



# Felices Diem Nativitatis

From the Desk of Mother Mary Wendy:



In our many travels across the United States and in our recent mission to Sicily, I noticed a sense of unease among many Catholics about the condition of our Church. This reminds me of the unease that awoke Ms. Clavel in the "Madeline" books, which many of us read as children. Perhaps you remember the opening line of each book, "In an old house in Paris that was covered with vines, lived twelve little girls in two straight lines...." In each of the stories the youngest girl is the brave, red-headed, Madeline who finds her way into and out of lots of trouble.



Miss Clavel, the headmistress, has a sixth sense about little Madeline's escapades. In one of the books we see her turn on the lights at midnight saying, "Something is not right." Well, the sense of unease that "something is not right" on the Barque of St. Peter (our Church) should be causing all of us to "turn on the lights" in a vigilant stance to protect the deposit of our faith, against those who promote the destruction of the family and both spiritual and moral confusion.

So, what do we do? Keep moving forward with the faith! As St. Paul says, "fight the good fight." (1 Tim 6:12) Promote and live Catholic culture in all its many forms. Start by living the holy traditions held by your local parish or diocese. And as St. Catherine of Siena said, "Do corporal works of mercy, fast and pray."

During my recent night Holy Hour, I opened to a passage in St. Faustina's Diary that gives me great hope as we face the storm within the Church. The passage describes what St. Faustina experienced during her nightly adoration, as she was caught up in spirit before the majesty of God, and saw how the angels and saints give glory to the Lord.



She writes:

"...The glory of God is so great that I dare not try to describe it, because I would not be able to do so, and souls might think that what I have written is all there is. St. Paul, I understand now why you did not want to describe heaven, but only said that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Cor 2:9, 2 Cor 12:1-7)." *Diary #1604*

This glory is every soul's destiny, so let's make use of our time to serve, praise and thank God by trusting in Him who can do all things and change all things in an instant. To quote the famous last line in the Madeline books, "That's all there is, there isn't any more."

*- Mother Mary Wendy*



Please consider supporting our missions with your contribution!

***Calling a Spade, a Spade!***

Not sure what to make of the current crisis in the Church? Listen to Sr. Mary Augustine's recent talk, "Calling a Spade a Spade" given at St. Luke's Church in Morgantown, West Virginia. This message brings clarity to the present situation in our Church. This talk was also broadcast on Guadalupe Radio and can be downloaded on our website.







# SICILY

## *Capturing the Mystery of a Cloistered Monastery*

How many of you have stood outside a cloister and wondered what goes on behind those walls? Now just imagine the mystery and holiness embedded in an old monastery and church continuously occupied since 1492 by Benedictine sisters in Sicily. Mother Wendy and the sisters were

offered the opportunity live behind those 500-year old walls and to actually take over and occupy the monastery.

They traveled to Sicily for a 3-week stay to discern the Lord's will, and they reveled in the beauty and the sanctity of the building and all that the Benedictine sisters had done through prayers, intercession, and work. The monastery sits on the side



*Mother Wendy, fluent in Italian, catechizes the First Communicants of Geraci-Siculo.*

of a cliff in a town called Geraci-Siculo; an ancient town high up in the mountains, best known for its pure mountain water.



*The last surviving Benedictine sister and her new Prioress visit us at the Cloister.*

The sisters loved the visit and got involved in processions, catechized the children, and spent much time getting to know the townspeople. They even met the last surviving sister of the monastery, who came with great joy to speak about her life there. But, at the end of the day, Mother discerned that the Lord was not calling us to move to Sicily. She felt in her heart the Lord say, "my work for you is in the USA."

## *Sicilian Catholic Culture*

We've all heard of the Sicilian Mafia, but how many of us know about Sicilian Catholic Culture? Well, we are here to tell you that there is nothing like it in all the world.

On a beautiful, warm, Pentecost Sunday, the entire town of Gangi and many Sicilians from surrounding towns, came out of their homes to witness a spectacular procession, honoring the most beloved saints of the island.

Decorated with flowers and carried on platforms supported by wooden poles, magnificent statues of the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, Padre Pio, St. Michael the Archangel and many others, are carried on the shoulders of 6-8 sturdy souls, who are members of a society dedicated to that particular saint.

The procession begins at Noon in the piazza outside the Chiesa Madre (Mother Church) at the very top of the town, and winds its way down through the ancient cobblestone streets, until it reaches the Church of the Holy Spirit below some four hours later. There is music, prayer, and shouting as each group proclaims its dedication to their special saint.



*Processing through the streets with St. Michael the Archangel*



### *Sicilian Catholic Culture (Cont.)*

Then, at the Church of the Holy Spirit the fun really begins! The huge front doors of the church are open and all the pews are removed. The procession comes to a halt as one statue at a time is presented outside the gate of the large piazza leading into the church. An announcer comes onto the loud speaker, saying: "Here comes St. Michael, St. Michael, St. Michael!"

Then those same brave souls who have been carrying that statue for over 4 hours in 90-degree heat, shout at the top of their lungs: "É lo Spirito Santo!! É San Michele!!" (or whatever the name of the saint is), and rush to the front of the church amid canon blasts and the ringing of bells. But when they reach the front door of the church the first time they suddenly stop, turn around and run all the way back to the gate. Then, they turn around again and at last rush into the church shouting their dedication to the saint and the Holy Spirit. It is an athletic feat of beauty, perseverance and strength that defines good Catholic Culture. We were blessed to be witnesses to such an uplifting event and pray it continues forever as a great testament to the faith. If you would like to see amazing videos of the procession you can visit our website at [www.sistersofreparation.org](http://www.sistersofreparation.org).



*Geraci Mayor and City Council presents Annunciation picture to the sisters.*



## **ALASKA**



What do you get when you mix copious amounts of water, shaving cream, powdered sugar, and red, blue, green and purple colored powder? You get MESSY WARS! Yes, messy wars, the coup de grace of St. Theresa's Summer camp in the beautiful Wasilla Valley, just an hour north of Anchorage, Alaska.

Sr. Mary Francis and Sr. Mary Augustine were invited to the summer camp to witness to the children about the beauty of their Catholic faith, and they very quickly became part of the crew. Each had to select a "camp name." One chose Sr. Spike and the other became Sr. Veg. Can you guess who was who? (Hint: one represents a volleyball player and the other a gardener). The sisters were asked many wonderful questions about everything from, "why did you become a sister," to "why do you wear a red cord," but the question they were asked most was, "Are you going to participate in Messy Wars?" As you can see from the picture, the answer was a resounding YES, and they were the first sisters in recent camp history to draft themselves into the war.



Each day of the camp was filled with prayer, lots of activity, songs, skits and games. Among the sisters' favorite camp activities were kayaking on the beautiful lake, archery and ga-ga ball. But, the most inspiring part was watching the children open up and grow in their faith. The sisters taught the children about their favorite saints, put on a skit about St. Anthony and the donkey to help the children appreciate the gift of the Eucharist, taught the children about the rosary, and simply witnessed to the faith with their love and attention.





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## *The Sisters of Reparation Christmas Newsletter*

*From the Desk of Mother Mary Wendy McMenemy.*

*A Christmas Novena will be prayed for your intentions.*

