



St. Margaret's Quarterly

St. Margaret's Convent

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Boston, Massachusetts

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The Sisters of St. Margaret wish you all the blessings of this Christmas season and a very Happy New Year!

CHRISTMAS, NEW YEARS EVE AND NEW YEARS DAY AT THE BOSTON CONVENT

Friday, December 24, 2004:

The Sisters invite you to share in the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord with the Christ-Mass at 10:00 pm. Refreshments will follow.

Friday, December 31, 2004:

Welcoming the New Year at 7:30 pm. The Sisters at the Boston Convent welcome you to join them in a service of lessons and carols. A festive reception with refreshments follows the service.

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Saturday, January 1, 2005:

The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. Choral Eucharist at the Boston Convent at 11:30 am. Dinner following.

Please let us know you will be attending these events so that we may make adequate preparations. Contact the Reservations Desk at 1-617-445-8961 X127 to make your reservation, or email us at resbostonssm@yahoo.com.

AN APPEAL FOR THE SISTERS IN HAITI

The Sisters wish to say thank you to all who responded to their recent appeal for money and supplies for their ministry to the people in Haiti. Those funds all go toward the work that the Sisters do among the most needy residents of Port-au-Prince and the outlying areas.

The situation continues to be very difficult. The Sisters have moved into the Foyer Notre Dame, the home for indigent elderly women that was founded and is run by the Sisters. The Foyer is in Port-au-Prince, about one mile from the Convent. It is too dangerous to stay at the Convent due to the fighting between opposing factions in the political struggle to control Haiti. Sr. Marie Margaret's most recent letter states, "We are still

at the Foyer Notre Dame. There is still a lot of shooting around the Convent. They usually take you by surprise. Please pray for us."

It has been

our tradition for several years now to make an appeal at Christmas for the Sisters in Haiti. Thanks to your generosity, the results of our appeal last year was double the previous year's. These funds are not used for the ministry of the sisters, but are used for the ministers - the Sisters themselves. As you can imagine, they are also in need of assistance. Funds are needed for their travel expenses for visits to the U.S., for their medical care, health insurance, vacation, and for their spiritual care as well. These funds will allow them much needed spiritual retreats and time away from the extraordinary work they do every day, and will ensure that the work will continue with healthy, Spirit-filled Sisters.

An envelope has been provided inside this issue of the Quarterly for you to return along with your prayer requests and your donation. Please make checks payable to The Society of St. Margaret and note "for Haitian appeal" on the notation line. Your donations are tax-deductible. Please request a receipt if you desire one when sending the check. We thank you so very much.

The Sisters of St. Margaret



Sr. Marie Margaret and several of the ladies at the Foyer Notre Dame.

A QUIET DAY IN PHILADELPHIA FOR ASSOCIATES

From October 22nd to 24th, a prospective Associate and her husband, Janice and Tom Showler, along with their delightful cats, Jenny and Martha, hosted me for the Quiet Day I gave for our Associates and prospective Associates-of which there are four at this time- in Philadelphia. The new rector of All Saints' Church in Torresdale, which the Showlers attend, had been invited to dinner the first night I was there. It was a nice way to get to know a bit about the parish, which I had not been to when I was in Philadelphia.

On Saturday, to begin our Quiet Day, the 15 of us who had come for the day joined the regular congregation at the 9:30 Mass celebrated by Woody in the crypt chapel at St. Luke's. We moved to St. Margaret's House for the rest of the day's activities. Janette States had done a wonderful job of planning the event, which included a pot-luck lunch provided by those who came. During lunch a suggestion was made that the Associates begin an e-mail/telephone prayer chain to keep one another informed of Associates who might be held up in prayer. And so that has begun.

It was good to see some familiar faces and some new ones and, also, to wander around inside the house to see what changes had been made to fit its new ministry.

I decided to walk around St. Luke's "campus" and out onto Germantown Ave., at which point I decided to see if Gaffney's, the fabric store I had frequently visited on the corner, was still there. It was. And, in one of its windows, it was advertising the book, *Threads of Time, Profiles of African American Dressmakers and Designers, 1850 to the Present*, for \$20, \$8 of which would go to St. Barnabas School there at St. Luke's. So I bought a copy.

On Sunday, I went with the Showlers to All Saints' Church, where they sing

in the choir, and was joined by Janette States, who also attends that church. During the Coffee Hour, I was introduced to a number of people and got to know even more about the parish. It was a perfectly wonderful weekend! With prayers of thanksgiving,

Adele, SSM

RENOVATION OF DUXBURY CHAPEL COMPLETED



Since its construction early in 1907 the Sisters' chapel in Duxbury has been renovated any number of times. At one point it was lengthened, and a porch added. As the building aged, steel tie rods were required at ceiling height to hold the structure together. In the 1980's the old green timber walls were closed in with sheetrock, the walls were painted white, and new lighting and electric heat installed.

This summer further improvements were made. The wall at the east end has been redesigned. It now features a large central window with two adjacent lancet windows, which provide much more light and a view of trees and sky. The interior tie rods are gone with external buttresses now supporting the structure. Cathedral-style seating has replaced the old benches, allowing for

greater flexibility and comfort.

The Sisters first worshipped in the Duxbury chapel in May of 1907. Those of us who gathered for worship on August 30, 2004 remembered with thanksgiving our Sisters gone before us and all those who have prayed in this beautiful place, and praised God whom we worship in the beauty of holiness. At Evening Prayer the new coronation tapestry Jacobean frontal was dedicated,

a gift of our Associates. As part of the liturgy on that day these words from St. Augustine of Hippo [430] were read: "This is our house of prayer, but we too are a house of God. If we are a house of God, its construction goes on in time so that it may be dedicated at the end of time. The house, in its construction, involves

hard work, while its dedication is an occasion for rejoicing. ... The work we see complete in this building is physical; it should find its spiritual counterpart in your hearts. We see here the finished product of stone and wood; so too your lives should reveal the handiwork of God's grace." May this be so for us all!

Adele Marie, SSM



EVENTS FOR 2005 AT ST. MARGARET'S

Saturday, February 26, 2005

A Day of Prayer in Duxbury at the Bertram Conference Center, 21 Harden Hill Road, Duxbury, from 9:30 am until 3:30 pm. **Led by Sister Sarah Margaret, SSM**, this program will show you how to make and pray with your own set of prayer beads. The morning will be spent on the Anglican Rosary. In the afternoon, you will create your own personal prayer beads. The donation for this program covers findings, fishing line, all beads for the Anglican Rosary, and ten beads towards the freeform set. Contact Sr. Sarah by phone or email sarah@ssmbos.com if you would like further information or have questions. The suggested donation for the day is \$20. Please bring a sandwich for lunch; beverages and dessert will be provided. Please register for this event by February 19 so that we have adequate supplies.

Saturday, March 5, 2005

A Day of Prayer at the Boston Convent from 9:30 am until 3:30 pm. **Led by Sr. Carolyn, SSM**, entitled *A Man for All Seasons: Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pastor, theologian, teacher, writer, Christian martyr. In this sixtieth anniversary year of his death at the hands of the Nazis, we will draw from Bonhoeffer's witness and writings through prayer and song, applying the lessons of his time to our own times. Lunch will be provided. The suggested donation is \$25. Please register for this event no later than February 27.

Sunday, March 13, 2005

Contemplating Christ's Passion

A service of scripture and sacred song will take place on Sunday, March 13, 2005 at 4:00 pm. This service of the Word, sung, spoken, and prayed, features The Schola Cantorum and congregational participation. There will be a reception following. Please let us know that you are coming so that we may make adequate preparations.



HOLY WEEK & EASTER AT ST. MARGARET'S CONVENT, BOSTON:

March 20 at 7:30 a.m.

Palm Sunday Liturgy. Preacher: the Rev. Carl P. Daw, Jr.

March 24 at 6:00 p.m.

Maundy Thursday Liturgy. Preacher: to be announced

March 25 at 5:00 p.m.

Good Friday Liturgy. Preacher: the Rev. Mark D. W. Edington

March 27 at 4:30 a.m.

The Great Vigil of Easter. Preacher: Sister Adele Marie, SSM

WEEKEND RETREAT in Duxbury: June 10-12, 2005

Beginning Friday evening and concluding Sunday morning by 11:30. **Led by Sr. Emily Louise, SSM**. Donation \$120, half due when registering. More details to follow. To register or for more information phone, write or email.

ST. MARGARET'S DAY

Saturday, July 16, 2005 at the Boston Convent. **Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.** with luncheon following. Please let us know if you are coming so we may make adequate preparations.

Scholarships are available for anyone who is not able to make the entire donation.

For more information or to register for any of these events, please call us at 617-445-8961 X127 or email us at resbostonssm@yahoo.com.



THE GOD QUESTION

PBS in Boston had a marvelous, two-part, four-hour series recently which they entitled "The God Question." The series was based on a book by the same name by a Harvard Medical School Professor of Psychiatry, Dr. Armand M. Nicholi, Jr. The program began with the author saying, "No matter what your faith or what you believe, how each of us understands the meaning of life comes down to one ultimate question: Does God really exist?"

In the book and in the TV series, quotations from Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, tell us the atheist's point of view. Quotations from C. S. Lewis, author and Cambridge University professor, tell us the viewpoint of Christian believers. Lewis' opinion was that "Human history with its slavery, war, prostitution, and poverty is the long, terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy." Freud, on the other hand, believed "Religiosity is to be traced to the small human child's long-drawn-out helplessness and need of help."

Since I have been living in our Convent for the past fifty years, I have often thought that all of the thousands of people who have visited our Convents during these years for retreats, Quiet Days, conferences, Bible studies, Vestry meetings, etc., come to a convent because they want the question "Does God really exist?" answered more affirmatively than ever before. Recent polls tell us that eighty percent of Americans believe in God, whether they are church-goers or not.

If some of these visitors of ours told me aloud that they would like to have such

a question answered, I would take them first of all to a window and tell them to just look out at the beauty and the glory of the world that God has created for us. (See Ecclesiasticus 42:15 and Romans 1:20) I would invite them to come to our community prayer. Four times a day we gather to sing our praise and gratitude to, and express our love for, our Lord in the Daily Office. Above all, I would urge them to come to our daily Eucharist to offer themselves to be fed, nourished, and empowered by our Savior's words and by His Meal.

I would suggest that they spend much time alone in our Oratory in the presence of the Reserved Sacrament, be-



ing still and listening for God's voice within their own deepest, truest selves. I would advise them to begin reading God's love letter to the human race – Holy Scriptures – especially the four Gospels giving the story of His healing love and presence in our world yesterday, today and forever.

I would urge them to search for the face of Christ in every human being they ever meet beginning with the faces of all those they have loved most: parents, brothers, sisters, spouses, children, friends. All have been gifts to them from God; all made in His image.

When I was a college sophomore and thought I knew everything, I considered myself an atheist. An essay on atheism which we read in English class poked the first hole in my self-confident, new-found belief in nothing! The author said if there really were such a thing as an atheist, so called atheists would stop talking forever about their atheism. He believed that they really longed to be convinced that there is a God by those with whom they contended.

A few years later when my Mother died - the first agonizing sorrow of the death of a loved one that I had ever experienced - I had such a profound sense of God's loving presence that I would never again call myself an atheist. I know God exists, and I know He loves every single one of us, including you and me.

The PBS series never answers the question "Does God really exist?" Dr. Nicholi begins and ends by telling us that "Freud and Lewis may in fact be two parts of the same human personality, conflicting parts of ourselves, the part that believes and the part that doubts."

The Reverend Sam Lloyd, Rector of Trinity Church, Copley Square in Boston, recently told an Adult Forum audience that if they want to deepen what faith they have, the very best way is to do what Jesus told His first questioning disciples to do. "Come and see." Enter into the life of the Church that Christ founded. Live your faith. Practice it. Follow as much of Christ as you know of Him and your faith will keep on growing and growing. I couldn't possibly think of any better advice than that for all of us.

Mary Michael, SSM

INTERESTED IN MAKING PRAYER SHAWLS?

You may have seen the recent article in Episcopal Life magazine about the Prayer Shawl Ministry that is gaining popularity throughout the country. I have been trying to discern if there is enough interest to start a Prayer Shawl group at the Boston Convent. The group would meet for approximately two hours each month to work on knitted or crocheted prayer shawls to be given to individuals who would benefit from them- people undergoing cancer treatment, grieving the loss of a loved one, or coping with some other type of emotional situation. The group would choose the recipients, learn how to pray over the shawls before, during and after their creation, and deliver the shawls to the intended recipients.

This would not be a "learn to knit or crochet" group, at least not at first. Those who already know how to knit and/or crochet and who are interested in a group like this, please contact me at 617-445-8961 X235 or by emailing me at grace@ssmbos.com for more information. I look forward to hearing from you.

Grace, SSM

AN UNLIKELY VISITOR TO THE CONVENT

It was a bright sunny late summer day when we had a visit from perhaps our most unique guest. Work was being done to the Carriage House windows when the workmen saw and heard something moving in the bushes. After beating a hasty retreat, they peered into the bushes to see what it was. The scaly face with beady eyes was certainly not the rabbit or squirrel or other furry creature they expected.

To our great surprise it turned out that we had an iguana in our bushes; a nice big fellow around 4 feet long from stem to stern, a lovely light green color. A



big crowd of workmen and sisters gathered around and peered with fascination and some alarm at the creature as it surveyed us with its reptilian eyes.

We were at a loss about what to do until Sr. Brigid came to see what all the commotion was about and promptly walked right over to it and picked it up with amazing ease and calm. Readers should know that Sr. Brigid worked for the Animal Control Department while living in Florida, prior to entering the religious life!

You could have knocked the big burly workmen over with a feather at the sight of our Sr. Brigid cradling the visitor. We then found a box to put him in and several sisters tried to feed him a snack of grapes; he was not interested.

Unfortunately, we could not keep him as we did not have suitable accommodations, so he was taken to the local animal hospital to be made ready for adoption. We all had a wonderful time seeing him and wish him well in his new home.

Kristina Frances, SSM

VOCATIONS WEEKEND A SUCCESS!

An Invitation to Explore, our weekend program for inquirers, was held from Friday October 8th through Sunday

October 10th. It was an opportunity for us to get to know six young women from around the country, ranging in age from 20 to 39. They had a chance to live and work with the Sisters, to join us in the Chapel for the Daily Office and the daily Holy Eucharist. They heard some of the Sisters tell their stories of how they found out about St. Margaret's and how they discerned their call here. Fr. Philip Byrum, a Priest Associate of the Society, offered some reflections on the discernment process.

The visitors also had a chance to tour our Duxbury property and helped us with several of the end of the season chores. They were able to see the newly renovated Chapel as well.

Overall, it was a very good weekend for both Sisters and inquirers alike. We plan to offer this program regularly. If you are interested in learning more about a vocation to the Society of St. Margaret, or know of someone who might be, or if you would like more information about these ongoing weekends, please contact the Vocations Director at the Boston Convent. The phone number is 617-445-8961 X125 or email us at info@ssmbos.com.

Grace, SSM

CONSIDER A BEQUEST TO THE SOCIETY IN YOUR WILL

After you have provided for your family and any other responsibilities that you may have, you might want to remember the Sisters of St. Margaret in your will. This generous gesture is a way to continue the good you have done on earth by providing for the continuing life and ministry of the Society of St. Margaret. The suggested wording using our legal title is:

"I give and bequeath to the Society of St. Margaret, Boston, Massachusetts, the sum of \$_____ to be used in their ongoing work for the greater glory of God."

COMMUNITY NEWS

The Gathering - All of the Sisters of the Society of St. Margaret gathered, as is our custom, prior to Labor Day and spent time together working, talking, and playing. Chapter meetings, small group discussions and a trip to the Science Museum kept us all busy. There was also a trip to Duxbury to see the renovated Chapel, and fourteen of the Sisters got a tour of the O'Neil Farm, the only remaining working dairy farm on the South Shore. A good time was had by all! The dates for next years' Gathering

are August 25 through September 4, 2005. We will be closed to the public during that time.

Sr. Marion presented a talk entitled "On Being an Episcopalian Nun" at the Rogerson Communities Fresh Faces/Local Talent program in Roslindale in September. According to the Social Services Director, Lisa Talayco, it was "organized and interesting and so well received by everyone at the Day Center."

Sr. Carolyn led a Choir Retreat in Charlotte, North Carolina from October 1st through October 3rd.

Sr. Ann and Sr. Claire Marie were invited to attend the Diocesan Convention of the Diocese of Maine on October 23. They brought the Haitian Craft Shop and delighted the visitors and delegates with the one of a kind, handmade craft items. The proceeds go for scholarships for children at the Holy Trinity School in Port-au-Prince and provide money for tuition, books, and uniforms. Sr. Claire Marie is happy to bring the Haitian Gift Shop around to local church fairs. Feel free to contact her at the Boston Convent at 1-617-445-8961 X230 for more information.

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