



"In our lives as individuals or nations, there will always be times when we feel that we are in the midst of a desert. Yet it is precisely there that the Lord makes his presence felt.

Let us ask for the grace to believe that with God things really do change, that he will banish our fears, heal our wounds, turn our arid places into springs of water. Let us ask for the grace of hope, since hope revives our faith and rekindles our charity."

Pope Francis, 5 december 2021

As people of faith, we continue to yearn for faith, hope, and love; for ourselves and for the world in which we live. This requires a permanent givenness and going back to the source.

In response to Cor Orans (An Instruction for the Female Contemplative Life, 2017), the Poor Clares are in the process of rewriting the Constitutions. All Poor Clares worldwide were asked to answer questions about the central aspects of community life (Life with God, Community Life, our Relationships, Poverty, Enclosure and Formation). We met weekly for 2 months to answer questions about these themes. It made us think about our Poor Clare life and the future.

To properly prepare for our future, we must also embrace the past. That is why we would like to give you an insight into the past year. Let's start with the joyful celebrations:

After corona we still had a lot of catching up to do: we celebrated sr Elisabeth's silver (25) jubilee, sr Mariette's golden (50) jubilee and sr Karien's diamond (60) jubilee. It was wonderful to celebrate this with each other and our closest family.

The vespers on the eve of the feast of Saint Clare (the Transitus) was graced with organ, played by Magda Jossa and violin played by Nele Daenen. Beautiful! The Eucharist in honor of Saint Clare was also an intense celebration. The Brewery of Wilderen treated us generously with their beer 'Cuvee Clarisse' at our reception. It tasted very good! Our sisters from Kessel-Lo, our brothers from Antwerp and Hasselt were also present this year – it was good to see them all again.

A few days later our bishop Mgr. Patrick Hoogmartens visited us. We were happy to have him for lunch and grateful for the pleasant meeting. Monseigneur was also very interested in the construction of our new monastery and even went to take a look with sr Elisabeth as a guide.

Yes, our new monastery... It has taken so many years and there have been so many delays, but now we finally see our new home rising up. This year, work has been regularly halted due to the war in Ukraine, the scarcity of building materials and fewer workers. But we are convinced: 2023 will be the year we move as a community.

At the end of August, P. Frans Cuypers moved from our outer monastery to an apartment. We are grateful for his continued commitment to our community and him presiding in the daily celebration of the Eucharist.

Now that the biggest corona threat is over, we have been able to restart a lot of meetings and activities. Our Taizé celebrations continue and people are very happy to be able to come together in prayer and singing. Our dean Wim Ceunen has asked us again this year to take care of the Fast-vespers in the Sint-Gangulfus church opposite our monastery. Meanwhile, the people of Sint-Truiden can already sing psalms really well!

Dean Luc Van Hilst - who is very fond of our community and we of him - has preached our retreat. Our triduum was led by Sam Goyvaerts. It has meant a lot to us.

There has been pain and sorrow everywhere. Sympathetic to world events, our hearts bleed for all the places where there is war and people find it difficult to live. And of course also for the many victims of war. All this occupies a special place in our prayer.

Some sisters had to say goodbye to a loved one. In May, Mathieu Houben, brother of our sr. Francine passed away. In June, Sr. Karien said goodbye to her sister Mia Poukens. In November the mother of sr. Elisabeth, Mia Buyst, passed away. We and so many others will miss them. We thank God for who they were.

As a community we are doing well. We can still live fully for God, in prayer for so many people and for the intentions of the Church and our World. We continue to ask for the grace of hope that will revive our faith and rekindle our charity.

We cordially invite you:

- On Saturday the 12th of December at 8 pm (inserts at 7.45 pm) for our Taizé celebration.
- On Saturday the 24th of December for the Christmas vigil at 8 pm.
- On December 25th, Christmas, for Mass, with the Gregorius choir conducted by Magda Jossa and with violin played by Nele Daenen at 9:00 am, followed by a reception and evening prayer at 4:30 pm.
- On Tuesday the 27th of December for a Christmas concert by the Gregorius choir at 6 pm.
- On the 1st of January for the Eucharist of the Feast of the Mother of God at 9:00 am and the evening prayer at 4.30 pm

More info on our website: www.zustersclarissen3800.be!

We wish you a heartfelt Advent full of expectation and hope, a blessed Christmas filled with grace and a happy and healthy new year 2023!

your Poor Clare Sisters of Sint-Truiden