

DAUGHTERS OF MARY, MOTHER OF ISRAEL'S HOPE



The Canticle of Simeon

Now dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, in peace, according to Thy word: For mine own eyes hath seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the sight of all the peoples, a light to reveal Thee to the nations and the glory of Thy people Israel.

March 30, 2010

Tuesday of Holy Week and The Feast of Passover

Beloved of God,

I am writing to you (yet) from the Visitation Monastery in Tyringham, Massachusetts, as I near the end of what has been a very wonderful novitiate year. The *Sisters of the Visitation of Holy Mary* have begun, together with over 150 Visitation Monastery's throughout the world, the celebration of the 4th Centenary of their founding by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal in Annecy, France, on June 6, 1610. I am very much looking forward to sharing in the celebration of their historic anniversary and most especially to the Holy Mass that will be celebrated by Bishop Timothy McDonnell, here at the monastery in Tyringham, *this* June 6, 2010!

The Catholic Observer, the newspaper of the Springfield, Massachusetts diocese, in honor of the Order's 400th anniversary, published a beautiful insert, a copy of which is enclosed for you. You can see that I had the enormous gift of being with the Sisters on their trip to Annecy last July, and join them daily here in their beautiful chapel (last white veil on the right ☺) for the Liturgy of the Hours, Holy Mass, Holy Hours and other prayer times. I could fill half a book with the story of how I came to spend this year with this particular Order, but, for now, just a couple of happy recollections.

It was well over two years ago that I was asked why St. Francis de Sales is my favorite saint. I remember responding, ". . . because he loves God, he has the mind of the Church, and, if St. Francis were alive today, I would board a plane, fly to Geneva, and sit at his feet!"

Oh the ways of God! *Who knew* that, two years later, the dream of forming a community of Sisters to "flood the world with habits to the floor" and reach out to every soul with the truths of our glorious faith, would take root, that St. Francis would be its patron, and that I would have the privilege of being formed in this unspeakably beautiful life by the very Order he founded? And *who could know* that I would accompany three of "his" Sisters on their pilgrimage to Annecy, to his very burial place, and that, by his tomb, I would *sit at his feet*?!

"But he's *dead* now," some would say. "On the contrary," I would reply, "St. Francis is more alive than *we* are, together with *all* the saints in glory!"



As I write, the Easter Vigil is five days away. The recollection of my *first* Easter Vigil, 15 years ago upon my entrance into the Catholic Church, is still very fresh, as are the somewhat shocking words I heard that night also for the first time: "O *happy* fault." *How*, I wondered, could Adam's fall, the fall that plunged the human race into sin and separation from God, be considered "happy"? Oh but *now* I sing with all the saints (on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven), "O *happy* fault!" – *happy* the fault that brought my Savior down, *happy* the grace that flooded my soul and washed away (and continues to wash away) my sins, *happy* the children of a faithful God who has fulfilled His promises to Abraham, *happy* the glory that awaits *all* who have loved His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8).

On this day (March 30) great numbers of Jewish People will celebrate the Passover Seder commemorating the

miraculous deliverance of their People from over 400 years of slavery in Egypt. Many of those yet await the coming of Elijah and the promised Messiah. The *Hallel* (Psalms 113-118) will be sung in hope and expectation. They are the very Psalms our Lord sang with His disciples as they walked from the Upper Room to the Mount of Olives on that never-to-be-forgotten Passover night, the Passover of all Passovers, the Last Supper.

We too sing those same Psalms now in celebration and thanksgiving for the One who *has* come. On Palm (or Passion) Sunday, millions in the universal Church chanted Psalm 118, the very Psalm the Jewish nation chanted as the *Son of David* entered Jerusalem riding on a colt, in fulfillment of all that the prophets had written (cf. Matthew 21:1-9). They thought it *was* Him, the long-awaited Messiah of Israel of whom the Scriptures speak. Fittingly they sang:

*"Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!" (Psalm 118:26)*

Five days later, many of those same voices would utter the unthinkable, "*Crucify Him!*" Why? Because He had *claimed* what, to many, was unthinkable: not simply to be *from* God but to *be* God.

He *was* God, of course, *and is*. The Son of David was not simply to be a conquering hero, but a dying lamb (cf. Isaiah 53) – "the Lamb of *God* who takes away the sins of the world." He came not to live, but to die – for you, and for me, and *rose from the grave* to give life – all of Life – to all who will come to Him.

Thirty-four years ago, just prior to my becoming a Christian (via Evangelical Protestantism), I was dining with a group of Jewish Christians who had been trying, for months, to help me understand who Jesus was, that He was the Lamb to whom all the Old Testament sacrificial lambs pointed. At one interval, I overheard some of the group at the far end of the table speaking about this "Jesus" as if He were *alive*.

"Excuse me . . ." I interrupted, "did I hear you say He was *alive*?"

"Yes."

*"But you told me He *died*."*

*"He *did*,"* they answered, "but He came out of the grave. He rose; He's *alive*."

"Why didn't anyone *say so*?!!!" I exclaimed in shock. "Everyone *dies*. No one comes *back*!"

The Jewish worshippers in Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost must have been equally shocked at *Peter's* words:

"Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ (the Greek translation of Messiah), that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses" (cf. Acts 2:29-36).

My dearest family, let us go into *all the world* (beginning with our neighbor) and *say so!* Tell them that we have such a Savior who loved us from the beginning, and who waits – *longs* – to give life to all who will call upon Him.

I wish each of you, your families and friends, a most blessed Easter in our beloved and risen Lamb . . . Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us.

In His love,

Sister Rosalind

Sister Rosalind

P.S. – For those who are wondering about our name, we did change the name of the new community from Daughters of Mary, Mother of *Israel's* Hope to Daughters of Mary, Mother of *Our* Hope, as explained in the Christmas newsletter. We simply are using up our first-run stationary. ☺ God bless you!

Below is a portion of the front page of the insert from the Catholic Observer mentioned in our Easter letter. We were not able to scan the entire page. If you would like a copy of the 12-page insert, please let us know. There is no charge; we have extras!

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THE CATHOLIC OBSERVER

VISITATION SISTERS'
400TH ANNIVERSARY

Springfield, Mass. February 26, 2010

Visitation Nuns celebrate 400 years of prayer and service



Photo by Elizabeth Weber

