monastery in Omaha, Nebraska. From there, the Poor Clare life spread throughout the United States.



Our monastery on Pleasantburg Drive, Greenville, in 1955

We are also celebrating seventy years in the Diocese of Charleston. On March 1, 1955, twelve Sisters from Jamaica Plain, MA arrived in Greenville to a warm welcome from the Franciscan friars at St. Anthony's Parish and several families who befriended us. We feel blessed to be standing on the shoulders of the many holy women who came before us and built the relationships that sustain us today, especially among our benefactors, including you! On October 4th, the Feast of St. Francis, we will be having a Mass of Thanksgiving to celebrate our 70th anniversary, and all our friends will be invited. We'll have more information about this celebration later in the summer.



Our founding sisters as they left Boston on March 1, 1955

In addition, this year is the 800th anniversary of the *Canticle of the Creatures*, a beautiful, well-known prayer written by St. Francis of Assisi as he lay almost blind on his death bed. This prayer has been an inspiration for the ecological movement of our time. Pope Francis cited it in *Laudato Si'* as he called all of us to a deeper reverence and care for Mother Earth; 2025 is also the 10th anniversary of his encyclical. The question of course, is how we are doing as a world community in preserving our first bible, God's creation.

Please take a moment to join us in giving thanks to our extravagantly-loving God for so many graces received over these past decades. We know that God provides for us through your generosity, and we also give thanks for you every day as well!

— Sr. Nancy



Srs. Elizabeth & Agnes with a banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe made by Sr. Elizabeth

A Visit from our Sisters in Guatemala

On May 19th, we were delighted to welcome Srs. Agnes and Elizabeth for a two-week visit to our monastery. They are members of the Poor Clare community in Huehuetenango, Guatemala, which we began sponsoring after the Memphis monastery closed. Sr. Agnes has visited us on several occasions, but this was Sr. Elizabeth's first visit to Travelers Rest.

They both contributed whole-heartedly to our daily life; Sr. Elizabeth, an accomplished seamstress, helped Sr. Maryann in the sewing room, and Sr.

Agnes helped in the kitchen. They also joined in our Memorial Day celebrations and proved themselves formidable competitors in the various games we played that afternoon. We loved having them with us!

While they were here, Srs. Agnes and Elizabeth presented us with special gifts from our Huehue sisters: beautiful handmade aprons! The aprons are lovely reminders of our sisters in Huehue and our special relationship with them.



Srs. Annemarie, Pia, Maryann, Sharon, Bernadette Marie, and Carolyn modeling the new aprons



I will God's will.
—Mother M. Magdalena Bentivoglio, osc

Special Gifts

We recently received two special gifts with deep connections to our Franciscan charism and heritage. A dear friend kindly donated two hand-painted canvases: one a copy of the Dossal of St. Clare, and the second a copy of the Dossal of St. Francis. A second generous benefactor framed the two dossals for us.



Fr. John Anglin, OFM and Srs. Elizabeth and Agnes with the new Dossal of St. Clare.
Fr. John visited us for two weeks in May; we hope to see him again soon!

Dossals are panels that were usually hung behind an altar. The original Dossal of Clare, which currently hangs in Santa Chiara in Assisi, was painted in the late 13th century. It depicts eight significant events in Clare's life. Similarly, the Dossal of Francis highlights major episodes in his life. We've hung both dossals on the walls near our hospitality room; we invite you to come see them!



The Dossal of St. Francis



Sr. Maryalice

Earlier this year, we realized that the monastery was no longer a safe place for our beloved Sr. Maryalice; she needed more care than we could provide. She is now residing in a memory care unit. We all miss her greatly and visit her whenever possible. Please join us in praying for her!

Spring brought the return of two dear brothers. In March, Fr. Russel Murray, OFM, Religious Assistant to the Poor



Fr. Russel

Clares, came for a fraternal visit. In April, Fr. Mick Joyce, OFM, Cap. arrived to celebrate the Sacred Triduum and Easter with us. It is always a joy to welcome these brothers back to Travelers Rest!



Fr. Mick

Thank you for responding to our Spring Appeal!

As we mentioned in our spring newsletter, we have been inviting friars to visit us for two weeks or more and celebrate daily Eucharist for us. (Our local friars and diocesan clergy are stretched very thin and cannot preside for us on a regular basis.) Nine friars have come so far, some for repeat visits! We have been so blessed by their presence and by the gift of daily Eucharist.

Thanks to your support, we have been able to cover the friars' travel expenses and stipends. We are so grateful to you for helping to make their visits possible, which in turn make daily Eucharist possible. Holy Eucharist is the center of our life of prayer. Thank you for helping it to be a reality in our lives!