

*“Dear Brothers and Sisters, Let us be lights of hope!”
by Pope Francis*

May this Advent season be one of hope for you and your loved ones. Throughout this past year of good & bad media, the sisters of the Monastery of Our Lady of the Desert pray and thank God for all of you and continue with the courage and strength of His grace. –

The Byzantine Nativity written by Sister Elizabeth depicts the Birth of Our Lord. Different from the Nativity seen in the Western tradition, this icon emphasizes the figure of Our Lady who gave birth to God, thus she bears the name, “*Theotokos*,” God Bearer. Top left expresses the heavenly joy of the Angels. The opposite side, the Angel announces the Good News to the shepherd. Below the angels, on the left, are the three kings on their way to look for the King of Kings. Lower left corner is St. Joseph who was confused by the devil, who tried to tell him that it was impossible for a virgin to give birth. To the right, the servants are giving the Infant Jesus a bath, showing His early life.



Exultation of the Holy Cross

Father Thomas Benedict, our Chaplain, blessed this huge cross, on September 14, a gift of Ernest Valencia, which was mounted on top of our property mesa. The blessing took place after Mass with veneration of the Cross. This symbol of hope reminds us that from the manger to the Cross, Our Lord Jesus Christ is our salvation, our life and our Resurrection.



Blessing

On May 9, 2014, we were honored by the presence of Bishop James E. Wall, from the Gallup Diocese, for the blessing our buildings of Subiaco (residence of the sisters), St. Walburga (for those in formation), St. Joseph Center, and the St. Benedict Guesthouse. The celebration included the Knights of Columbus and other guests.



I will wait for the Lord who saves me; I will hope in him, for he is coming, Alleluia.

Community News

Visits

On March 3, 2014, Sister Hilda left at 5:20 am, to begin her journey to Guatemala for a family visit. Also, she and her mother, Cristobalina Tuyuc, visited Mexico City, Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the Benedictine monks and nuns at Ahuatepec, Morelos. - On April 24th, Sister Guadalupe, went to Michoacán, Mexico for her family visit, which included family reunions with Masses and fiestas. She was very grateful to see that her family members were doing well. Both sisters came home refreshed and renewed!

On September 30th, we welcomed home our Novice, Sister Agnes Le from a one-year visit to our Motherhouse in Jamberoo, Australia. As most of you know, she left on September 27, 2013. We are delighted to have her back at the monastery and are grateful to all the sisters of Jamberoo Abbey, especially for Sister Antonia Curtis, Novice Mistress, who taught her classes on the vows of Obedience, Conversatio, and Stability. She also received lessons in English, chanting, keyboard, gardening, candle making and painting.



Sr. Agnes Le with Sr. Antonia studying the Rule of St. Benedict outside at the Abbey.



Journey of Hope

We are thankful for the many graces we have received from Our Lord this past year and grateful to each of the parishes, who contributed to our fund raising efforts, especially St. Rose of Lima, Blanco, NM. Twice this past year, we were invited to be part of “Justice Matters,” at Immaculate Conception Parish in Albuquerque, NM. Not only do they offer fair trade and local items to ensure artisans get a living wage, and the “Just Market” also makes for a fun community event. You can contact Joy E.C. Dinero, Director of Social Ministries, at Immaculate Conception Parish in Albuquerque, at 505-247-4271 ext. 3034, for more information.

Dr. James L. Steskal, from St. Xavier University and his volunteer students were here in June to do mission work for the Gallup Diocese. They were able to stay with us for a short period of time, helping us with various projects.

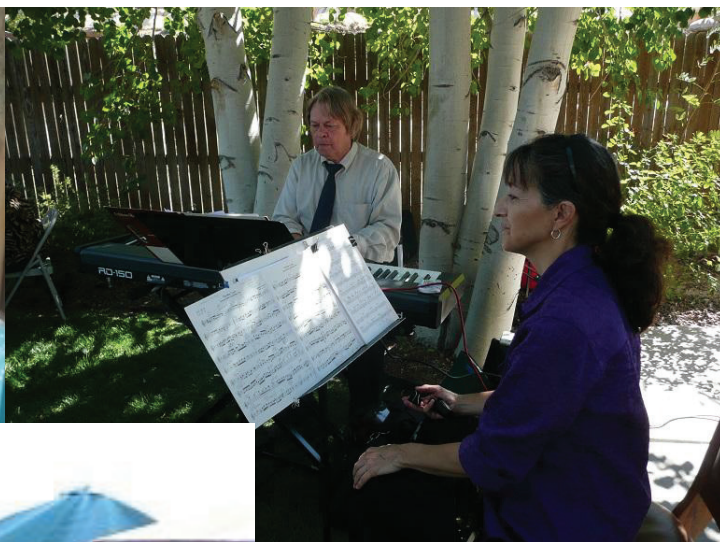
In March, Sister Mary and Sister Kateri drove to Sun City, Arizona. Aurora Ortiz and her family kindly hosted them. We thank Rev. John Ebbesmier, from the Church of St. Joachim and St. Anne, in Youngtown, Arizona, for allowing us to sell our crafts and religious items. We raised close to \$2k.

One of the big highlights this year was our 5th annual Ice Cream Social, in June, which brought in \$14k. Thank you to all the volunteers and especially the Knights of Columbus for their help! - The Get-together with Dr. Francisco & Marie Colon was a delightful gathering for everyone with a special meal and jazz music, along with a selection of Southwestern and contemporary inlay jewelry donated by Mr. Juan T. Nguyen and Icon prints by Sister Elizabeth. Over \$4k, was raised.

Is God Calling You?

Sister Kateri was invited and participated in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Religious Vocations, “Focus 11,” April 29, 2014, to promote religious vocations, which included a day filled with many activities for 6th graders at the Shrine of the Little Flower, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus Parish.

Please pray for Miss Dailesi Phiri, from Zambia, who is interested in our monastic way of life. Miss Dailesi is 44 years old and has been communicating with us for a long time.

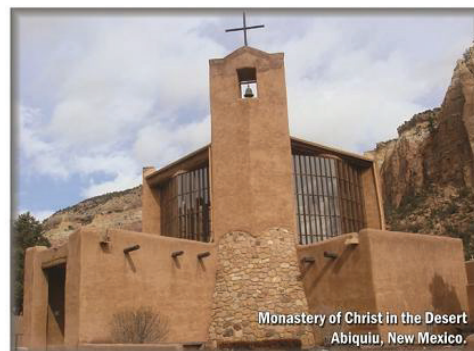


Get-Together, Sept 20th with Dr. Francisco, & Mrs. Marie Colon with Camille Galanes, upper left; Pat Rhoads & Lori Lovato entertained us with jazz music. Fr. Frank Chacon, St. Mary's Parish Pastor speaks to the guests and blesses the meal, shown with S. Hilda, M. Benedicta & S. Elizabeth.



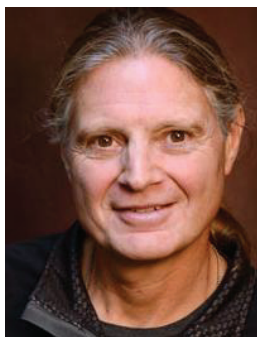
Retreat Master, Fr. Prior J. Gabriel Cusimano

Monastery of Christ in the Desert celebrating 50 years! On June 22nd we welcomed visiting superiors from various communities. Enjoyed a delicious Italian meal provided by BERNADINO'S RESTAURANT, FARMINGTON, NM



Monastery of Christ in the Desert Abiquiu, New Mexico.





Thanks to
Dr. Steyskal , St.
Xavier Univ, for
his volunteer
work



Ice Cream
Anyone? Fun at our 5th
Ice Cream Social



Erlinda M. Archuleta
isits our booth at the
St. Rose of Lima Fiesta.

Arora Ortiz & Company,
our chefs!



Msgr. Leo Gomez with Confirmation class,
From St. Joseph, Aztec, and Holy Trinity,
Flora Vista.



In September Mother Julianne gave a
workshop on Grief

St. Joseph Center & St. Benedict Guesthouse

Guests continue to make retreats and we had two conferences and one workshop:

- ❖ “Grief,” presented by Mother Julianne, in September
- ❖ Confirmation Youth group directed by Msgr. Leo Gomez in March
- ❖ Katie Richie, Iconographer gave a workshop for a weekend in March. Mother Benedicta participated. We look forward for another class in the spring 2015. For more information on Kati’s work:
<http://peopleofpraise.org/thevine/issues/2013-summer-vine-and-branches.pdf>

Retreat

On Sept 21-27, Father Prior Joseph Gabriel, OSB, directed our retreat, a time of reflection and much needed rest for the sisters. Many of you have asked, “What do you do on retreat?” or “I thought you were always on retreat.” It is a time of letting go, and focusing on God. Our retreat includes daily Mass, Divine Office of Lauds/Middle Hour of Sext/Vespers, and plenty of time for *Lectio Divina*. Times are scheduled to speak privately with the retreat director or go to Confession. A sister can work in the morning or in the afternoon if she wishes to do so without disturbing the silence of others. Dish-washing is done in silence. The best part of the retreat is having two conferences a day, which refresh our faith and our monastic way of life.

Fr. Joseph Gabriel’s retreat included topics such as “Forgiveness, praying, hope, vocation, listening,” with a touch of humor and serious reflections. Each conference began with a quote from Scripture and/or the Rule of our Holy Father St. Benedict. Fr. Prior Joseph Gabriel resides at Mt. Savior, in Pine City, NY. Please visit the website at www.msaviour.org/index.php



Visit to Jamberoo

Mother Benedicta is visiting Jamberoo Abbey, Australia from November to December 2014.

Advent Acedia: Impatient Waiting by Fr. Thomas Benedict Baxter, OSB

“It’s not going the way I had hoped. It was supposed to be a quick trip to town, pick up the SUV at the repair shop and head back. I’ve got so many things to do; I just don’t have time for any other scenario.” This is what I was telling myself after I found that the quick trip to Farmington would be hours long. The ride I needed wouldn’t happen until midday and then I would likely have to wait four hours or so for the vehicle to be ready. Who has time for this?

But wait now, the waiting is at the heart of it. Like so many inside or outside the monastery I allow myself to get so busy that I no longer want to be engaged in all that goes on around me. I no longer allow myself to be present to the present which is after all the only place we can really live.

As a monk, I should recognize this spiritual stumbling block. It has to do with what a monastic is all about: waiting with patience the work of God. That is why we rise early and keep vigil. That is why St. Benedict asks us to hear with the ear of our hearts. But does this mean doing nothing? I think not. Ours is an active waiting whether it be in the monastic cell or in the world. It is a waiting that is both individual and communitarian. It allows us to be attentive to the needs of the community in which we live and the signs of the times in the world around us. We wait for the revelation of the God who saves and invites us to share in Divine Life.

This means that all the while we wait for the God of love; we ourselves are active in love. While we wait for the God who forgives, we forgive. While we wait for the God of mercy, we show mercy. While we wait for the God of justice, we act justly. While we wait for the God who reconciles all things to himself, we seek reconciliation. This is the Advent waiting of the Church and for us who are members of that body. - So, what am I to do about these four hours at auto repair shop as I wait for the repair of my vehicle? Be present, pray and long for the merciful in-breaking of God’s love.

Fr. Thomas-Benedict is our Chaplain and a monk of the Monastery of Christ in the Desert.

Sign up for the upcoming Advent Days of Reflections, entitled: “Mercy: The Compassion of God,” on Saturdays, from 9 am to 3 pm, at the St. Joseph Center: December 6, December 13
Just call 505-419-2938.

Greetings from the Prioress

“May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our HOPE in you.”

Psalm 32

Dear Friends,

Another Advent Season draws near, a time of renewed hope in God's love for us. As we wait for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in glory he is present to us daily if only we listen for him with the ear of our hearts. Sometimes it is hard to hear the still voice of the Spirit gently whispering in our hearts with the bad news that bombards us on TV and the Internet – Ebola, terrorism, negative political advertising, war, the list goes on. But not to fear, take this Advent Season in silence and solitude to watch and listen for the voice of God. This September we had our annual community retreat with Fr Joseph Gabriel, who shared an email message with us from his friend Fr Rick Frechette, CP, D.O. Fr. Rick is a missionary in Haiti where he built a hospital for the poor. I would like to share with you a part of Fr Rick's words of hope from Haiti:

Dear Friends, As the long day was winding down, a few of us went to Cite Soleil to have a look at the progress of the house we are building to solve some related problems. We stopped by our St Mary's hospital for a visit and right away a motorcycle raced up to us with three men on it, the man in the middle flopping to the side, near death. I knew right away it was cholera and I needed a few IV needles, and a half dozen liters of IV fluid to save his life.

With difficulty I was able to get a catheter into each arm, while Amaral, Fr. Enzo, Wisley and Murat took turns squeezing the IV bags in order to make the fastest entry of the fluid into this man, who was minutes away from shock and death. While I worked, I made small talk with his brother who had held him up on the motorcycle and small talk with the half conscious man who had cholera, and small talk with myself, in order to keep everyone, including myself clam and hopeful. I knew if he died, many dreams would die with him, for himself, his children and his family.

I kept my fingers on his pulse as the young men squeezed the bags. I warmed his shivering body with sheets and prayed quietly. First a faint pulse, then an intermediate pulse, then a strong pulse told my fingers he would be OK. I am always amazed at how little it takes to help, how high the impact of that help can be and how often dreams that are about to shatter come to full sail again with the beautiful gust of the wind of hope.

Fr Rick's message, from one of the poorest countries in the world, was truly a wind of hope. We don't have to fear, each small act of kindness squeezes life back into our poor world that yearns to feel the wind of hope! You can read more information on Facebook.

May the grace of hope fill your hearts at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ who comes to us this Holy Season of Advent. Please know we hold you and your loved ones in our daily prayers.

Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!

M. Benedicta Serna, OSB

Mother Benedicta Serna, OSB

Prioress

<p>1ST PRIZE - NECKLACE W/PEARLS VALUE \$1,950 2ND PRIZE - NECKLACE W/SILVER -VALUE \$100 3RD PRIZE - HAND PAINTED CANDLE 3RD PRIZE - 2 NIGHTS AT MONASTERY FOR TWO RAFFLE TO BE HELD <u>FEBRUARY 2, 2015</u> \$5 PER TICKET OR 5 TICKETS FOR \$25</p> <p><u>NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN</u> MONASTERY OF OUR LADY OF THE DESERT PO Box 556, BLANCO, NM 87412-0556</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ENTER TO WIN! SUBMIT THIS PORTION OF THE TICKET</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Thank You!</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p>
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I will wait for the Lord who saves me; I will hope in him, for he is coming, Alleluia.



Words of St. John XXIII, "Peace is but an empty word, if it does not rest upon that order...that is founded on truth, built up on justice, nurtured and animated by charity, and brought into effect under the auspices of freedom...human resources alone, even though inspired by the most praiseworthy good will, cannot HOPE to achieve it. God Himself must come to man's aid with His heavenly assistance." - Pacem in Terris

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