



# St. Margaret's Quarterly

St. Margaret's Convent

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## THE WILDERNESS OF LENT

Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness. The wilderness is the meeting place with God. That is why the Spirit led Jesus there and is leading us as well. The devil, of course, comes too to intercept the meeting with God. The Greek word for desert, *eremos*, is the word from which we derive our English words, hermit, eremitical. The meaning of *eremos* is alone, abandoned, deserted, wasteland, empty.

The desert tradition is an old tradition. Jacob was alone at Bethel and at Jabbok. Moses was alone on Mt. Horeb when he saw the burning bush. Moses and all the children of Israel were alone for forty years in the wilderness. Many of the prophets (we think especially of Elijah) spent time in the desert. John the Baptist was in the wilderness of Jordan and baptized there. Jesus was baptized by John and was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. During forty days there he opened himself to the Spirit. They were all totally dependent on God.

The desert can take many forms. It is a place of sand and wind and of utter

dryness, physical and perhaps spiritual. For St. Ignatius, St. Francis and many others the desert was a time of illness which provided space for a great deepening of spiritual life and a time of encounter with God. The Religious Life is a form of desert life because dedicated Religious freely strip themselves of many things. We empty our hearts that they may be filled with all the fullness of God.



Lent is also a desert. It is a wilderness time into which we come to meet God. Of course the devil comes too to intervene, to tempt, perhaps to test. Lent tends to become an ultra busy time. There are programs, retreats, extra services, missions, and these are all good, but we need to watch out lest we lose

the point of it all in our busyness. How can we strip ourselves or empty ourselves so that we shape Lent into a wilderness where we can meet God? The ancient Lenten Office hymn has some advice for us:

“More sparing therefore let us make  
The words we speak, the food we take.”

And it is valuable for us to do just that for it makes for a certain emptiness. I like that word sparing because it depicts a sparse life that God may fill. It suggests a place of simplicity where God may enter. But beyond the literal meaning, the words of the old hymn are a call to discipline. It is a call to limit our excesses and moderate our extremes. In St. Paul's words it is a call to bring our body into subjection. It is to get the body in hand. It means not only a discipline of our outward lifestyle but a

discipline of our whole selves including our minds, our thoughts, our attitudes. It is a call to make ready for God by stripping away all sorts of non-essentials. We become open, empty, free and available to God.

Then, the house of our soul being cleansed and ordered, we need to guard against the devil and wait for God to enter our emptiness. We must be content to wait and look and long for God to fill us. That is why we are being led into the wilderness this Lent. And that is why we are in the Christian life. It is to ready ourselves for the meeting with God.

Catherine Louise, SSM

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## TWENTY FIVE YEARS A PRIEST. IMAGINE!

On St. Thomas Day, December 21, 2004, the Sisters of St. Margaret, along with Associates and friends, celebrated the twenty fifth anniversary of Sr. Catherine Louise's ordination to the priesthood. Sr. Catherine Louise was the celebrant at the Eucharist and Sr. Adele Marie was the preacher. She began her homily by saying that we were celebrating a significant anniversary not only for Sr. Catherine Louise but for our entire Community.

"Along with the ordinations of other women in the Episcopal Church, it proclaimed God's inclusivity. Twenty five years later, it all seems so right, so normal, soooo – acceptable. But this was not the case twenty five years ago. This was not something Sr. Catherine Louise or the Society arrived at easily. The conviction that women could be priests was an act of inspired imagination, in the face of what was considered impossible. (I think here of the week prior to my own ordination more than twenty three years ago. The parish with which I was associated sent out the ordination invitation to their mailing list. One irate parishioner sent it immediately back to the Rector, with one handwritten word scrawled on it in bold black letters: IMPOSSIBLE!) This protest was mild compared to others. The conviction that women could be priests had to be more than a belief; it required an act of courage..."

"Even after December 21, 1979, proponents of the ordination of women within the Church in general and in the Society of St. Margaret in particular needed to hold fast to the vision and endure. It may seem hard to believe now, but after December 21, 1979, it would take us almost ten more years to come to the realization that having ordained Sisters was a gift for the Community, rather than a problem within it. But that day did come, and that is why this day is such a celebration."



*Sr. Catherine Louise cuts her cake.*

"I think here of Robert Kennedy, who said, 'There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why...I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?' Sr. Catherine Louise is among those who not only asked, 'why not?' but who dreamed and worked to bring into being things that never were." Before writing her homily, Sr. Adele Marie asked the Sisters to tell her what difference they thought women's ordination had made to the Church, what difference to the Society of St. Margaret, and what difference to each of us personally. "One Sister said, in so many words, that our Founder would be pleased. Most of us will agree heartily with this assessment. John Mason Neale was a person of great imagination, and possessed of the ability to combine tradition and innovation, conservatism and creativity. I am sure he is cheering us on."

"Several Sisters commented on the value of the process we went through. The necessity of having to struggle over a major issue led us to communicate in new and deeper ways. We came to a greater appreciation of our high calling as women of the Church. We were glad to see the unique gifts of women being valued and accepted. We learned that it was possible for us to have grave differences of opinion and yet remain one united Community..."

The Very Reverend Alan Jones, Dean of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, who was our Chaplain during those tumultuous days in the mid-seventies, wrote that his relationship with our Community – "with its capable, intelligent, strong-minded women – deepened my conviction that it was high time women were admitted to the ministerial priesthood. Perhaps it is a great testimony to the grace and providence of God that we (or most of us!) now simply take it for granted."

Sr. Adele Marie continued, "Even as we rejoice this day, we know there is still much more to do. We cannot rest on our laurels. Internationally, the Society of St. Margaret is not one in heart and mind in this matter. And if we look at the wider church, it is reported that while women are being ordained at a steady rate, compared to men, these are more often low-paid, part-time, and career-end jobs. Another observer of the contemporary church rejoices that there were eleven women bishops at Lambeth in 1998; yet he states that 'women have to jump higher to get less far.'

"Alan Jones' email declares the central truth of this day. This is not so much a celebration of Sr. Catherine Louise, or of the Society of St. Margaret, or even of the ordination of women: it is above all, a celebration of the grace and providence of God who by bringing into being things that never were, makes all things new. May we be women and men of such imaginative faith in the face of things that are, that we will continue to dream with God big dreams of inclusion and love for all people. Yes, 'there is still a vision for the appointed time...if it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come.' In Advent's final days we cry out, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'"

Mary Michael, SSM

## EVENTS FOR 2005 AT ST. MARGARET'S

### A DAY OF PRAYER AT BERTRAM CONFERENCE CENTER IN DUXBURY:

**Saturday, February 26, 2005**

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](mailto: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.

### A DAY OF PRAYER AT THE BOSTON CONVENT:

**Saturday, March 5, 2005**

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.

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

### CONTEMPLATING CHRIST'S PASSION:

**Sunday, March 13, 2005**

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: The Rev. Katharine  
Black

**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

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](mailto:resbostonssm@yahoo.com) or write to the Reservations Desk in Boston.

### PRAYING WITH JULIAN OF NORWICH - A WEEKEND RETREAT IN DUXBURY:

**June 10-12, 2005**

Today, Julian of Norwich (1342 - c. 1414) is considered more than ever to be one of the greatest Christian thinkers and mystics. Her era is eerily like our own - war, plague, religious unrest and bloody persecutions, great social upheaval and poverty.

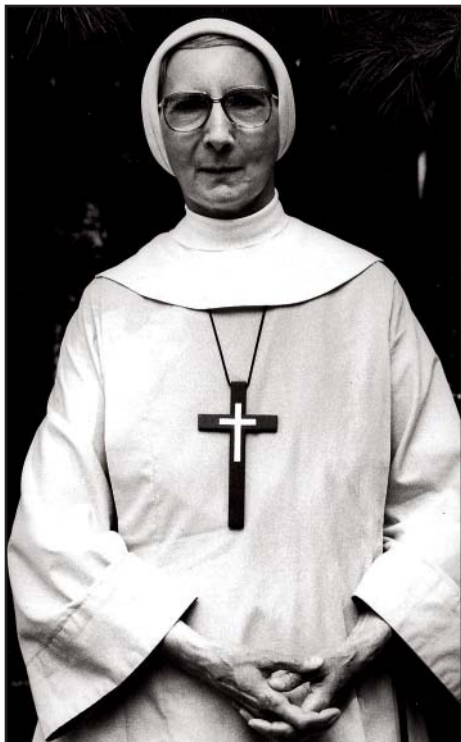
Come to St. Margaret's in Duxbury, pray in the recently renovated Chapel, walk the beautiful grounds, sit overlooking the bay, read, rest, and explore your God. There will be five addresses presented by **Sr. Emily Louise, SSM**. These addresses are based on Julian's visions, her struggles, both interior and exterior, which bore fruit in her theology and teaching.

This silent retreat begins with the opening address at 7:30 p.m. on Friday evening, June 10, 2005. Retreatants are welcome to arrive at 4:30 p.m. A simple supper will be served at 6:00 p.m. for early arrivals who have made a supper reservation. The retreat concludes Sunday morning, June 12, with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist at 10:30 a.m. The suggested donation is \$120, half due when registering.

### ST. MARGARET'S DAY AT THE BOSTON CONVENT:

**Saturday, July 16, 2005**

**Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.** with luncheon following. Preacher: To Be Announced. Please let us know if you are coming so we may make adequate preparations. Check the website for details as they become available: [www.ssmbos.com](http://www.ssmbos.com).

**SR. MARINA MARY, SSM****June 16, 1915 - January 13, 2005***Sr. Marina Mary, SSM*

It was in the autumn of 1935 that we first met Margaret Collier, who would become Sister Marina Mary. She came from Newfoundland with a minimum of baggage and a determination to stay. We in the novitiate wondered what she would look like; and lo! a Newfoundlander looked just like us. She began her postulancy with Florence Fulwiler, who went on to become Sister Bernardine, and Muriel Cavis. Muriel decided on another path, and left the Society. In due time, we were received as Novices. At first, we had a little difficulty with language, but we were all trying valiantly to understand each other, and after a while we were not noticing differences.

Sister Marina Mary became a valuable helper in more than one department, and showed so much ability that she was given positions of trust, especially in the Canadian houses which we still had at that time. She had always hoped for a mother house in Canada, along

with the other Canadian sisters; Sisters Laura, Jean, Geraldine, Ethelwyn, Cecilia, Louise, Isabel, Felicitas, and Mother Susanna. Nevertheless, they all worked joyously wherever they were sent.

Sister Marina Mary's spirituality was of a deeply personal kind; she would not talk about it, but she helped many people along the way. She is remembered especially for all of the hospital visiting she did over many years. In her later years, she is remembered fondly for her Sunday forays to the Church of the Advent, which would be followed by a trip to the Boston Convent for Sunday dinner, after which she would return to Goddard House, where she was a resident for many years. Just recently, she moved to Sherrill House, joining Sister Joan who is also a resident there. This year would have marked her seventieth year with us, her sixty-sixth in life vows.

Vespers of the Dead was said by the community on Wednesday evening, January 19, 2005, followed by the Community Vigil and Compline. A Eucharist of the Resurrection was celebrated on Thursday morning, January 20, 2005, at 9:30 a.m. Despite the snowy weather, a number of Sister's family and friends were able to attend. Burial followed at Cedar Grove Cemetery in Dorchester. May she rest in peace.

Esther, SSM

### **A WINTER TRIP TO FLORIDA AND ANOTHER NEW ASSOCIATE OF THE SOCIETY**

At the invitation of Louise Baker, Pastor of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, I spent the weekend of January 7th in St. Petersburg, Florida. The women of the church attended a quiet day on Saturday. St. Matthew's has the Gulf of Mexico in its back yard, so we were able to celebrate the closing Eucharist at the outdoor altar with the water right behind us. On Sunday I spoke at

the adult forum and answered many questions.

Our Associate Janette Miekka attends St. Matthew's and was a superb hostess. She saw that I was well fed, that I had the opportunity to inspect a mangrove tree up close, and that I had a wonderful walk through Boyd Hill Nature Park. She also introduced me to Charlie, a beautiful Great Egret who visits each day. Charlie is probably one of few egrets who supplement their diet with hot dogs! Needless to say I enjoyed myself very much and met many wonderful people.

*Charlie the Egret*

On another happy note, Edith Ristau from Wilson, North Carolina was received as an Associate on December 2, 2004. We welcome her to the ever increasing number of Associates of the Society. If you have an interest in learning more about becoming an Associate, don't hesitate to call me at 617-445-8961 X169 or email me at annssm@yahoo.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Ann, SSM

## NEWS FROM HAITI

At 8:30 in the evening of Oct. 7, as we were finishing community recreation in the common room on the first floor of the convent, we were jolted by a very loud and very near gunshot. We hastily put out the lights and shut off the TV and fumbled our way upstairs to our bedrooms. It was discovered later that the crumbled cement on the floor of the hall between the bedrooms of two of the Sisters was the result of a bullet that pierced the north wall. We did not find the bullet from this hole, but we did find one a day or so later through the wall of the room next to that of Sister Beatrice. But by that time we had decided to leave Rue Montalais which had become a war zone, as it leads directly to the National Palace.

We have taken up temporary residence since October 11th in the upstairs of the Foyer Notre Dame, our home for aged and indigent persons, which is only a few blocks away but is in a quieter neighborhood. Our residents are too frail to climb up the stairs, so the area was being used for storage. By degrees we have pushed back the storage, set up three beds, a dining table, a small refrigerator, etc. We are very glad to be this near to the old people at a time like this.

Sister Marie Margaret carries the overall responsibility for the Foyer residents and for the sisters. Sister Beatrice does the food shopping and management for the Foyer and for the sisters. Sister Marjorie Raphael has become an expert at nail cutting, and has completed her series of portrait drawings in charcoal of the residents. This has had to include some of the caregivers as well as the mason who is currently repairing the older building. The Foyer is not far from the Episcopal University where Sister Beatrice can continue her studies.

Our possessions here began with what we would need for a few days. That was three weeks ago. Bit by bit we have added things. Supper menus and "desserts" were decided as we sat down. The choice

of the "desserts" if oranges and grapefruits were not available, was: nuts from a jar, peppermints in another jar, brown sugar tablets in another, and raisins in still another. If supper is a pudding of grated plantain (skins and flesh) boiled in milk and cinnamon, then you don't need any dessert for that is dessert.

Our recreation is evening news, the local serial love drama (20 minutes or less per day) or dominoes. Bed, even for the night owls, comes early and rising comes just before the sun. A priest (our associates) comes for Eucharist for the whole house usually on a Friday and Sunday at 9:00 am, giving time for the bathing



*Sr. Marjorie Raphael and an old friend, a former ECW president, in La Gonave.*

and dressing and feeding of residents. Sometimes one thing overlaps with the next. It is unbelievable how clock-time becomes less important and people-time more important.

I would say that life is more peaceful here, less interrupted, and it is giving us time to catch up on desk work. We are relieved of worry about the old folks, their food, their health, etc., for we are literally in their house. It is good to be here.

Marjorie Raphael, SSM

Editor's Note: Sr. Marjorie Raphael has returned to the Boston Convent for a time. Sr. Marie Margaret and Sr. Bea-

trice remain in Haiti. Sr. Promise and Sr. Marie Therese are living at the Boston Convent while pursuing their education.

Grace, SSM

## SR. GRACE MAKES HER LIFE VOWS

A January storm caused some panic as the snow began to fall the night before Sr. Grace's Life Profession. But what made for some nervous hours and difficult travel ultimately created a snowy wonderland for the special day, January 6, 2005, the Feast of the Epiphany. While not everyone who wanted to come was able to due to the weather, those in attendance were privileged to be part of a beautiful and moving service as Sr. Grace made vows to God as a sister in life profession. We know that those who were not able to attend were with us in spirit and their prayers were felt by all in attendance.

The intimate group of old friends, new friends and fellow Religious were reminded in Sr. Adele Marie's sermon to think of the epiphanies in our own lives as we shared in the expression of Sr. Grace's commitment. It was a special treat to have our priest associate the Reverend Philip Byrum come all the way from North Carolina to serve as Deacon for the service. The congregation sang the hymns Sr. Grace had chosen, her favorite containing the words "turning chaos into grace"; it truly seemed that these words were visible as the new gold ring was blessed and placed on Sr. Grace's finger.

A reception and luncheon with gorgeous flowers, excellent food and delicious cake followed the service and provided a time of celebration and fellowship. Then it was time for our guests to venture back out into the snow and cold.

All in attendance were enriched by this service and pray God's richest blessings on Sr. Grace in the years to come.

Kristina Frances, SSM

## THE BLIZZARD OF 2005



*View from the Front Door- January 22, 2005*



*Penny isn't sure she likes this!*



*View from the Refectory- January 22, 2005*

### The Society of St. Margaret

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