



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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GOD WALKED AMONG US

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.
The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us."

(Jn. 1:14)

"God Walked Among Us" is a beautiful visual meditation on this poignant passage from the opening of Saint John's Gospel. I was probably drawn to this for my Christmas card this year because I have been praying to and meditating on Saint Joseph as a major theme.

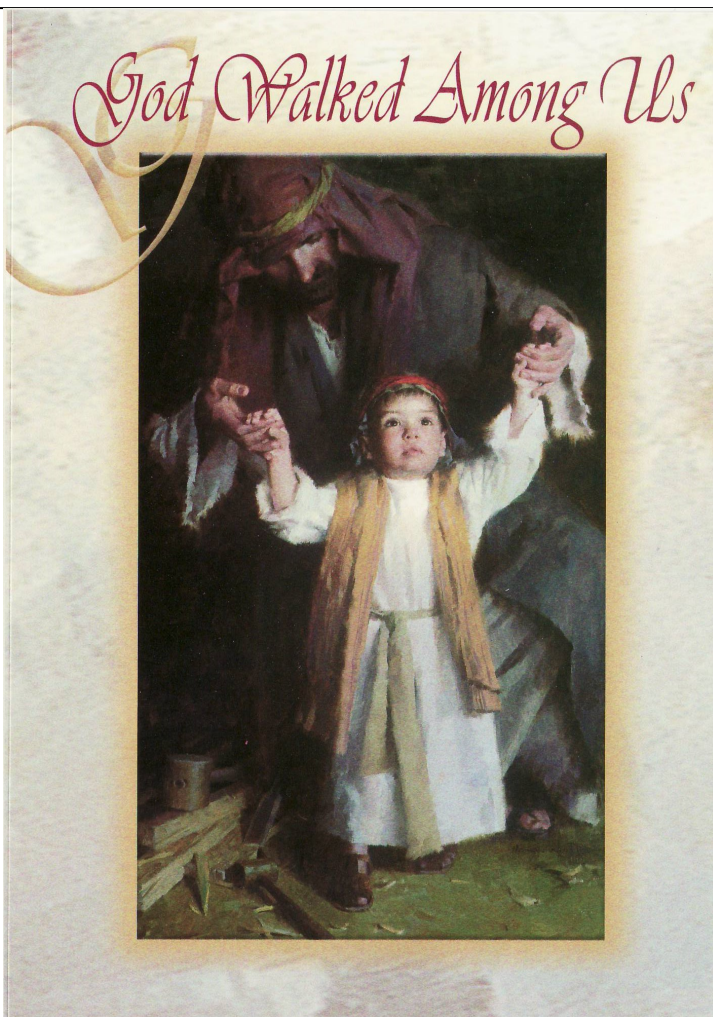
I noticed in one of Pope Francis' talks some years ago that he mentioned a book about the life of Saint Joseph, which he recommended. Pope Francis used to teach literature and he is widely read in great books from many countries and languages. The book is a novel because we basically know very little about Saint Joseph's life.

The title of the book is The Shadow of the Father and is written in Polish by Jan Dobraczynski. I actually loved the author's insights and the book gave me a lot to think about. However, the Polish translator is very inept in the English language. Some sentences can hardly be understood and I had a lot of ciphering to get at the real meaning. This worthy book deserves a better translation.

Often our meditations at the time of Advent and Christmas focus on Jesus and/or Mary. This year I am very much attuned to St. Joseph. Do you know that the first title of St. Joseph in his litany is "Shadow of the Eternal Father"? Undoubtedly, the author chose this mysterious phrase for the title of his book.

Dobraczynski's reflections on why Mary and Joseph had to stay in a stable really struck me. He reminds us that the gospel notes that Joseph was of the House of David, thus from the royal line. Since David's home town was Bethlehem, that is why Joseph had to take his very pregnant wife and travel there from Nazareth during the census. Considering that Joseph was of the house and family of David, it would be logical to think that the ancestral home, property and assets were large and rich. Why was Joseph not able to ask his family, his father, uncles, brothers or relatives to stay at their home while they were temporarily in Bethlehem and in such need?

The author extends this reflection by wondering why Joseph left home and traveled north to work in a poor, remote village like Nazareth to begin with? Was it be-



Original art by Morgan Weistling

cause of some disagreement or falling out, which made the self-exile necessary? If Joseph could not ask them for hospitality, it must have been something serious and painful. This puts a nuance on Joseph's suffering at having to have his wife give birth to the Messiah in a stable because "there was not [even] room for them in the inn." (Lk. 2:7)

My meditations on the Christmas event so far have been focused on Joseph's sense of loss. They had to leave the home he had lovingly prepared for Mary and

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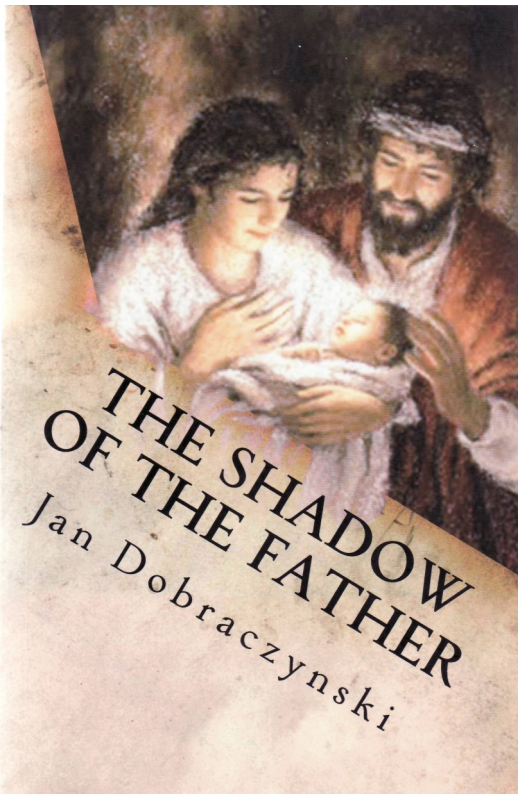
GOD WALKED AMONG US

(Continued from page one)

her son. Had he made a wooden cradle to welcome the newborn when he would arrive? It would have to have been left behind. I am sure it was a suffering for Joseph to think they had to leave behind the household items they had created for the benefit of this divine baby: linens Mary had hand-woven, bedding and clothing, she had made for him.

Of course, the flight into Egypt, after the birth of Jesus, would add financial insecurity and a sense of dispossession to their family. Would the trip be safe? In the Polish novel, the dangers of the long trip are stressed in a realistic way. Would Joseph find work and housing for them in Egypt among other Jewish refugees? How long would they have to be gone from their home in Nazareth? Mary and Joseph had to accept all the difficult details of the birth of God's only son, not fully understanding why all this was necessary. Accepting God's will in faith is often largely accepting not knowing the larger picture from God's perspective. In all of these painful details, we see the phrase Jesus was teaching his parents and us: "Thy Will be done..." Holiness and peace come from this heavenly source. "...on earth as it is in heaven."

Looking again at the image of "God Walked Among Us", we note that Saint Joseph is in the shadows, behind toddler Jesus. The light shines on Jesus. It is really an image of our life in him. The light must be on Jesus, who is the "Light of the World". Our role, like St. Joseph's, is to help and highlight the true reality. The focus on Jesus as "The Way" gives us peace and confidence. No matter what the human losses and sufferings are, there's always a way forward in "The Way and the Truth and the Life." (Jn. 14:6)



COMMUNITY NEWS

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

MY LOSS: On October 24, 2024, Ron and Sherry Moore moved back home to Weiser. They left Marymount Hermitage after four months because it was clear to them that their children and grandchildren really needed them. Their discernment was that the needs of their family were part of their vocation. We all cried when we said good-bye. They were such a joy, comfort and help to me. I miss them very much. I accept that it is God's will, but it is not easy. I ask for your prayers for the three of us. Thank you!

ADVENT RETREAT? Prayer is the best preparation for Christmas. If you are able to make an Advent hermitage retreat, please call me #208-256-4354 or email me at SisterBeverly@marymount-hermitage.org to request reservation dates. The calendar is quite open until Dec. 19. I will be making my own retreat from Dec. 20 to 24.

SALT & LIGHT RADIO: My newest series of podcasts are on the general topic of PRAYER. These will be broadcast at 7:20 AM MST on Mondays, Dec. 2, 9, 16, & 23. After the broadcast, the podcast is archived under the *Morning Light* section of the station's website. I have really enjoyed teaching in this format, but I will be taking a "vacation" in the winter months to return more deeply to my life as a hermit, for my own prayer and creative work.

JUBILEE GUEST HOUSE: I am still fundraising in earnest for work needed on the new building which is half done. Donations coming in during Oct.-Nov. are helping me pay for work that was done in Sept., but billed in October. I estimate I will need \$550,000 to finish Jubilee House. I hope and pray I will have money by early January to begin hiring work crews again. Monthly construction work and supplies amount to \$100,000-\$200,000. No work was or will be done in Oct.-Dec. Please prayerfully consider if the Lord is inviting you to help with this project. Those who contribute \$100,000. or more are able to create a memorial plaque for a loved one to be placed over the door of one of the rooms in Jubilee Guest House.

CORRESPONDENCE: The annual Christmas post card was mailed on Nov. 20. If you are not on the mailing list or did not receive the card, please let me know. **Merry Christmas and Happy, holy New Year! Let us pray for peace in our hearts, families, nation and world.**

MEMORIALS
FATHER THOMAS MAHONEY
by Michael and Sarah Mahoney
McLean, VA
MICHAEL E. NOURSE
by Ceara M. Nourse
Mesa, ID

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!