

MONASTERY OF THE ANGELS

CANYON'S PRAYERFUL POCKET

BY THERESA M. DANNA, M.P.W.

In our diverse city, there are professionals available to serve you in every imaginable industry. So perhaps it is no surprise that there exists in Beachwood Canyon a cloister of Dominican nuns whose "work" is to pray for you.

The place is Monastery of the Angels, located at 1977 Carmen Avenue, one block north of Franklin Avenue, between Vista Del Mar and Gower. Their mission statement:

"As a community, we are called by God to witness His love, and in adoration and prayer, we seek to sustain the Church and to intercede for mankind. As contemplative Dominican nuns, we have withdrawn from the world in such a way as to embrace everyone in the heart of Christ. Through our life of prayer and study, we bring to fruition God's living Word in the world."

Founded in 1924, Monastery of the Angels was originally located in downtown Los Angeles and had only five nuns in residence. In the 1930s, they learned of a beautiful mansion for sale by the Giroux family in Hollywood. Though the area was considered



Sister Mary Pia in the gift shop

undesirable, the price was right for the financially struggling nuns. The present Monastery building was built in front of the mansion, where the gardens and lawns had been landscaped with the most expensive shrubs and trees. A statue of the Blessed Mother would take the place where the grand fountain stood. The permanent Monastery was completed in time to celebrate Christmas Midnight Mass in 1948.

Today, 22 nuns, coming from a variety of countries, including Vietnam, Canada, and the Philippines, call the Monastery home. The Monastery grounds include gardens; a chapel; living quarters for the nuns; and a

gift shop offering needlecraft items, candies, and pumpkin bread made by the sisters. From now through the Christmas season, the gift shop is featuring a holiday boutique. The shop's hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., every day except Sunday.

If you are looking to do community service, volunteers are needed for operating the gift shop, as well as for driving the nuns around town when necessary, according to Sister

*Faint angel whispers in the breeze
in roses,
in pumpkin bread,
chocolates.*

*The best kept secret in Hollywood
tucked in folded hands,
behind eyelids,
and closed corridors.*

*From "Wrestling with the Angel"
by Armando P. Ibanez*

Pia has been at the Monastery for more than 50 years.

"I attended Immaculate Heart school right up the street," she said. "I used to

the Monastery are cloistered and perform their daily work in prayerful silence, Sister Mary Pia reminds the community that there are regular opportunities for the public to join in prayer groups and worship services. There is a daily Mass at 7 a.m. and all-night vigils on the first Friday of each month. For a schedule of prayer group meetings, either call (323)466-2186 or visit the Monastery's Web site at www.op-stjoseph.org/nuns/angels/index.htm.

If you would like to request the nuns pray for a particular intention (such as healing, sympathy, success, or a happy marriage) for yourself or a loved one, you can do so by making a modest offering (typically ranging from \$3 to \$30) to the Venite Adoremus Association. (Venite adoremus is Latin for "come adore.") An enrollment form is available on the Web site, as well as at the Monastery.

Theresa M. Danna has a master's degree in professional writing from University of Southern California. She highly recommends the nuns' pumpkin bread (which is more like cake than bread) for holiday desserts.



Take some time to browse the gift shop

Mary Pia, the Monastery's director. A native of the Hollywood area, Sister Mary

stop at the Monastery on my way to school."

Although the sisters at

"If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else." — Booker T. Washington