

# Under His Mercy



Newsletter of the Franciscan Sisters, T.O.R.

Summer 2011

## Open Hands, Open Hearts, Open House



The day started with Mass, and I ended up sitting towards the back of the chapel. I sat there looking around at the men, women, and children scattered



Fr. Dennis celebrates holy Mass to open our day

throughout the pews. When I moved from Kansas to Ohio in 2007, I knew only the sisters, but now as I scanned the room, I had a story or relationship with almost every person there. I was filled with gratitude for each and every person, for their lives, their love for the Lord, and their open hearts that welcomed me so warmly into their lives and families! And there we were, all gathered as one family around the table of our Lord.

This was so significant for me because when I was a child I always looked forward to Thanksgiving and Christmas, weddings, and really any other event that involved a family gathering. My mom is from a big family, one of nine children, so I have many memories of my grandmother's house being filled with aunts,



uncles, cousins and second cousins. As I grew, my desire for a large family grew as well. In college I was surrounded by several beautiful families who really witnessed to me the value of life, and it seemed they were always adding members to their family. So, by the time I graduated I imagined myself getting married and having 12 children! Then about a year and a half later God asked me to think about religious life. As I began to consider religious life more and more seriously, I realized that one of the hardest sacrifices for me would be not having that big Catholic family of my dreams. But as I reflect back on the past 4 years, I know that God has indeed fulfilled the scripture passage "Find your delight in the LORD who will give you your heart's desire" (Ps. 37:4). Over and over and over again He has shown me that my family is larger and more diverse than I could ever have expected; most recently I experienced this at our Open House.



Children playing with a fawn during Open House

Then after Mass, like any family gathering, there was a meal: hotdogs, meatballs, and desserts galore! I had always pictured my family of 12 children sitting around a long table for meals and talking about our day and other events in our life. When I went downstairs to the dining room, I realized the Lord had surpassed my desires once again, because there wasn't just one long

table but 8 to 10 of them! Conversation and laughter filled the air as children with Kool-Aid mustaches ran through the maze of tables and chairs.

As many of our friends, co-workers, past and present neighbors, family and supporters had not seen the inside of the new Father of Mercy Chapel and Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery, tours were given throughout the day. Sr. Catherine Lynn, who was privileged to tour a number of guests around our grounds and buildings commented, *"It was encouraging to experience their interest in and enthusiasm for our way of life."* [The Lord had fulfilled one of her heart's desires too!] *"I have always known that I missed my calling to be a professional tour guide, so I'm glad I can fulfill that dream, at least annually at our Open House!"* There were also "home videos" playing that showed pictures of the Chapel Dedication and First Profession of Vows from August 2010 along with a display and photo album depicting our way of life.

The rest of the afternoon included a variety of activities for the young and young at heart. Outside in the orchard any kind of ball or Frisbee you could have imagined was being thrown or kicked as well as bubbles being blown in the wind. Others displayed their artistic talents in sidewalk chalk or by coloring pictures of saints indoors. Sisters helped make St. Theresa beads – a strand of beads that helps to keep track of sacrifices or acts of love for the Lord. There was always a line of children waiting to have faces, hands, and arms painted with anything from the Sacred Heart to butterflies and



Emily Davis, postulant

dinosaurs, and Story Time with Sr. Veronica was also a big hit!

As the day came to a close, we all gathered back into Father of Mercy Chapel to honor Mary in our traditional May Crowning and to unveil a painting of the Assumption, by Lisa Andrews, that is now displayed in the back of the chapel. I got to spend my afternoon playing with all of the children (definitely more than 12) and at the *May Crowning* one of them was sitting on my lap. It was such a joy, as I was able to sing with her and explain to her what was happening in the ceremony. Again a heart's desire that was given to me! Our Lady must have been so pleased as she was crowned by her children with songs, prayers, and of course, flowers.

Many memories were made that day that will last a lifetime. Scot and Cherine Blackburn and their family participated in all of the events of the day and commented that *"The highlight for us was having the opportunity for our 3 daughters (ages 5, 4, and 1 1/2) to spend time with religious sisters who have such true joy, and that our daughters at a young age can become familiar with religious life. Thank you, thank you, thank you, sisters."* No, Scot and Cherine and all our friends, neighbors, and supporters, thank you! Thank you for opening your hearts and inviting us into your family and for coming to gather with us as one family.



Sr. Sophia Grace with the Blackburn Family

It must have brought God the Father so much delight to see so many of His children gathering to celebrate His love for us in the gift of His son and our Blessed Mother.

~Sr. Sophia Grace Huschka, TOR



**The painting of the Assumption** was blessed at our Open House, and added to our "Father of Mercy Chapel" to display the culmination of the Blessed Mother's journey of faith, from the birth to the Cross, to the resurrection of Christ and then to her own glorious assumption into Heaven! Mary gives each of us hope for our own journey, that our journey does not end at the foot of the Cross, but in the redemption won for us by Christ!

To honor Mary's glorious Assumption is very important to us since our community was founded on this beautiful day, Aug. 15, the last day of the Marian Year 1988. By establishing our community on the Solemnity of the Assumption, God, our Merciful Father, continually beckons us toward our final home and draws us ever deeper into the mystery of being His children and the daughters of Mary. **(A full article about the painting and artist will be featured in our next mailing.)**

# "To make known God's merciful love"



Emily Davis, Sr. Magdalena, Sr. Sophia Grace,  
Sr. Della Marie, and Pittsburgh priests & seminarians

May marked the one year anniversary of the sisters running in the Pittsburgh Marathon to help support our now postulant, Emily, as she ran to pay off her loans in order to enter our community with no debt. The sisters who ran with her enjoyed it so much that they entered yet another "Run for Nuns" marathon in Pittsburgh this year! But that wasn't all! The same weekend, Anna Ciarrone, who will be joining our community this August, entered herself in the Cleveland 10K with the same intention as Emily - to pay off her loans. Of course the sisters weren't going to miss out on this opportunity either! So while one group of sisters went to Pittsburgh, another group went to Cleveland to support Anna and her group called, "Support Good Habits". It was a great (but tiring) weekend on both accounts!



Sr. Sarah Rose, Sr. Katherine (Rev. Mother),  
Sr. Rita Clare, Sr. Miriam, Sr. Catherine Lynn,  
Sr. Maria Teresa, Sr. Maria Clare, Anna & her  
family & friends at Cleveland Marathon

For Vocation inquiries  
please contact  
Sr. Della Marie at  
(740) 544-6204, or  
vocations@torsisters.org

Vocation Discernment  
Retreats  
September 9-11, 2011  
November 18-20, 2011

Come and See Visits  
Sept. 21-28, 2011  
Oct. 26-Nov. 2, 2011

## Contact info

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## Begging Box

We need:

- \*volunteers for grounds and maintenance
- \*volunteers to answer phones and office assistance
- \*volunteers to help make religious articles
- \*New desktop computers
- \*Self-propelled lawn mower
- \*Gas Gift Cards for Marathon or BP

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## **SAVE THE DATES:**

### *Days of Recollection*

***Saturday October 22***

*Bl. John Paul II Feast Day  
and the Blessing of the  
Divine Mercy Shrine*

*&*

***Saturday December 3***

