

# *From this Holy Mountain*

A Publication of the Dominican Nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery - Linden, Virginia - Winter 2019 Issue

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*"While gentle silence enveloped all things,  
and night in its swift course was now half gone,  
Your all-powerful Word leaped from heaven,  
from the royal throne,  
into the midst of the land that was doomed."*

*Wisdom 18: 14-15*





You and your intentions will be remembered in a novena of Masses celebrated in our monastery chapel during the Christmas season. Thank you for your faithful support.

*Nativity, Gentile da Fabriano*





*D*ear Friends,

The darkest time in the history of the world has already passed, for the *Light from on high has dawned upon us*. Prior to the advent of Christ, the gates of heaven were closed. Eternal beatitude was unattainable, but Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, definitively and irrevocably conquered the darkness of sin and death and opened the gates of paradise. Christ has won the victory! The world will never be the same again. There is every reason for hope.

The power of light is clear: a tiny flame can illumine the darkest night. Countless flames are breaking forth as God is raising up men and women who reflect His goodness and truth, becoming beacons of hope in a world lost in the darkness of sin and unbelief.

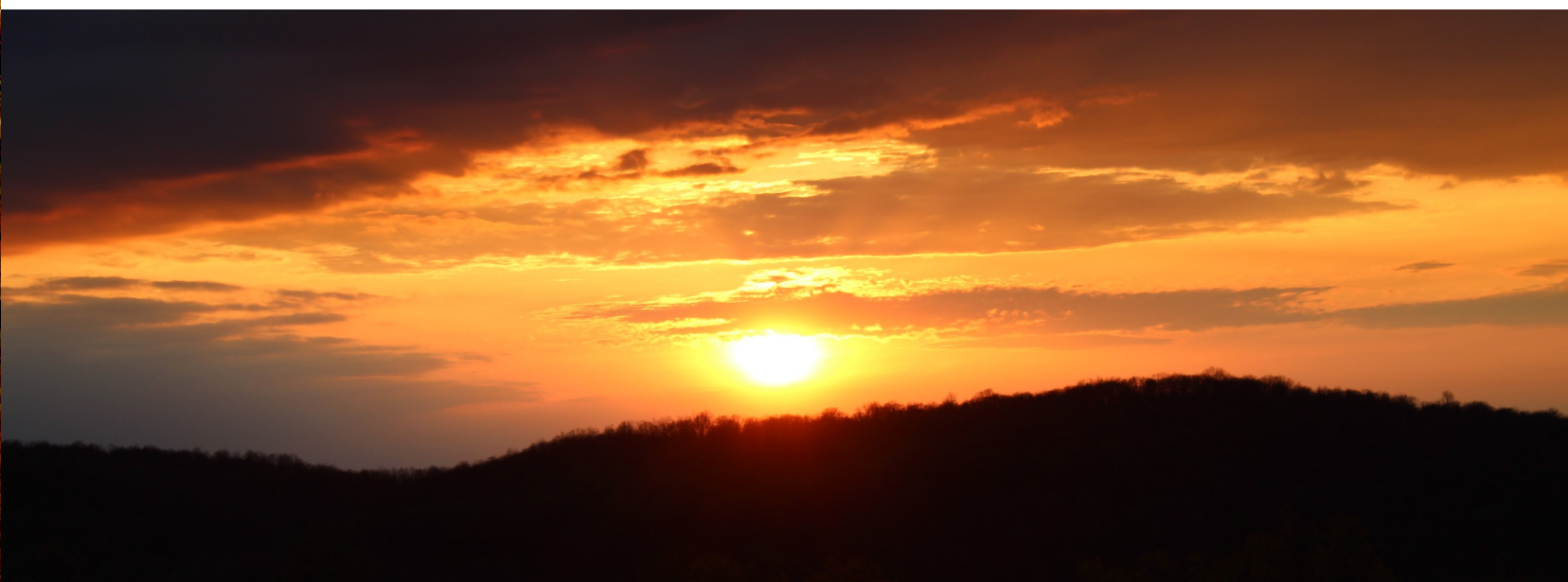
Many people, young and old, are recognizing in their yearning for love a yearning for God. A significant number have discovered that the monastery offers a tangible reminder of this longing and fulfillment.

Our 'Friends' page highlights the perspective of one 'millennial' who has discovered this truth and sees this monastery as one of the flames of light and hope in the world. This current issue also speaks of light and longing as the nuns offer insight into the traditional practice of singing the *O Antiphons* at Vespers during the seven days prior to Christmas. These ancient chants testify poignantly to this perennial yearning for Christ.

We pray that *the Light from on high* may descend upon you and your loved ones in a powerful way this Christmas, bringing light, peace and hope to each of you.

With our gratitude and constant prayer,

*Sr. Mary Fidelis, OP*  
Prioress





## Hope for Our Future

*D*espite the increasing religious indifference among young people, God has given the nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery substantial reasons to hope for their future. Since their 2008 arrival in the Diocese of Arlington, four new nuns have been joyfully received as permanent members of the community, each receiving a gold ring signifying their definitive commitment to Christ the Bridegroom. The nuns will celebrate yet another Solemn Profession on January 25, 2020: Sr. Mary Grace of Jesus, a former member of All Saints Parish in Manassas. These five nuns are the first fruits of God's vineyard in Linden.

"The community continues to receive inquiries from young women—and at an unprecedented rate," says novice mistress Sr. Mary Magdalene. These women, she adds, all share one thing in common: "they are inspired with the desire for God alone." The community currently has one woman in the process of applying and others in the early stages of exploration. When asked what could be drawing these young women, Sister responded, "Only God could be at the heart of this!"

### Millennial and Monastic

Nuns from Dominican monasteries were interviewed for a series of articles posted on Aleteia.com which offered millennial cloistered nuns the opportunity to address their peers on a wide variety of topics. Find the award-winning articles by Elizabeth Scalia online:

- "Millennial and Monastic: It doesn't get more counter-cultural than that"
- "Young nuns have some advice for their millennial peers"



# Friends Spotlight: The Joy of Self-Giving Love

By Danny Riordan, *St. Catherine de Ricci Guild* member

*I*n a world of selfies, likes, isolation, and counterfeits of connectedness, the nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery bear profound witness to the fact that we truly live in the joy for which we were made in precisely the same measure that we give our lives away and make them an offering to God.

At the recent St. Catherine de Ricci Guild Evening at the Monastery in Linden, this struck me in an intense way when the nuns explained how they are given their new religious names. The nuns explained that they do not choose their new names upon receiving the habit, rather their new names are chosen through the prayerful consideration of their

superiors. To contemporary ears, this concept may seem ridiculous or even cruel—an offense against an individual's assertion of complete self-determination—but seeing the peaceful happiness of our nuns at St. Dominic's Monastery, one can tell this for the lie that it really is. They seem to be nearly weightless, buoyed up by their utterly contagious joy.

In a world of individualism, the nuns show us that the true meaning and measure of our identity is found in receiving all as a gift from God and making our entire lives an oblation back to Him.

"Man cannot fully

FIND HIMSELF

except through a sincere

*gift of self."*

- Pope St. John Paul II





# December 17-23: The O Antiphons

*The Brides say, "Come!"*



*"... their role in the heart of the Church [is] to pray both for and as the Church, to give voice to the Bride of Christ, as the brides of Christ."*

*In the bleak midwinter; when frosty wind makes moan and darkness has covered the whole earth, St. Dominic's Monastery stands as a beacon of hope, set on a hill, as the nuns silently don their cappas and prepare for Vespers. The Church has deputed them to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. This truly is their office, their role in the heart of the Church, to pray both for and as the Church, to give voice to the Bride of Christ, as the brides of Christ.*

The darkness of their cappas, the darkness of the night sky, and the darkness of the world around them is a solemn darkness, an expectant darkness, a darkness waiting, yearning for the light. Their chanting echoes the ancient aching in the hearts of all men, when on these last days before Christmas, the darkest days of the year, they sing the O Antiphons: *O Sapientiae, O Adonai...Veni! O Radix Jesse, O Clavis David...Veni! O Oriens, O Rex Gentium, O Emmanuel...Veni!*

Nothing spectacular or magnificent – these nuns are not trained musicians, but still, from out of the darkness, through their ardent voices, day after day, the voice of the Church “has gone out to the limits of the earth, as the Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’” and behold, “the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”



# Contemplata Aliis Tradere

By Fr. Aquinas Guilbeau, O.P.  
Prior of the Dominican House of Studies



In order to grasp deeply the mystery of Christmas, we must wrestle with the utter stillness and silence of the first Christmas night. Even now, that stillness and silence haunts the soul: the God-Man was born, he drew his initial breath, he uttered his first cry—a kind of first word of the Incarnate Word—to the notice of nearly no one. God entered his creation—he assumed the flesh of man—and neither creation nor man took account of him. That night in Bethlehem, there were no flashes of light, no crashes of thunder, no jubilant crowds—there was nothing to register the visitation of the Most High, except that a few, curious poor came to the manger to pay the Lord homage.

The first Christmas night, God appeared on earth as silently and unassumingly—as gently and meekly—as a bud sprouting from its stem. “Lo, how a rose ere blooming...” the beloved carol sings tenderly. The bud was conspicuous, to be sure, like a rose blooming unexpectedly in the cold of winter. But as the carol further explains, the rose appeared “when half-spent was the night.” The world

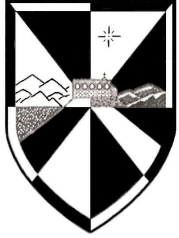
was asleep when God was born. Few noticed his appearance, but God was at work nonetheless.

Such is the mystery of Christian grace. It arrives to souls quietly, often stealthily. We seldom know of its presence until its fruits begin to blossom and ripen.

Such, too, is the mystery of the monastery. Its life is born from the grace of Bethlehem. The nun lives in the silence and stillness of the first Christmas night. Like grace, her appearance remains hidden to the world, but she works nonetheless, attending to the gentle, meek Savior with her prayer and sacrifice. The nun graces the earth as God has visited it—silently and unassumingly. The nun graces the earth *because* God has visited it.

The night of earth’s sin is half-spent. It is in this night that God continues to appear to us, and it is in this night that the nun continues to attend to him. For the nun, this night is a yearlong Christmas.





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Friday & Sunday: 11:00 a.m.  
Remaining weekdays:  
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*Please consider joining our  
**St. Catherine  
de Ricci Guild**  
to help support the nuns  
on a monthly basis.*



**Benefits of membership:**

- A perpetual membership in the Monastery's Eucharistic Adoration Association, which includes a weekly Mass for your intentions and a daily remembrance in the prayers and good works of the nuns
- An invitation to join the nuns for Vespers on a Sunday evening in the fall, an opportunity to meet and greet the nuns, followed by a wine and cheese reception at a nearby winery.

Visit our website for more details on how to register to make a monthly donation through Faith Direct: [www.lindenopnuns.org](http://www.lindenopnuns.org).