

The Story of

**The Teddy Bear
Monastery**



The Story of



Story written and photographed by Lance Micklus

Monk costumes created by Dianne Micklus

**Teddy bear congregation from the personal collection
of Sherry Cote**

Photographed on Eastman Kodak Royal Gold Film

**Theodore and Tilly-Bear is a trademark of and is based on original characters
created by Lance Micklus of Essex Junction, Vermont USA.
The Teddy Bear Monastery is a trademark of Lance Micklus of Essex Junction, Vermont USA
© Copyright 1998-2016 by Lance Micklus. All rights reserved.**



Deep in the woods where nobody goes, is a clearing near a gentle river. It's the home of two teddy bears named Theodore and Tilly-Bear.

Teddy bears normally live with human kind. They are usually given as a gift to a person, and that person becomes the bear's special friend. Theodore and Tilly-Bear are different. They don't live with human kind, but they do have a very special friend named Jesus, whom they love and serve.



Early one summer morning, when a beautiful new day was beginning, Tilly-Bear awoke from a good night's sleep. The first sounds she heard were the birds singing and the water gently flowing down the river nearby. The sun was just beginning to shine through the trees. It was going to be a perfect summer day.



As she began to get out of bed, she suddenly realized that Theodore, her brother, had gotten up before her and was gone. All that remained in his place was Theodore's little teddy bear named Tiny Ted.



Theodore always sleeps with Tiny Ted at night.

Tilly-Bear began to worry. For almost two weeks, Theodore had gotten up before she did, was gone all day, and came home late at night to sleep. She hardly ever saw him anymore. He wasn't eating, and certainly not getting enough rest. He just wasn't his old self.



Something was bothering Theodore, and Tilly-Bear had no idea what it was. He had never acted this way before. All she knew for certain was that Theodore liked to spend time at his prayer log near the camp where he would study his Bible and seek out the Lord.



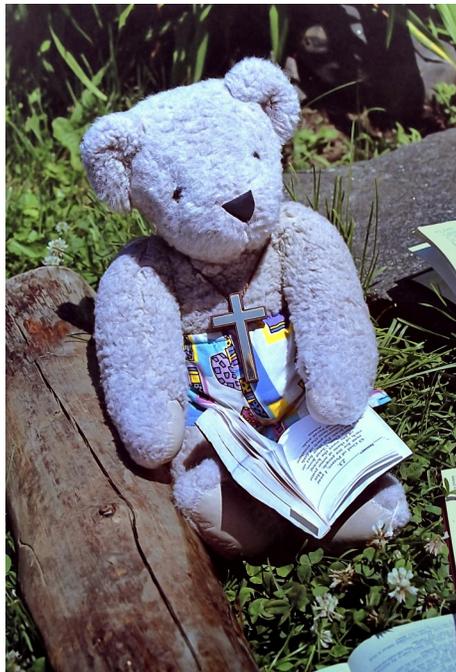
Tilly-Bear decided the best thing to do was to try to cheer Theodore up. She put on her prettiest dress. Then, she went to a secret place in the woods where she had hidden something special. It was some chocolate truffles with a red cherry in the middle - a rare treat, especially for a teddy bear. She had been saving these truffles for a special occasion and now seemed like as good a time as any to take them out and eat them.



After setting the table and making a nice mug of chocolate milk, Tilly-Bear walked through the woods looking for Theodore and found him at his prayer log, praying and studying his Bible.



"Are you all right?" asked Tilly-Bear.



"Oh, I'm all right," said Theodore. "I just need to spend a little more time studying my Bible and seeking out the Lord."



"But, Theodore, you've been doing this for almost two weeks. You haven't been sleeping right and you've hardly eaten a thing. I found something special for you to eat if you'll come home. Is this so important that you can't stop for a while to eat and rest?" asked Tilly-Bear.

"It's very, very important," said Theodore. "I'll be all right. Just leave me alone for a little while longer."



So Tilly-Bear went back to their campsite, and began to pray, "Oh Daddy God, please watch out for my brother, Theodore. Don't let anything happen to him. Help him to find what he's looking for and keep him safe."

Then she couldn't hold the tears back any more, and she began to cry.





By afternoon, Tilly-Bear had decided that the best way to keep her mind off of worry was to keep busy taking care of the flowers. As she was watering each plant and trimming those that needed attention she could hear something coming toward her through the woods.

It was Theodore, running just as fast as he could, yelling, "I've got it! I've got it!"





Tilly-Bear didn't know what to make of this, but it was nice to see her brother acting normal and bubbling over with excitement. "What have you got?" asked Tilly-Bear, pleased that God had answered her prayer.

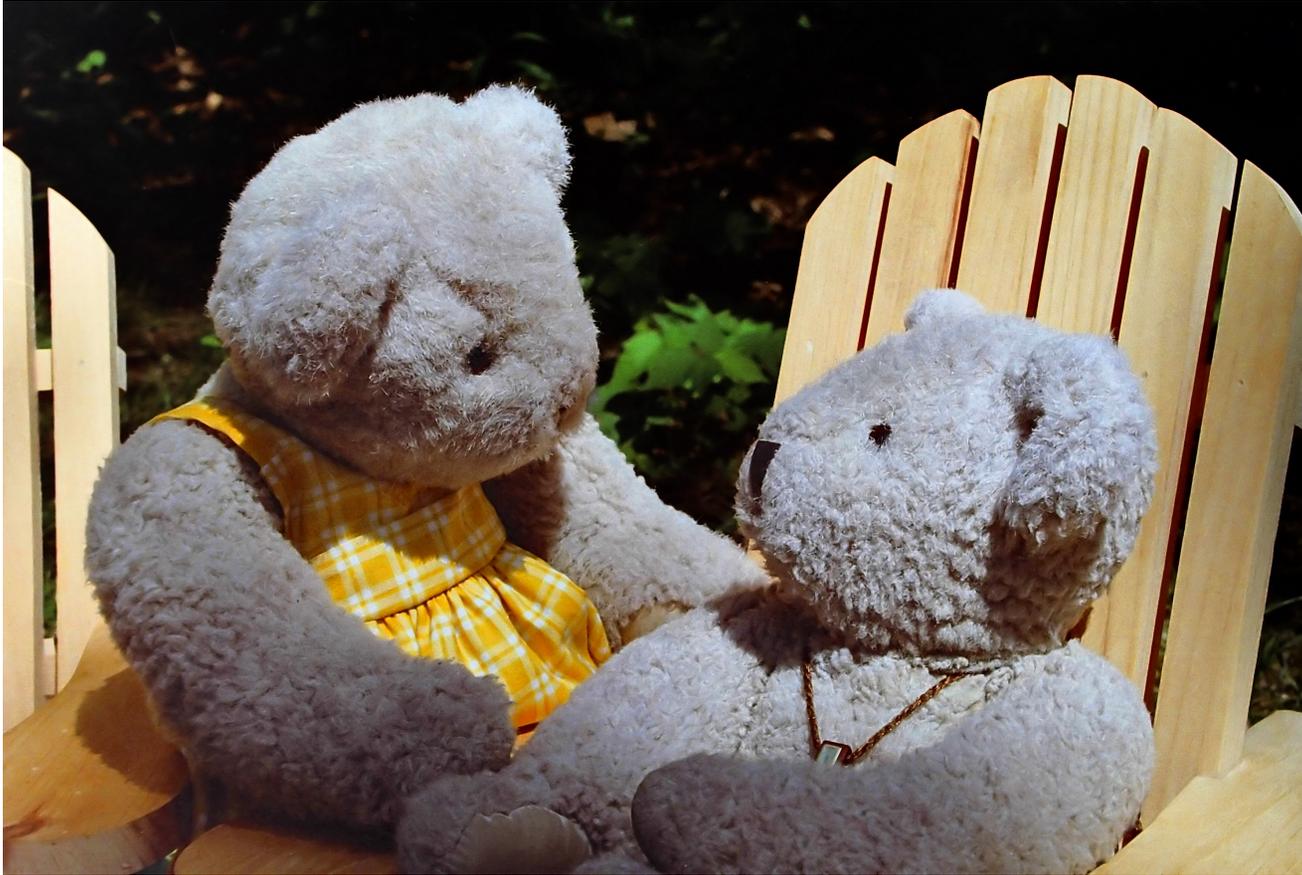
"We're going to build a monastery!" said Theodore. "We've got to get all the other teddy bears together for church next Sunday so I can tell them all about it."





Then Theodore began to notice that he was hungry because he hadn't had anything to eat in days. "I'm starved. What have we got to eat?"

"There are some chocolate truffles with a red cherry in the middle on the table that I saved just for you. With a nice mug of chocolate milk, I bet that would make your tummy feel real good," said Tilly-Bear.



"But what are you going to eat?" asked Theodore.

"Oh, I'll find something," Tilly-Bear replied. But Theodore knew there was nothing for her to eat.

"Tilly-Bear," said Theodore, "I can't eat the truffles and let you go hungry. Jesus wouldn't do that. If Jesus had some truffles and there was a teddy bear that had nothing to eat, he would share it along with his chocolate milk. Besides, if we share the truffles, it'll be a way to celebrate, and I'm ready to have some fun."



So the two bears shared the truffles and the chocolate milk, and then sat down by the river to soak up the sun and do some fishing.



The following Sunday all of the teddy bears who lived in the woods gathered together for their weekly church service.





Tilly-Bear began the service with a prayer.

"Jesus, we love you very much and you will always be every teddy bear's special friend. We hope you like our singing. Even though we can't see you, we know you are here. You're always welcome in this place even if you aren't a teddy bear, but the Son of God. Finally, we want to thank you for giving our Brother Theodore a very special message to share with us this morning. Amen."





Then Theodore got up from his chair and began to speak, "Long ago, our Daddy God looked down on the Earth and saw that children needed a special friend. So, He decided to create the teddy bear so the children would have something they could hug, and love, and sleep with, that would be just like Jesus. For hundreds of years, every teddy bear has been doing this and our Daddy God is very pleased with all of us."



"A couple of weeks ago, I was wondering if there was more we bears could do. I began studying my Bible and I learned that just being like Jesus is not enough. We have to tell the world about Jesus. Then I discovered that Daddy God is going to do something new, right now, something He had never done before, something that was impossible before: He's going to raise up an army of teddy bears to tell the world Jesus Loves You."



"Since we teddy bears are not allowed to talk in front of humans, we're going to use the Internet to build a special place. It'll be a monastery in cybearspace, where everybody in the world can come and learn about Jesus."



The teddy bears cheered. At last, their Daddy God had chosen them to do something very special - something that only they could do. That brought them great joy.



The news spread quickly that Theodore and Tilly-Bear were going to build a monastery in cy-bearspace. The only problem was that the two bears didn't have any electricity, a computer, or even a smartphone.

Then winter came, and the two bears had to leave the woods that they once made their home, and find a new place to live.



"Theodore, look", said Tilly-Bear, "Isn't that Mary, the mother of Jesus, sticking out of the snow? It must be a sign from God!"

"Well, actually", said Theodore, "It's a nativity scene in front of somebody's house. Careful you don't trip over the little sheep that's in front of you buried in the snow."

"Well, anybody with a nativity scene in front of their house must be a Christian. Besides, I'm cold, and it looks awful warm inside. Let's see if they'll invite us in."



So, the two bears knocked on the door to see who was home. It turned out that a good Christian family did live in the house. After giving the bears warm dry clothes and some food, they invited them to stay for as long as they liked. They could even use the family's Internet computer to build a Web site.



Before long, The Teddy Bear Monastery started operating in cybearspace. Then Theodore and Tilly-Bear got on Facebook and Twitter to tell the world Jesus Loves You - just as God commanded them to do.



You want Jesus to be your special friend? All you've got to do is ask, like this:

**Jesus, I want you to be my special friend,
and I want to be your special friend.
Then we can be together forever and ever.**

Amen