

Celebrating Centenarians

From the Desk of Mother Mary Wendy

"God loves that bunny," said Sr. James pointing to a colorful birthday card she received for her one-hundredth birthday. "But He loves me more..."



...That's the key to old age you know...it is knowing that God loves you."

I have had the privilege of spending a lot of time with three beautiful centenarians and though their lives were as different as an oak is from a poplar, and a cedar from a redwood, these three special women share one special trait, serenity of soul.

Sr. James of the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer is a kindred spirit of Moses whom the Lord proclaimed to be the meekest man on earth. She is that simple, gentle soul who can look at a bunny card and exclaim like St. Francis of Assisi, "Sister bunny, what soft and fluffy ears God gave you!"

The second centenarian, Ruthie, converted from the Episcopal Church to the Catholic Faith in 1963 along with her husband, Rev. Ray Ryland, and their five children after a long and heartfelt search for the Truth. Fr. Ryland wrote about his conversion and the journey from minister to priest in "Drawn from Shadows into Truth," a book I highly recommend. The couple also helped to start the Coming Home Network aired on EWTN, as a beacon for all those searching for



Sr. James

their true spiritual home. Whenever I visited Ruthie after the passing of Fr. Ryland, I noticed that she always had a beautiful arrangement of flowers on her coffee table, with her black prayer books right next to her armchair. Ah' when a heart is as close to God's heart as Ruthie's was, stillness and peace reign where that heart lives, and it is more refreshing than a spring rain.



Ruthie Ryland

thousand miles away from her home and friends in St. Louis. While we were on missions out West this Spring, we brought a priest friend, Fr. Michael Suhy, to give Ellen the sacraments. No sooner had she received Father's blessing than she exclaimed, "Now we have to do the same thing for Cora, Becky and John." She immediately reached for her walker and whizzed down the hallway to make sure every Catholic she knew received the sacraments. Her zeal reminded me of the haste St. Mary Magdalene made to announce the Resurrection to St. Peter. Ellen is truly the sweet, determined apostle of the Sage Senior Living Center in Jackson Hole, who made way for all to receive the Lord's blessing. As the Proverb says: "The glory of the young is their strength; the gray hair of experience is the splendor of the old." (Prov 20:29)

Finally, there is Ellen Carter, the sister of my Aunt Bubbles. She possesses an elegance and goodness that belong to a bygone era. At the spry young age of ninety-nine, Ellen graciously agreed to move into an assisted living facility in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, over a



Ellen Carter



Not too far behind..

It's not only our centenarians that show us the way, our nonagenarians (I had to look that word up) have something to teach us too.

We were doing missions in Louisiana during Lent and stopped in to visit our dear friend Ding Hoffpauer who, at 94 years old, acts like she is just beginning to live. She is a local Catholic legend and prayer warrior of the first order, daily reciting all twenty decades of the rosary along with several other devotional prayers. Her home is a monument to the faith with statues and first-class relics of the saints surrounded by end tables covered with bowls of tempting candy. Holiness is truly sweet!

Ding's southern hospitality doesn't stop with candy. Her freezers are filled with homemade dinners like gumbo and etouffee which she is happy to share with those who stop by for a visit, and her shelves are full of prayer books, colorful rosaries, and a myriad of devotionals that she hands out with fervor. But the best part about Ding is her contagious smile, southern laugh, and memorable charm.

The perseverance of each of these women personifies the beautiful Psalm 92:
 "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, and grow like a cedar of Lebanon...
 They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green."

May you have a very Merry Christmas and thank you for all your kind support.

- Mother Mary Wendy

Answer to the question on the back: Well, if you're nuns it's not to load his pistol but his stomach. Every Sunday in July we brought him fresh baked bread and a homemade platter of four cheese ravioli topped with the reddest tomato sauce and hand-picked green basil. We baked pasta enough to last him until we returned the following Sunday.



Gap with two of his mares

Mermentau, Louisiana



Faith, fabulous food and friendly people, the definition of Louisiana! Our Lenten mission in Mermentau was a grace-filled time. We reconnected with old friends and made several new friends. We ministered to college students on retreat, friends who had lost loved ones, and a man in the hospital recovering from an overdose.

Legatus of Atlanta



Mother Wendy was a lively and entertaining addition to an open panel discussion at a monthly Legatus dinner in Atlanta. The audience of business professionals asked some very thoughtful questions and the responses of each panelist were refreshing and insightful.

GOD'S TIMING IS WITHIN SECONDS...

We all know that God's timing is perfect but sometimes it's so noticeably perfect that you shake your head in wonder.

It was our last day on mission and we went to mass at the local Catholic church. We stopped in the center of town for a morning picnic of coffee and leftover sandwiches. Mother Wendy decided to make one last visit to the church before departing for home. We said some brief prayers and then left. As we were descending the stairs, a tearful young woman (we will call her Naomi) approached us, asking if the priest was still in the church.

Mother said that he was probably in the rectory and asked if there was something we could do for her. She said, "I am the mother of four, am 6-weeks pregnant, and took an abortion pill because my doctor felt I was high risk." She regretted her decision and was desperate for help.

Mother had recently read that abortion pills could be reversed so we rushed to the local emergency room to see what could be done. Boy did we learn a lot. The ER would not see her, nor would the Ob-Gyn on call; they insisted she return to her own doctor who prescribed the pills.

After several frantic phone calls on a Saturday in summer when everyone is hiking in the mountains or visiting the national parks, we connected with some very knowledgeable young women from the local pro-life clinic. We learned that in some cases there are two pills taken. One to prepare the body and the second one to abort the baby. Naomi had only taken the first pill and we were "inside the window" to stop the process. We also discovered that the administering doctor is required by law to prescribe progesterone, the pills which can stop the body's preparation for an abortion, if the mother requests it.

Naomi did request the progesterone pills and we stayed with her until the prescription was finally filled and she had taken the medicine. As we left for our next destination we marveled that our encounter with Naomi was a matter of God's perfect timing. Had it been only 30 seconds later, we would have missed her. To this date, praise God, Naomi is still carrying the baby. The prolife center will continue to see her through the pregnancy and assist her in every way.



We prayed a rosary with Naomi in front of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Follansbee, WV



Combine a Lenten Reflection with a fish fry and you feed both the soul and body. For three consecutive Fridays, Fr. Jude of St. Anthony's invited the sisters to give a Lenten Reflection in the church and then all were invited to the parish hall for a delicious fried fish meal.

Rochester Divine Mercy Sunday Mission



Divine Mercy Sunday is always special, but this year it was extra special for Sr. Mary Francis. We were invited by Fr. Justin Miller, her good friend, to speak on the incredible graces associated with Divine Mercy Sunday. The church was packed and among the attendees were Sr. Mary Francis' parents, her brother and his new wife.

**Sisters of Reparation to the
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The Sisters of Reparation Christmas Newsletter

From the Desk of Mother Mary Wendy McMenemy

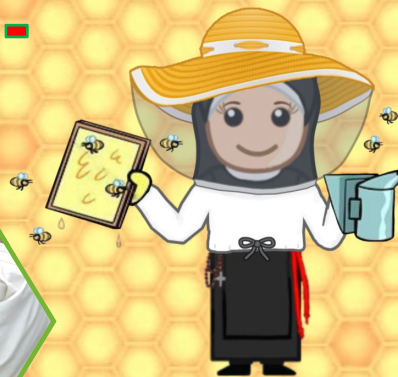
*'May your soul, like a mystical
bee, never abandon the dear
little King and may everything
within it be for Him.'*

-ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Get the latest BUZZ ...



Sr. Mary Francis learns about
beekeeping from the Visitation
Sisters of Tyngham, MA.



Missionary Territory in Idaho

*"Your Words O' Lord are Sweeter
than Honey from the Comb"* -Ps 119:103

QUESTION OF THE YEAR:

What can you do for Gap, an 87-year-old Sicilian cowboy who single-handedly takes care of a ranch with six horses, lots of peacocks and a faithful dog named Nina? (You remember him from our previous newsletter?)

