



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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THIRSTING FOR GOD: Michael Nourse

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

*"O God, you are my God, for you I long;
For you my soul is thirsting..." Psalm 63:2*

If you have been to Marymount Hermitage, it is quite likely that you have met Mike Nourse. He was often praying in chapel and enjoyed welcoming visitors and retreatants. You might say he was "the face of hospitality" for Marymount with his joyful spirit and genuine smile. Mike was diagnosed with cancer on June 8 and died on September 2, 2022. He will be greatly missed by all of us at Marymount and in the extended community of Mesa-Council-Cambridge locals and Boise residents.



*Mike Nourse's funeral Mass, concelebrated by 5 priests, was held at St. Agnes Church, Weiser, ID on September 9, 2022.
[Photo by Tom English]*

If you have never been to Marymount Hermitage and do not know much of our history, this will show how much Mike Nourse was a part of our lives for almost 30 years. In 1996, Mike and his wife, Ceara, and their children, Brooke and John, moved from Boise to Council, where they rented a house for a year, while they established their new home at Mesa on their property, which surrounds Marymount Hermitage on three sides. Country living was a new

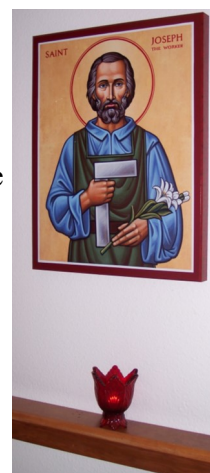


Ceara & Mike Nourse with their goat and turkeys to the left in a photo from the family archives.

adventure for all of them. Mike and Ceara raised a goat, turkeys, chickens, and a horse. As 8th and 7th graders, the children could help with the work. A large woodstove in the living room was the main source of heat in the winter time, and this meant chopping firewood and kindling on a regular basis. They were home-schooling their children and attending daily Mass from the beginning.

When the Nourse children had graduated from high school and were on their own, and the family schedule changed, Mike continued to attend daily Lauds and Mass and the evening holy hours of adoration, which we had two nights a week in the early years. Mike's spirituality developed because he was fond of reading the lives of the saints and books on the Blessed Mother. As he grew more and more attached to the Divine Mercy devotion, Mike decided to make a daily holy hour of adoration from 3-4 PM, and was faithful to that these last 10-15 years. Mike loved St. Joseph and prayed to him regularly to help him do computer installations and repairs successfully and to guide him in evangelizing the unchurched people of our area. Another long-standing devotion for Mike was praying for the holy souls in purgatory, especially at Mass on Fridays. In the last several years, Mike began making another daily personal holy hour before he went to bed. I would see the light on in chapel some time between 11 PM - 1 AM on a regular basis. What was most edifying about this daily practice is that he made it even when he was exhausted from daily work or when winter weather was really inclement.

Mike was normally the only other person at Mass with Sister Rebecca Mary and me and so Mike was almost always the altar server. He loved serving Mass and had a great respect for priests. Continued on page 2



THIRSTING FOR GOD

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Mike once told me that his guardian angel, Pio, loved being close to the altar and his angel was happiest at Mass when Mike was serving and he could be close too!

Mike Nourse was the cross bearer at the 25th Anniversary Mass for Marymount celebrated on September 14, 2009 by Bishop Michael Driscoll, Bishop of Boise.

It was obvious that the Eucharistic faith of the Catholic Church was Mike's with every fiber of his being. He was truly thirsting for God.

"Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul longs for you, my God..." Psalm 42:2

Mike was a great supporter of me personally when I was Teaching classes or directing retreats at Nazareth Retreat Center in Boise for probably 20 years. He was at every class or retreat which I

was giving there. The topics I was teaching were the subjects of our conversations and those times were very meaningful to both of us. I would consider these opportunities for sharing spiritually the real core of my friendship with Mike. What is interesting to me is that Mike occasionally would say, "You never teach on the topic of suffering." I realized he was correct. Mike loved meditating on the Seven Sorrows of Mary. As part of his daily 3-4 PM prayer time in the Marymount chapel, Mike would always make the Stations of the Cross. He reminded me of Pope St.



Father Brad Neely and I gave a weekend Nazareth retreat on "I Thirst": the spirituality of Mother Teresa of Calcutta in May, 2015. In this group photo, Mike Nourse is at the back, to the right of Father Brad Neely.

John Paul II, who made the Stations every Friday and every day during Lent. Mike's attitude to suffering was that it was redemptive and got him ready for heaven. Mike did long to be in heaven. He was truly thirsting for God.

"My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life; When can I enter and see the face of God?" Psalm 42:3

That gives you a window into Mike's life of prayer, which, of course, was a tremendous spiritual support for us at Marymount. Since the Nourse home was the first building on Hermitage Lane, they were also our nearest neighbors. Mike always liked to help and when he was younger, did serious maintenance work on our buildings. I remember in particular Mike repairing the broken water pipe under the old Common House. The access panel under the building was not really large enough for a man the size of Mike. After the difficult entrance, a man could not even crawl on all fours because the height of the space did not allow for that. To repair a pipe, he had to be on his back, working on the underside of the floor above him. All this physical difficulty was in addition to the very real mental strain: the possibility of the presence of spiders and snakes in the dark space and the sense of claustrophobia. I will never forget overhearing Mike murmuring his fervent prayers in a whisper on this occasion beginning with, "Lord, please help little Mikey to do this right..." He was welding a broken pipe. Not an easy task upside down where molten metal could fall on you. I do think "the spirit of a child" would be a good way to characterize Mike's faith, prayer, trust and approach to God his Father.



In my office on March 7, 2014, Mike Nourse was installing a new computer and screen for me.

Besides big jobs, there were a myriad of smaller, quicker jobs, which Mike did on a regular basis all these years. Mike was my computer guru and web master. I paid a fair wage, if the work was long or complicated, but, if it was something that took less than 5-10 minutes, he was willing to accept a brownie or two as payment. If I came home from Boise with cases of sanctuary lights, Mike was right there, able and willing to unload and store the boxes for me. He'd joke: "Today you need your ox." The list in this category is long: unloading and loading tires seasonally, changing light

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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!

THIRSTING FOR GOD (Cont. from pg. 2)



Board of Directors for Marymount Hermitage, Inc.: Mike Nourse, Joanne Wood, Sister M. Beverly, & Sister Charlene Herinckx, SSMO. [Photo by Sr. Julianna Monti, SSMO] 10-22-2016

bulbs which were burnt out in chapel or elsewhere, mowing the yard around chapel in the early summer. You get the picture. God alone remembers everything and will reward Mike accordingly. There was a long period of time when Mike volunteered to serve on the Board of Directors for the non-profit, Marymount Hermitage, Inc. He was the treasurer. This role gave Mike the impetus to welcome others and give them tours when he could.

The last really important and large job, which both Mike and Ceara did for me, was being the librarians. My job was to decide if I wanted to keep the book and to assign a unique number to each, based on the category, and then the dynamic duo did the rest. There was a lot to do in this old-fashioned library system. Mike found a computer program, which would make all the access work easier, and taught it to his wife. Ceara would do all the typing: check-out card, number labels for the book spine, three 3x5 cards for author, title of book and acquisition number. These days, with the aid of a computer, the books were typed into a program and a person can research a certain author or book through that means. Once all the typing was done, Mike would do most of the manual work, installing the pocket in the back inside cover, printing the labels for the book spines, and stamping the Marymount name and address in three parts of the book. Ceara would put the check-out card in the pocket and leave these completed books on a shelf for me. The last task was to install the book in the correct section of the library. This was my chosen job because it was also my last chance to see that all the numbers and words were correct. They always were! Ceara has the skill of attention to

After Mass on April 29, 2018, seen at right: Mike and Ceara Nourse with Father Ed White, our friend from the Archdiocese of Seattle, who comes on retreat almost every year.



details and experience as a para-legal. Once a year, Mike would undertake the tedious job of printing out an inventory, which I needed when I decided on keeping a book or not, so I did not keep duplicates. It was only about a year ago that Mike and Ceara decided that, with major home improvement projects planned, they would no longer have time to volunteer for this important work. It was the end of an historic era of real progress in the library. God bless them!

To bring this memorial article to a close, I will tell the story of the last job Mike did for me because it is so touching, looking at the event in hindsight. We had been able to have major road work done in late 2021. The improvement to the road induced most of us, myself included, to travel much too fast on Hermitage Lane. Besides the risk to pedestrians and deer, high speeds were creating washboards in the gravel, which required expensive repair work to have them smoothed out. I discussed the problem with Mike, and we agreed that we should post speed signs along the lane. He was kind enough to say that he would find such signs online and purchase them as a donation.

The signs were delivered and are really sturdy and nice: **"Private Road; Speed Limit 15 MPH"**. We were planning on a Day of Pilgrimage for May 21 and Mike wanted to get these signs posted by then. However, he had been having symptoms, which made me think he was really sick. I had urged him not to plan to attend the day retreat and rest instead. I also declined his job offer and said I would get another Mesa neighbor to install the posts and signs. It was only two weeks later, on June 8, that Mike received his fatal diagnosis. It is so precious that Mike wanted to help to the very end, even though he was objectively much too ill to do so. Now when you drive up Hermitage Lane and see the new signs, Mike is reminding you to help me maintain the infrastructure of the campus, as he was so eager to do himself.

Did I say WE would miss Mike Nourse? I miss him very much in the innumerable everyday details of my life: at 3 PM his car is not parked in front of chapel; when I make brownies, Mike is not here to get some as "payment"; when I open the computer first thing in the morning, there is no email from Mike any more; a light bulb is out in chapel or sanctuary light cases are in the car, but Mike is not here to help me. Yes, I miss him very much...and the smallest details are the most painful. Mike would want us to pray for the repose of his soul. He would also be very happy to pray for us and our needs and intentions, as he faithfully did in this life. R.I.P.

Post Script: Ceara Nourse wrote a beautiful obituary for Michael and you can access it with this link:

<https://lienkaemper-thomason.com/tribute/details/Michael-Nourse/obituary.html#content-start>

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

MEMORIAL DONATIONS TO HONOR MICHAEL E. NOURSE

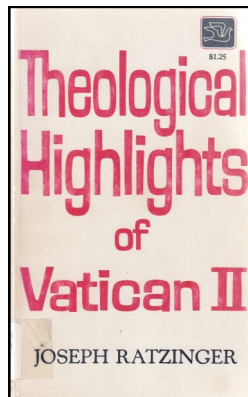
Kathleen and Paul Houge, Vancouver, WA
Mr. & Mrs. Bob McQuade, Boise, ID
Johnny Serpa, Pocatello, ID
Mr. & Mrs. Randy Williams, Boise, ID
Indian Valley Fire Department, I.V., ID
Indian Valley Rural Fire District, I.V., ID

NOURSE MEMORIALS: I want to publicly thank Ceara M. Nourse for requesting in the obituary for Mike that, in lieu of flowers at the funeral Mass, people consider giving a donation to Marymount Hermitage.

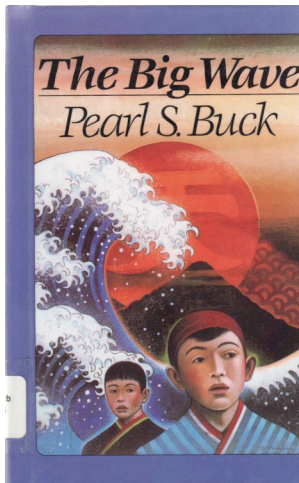
ROAD WORK: Our Mesa neighbors, Vince Brigante and his son, Greg, with the able assistance of a Goodrich rancher, Heath Chandler, recently dug out and re-set the first cattle guard on Hermitage Lane. Thus cattle being pastured in adjoining Nourse and Brigante properties are prevented from escaping onto the highway. Tim Moyer did the finishing work on either side to make the results more aesthetic and the roadway more accessible for the snow plowing work. I am always grateful and pleased with new maintenance progress!

LIBRARY WORK: Ceara Nourse is working on a special project for the book inventory in the library. She is checking every book listed in the computer database to see if the books are actually on the shelf. It is a huge job, but she is just enjoying being in the library occasionally and helping out with one aspect of the library inventory. A library is always a work in progress! If you have books checked out and have finished reading them, please consider bringing or mailing them back to help Ceara with her survey.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS: Study is one important focus of my life as a Hermit Sister, along with prayer and work. I like being able to share with you the books I am reading and enjoying. When I read the Vatican paper daily, *L'Osservatore Romano*, I notice how often Pope Francis talks about the Synod on Synodality, which he began this year. I confess I am still confused about what that means. Working in the library one day, I noticed one book did not have its check-out card. I was going to put it on a storage shelf until that could be created. Then a grace came to me. I realized that Pope Francis is often referring back to Vatican II in



regard to the Synod. When I saw Joseph Ratzinger's book, Theological Highlights of Vatican II, I suddenly wondered if this little book (128 pages) would be a help to me. Father Ratzinger, as a priest, was a "peritus" at Vatican II, helping his bishop with the work during those four years of the Council. Ratzinger's text is so understandable, compelling, clear and memorable. He does not shy away from questions, tensions, difficulties and controversies. What is striking is the serene faith and calm charity with which he offers wise insights into the dynamics which have shaped the Church in our day. This small paperback, which cost \$1.25 when it was published in 1966 by Paulist Press, is even more of a treasure now than when it first came out.



My second recommendation could not be more different than the first! This is a children's book, set in Japan, written by Pearl S. Buck, whose parents were Christian missionaries and who lived for years in China and Japan. This background explains why Ms. Buck understands so well the Asian cultures with their wisdom, realism, and memorable sayings. If you have never read it, treat yourself! It is only 47 pages long. I guarantee that the characters and images in the story are memorable. It is a sweet, well-told story about death and life. As the father of the family says more than once, "Life is stronger than death." I found The Big Wave very comforting when Bill Bader had died, and I was grieving with the added sadness of knowing that Mike Nourse was to die soon also.

GIFT SHOP: Christmas is coming. Do you or someone in your family or circle of friends need a rosary? It is something to consider as a gift. Rosaries are available in many kinds, colors, sizes and costs. Rosary bracelets come in a great variety also. Check out the website or send an email to make your request or ask a question.

PRAYERS: Mass is offered once a month for the repose of the souls of the deceased benefactors of Marymount Hermitage. We are praying fervently at Mass and hours of adoration for peace in martyred Ukraine. May God have mercy on us and on the whole world! Let us pray for each other daily and God bless you.