

The Santa Rita Newsletter

Annual Christmas Newsletter of the Trappist Cistercian Nuns of Sonoita, Arizona
Vol. XXIV, No. 1

December 2018

Dearest family and friends,

As we come full cycle in another year, it is our joy to send our heartfelt love and prayers for each of you in our lives. May this blessed season of the love of God made manifest in Jesus be a time of grace, blessing and every good gift from the heart of God. We thank you for your love and support, and all the many ways you have been with us in this past year. And we pray that 2019 will be a happy and healthy year for you. We are blest in the precious gift of your friendship.

Mother Victoria & all your Santa Rita Sisters

Here at Santa Rita the two big events of 2018 were the re-election of our Mother Victoria Murray for a second six-year term as our titular prioress, and the completion of our new Family Guest House. See inside for more about these joyful occasions! For our chaplains this year we are grateful to the abbot and monks of Our Lady of New Clairvaux in Vina, CA, for lending us Fr. Thomas Davis to be our Holy Week and Easter chaplain; we look forward to his return in December for the end of Advent and the Christmas Octave. We are also grateful to our Franciscan friend, Fr. Eddie Fronske, who in September began celebrating Sunday Mass for us each week. Other visitors this year included Dom Brendan Freeman of Mellifont Abbey in Ireland who conducted our Visitation in January, and then returned in late April to preside at our election. Mother Kathy Devico of Redwoods Abbey in CA also came for our election. During Lent, Sr. MariaSther from our motherhouse came for a retreat-visit in honor of her Golden Jubilee, while in May Sr. Gilchrist came from our niece house in Norway, for her own retreat-visit. In August we enjoyed conferences on Cistercian spirituality and history by Sr. Magdalena from our monastery in Germany. Fr. Stephen Verbest of New Melleray Abbey in Iowa was here for a week in the Fall.

We've neglected our website journal this year as we've been developing a new website. We hope to launch it by early 2019. Take a look at www.santaritaabbey.org and let us know what you think! We post weekly on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/santaritaabbeynuns/>. To sign up for the email version of this newsletter, email the newsletter editor at sragoodnews@gmail.com. *In the photo below: our new Family Guest House.*



Mother Cecile Jubinville, RIP



Our beloved former superior and first titular prioress, Mother Cecile Jubinville, was called home to God on December 31, 2017. Born in 1920, she entered the religious life in 1949 at a brand-new monastery, Mt. St. Mary's Abbey, in Wrentham, Massachusetts. The new monastery grew so rapidly that in 1964 a foundation was made in Iowa: Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey. In 1972 a second foundation was made in Arizona: Our Lady of the Santa Rita Mountains with Sister Cecile appointed as its superior. Mother Cecile proved to be a kind-hearted spiritual mother and an excellent administrator. She led us through multiple building projects, the startup of our ceramics, stained glass, and altar bread industries, and received our first new members. Building projects included a small church and dormitory in 1973, followed by a craft building for the making of ceramics and stained glass art. By 1980 the community began baking altar breads and that needed a building, too. On September 14, 1978, our monastery was elevated from foundation status to autonomy as a major priory. M. Cecile was elected our first titular prioress that same day. She was re-elected in 1984. Meanwhile, postulants kept coming, and so in her second term of office M. Cecile oversaw the building of a larger church and an addition to the dormitory. In 1990, after taking some sabbatical time, M. Cecile decided to return to our mother house in Massachusetts. This was a great loss for us, but a great gain for Mt. St. Mary's. We stayed in touch over the years, and she always assured us that she prayed for us every day. She will forever have a special place in our hearts! For a fuller account of M. Cecile's life see our website's journal page: <https://www.santaritaabbey.org/2017-journal/february-17-1920-december-31-2017-mother-cecile-jubinville/>

New Family Guest House

In May of 2017 we blessed the building site for our new Family Guest House, and one year later, on May 31, 2018, we celebrated a Mass of blessing inside the new house, with our friend Msgr. Tom Cahalane presiding on both occasions. The old trailer family guest house was demolished as soon as the new house was ready and then the landscaping was put in around the new house and at the site of the old trailer. Our architect Hank Krzysik and contractor Dave Mellgren did a wonderful job! The result is a truly beautiful home, inside and out, for welcoming our families and other special visitors. Already several visiting members of our Order have stayed there, as well as three of our Sisters' families. All have given it five star reviews! Our hearts are full of gratitude to God and to the generous donors who so graciously funded the project.

In the photos: in May Sisters Pam and Clare were testing out the new sofa in the great room. In November Sister Kate's sister Eileen and brother-in-law Jeff visited; here they are together on the front porch.



Re-election of Mother Vicki

On Tuesday, May 1, 2018, we had the great joy of re-electing our Mother Victoria Murray for a second six-year term as our Titular Prioress. Please pray for M. Vicki as she continues in office as the loving shepherd of our community. *In the photo: standing, left to right: Srs. Esther and Jacqui, Fr. Brendan, M. Vicki, Sr. Cathy, M. Kathy, Srs. Nettie and Rita; seated: Sisters Pam, Margarita, Clare, Kate and Miriam.*



Vocations and Volunteers

We held Monastic Experience weekends in both March and September this past year. These weekends introduce young women to our contemplative vocation, giving them a glimpse into our daily life and the charism of our Order. *In the photo below our Sr. Rita (on the far right) poses with Emma, Bernadette, Brianna F., Clarissa, Angela and Caroline.* We look forward to hosting more of these vocational weekends in 2019. We also had two Volunteer Helpers this year. Janell and Brianna D. were a great help and a joy to have in our midst. It is wonderful to see the grace of God at work in the lives of all of these faith-filled women!



Our Christmas wish this year is for donations to help us make our kitchen safer and more accessible for our Sisters. Anyone who feels moved to contribute may send a donation to: Christmas Wish Fund, Santa Rita Abbey, 14200 E Fish Canyon Rd, Sonoita AZ 85637-6545. Thank you!

Merry Christmas! God bless you, one and all!

Your Sisters at Santa Rita Abbey

Santa Rita Abbey
Cistercian Altar Breads
14200 E Fish Canyon Rd
Sonoita AZ 85637-6545

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