



FROM THE HEART OF

The Pelican

NUMBER 18

SUMMER 2017

Our new home!



Editorial

SR. GERTRUDE GILLETTE

DEAR FAMILY AND FRIENDS,

EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, something wonderful happens that is so unexpected that one knows immediately that it is a gift from God. This is what we experienced when our new property was dropped into our lap. It all began with an interior nudge last summer during our retreat, when I felt the Lord urge me to start looking for property. Since we were pretty naive about real estate, the whole property search was quite a learning experience. We looked through hundreds of houses online and formed lists of those we wanted to see. In the end, we visited thirty properties in at least a dozen counties in six months. We almost settled on a couple of them, but each time one of us couldn't quite commit and so we kept looking. We finally both settled on a place in Salisbury, not far from the local Catholic parish. We negotiated the price, had the house inspected, the whole nine yards... but there was still a longing for something with more space and privacy, so even with the closing date approaching, we kept looking. Then, a week before closing (and five days before the due diligence period expired), an intriguing piece of property in Rutherford county came across our computer screen. After initially locating where the town was (where in heaven's name is Rutherfordton?!!) and the distance to the nearest Catholic church (twenty minutes... doable), we thought, hmm: this has got potential. We went out to look at it, and immediately saw its budding possibilities: it would make a perfect place to start a monastery. We made an offer, but it was so low that we seriously doubted the owners would accept it. If they didn't we'd fall back on the Salisbury house. In the two days the owners were mulling over our offer, we prayed that God's will



be done and surrendered ourselves to go either way. When they accepted the offer at 4:45pm the day before the due diligence was up on the first house, we knew that God had intervened on our behalf. Even the realtor couldn't believe we got it. Looking back, I think we may have forced the Lord's hand. It was in his plan that we should have this piece of land all along. But when we decided to go for another place, and were serious about it, he had to jump in and do something quick, as if saying: "No, not that one! I have one over here for you!" He then acted speedily to make it all happen in the few days left to him. Isn't that just like the Lord? He enjoys bringing his friends right up to the deadline and then says: surprise! We give "thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love endures forever" (Ps 136:1). +

VOCATIONS!

If you know a young woman who is discerning a vocation, please share this newsletter with her and direct her to our website. Thank you!



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Queen of Peace

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News & Updates



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ISSUE 18: SUMMER 2017

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OUR NEW ADDRESS:

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Cover: Our new home.

NATURALLY, OUR BIG NEWS is that we are moving! We told you *how* we obtained the new property in the editorial, now we'll *describe* it for you. It's a seven acre farm on a hilltop ten minutes northwest of the town of Rutherfordton, North Carolina. The view from the hill is amazing, with Mt. Mitchell—the highest peak east of the Mississippi—lying to the northwest and Grandfather Mountain to the northeast, along with many other smaller peaks in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The property is entirely fenced in, including five separate enclosures for animals. There is besides, a new barn, a chicken coop and a few other small structures.

The house was built in two segments, the lower level (which is interiorly inaccessible to the upper floors) is a unit in itself, with two bedrooms. After giving it a face lift, we hope to turn it into a retreat house. The upper level and a half has three bedrooms and two and a half baths. Since Easter week, we have been going out periodically to paint it (with some help



Top: Side view of the house, where we wish to add the chapel.

Middle Top: View from the porch.

Middle Bottom: The kitchen.

Bottom: The barn.

from some very kind St. Mark's parishioners, God bless them!), along with the usual cleaning and minor repairs that need to be taken care of. There are also two large porches, the front one ideal for taking in the view of the mountains. The large windows on the upper level of the north side of the house also afford a wonderful panoramic view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The property sits back from the road, which is fortunately a quiet country road. A deep peace emanates from the land and the beauty we are surrounded with. A perfect location for a place called "Queen of Peace Monastery"!

OTHER NEWS



As we put this newsletter together (June, 2017), we have the joy of having **Jennifer Walker** (above) with us for a month's observership. Jennifer is a convert to the Catholic faith, and tried her vocation with the Carmelites for several years before discerning that the Lord had other plans for her. We pray that her time with us will be one of many blessings.

In an attempt to develop new skills we both took some lessons in **stained glass** this year. After making some very simple crosses, we each took on a project that stretched our skills to the max! In the end, we were both happy with the



results, but we certainly gained a whole new appreciation for those who work in this field!

Sister Gertrude was blest this year with her first great-nephew, the son of her nephew (Garrett) and his wife (Michelle) whose wedding picture was featured in the Pelican last summer. **Koa Steven Gillette** was born on Feb 14, 2017 and is a bundle of joy for the whole family. May God destine him for holiness and greatness!



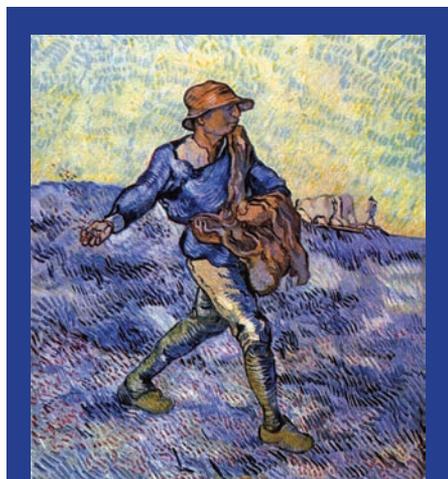
UPCOMING NEWS

Sr. Scholastica is heading to **Fatima** for a pilgrimage with some parishioners on July 19. What a wonderful gift to visit Fatima during the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions there! She will remember you all in her prayers at the shrine in Portugal.

With the imminent move to the new property, nearly two hours west of us, Sr. Gertrude **retired** from her teaching job at Christ the King High School in June. She will, however, be giving a semester of talks this Fall for the Women of Joy at St. Mark's parish in Huntersville NC on the virtue of **humility**, based on the teachings of St. Bernard as presented by

Abbot Bernard Bonowitz in his excellent book, *St. Bernard's Three Course Banquet*.

Moving date to the new property is Saturday, **August 19**. Please note our **new address** in the credit box on p. 3. With all the wonderful features of the new house and property, the one major lack is a room that can function adequately as a chapel. For the time being, we'll be using the lower level common area until we can **add on a section to the house**. We plan to add it to the east side of the house, which is the side without windows in the picture at the top of p.4. **If you would like to contribute towards the addition, any donation would be much appreciated!!!!** Thank you in advance and may God's generous heart reward you. +



Dear Sowers,

Thank you in advance for your yearly contribution! To our other readers, we would be very grateful for any contribution you can make towards our chapel addition! God bless you much!

Please send your donations to: Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Peace, 687 Moss Rd., Rutherfordton, NC 28139.

May you be richly rewarded by our good God!

The Visitation

PART II: Mary as the new Ark of the Covenant

BY SISTER GERTRUDE GILLETTE

PERHAPS THE MOST EXCITING message of the Visitation is Mary's link with the Ark of the Covenant.

St. Luke takes the words and events surrounding this visit of Mary to her cousin (Lk 1:39-45), and links them to an event in the Old Testament that sheds additional light on what God is revealing in this episode. The event is that of **David receiving the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem** as related in 2 Sam 6.

Let's first review a brief history of the ark. The Lord instructed Moses to have it built when he was on Mt. Sinai. It was a box, carrying the stone of the 10 commandments; the staff of Aaron, and a jar with some manna from the desert. On top of the box were two Seraphim forming a seat with their wings. The seat represented God's throne and the ark thus represented God's invisible but real presence among this people. The ark was made of acacia wood, glided with gold; it was carried by the Levites by means of two long poles which they hoisted on to their shoulders. After crossing the Jordan River, Joshua set up the ark in Shiloh (c. 1250 BC) where it stayed on and off for several centuries. The Philistines captured it at one point, but after seven months returned it because they experienced nothing but misfortune while it was in their keeping. The ark was next at Kirjath-jearim at the house of Abinadab for



about twenty years until David decided to bring it to his capital in Jerusalem. Kirjath-jearim was about ten miles north of Jerusalem and Abinadab's house was on a hill. As the ark was making its way amidst great celebration, an accident occurred in which one of Abinadab's sons died when he put forth his hand to steady the ark when the oxen stumbled. Seeing the young man dead, David was traumatized and afraid to bring the ark to his house. Instead, he diverted the ark to the nearby residence of Obededom. The ark was there for three months and in those three months, the house of Obededom was blest by its presence. When David heard this, he felt better about inviting the ark to Jerusalem. He had it brought with great rejoicing and festivities, even himself dancing in front of the ark. I have listed the two accounts in parallel columns below, to highlight the similarities which St. Luke draws

between Mary's visit to Elizabeth and the ark "visiting" the house of Obededom.

Noteworthy also is St. Luke's use of the word "exclaimed" (ἀνεφώνησεν) in verse 42 when Elizabeth, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, "exclaimed with a loud cry: Blessed are you among women." The word used in Greek is used only this once in the NT, but is used six times in the OT, mostly to describe Levites praising God before the ark. For example, it is used thrice in 1 & 2 Chronicles in the description of the Levites making lots of noise before the ark as it was being brought into Jerusalem by David—a parallel account of the story to that of 2 Samuel—and once when David sets up the Levites in their duty as ministers of the ark, instructing them to *make themselves heard* in unison, praising the Lord. Luke surely saw the link between those who stood before the ark, giving joyful praise to the Lord in his presence, and Elizabeth doing the same before Mary and her divine Child.

Thus, in Catholic tradition, Mary is known as the new Ark of the Covenant, having been blest to carry the Lord himself within her.

Perhaps the first to make this connection between Mary and the Ark was St. Maximus of Turin (c. 450 AD):

...David, at once king and prophet, is also said to have danced before the ark of the covenant with much singing. In high rejoicing he broke into dancing, for in the Spirit he foresaw Mary, born of his own line.... The prophet David danced, then. But what

2 Sam 6:2, 9-16: David and the Ark of the Covenant	Luke 1:39-43, 56: Mary's visit to Elizabeth
v. 3 <i>The ark</i> is traveling through the hill country of Judea , making a journey from north to south.	<i>Mary</i> is going to a city in the hill country of Judea , also making a journey from north to south
v. 9 David asks: How can <i>the ark</i> of the Lord come to me?	v. 43 Elizabeth asks: Why is this granted me, that <i>the mother of my Lord</i> should come to me?
v. 10-11 <i>The ark</i> stays at the house of Obededom for three months .	v. 56 <i>Mary</i> stays at the house of Zechariah for about three months .
v. 12, 16 David leaps and dances for joy before <i>the ark</i> , which carries the presence of the Lord .	v. 41 John the Baptist, still in the womb, leaps for joy when <i>Mary</i> , carrying within her the presence of the Lord , greets Elizabeth.

Announcement of John's birth	Announcement of Jesus' birth
The Angel Gabriel comes to announce the birth of a <i>prophet</i> .	The Angel Gabriel comes to announce the birth of the <i>Son of God</i> .
The birth will take place miraculously, from one who is <i>physically barren and advanced in age, by normal human means of conception</i> .	The birth will take place miraculously, through the conception of a <i>virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit</i> .
<i>Zachariah doubts</i> the veracity of Gabriel's words, and is <i>struck dumb</i> until the birth of John.	<i>Mary believes</i> Gabriel's words and is blest with the <i>Word of God becoming flesh within her</i> .

would we say that the ark was if not holy Mary, since the ark carried within it the tables of the covenant, while Mary bore the master of the same covenant? The one bore the law within itself and the other the gospel, but the ark gleamed within and without with the radiance of gold, while holy Mary shone within and without with the splendor of virginity; the one was adorned with earthly gold, the other with heavenly (*Serm 42, 5*).

In v. 45, Elizabeth ends her praise of Mary with “Blessed is **she who believed**.” Why is Mary’s faith being praised here? The background to this verse is the earlier account in Luke of the announcement to Zachariah of John the Baptist’s birth. Luke wants us to see both the similarities and the differences in the two narratives. Notice in the table at the top of this page that in each event, there is a series of incidents, which contrasts a lesser and a greater.

Mary’s **faith** therefore can first of all be seen in contrast to Zachariah’s **lack of faith**. Zachariah did not doubt that an angel was delivering a message to him. He did not question Gabriel’s credentials: where are you from? how do I know you are a real messenger from God? But he questioned what he said: “How shall I know this?” Zachariah wanted a *sign*. Like the Jews thirty years later who asked Jesus for a sign, Zachariah had some of that same difficulty in believing in the supernatural. Zachariah

got his sign, he was struck dumb, meaning, that he had misused his tongue in addressing God and needed to learn more humility and learn to believe.

Mary’s humility was so deep that she could never think that her perception of reality or her ideas were better than another’s. So, to begin with, she stood on firmer ground than Zachariah. Secondly, Mary’s faith was not a questioning faith: “why?” She didn’t ask: “Why me?” Or, “How can you ask me to give up my honor before the rest of the world?” She didn’t try to reason with God: “Wouldn’t my being pregnant before living with Joseph be a discredit to your message, since others will look on me as a sinner?” etc. Again, these questions would never arise in a soul as humble as Mary’s. A friend of mine once shared with me that she was given a lesson in humility when she questioned the Lord about why something was happening in her life; the Lord responded: “Those who wish to serve, do not ask why.” As one who preeminently wished to serve, Mary’s whole being humbly acquiesced to the Lord’s will for her without making demands. May we all learn from her humility to serve without questioning. God-willing, in the next issue, we will contrast Mary’s faith with that of Abraham, who is known as the greatest OT figure of faith. Is Mary’s faith greater than that of Abraham? If so, how? +