



Congregation of the Good Samaritan

“Little Thoughts from the Big Thicket”

December 5, 2010

Check out our website at <http://www.cgsorder.com>

From our house to your house. . .



May you have a most blessed Christmas!

This icon was a past Christmas gift from a very dear friend and now Board Member, Father Donald Rice (You will find a short biography of him in this issue). It now hangs in a place of honor as the focal point of the living room at the new monastery. We thought it a fitting way to say to each and every one of you, “Have a very Merry Christmas!”

Fr. John Benedict, C.S.S.

Bro. John of the Cross, F.A.D. C/CGS

Our first Christmas in the new Monastery! It is exciting—but with so much work to do on the house and the grounds, there won't be too much time to sit around and think about it. But we do plan to have a tree and to decorate a little outdoors. We won't buy anything new to fit the house, but we have things left over from other Christmases in other places, so we won't be without a bit of Christmas Spirit.

Of course, like everywhere else, new decorations are showing up at the neighbors house, the little communities around us are all gearing up and store fronts are alive with Christmas. We took a little

tour of the area and took pictures, some of which are included on page 4.

Of course, Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without music, and Father John Benedict is working on it. (Want a copy? Let us know.) Sister Anne's family visited on the Sunday Next Before Advent and we sang all the Thanksgiving favorites to the accompaniment of recorded organ music. It was wonderful—And we are sure that Christmas at the Monastery will be even more SPECTACULAR! We will show you some pictures of Christmas, 2010 in the January issue.

Have a very, very happy and blessed Holyday

Progress Is Slowing Down

Our understanding of God's Will for us here is evolving. The original plan was for Father John Benedict to go back to hospice nursing right away. But it immediately became obvious that, if we were to make this property livable and to turn it into the educational and retreat center that we envisioned, it was going to take much more work than Brother John of the Cross (who has cerebral palsy) and Sister Anne (who is eternally old) could do without the help of Father John Benedict. So, we have been managing on Brother's and Sister's Social Security, help from families and friends, and a honorarium as a supply priest to get along—until now. It is becoming very obvious that, without some additional funding, not only can we not pay our bills, progress on the monastery will have to come to a screeching halt as well. We have decided that the best idea will be for Father to find a half time job, which will add to the coffers, but still allow him some time to work on the remodeling here at the monastery. We now have the essentials of life (water, sewer, electricity and heat) so we will be comfortable and safe here.

The Saturn is still not running, but we do have the Grand Fury which (with a new set of tires) is doing just fine. It is old, but us old folks can and do get around. But a prayer or two would be appreciated.

Donations are always welcome and gratefully accepted. If any of you feel so inclined you can send a check to our post office box (P.O. Box 527, Rye, TX 77369) or to our PayPal account (sranneegs@gmail.com) In any case, make sure you designate the donation for the Congregation of the Good Samaritan.

And please do keep the Congregation in your prayers. God is guiding this project but He likes to know that He has your support. We will continue to pray and to listen to His Holy Spirit. Together—God, you and the Congregation—we can and will make this work!

Father John Cotterell (some of you knew him) used to say, "Faith can move mountains, but you should bring along a shovel." To that we add, "Yes, but first ask God which one we should use."



Family is very important to everyone, and monks and nuns are no exception. Yes, God and then the Community are our first priorities, but we have parents, brothers, sisters, and even children and grandchildren who were our families long before we took our vows and who continue to hold special places in our lives and

in our prayers. And no time of the year brings that to mind more than the Christmas holiday season.

Sister Anne was able to take a week to visit with her family in San Antonio for Thanksgiving and she had a wonderful time. She is safely back in the fold, after an eventful trip home. On the way here, about 60 miles from Rye, the serpentine belt on her daughter's car came off. She managed to get it fixed (not an easy trick on a Sunday afternoon in the "boonies") but it delayed the trip by about six hours. Sister Anne is safely back at the monastery and her daughter and granddaughters are home in San Antonio and our 'car angels' are relaxing again in heaven. Thanks be to God.

Sister is also hoping for a quick trip in January to Albuquerque, New Mexico see her sister and brother-in-law there.

Brother John of the Cross leaves Tuesday for a visit in Denver with his mother and brother and with friends left behind. He is looking forward to seeing everyone, but is a bit worried about how Blackie (the kitten) will fare. Father has agreed to do the lion's share of entertaining and caring for Blackie while he is gone, but Blackie will miss Brother John. They have solidly bonded!

And Father John Benedict is hoping to be able to take a few days to visit his mother in Plainview, Texas. He hasn't seen her in almost four years, so it is time for a visit.

Fortunately, when we visit with relatives, our travel expenses are generally paid for, or, obviously, we would not be able to make these trips.

We know that many of you will be traveling over the holidays. Please let us know when you are traveling and we will add you to our intercessions while you are away. E-mail us at sranneegs@gmail.com or drop us a line.

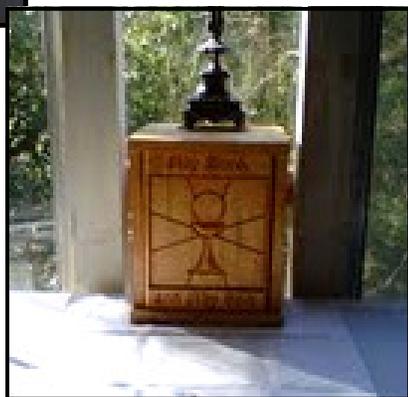
Know Someone Who Might Like the Newsletter?

We would like to get this Newsletter out to as many people as possible, so that everyone will know what we are doing. We send it e-mail if possible because the price is right. If you have friends that might be interested, please send us their name and address and we will be happy to add them to the list. If *you* would rather not receive this Newsletter, let us know and we will remove you from the list. We just want folks to know who we are, what and why we are. Just send an e-mail to sranneegs@gmail.com.

Z-Truck Is Installed Carving Machine Is Up and Running



Thanks to a very generous donation, we were able to purchase the Z-Truck and it is now installed. Father has been busy (in his spare time) making a Tabernacle for the chapel and it is now his first completed project since we moved.



Pretty neat—
Huh???

A Bit Crowded, But Functional

All the tools are now ensconced in the area designated as “the Shop”. Apparently working there is somewhat of a challenge, but Father John Benedict is developing a much more patient spirit and can usually manage the inconveniences with few or no outbursts of name-calling. (Some of you should be impressed.) Obviously, the stillness of the Thicket has been good for him.



FATHER’S WORKSHOP

He fashioned a desk for his cell out of “found” wood, and it is working just fine. He has also remodeled some old shelves and cabinets to make more storage for canned goods and cleaning supplies. Soon in the plans is a cabinet and shelving unit for fabric and a spice rack over the stove. He also is planning on making lots of bookshelves and even a sofa for the living room. And

that is all just for the inside. He has lots of building plans for outside as well. Of course, we need the supplies, but they will come. We also need to get his car out of the shop so that we have something to haul any lumber we do get. Won't fit in the car!

Meet the Board

Our Board is very small—it consists of Father John Benedict, Sister Anne, Bishop Presley Hutchens and Father Donald Rice. However, Bishop Hutchens and Father Rice do play very important roles in the functioning of the Congregation, so we want to introduce them, one at a time.

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A Bit More About Father Barry Hodgkin



It arrived too late for last month's newsletter, but I thought you would still enjoy seeing this picture. Of course, Father Hodgkin is on the left with his wife, Noluvuyo, and his two children, Sandiswa (Benedicto) and Khakhaletu (Dorothea). He has not seen his family for 9 months, a problem mostly with red tape and visas. We know he misses them especially at this family time of the year. Please keep Father and his family in your prayers this Christmas sea-

Newsflash

“On the 29th November Noluvuyo Hodgkin and children left Cape Town Airport on their way to Caracas to join her husband Father Barrie Hodgkin at St Mary's Cathedral in Caracas, Venezuela. We wish them every success and hope that they settle in soon, the children were sad to leave their 'best friends' behind.”

Our own personal Christmas miracle!

At the airport,
ready to go!
Our Christmas
Prayer is that
God will continue
to bless you with
the most
Merry Christmas
ever!





BOARD MEMBER THE VENERABLE DONALD B. RICE

Meet the Ven. Donald B. Rice, a member of our Board, whose title designates him as Archdeacon of the Diocese of New Orleans. He currently serves as Rector of Christ Church, Metairie LA, and is thus

Dean of the Pro-Cathedral. Back in the days of the formation of the Congregation, he was also Executive Director of Good Samaritan Services in Bridge City, LA. In this latter role, he was part of the birthing of the Congregation—the Good Samaritan, what else? Over a series of months and many informal meetings, he and Sister Anne shaped the early versions of the Statutes and Customary of the proposed Order. Recognizing his role as advisor to the Congregation, Sister Anne appointed him as Chaplain. And thus he remains (Fr. Rice observes that “inertia is a very important aspect of the life of the Church in the world.”). When the Congregation of the Good Samaritan was finally approved by the Diocese, he was asked to become a member of the Board of Directors as well as continuing to serve as "Chaplain Emeritus" and advisor. And in that role, he continues.

It should be noted that technically Fr. Rice is not a member of the Congregation itself. He has frequently observed that he does not consider himself called to the religious life at the present time. “Of course, if for some unusual reason, God might change his mind (meaning my mind), that would be obeyed,” he says. He is, on the other hand, obviously supportive of the CGS and the religious life in general. “I agree,” he recalls, “with the oft-stated opinion of the late Bishop James Mote that the religious life is intrinsic to the fullness of the Catholic Church and must always be encouraged.” “Therefore, so long as the members of CGS will allow me in their midst, I will try to be as helpful as I can,” he promises.

Fr. Rice attended the College of Wooster, Wooster Ohio (BA) and Virginia Theological Seminary (MDiv) before being ordained both deacon and priest in the Diocese of Ohio (PECUSA). He met Sally (Sarah Jane Scriven), a cradle Episcopalian, on the only blind date he ever had, in Cleveland in 1964 while she was a Senior at Denison University, home for Christmas holiday. Two years and 7 dates later, he proposed . By the time they married in 1967, he was curate at Redeemer, Lorain OH and Sally was teaching in the Lorain schools.

After serving as curate in Lorain OH, he completed his Master in Pathology (MS) degree at Case Western Reserve University, joined the Medical School Faculty as

an Instructor in the Department of Pathology, and continued to exercise his ministry in the Episcopal Church, concluding in 1978 after two years at St. James, Cleveland (now ACC). For the next five years he was Administrator of the Pathology Departments in both Hospital and Medical School at the Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York. Shortly after arriving in New York, he began his ministry as an active ACC priest, having been received in orders by the late Bishop William F. Burns, Diocese of the Resurrection. In 1983, the Board of Governors of Holyrood Seminary, Liberty NY, invited him to become Dean, in which position he continued until he resigned in 1993 to become Priest Associate and, one year later, Rector of Christ Church, Metairie LA. In 2003, he became a member of the Board of Directors and part-time Financial Director of Good Samaritan Services, an effort of Anglican Catholic Social Services, Bridge City LA, which became involved in food banking, tutoring and after-school programs and, after Hurricane Katrina, special help with the psycho-social aspects of recovery. He was appointed Acting and then Executive Director and served as such until his resignation for health reasons in 2007.

Amongst his other duties with CGS, Father Rice is tasked to interview all potential resident members and make recommendation to the Governor/Governess. Beyond that, his role is to give general advice on the spiritual life of the Congregation and to assist in providing clerical supply as needed .

Downtown Livingston



at



Christmas