

HERMIT IN THE HIGH DESERT OF IDAHO

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

Marymount Hermitage is home to the Hermit Sisters of Mary. It is located in Mesa, Idaho which is along Highway 95, between Weiser and New Meadows. Sister Rebecca Mary and I founded Marymount Hermitage over 32 years ago. We were invited to the Diocese of Boise in 1981 by Bishop Sylvester Treinen whom we revere as our founding bishop. We felt called by God to live in solitude and silence for the sake of unceasing prayer for the salvation of souls, the good of the Church and the world. Ours is a life of sacrifice and austerity; it is also a privilege and a joy for the love of God. I believe that our peace and presence to people, whom we do meet and talk with, is a reminder that there is a God and He can make a person fulfilled and happy. Wearing our religious habit adds to this public witness.

Marymount Hermitage is situated on 100 acres of ranch land and the campus has 10 buildings. Originally planned for a community of Hermit Sisters, over the years we have opened the five hermitages for use by retreatants. Even though, because of old age and ill health, Sister Rebecca Mary has returned to the community from which we came in Beaverton, Oregon, there is still a praying community here on the mesa. Neighbors and retreatants join me for Lauds, Vespers and holy hours of Adoration. Another important member of our praying community is Mary Chamberlin, who moved to Marymount two years ago, and is our first resident Lay Associate. She is a great support to me in the daily task of maintaining the buildings and grounds.

Bishop Treinen had many wise sayings, one of which was, "If you work hard, people will be willing to help you. I have found this to be true. Fees from retreatants basically maintain the buildings. I make items to sell and have made a business doing this in the Treasure Valley parishes. I also make myself available to teach or give retreats at Nazareth Retreat Center in Boise and in parishes throughout the Pacific Northwest. This income provides me and Marymount with what I need for operating expenses. Besides this, generous individuals or families donate monthly. Since Marymount Hermitage is a non-profit corporation, all donations are tax deductible. I have Mass offered once a month for our benefactors. The Knights of Columbus from Risen Christ, Sacred Heart and St. Mary's parishes in Boise, Holy Apostles in Meridian, and St. Agnes in Weiser have been very generous over the years sending work crews once or twice a year to do maintenance chores. Mike Townsend fondly recalls the photo I took of him hanging off the bell tower in an attempt to power wash it!

After prayerful deliberation, consultation with Bishop Christensen and our Board of Directors, we have decided that circumstances require us to build a new library and house of hospitality. The new building will be called Mercy House to commemorate the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. It will be dedicated to Pope St. John Paul II, St. Teresa of Calcutta, and St. Faustina, our great new saints of mercy. **Save the date: October 25, 2017.** Bishop Peter Christensen will offer Mass at Marymount Hermitage at 11 AM to celebrate the faithfulness of God to me on the occasion of my 50th Jubilee and, God willing, will bless the new building. John Pettinger has offered to have an Honor Guard for the Mass, as he did for our 25th Anniversary Mass in 2009. I am currently doing fund raising for construction to begin in the spring of 2017. The campaign goal is \$213,000. We have over \$40,000 to date. Risen Christ Council of KC's contributed \$500. Please visit the website for more information about Marymount Hermitage and the Library. You can read my letter and the letter Bishop Peter wrote in support of this project. Monthly newsletters are posted there. You can take a virtual tour of Mercy House and read updates...questions which people have asked and, when construction begins, photos of the progress at www.marymount-hermitage.org

I conclude this brief overview of my vocation as a hermit, Marymount Hermitage, and our proposed new library and house of hospitality with a request for prayers. Mercy House will be built by prayer and charity as is evidenced by the past work and progress of Marymount. It is God's work and whatever the Knights of Columbus, my friends, are inspired to do to help me will be greatly appreciated and rewarded by God Himself. God bless you abundantly!



Photo by Pastor Geoff Cole of Council, Idaho



Bishop Peter Christensen, Bishop of Boise, with Sister Mary Beverly, HSM, at Marymount Hermitage on Dec. 2, 2015.