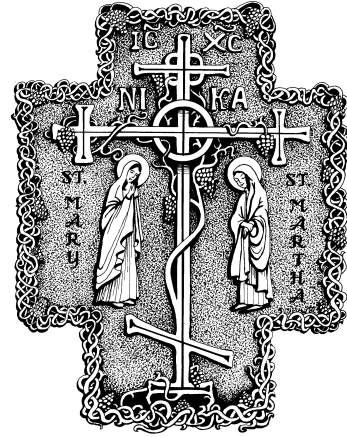


Saints Mary and Martha
Orthodox Monastery
Report to the
Diocesan Assembly, 2022
Baltimore, Maryland



Glory to God for all things.

Although the past two and one-half years have had more than enough difficulties, as always we see God's hand in it knowing that He is in control.

Our monastic life continues to be full of prayer, hospitality, the ministry of the telephone, candle making, construction, office and household tasks, working with those who come for retreat and/or to help us with some of the multitude of chores that are part of our life.

Moscata Visits a Monastery, a children's book about our monastery, was published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press in December, 2021. Moscata, our dog, gives a tour of our monastery and teaches Orthodox vocabulary as she goes. Chelsea Youell, a local Orthodox author and artist, did a wonderful job.

Several friends reposed in our Lord and bequeath some of their belongings and sizable amounts of money that has allowed us to finish the chapel so that it now has heating/AC, walls, floors, lighting, etc. Now our monthly Saturday Liturgy is served therein. This also gave us the funds to almost complete the sun room, a lovely place for plants and meditation. In addition, we have been able to make a good start on the second third of the building. Just getting it up and dried in is a huge hurdle. Building a monastery is the work of many people with God's blessing.



We believe that God would not have allowed us to get this far if He didn't have plans for this monastery and others who will continue its growth.

Your prayers for the growth of monasticism here and everywhere is greatly needed.



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST MONASTERY †

Annual Diocesan Report

July 7, 2022

The Nativity of Our Lord Monastery had major iconography done in the St Nicholas chapel. This included the walls and iconostasis, in addition to iconographic and decorative frescoes. The iconographer John Jurewicz, son of the well-known iconographer Fr Theodore Jurewicz, came to Texas in order to complete this intensive work. The convent chapel, though small, serves as the place of worship for the monastics and visitors until the monastery church is built. As such, it is fitting to worship in a space of beautiful iconography offered to the glory of God.

Three women are currently living at the monastery; two monastics and an aspirant. The monastery receives a consistent flow of emails from people asking about monastic life. Four monastic inquirers have scheduled visits to the monastery for later this year.

In the summer of 2021, we completely renovated the retreat center kitchen so that it is commercial. This allows us to efficiently serve mercy meals and extend hospitality for pilgrims and retreats; In 2021-2022, the retreat center provided facilities for numerous mercy meals and, after the pandemic, several women's retreats, with attendees as follows: 25 from St. Peter Antiochian Orthodox Church of Fort Worth; 30 from St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church of Woodway; 25 from Holy Nativity; 12 from St. Anthony the Great OCA Orthodox Church of San Antonio. We are also looking forward to hosting retreats for burial societies, including the burial society of St. John the Forerunner Antiochian Orthodox Church of Cedar Park.

Throughout the pandemic, we continued to keep the cemetery open for those in need. Our ministry here expanded, out of necessity, into much more than providing a resting place for the dead. Grieving families require not only practical advice on how to prepare the bodies of the Orthodox dead for burial. They also require guidance on how to navigate the funeral industry during an emotionally difficult time. Seeing an intense spiritual need, we also provided immediate, and even long term, pastoral care for grieving families after the burial of their loved ones.

By the Grace of God, because of the increase of converts and attendants at Orthodox churches during the pandemic, the monastery's candle business remained strong and has continued to grow.