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Advent 2024

*Spes non confundit
Hope does not put us to shame
(Rom 5, 5)*

Like a flame my hope is burning,
may my song arise to you:
Source of life that has no ending,
on life's path I trust in you.
Ev'ry nation, tongue, and people
find a light within your Word.
Scattered fragile sons and daughters
find a home in your dear Son.

Hymn Pilgrim of hope

Good friends,

On December 24, 2024, Pope Francis will open the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome for the Holy Year 2025. We are invited to set out as pilgrims of hope in this Jubilee Year. May it be a year of deepening our faith and reconciliation for us and our world.

We would like to look back with you on the past year.

We were very happy to welcome our Pope Francis to Belgium last year. His arrival was truly a sign of hope for our country. Sister Francine and Sister Elisabeth went to the Basilica of Koekelberg to meet him.

Now that our construction problems are over, we had the opportunity to have gatherings here. We got to know the upstairs neighbours in the apartments. Family and friends came to view our new home. There was a visit from the Benedictine Sisters of Loppem to our community. And many activities took place in our new monastery. We were able to welcome the council meeting of the federation. All the sisters of the Poor Claire Federation were invited to our annual Poor Claire-day. On that occasion, sand artist Immanuel Boie brought us the story of Genesis fascinatingly drawn in the sand. We were allowed to welcome our fellow sisters and brothers for the Conference-day that was given this year by our sister Elisabeth with the theme "Saint Clare, Saint Juliana of Cornillon and the Holy Sacrament". It was so good to be together as brothers and sisters!

We were able to experience being together very strongly at many moments. The Taizé celebrations in our chapel on the second Saturday of the month attract many enthusiastic people to pray together. In our wonderful chapel it is good to celebrate the Eucharist daily with an inspired group of believers. Let us not forget the holidays! We celebrated the Easter Triduum and the feast of Easter in the main church of Sint-Truiden, where we were allowed to participate in a well-cared for and beautiful liturgy together with the church-community of Sint-Truiden. We had to celebrate the feast of Saint Clare a little differently this year because we now have a much smaller chapel. For the Eucharist we crossed the street to the other side (to the Saint Gangulfus Church) to then have a reception in our monastery garden. Afterwards we enjoyed a festive evening meal together with our Franciscan Friars.

For us, 2024 has been a year of settling into our new home. We were very happy that Mgr Hoogmartens came to bless our monastery. For this celebration and the reception afterwards, we had invited all those who helped us so much with the realization of our new monastery. It was an ideal opportunity to express our gratitude; both to the Lord and to all who assisted and supported us in so many ways.

With a happy heart, we also think back to the conferences given by Fr. Tercic, Padre Erik Pétré and Fr. Coppejans; who also leads our daily Eucharistic celebration. We are grateful for everything they have offered us and still offer us on a spiritual level.

With a sad heart, but with gratitude, we think of all those who have passed away. With Saint Claire we say: 'We thank you, Lord, that you have created them'. On October 23rd, our sister Joanna passed away peacefully. Her health had been declining for some time. Her positivity and joy remain with us. We sympathized with Sister Karien at the passing of her brother Henri Poukens and with Sister Mariette at the farewell of her brother Paul Opsteijn. We remember them all with a warm heart, in the certainty that their lives are complete in God.

This Advent season invites us to open our hearts to God to be a 'flame of Love', and to radiate that hope that gives life.

*We sincerely wish you
an intimate Advent full of expectation and hope
and a blessed Christmas filled with grace
and God's Blessing for 2025.*

Your Poor Claires of Sint-Truiden-Belgium

You're always welcome for a visit!

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