



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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THE GIFTS OF SNOW

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

What are the gifts of snow? On the natural level, certainly the gifts are beauty, water for summer irrigation, deep silence and the stillness that is nature's peace. It is really fun to see tracks in the snow and to observe the drama of wild life, such as a pile of feathers on the Mercy House porch and pondering the question of how that occurred? by whom & to whom?

On the spiritual level, snow brings deeper solitude to hermits who are snowed in. Life is pared down to the basic minimum and one can stay focused on the day-to-day disciplines of prayer and work, serious study, reading and writing. Interiorly, there is a greater freedom from distractions which is a luxury.



If you like to be active, work hard, and be outside, like Sandra Meza does, there are long walks in snow shoes and snow removal chores to keep her vigorous and healthy.

With regard to this type of winter maintenance, I lost my neighbor and helper at Mesa, who recently moved, so Sandra's willingness to do hand shoveling is a God-sent gift.



Hospitality is at a minimum (non-existent actually) since visitors or retreatants cannot come in or out reliably. This morning, I measured 18 inches on level

ground. Our snowplow man and machine have already plowed the roadway three times this month and he is coming again tomorrow, January 14. These last few days, we have had 35-50 mph winds, so drifts in the plowed road are a regular occurrence. God bless the local friend, who for Christmas, sent a substantial donation for snow removal!

I was tempted to entitle this article "Winter in a Week". We have had an extremely mild winter until about New Year's Day with regard to temperatures and small amounts of snow. About a week ago, the all-weather radio, which I listen to daily, was predicting snow storms with accumulations of 1-3 feet and I thought: "Yikes!" Now snow removal is ramped up another notch. Too much snow on the roofs can be catastrophic as the winter weather two years ago taught us in this area. I was worried about who I could ask to do this heavy work, but Sandra offered that she and her father could do it together. I was so relieved. Rafael Meza was already here last week to help Sandra clean the chimney of her hermitage. The above photo shows Rafael and Sandra working on the chapel roof.



One aspect about several feet of snow is the potential for power outages. Without electricity, here at Marymount like in so many rural areas, we are also without water. Sandra and I have our hermitages prepared for that very real possibility. So far we have not been without power, thanks be to God!

The US mail is not delivered to Marymount Hermitage as it would seem given our address on

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COMMUNITY NEWS



Hermitage Lane. I drive daily to the old town site of Mesa, about a mile away, to pick up the incoming mail from the rural post boxes. This is one of the reasons having Hermitage Lane plowed regularly is important for us.

Meditating on the aspects of winter years ago, I summarized my thoughts in this quote, with which I will close:

*Winter is the silence of nature.
The Eucharist is the silence of God.*

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

Christmas Celebration: Sandra Meza and I enjoyed our Christmas together this year. We thank the many people who sent beautiful cards, wrote kind words of encouragement, and made thoughtful and generous donations to help with our expenses. We have taken down the Christmas tree in chapel, which was a gift from Rafael Meza, and have packed away the decorations. Chapel is ready now for Ordinary Time, which is a season of grace all its own before Lent.

Craft Work: In past years, Sandra and her younger sister, Lorena, have helped me pick wild flowers in the mountains north of McCall, Idaho. Now for the first time, Sandra worked with me making flower cards for sale. Her cards are creative, artistic and unique. We both enjoyed our “work” which is really more like recreation. What could be more fun than wild flowers in winter?

“Come and See Program”: Sandra is scheduled to conclude her discernment time at Marymount Hermitage on January 31. We both appreciate your prayers and good wishes for her during this very important process. Please continue to spiritually accompany Sandra Meza as she decides what is her vocation in life. Thank you and God bless you!



Cards by Sandra:

A wreath of lavender desert phlox with tiny red-stemmed filaree

A bowl of purple sticky geraniums, smaller purple fireweed with blue brookline



A meadow with rosin weed, black grass and blue brookline

A Note from Sandra Meza:

Three months have gone by quickly. The time seemed short, but God has given me many graces. I'm certainly grateful to God for this time at Marymount Hermitage and for the blessings and graces He gave me each day. I am grateful to Sister Beverly for allowing me to do this “Come & See” program to discern my vocation. Her love of teaching is clearly expressed with the preparation she did for my coming.

On a regular day here as a hermit, I spend about three hours of prayer throughout the day in chapel, two hours of reading and studying, four hours of work, and an hour of class on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. My classes consisted of Discerning my Vocation, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Hermit Vocation, and maintenance and upkeep of the Hermitage buildings and campus.

I am also thankful for your prayers and generosity towards Sr. Beverly and me during my program and for your Christmas cards in which you expressed your blessings and prayers. Please remember to pray for us, and be assured of our prayers for you.

The MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER is published by Marymount Hermitage, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation in the State of Idaho. The Hermit Sisters of Mary are a canonically approved, Catholic community of women hermits, following the Rule of St. Benedict. The newsletter is published each month by the 15th on our website only. The purpose of the newsletter is to share the spirituality and material progress of Marymount Hermitage. Please pray that we may be faithful to our way of life in prayer and penance, solitude and silence for the sake of the Church and the world. Donations are sincerely appreciated and are tax-deductible. Thank you in advance to those who have remembered Marymount Hermitage in their wills. God bless you!