



In my God is the joy of my soul. On April 24th, 2021, our Sister Mary Rose of the Pure Heart, O.P. made Solemn Profession in the hands of Mother Mary of the Precious Blood of Jesus, O.P.! What a joyful event, attended by Sister's family and friends from all over the country, who braved all the COVID complications to be present.

Archbishop Thomas Rodi graciously presided at the solemn Mass, and several Dominican, Franciscan, and diocesan priests were able to concelebrate as well. Sister's brother, Deacon David Allen sang the Gospel, while her other brother Jonathan served at Mass. We are very grateful for such a special and beautiful ceremony and to have Sister Mary Rose make solemn vows to belong to Him, *usque ad mortem!*



In his homily for the occasion, Fr. James Brent, O.P. spoke of the special grace given to Sister Mary Rose in her contemplative Dominican vocation. "In God is the joy of my soul," she could say with the prophet Isaiah, as our cloister walls, grilles, and monastic observances are here to protect such grace at work in our hearts. We "let the Word of God dwell in [us] richly," as St. Paul says, through our singing God's praise in "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" and especially through our Eucharistic Adoration and Perpetual Rosary.

Mysteriously, our carrying the Word in our hearts is fruitful for the salvation of souls. Most importantly, Father spoke of our vocation as a response of love to Jesus Himself, who said, "Remain in My Love." Jesus gave Himself in love and suffering on the Cross for our salvation, and each consecrated man and woman is called to join Him in His offering. "Why all this grace? Why the grace to rejoice in Him alone? . . . Why the abiding in His Love at Mary's side? Why the cloister? . . . But on the day of a Solemn profession, the veil of Eternity is lifted for a moment that we might catch a glimpse of Eternal Designs. *It was not you who chose Me, but I who chose you.*"

Every year we look forward to the celebration of St. Dominic's feast day, but this year, the 800th Jubilee of his *Dies Natalis* (death, or heavenly birthday), is especially memorable. We have been preparing by our traditional Dominican devotion of the "15 Tuesdays" leading up to his feast day on August 8th. You can check out our website to find meditations written by the Sisters reflecting on the mysteries of the Rosary and the virtues and life of St. Dominic. What an inspiration to reflect and share about our Holy Father St. Dominic, through the lens of the mysteries that were so dear to his heart.



Along with St. Dominic, St. Joseph is one of our favorite saints, and this year we have the joy of celebrating them both! According to St. Thomas Aquinas, "*There are many saints to whom God has given the power to assist us in the necessities of life but the power given to St. Joseph is unlimited: it extends to all our needs, and all those who invoke him with confidence are sure to be heard.*" St. Joseph has been invoked for help for various projects around the monastery, especially for sending us much needed workmen assistance. Particularly impressive were the twenty-two men who came from Prattville and Montgomery with chainsaws, trucks, dump wagon and manpower on March 20th to help us with much-needed clearing of some trees and storm damage on our grounds. We are more grateful than we can say to all those who help us in so many ways. We are definitely keeping up our prayers to St. Joseph, for it seems that there is always more to be done!



As we know well, Alabama is no stranger to tornadoes, hurricanes and other violent storms. On May 4th, as we began chanting Vespers of Sts. Philip and James, a whirlwind ripped across our land, toppling huge trees, ripping large branches and sending pounding rain against the windows, even lifting off one of our small storage buildings and hurling it in a crumpled mass against a pine tree before raging off to other neighborhoods to wreak even worse damage. We gave prayers of thanksgiving for deliverance from more severe damage and for so many of our friends who prayed and expressed their concern.

We were going on retreat—but what about the flowers?? As cloistered nuns, each year we make a community retreat of eight full days, when we hear conferences preached by one of our Dominican friars, keep an extra degree of prayerful silence around the house, and take a break from all but the most necessary daily work. This year our retreat began just as we finished planting the summer annuals in our flower garden. How to keep the flowers alive and flourishing amid the hot, scorching weather? Our Lord turned His merciful gaze upon His spouses hoping to spend this extra time with Him. The weather changed and daily afternoon thundershowers watered the flowers abundantly, just as the heavenly rain of His grace nourished our souls during our annual retreat, preparing a beautiful flowering of charity for God and souls.