



*Hope never stands still,
Hope is always happening and makes us go forward.
That hope that the Child of Bethlehem gives us,
offers us a purpose,
a happy fate in the present,
salvation for mankind,
bliss to those who entrust themselves to the merciful God.*

Pope Francis

St. Paul summarizes this with the expression: In this hope we are saved (Romans 8, 24). That means: by going thru this world with hope, we are saved. And then we may ask ourselves the question: do I lead my life with hope or is my internal life rigid, closed? Is my heart closed or open to the hope that not only causes me to go on my way, but to go it together with Jesus? "

How did we try to live with Jesus in the past year? We want to inform you about this in our Advent- and newsletter.

Many people saw to it that we were fed with spiritual food this year. Many thanks to our friars from Sint-Truiden for presiding daily in the Eucharist. We were blessed with all kinds of conferences from, amongst others, F. André, F. Bob, Rev. F. Tercic, Rev. F. Van Hilst. Also the triduum accompanied by Rev. F. Martin Moors and the retreat by Rev. F. Jaak Jansen helped us grow in our religious life.

The monthly contemplative dialogue with our friars were interrupted in 2017 due to F. Marcel's illness. Now that he's recovering well, we'll continue our monthly gathering with the writings of Francis and Clare.

There have been a number of changes in our community. In our last newsletter we wrote to you about Susan who would join us. After living here for some time, she decided that this life, unfortunately, was not her way. The departure of sr. Carmen had a great impact on our community. It is a mourning process on both sides. She now lives alone in an apartment in Ranst and works there connected to the reflection house 'Hof Zevenbergen'. There was also an election in our community chaired by Vicar Boonen and sr. Rosa Olaerts, our new visitator. She follows sr. Werner Boutsen who resigned after 9 years of wise and generous commitment to the religious of Limburg. Sister Mariette continues to take on the task of abbess and is assisted by sr. Karien as vicar and sr. Francine as a council member.

Sister Joanna has been helped a lot with a new hip and is active as always.

With help and support from the community, sr. Elisabeth has been able to make time for leading a number of activities: the reading days; these are reflection days for Poor Clares and Franciscans and a Franciscan Meeting in Nijmegen; this is a reflection weekend for Poor Clares and Franciscans in formation of the Netherlands. In November, she conducted a well-attended reflection afternoon for all those interested.

A source of permanent care is the construction work that we have been hoping for for such a long time. We still do not have a building permit. Waiting is taking a lot of time and we grow impatient ...

A lot of beautiful things happened. There was the event of Eurofleurs 2017: the European Championship for Young Florists. Hosted this year at the monastery of our fellow Franciscan friars of Sint-Truiden. Queen Mathilde visited the young florists and also made time to meet us. We have a beautiful photo as a souvenir!

We were invited by our bishop on the day of the Consecrated Life in Hasselt. It was a very festive event because of the 50-year jubilee of our diocese. We celebrated the vespers in St. Martin's Church and were received for a reception in the bishop's house. Sister Mariette and sr. Karien took part in the meeting with the bishop in Tongeren with the superiors of the monasteries of Limburg. Our bishop also paid us a visit during the course of the year. We appreciate his dedication to our community.

The annual meeting of the Poor Clares of Flanders took place in Boom. It was a happy reunion and we were well taken care of. Sister M. Benedicte and her fellow sisters did not spare themselves to make it a festive and heart-warming day.

A nice, recurring initiative was the singing of the vespers in the Saint Gangulfus Church opposite our monastery for Lent. A lot of people joined us in prayer. An even greater turnout came with the initiative of our new deacon Rev. F. Wim Ceunen with 'An Evening of Churches'. At Pentecost many activities took place in various churches of our city. This was concluded in the Saint Gangulfus Church, where our community sang the evening prayer together with about 250 attendees. A wonderful and intimate event!

Our community has received a lot of pleasant visits from, amongst others, prince carnival with gifts, groups of Neos, Femma, communicants, confirmees, teachers with classes, the friends of Herkenrode, a family group, etc. The priests of the deaneries Sint-Truiden and Borgloon held their recollection days in our monastery. The daily meetings with people at the door or telephone show us that many still count on us and ask for our praying intercession.

Very joyful was the annual Clara-feast with a Transitus celebration on the eve, with beautiful violin played by Ms. Nele Daenen. On the day itself there was a solemn Eucharistic celebration with the Gregorius choir led by Ms Magda Jossa and with Mr. Patrick Peters as a violinist. Saint Francis was also not forgotten. A beautiful Transitus celebration on the eve sung by the Schalmei led by F. Bob and a solemn Eucharistic celebration on the feast day brought many people together. Our two founders were also celebrated afterwards with a festive meal together with our friars.

What is also worth mentioning is the profession in our chapel of Jos, who connected with the Franciscan Third Order of Borgloon in a solemn celebration.

Many people show up for our Taizé prayer. On April 5th, we welcomed Brother Jasper from Taizé together with 120 people in a warmhearted prayer and reception afterwards. The Taizé prayer always takes place on the third Saturday of the month at 8:00 pm. WELCOME!

A beautiful Mary-concert sung by the Gregorius choir received a good turnout. And there are still some nice things waiting for us. We would like to invite you:

- On Wednesday, December 27th at 5.30 pm for a Christmas concert, sung by the children's choir 'Gregoriaantjes', together with the Gregorius choir, led by Ms. Magda Jossa.
- On every Sunday of Advent for a warmhearted evening prayer at 4.30 pm.
- On Friday 8 December for the feast of Our Lady Immaculate Conception with the Eucharist at 9.00 am, silent Worship in the morning and afternoon and evening prayer at 3.30 pm.
- On Sunday 24 December for the Christmas vigil at 8 pm.
- On December 25, Christmas, for the Eucharist at 9 am and the evening prayer at 4.30 pm
- On December 26 for the Eucharist at 9 am and the evening prayer at 5 pm.

For all this you are welcome at your Poor Clares in the Diesterstraat 66, 3800 SINT-TRUIDEN!
www.zustersclarissen3800.be

We would like to end this annual report with a warm thank you for your great affection and your sympathy towards us. Know that we also carry you, your joy and worries in our hearts and in our prayers.

May the Lord bless you and all who are dear to you with deep joy and peace.

We wish you a blissful Christmas and a blessed 2018. Peace and all that is good!

your Poor Clares from Sint-Truiden