

December 27, 2010



Dear Friends and Family,

Merry Christmas to you and a Happy New Year, 2011! This year has been filled with Christ's blessings for us, more than we could ever have imagined.



The newly vowed sisters with Bishop Finn

The greatest events for our community this year took place on July 31, 2010. Sr. Maria Stella professed her perpetual vows, and Sr. Maria Damiana professed her first vows, in a Mass celebrated by our diocesan bishop, Bishop Robert W. Finn, D.D., of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri. We still feel the effects of the graces of that day, surrounded by so many family members and friends, even Father Daniel Maurer, CJD, from Vladivostok, Russia. Another momentous development that same day was Bishop Finn's announcement at the Mass that he had decided to raise our community to a Public Association of the Faithful. This is the last step before becoming a full-fledged diocesan religious institute! The following day, we had a sacred music concert, "In Jubilatio," to express at least in part our gratitude to God for the tremendous gift of our religious vocations. We praised God with the voice, flute, organ, harp, violin, and bells! See our website www.cjd.cc for more pictures and to view our latest newsletter.

In February, Sr. Catherine Marie and Sr. Maria Stella returned from three months in Russia. They have given several talks about the Russian mission and the history of the persecution of Catholics in the Soviet Union at schools and parishes. Sharon King, a widow and long-time volunteer from St. Paul, Minnesota, who accompanied Sr. Maria Stella on her first three month trip to Russia, came to live with us as an associate member. Sharon helps in every possible way, most especially with cooking and baking and restoring church statues, while joining us in our daily prayers.



Sisters with Sharon King

Sr. Julia has been helping to teach RCIA at our parish, and Sr. Maria Damiana continues studying piano and studying at the diocesan "Bishop Helmsing Institute," working toward a Catechetical Certificate. Sr. Catherine Marie and Sr. Maria Stella are frequent cantor/flutist/organist at Sunday Mass, and Sr. Maria Stella plays twice a week for the parish school Masses. Sr. Maria Damiana continues to play the piano weekly for Benediction. This year, both Sr. Catherine Marie and Sr. Maria Damiana began ministry to the shut-ins of our parish, bringing Holy Communion twice a month. Sr. Catherine Marie enjoys tutoring children after school. We continue to be active with the pro-life ministry here. We also introduced the Lighthouse Catholic Media CD project to our parish. The parishioners are enjoying the great talks on the Faith that the CDs offer.

We were blessed to have booths at both FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) and KCYC (Kansas City Youth) conferences, and at a vocation fair at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. Sr. Julia and Sr. Maria Damiana represented the community at FOCUS and heard many wonderful talks and met many people. Sr. Maria Stella and Sr. Catherine Marie represented the community at KCYC. Once again, we helped organize

and lead a group of young people to the National Meeting of the Institute on Religious Life in Mundelein, Illinois.



L-R: Sr. Maria Stella, Sr. Maria Damiana, Sr. Catherine Marie, with Fr. Myron Effing, CJD, and Sharon King

We attended Fr. Myron Effing's surprise 70th birthday party in Evansville, Indiana, in October, and enjoyed seeing many friends of the Vladivostok Mission. That month we also had a wonderful visit from Sr. Julia's regional superior, Sr. Mary Lou Rajdl, MM, from Chicago. In November, Sr. Catherine Marie and Sr. Maria Stella gave a sacred music concert, "To Jesus Through Mary" at Conception Abbey, a Benedictine Abbey about two hours north of us in Missouri, which also serves as a diocesan minor seminary.

Recently, all of us put on "Advent family nights" on three Fridays for the whole family at the parish. The adults, led by Sr. Julia, studied the book by Pope Benedict on *Jesus of Nazareth*. The group requested to continue with this book each Friday in Lent. The children were in two groups and were taught about Advent customs. Sr. Maria Stella taught the teenagers, Sr. Catherine Marie taught the younger children, Sr. Maria Damiana and our friend Sammy assisted Sr. Catherine Marie with the smaller children. Sr. Catherine Marie was creative with the activities. She designed a game that we used for Advent, but can be changed for each liturgical season. She had them singing Advent and Christmas songs, sharing resolutions from which they could choose to prepare for Christmas and much more. The activity the children seemed to enjoy the most was the piñata of the Star of Bethlehem.



The Star of Bethlehem and Sister

We are most grateful to God for the gift of a new postulant who is joining us on January 9, 2011. Please pray for her as she prepares to embark upon religious life. We look forward to sending two sisters again to Russia, most likely in the late spring or summer. Our ministry is made possible by your prayers and the grace of God—thank you.

With fervent prayers for a most holy Christmas Season,

The Sisters in Jesus the Lord