

The Lamp



United States Association of Consecrated Virgins

June 23, 2006
Solemnity of the Sacred Heart

Volume 11, Issue 4

From Archbishop Burke to the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins

Dear sisters in Christ,

During the month of June, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, you have been more frequently in my thoughts and prayers. The divine love poured forth into your souls from the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus is the source of your spousal love, your total gift of self forever to our Lord Jesus Christ.

I recall for you words from the Encyclical Letter *Deus caritas est*, “On Christian Love,” issued on Christmas Day of last year by our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI:

By contemplating the pierced side of Christ (cf. *Jn* 19:37), we can understand the starting-point of this Encyclical Letter: “God is love” (*1 Jn* 4:8). It is there that this truth can be contemplated. It is from there that our definition of love must begin. In this contemplation the Christian discovers the path along which his life and love must move (n. 12).

Your chaste virginal love is the fruit of your having first been loved unconditionally by Christ. In the pierced Heart of Jesus, you have discovered and discover always anew the path of your “life and love” as a consecrated virgin.

Your consecration is, therefore, one of the most eloquent signs of the reality of Christ’s love for us all in the Church. In your consecration, we witness how Christ, alive for us in the Church, has called you to be His brides and has given you the grace of total oblation of self for the sake of Christ, your Bridegroom, and His Mystical Body, the Church.

Some years ago, we devoted a significant part of our time together, during the Annual Convocation, to reflection upon the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and its altogether particular importance in the spiritual lives of consecrated virgins. It is my prayer that you continue to be fervent in your contemplation and love of the pierced Heart of Jesus. In the glorious Heart of Jesus, you will find an ever rich and never failing source of divine love.

Asking a remembrance in your prayers, I am

Yours sincerely in Christ,

(Most Rev.) Raymond L. Burke

Archbishop of St. Louis

Inside this issue:

Council News	3
Pastoral Planning Meetings	4
From the President’s journal	6
2006 Information Conference	7
2006 Convocation	7
Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament	8
Web Master News	8

Special points of interest:

- Something Ancient
Something New
- Consecration
announcement &
invitation
- Upcoming elections
- USACV structure
- USACV Officers

SOMETHING ANCIENT, SOMETHING NEW

“In the midst of tears, she sheds no tears herself. The crowds marvel at her recklessness in throwing away her life unstarted, as if she had already lived life to the full. . . What is beyond the power of nature, they argue, must come from its Creator.” [St. Ambrose]

The crowds recognized affective maturity in the life and suffering of Saint Agnes, an adolescent virgin martyr of the ancient Church. Her testimony is evidence of the power of the gift of virginity, created by our Eternal Father for our Blessed Mother and given also to us through the mystery of his divine grace.

Maturity in our affections is deeply connected to our spirituality as consecrated virgins, a spirituality which is rooted in a mystical betrothal to Christ. Recall the words of the Bishop on the day of Consecration: “Today through our Ministry the Holy Spirit anoints you with a new grace and consecrates you to God by a new title. He gives each one of you the dignity of being a bride of Christ and binds you to the Son of God in a covenant to last for ever.” [Rite of Consecration of a Woman Living in the World]

Indeed all of the affections of consecrated virgins are transformed and bound up in newness of relationship with the Divine Spouse. Prayer, work, intensive study and service – “they had consecrated their entire lives, including all the energy and intimacy of love, to Christ, with whom they hoped to live for all eternity on the great wedding day.” [Cf. Father Benedict Asley, O.P., “Justice in the Church”, University of America, 1966]

Consecrated virgins in our century are bequeathed the treasures of the virginal spirituality of sister virgins of earlier centuries. Discovering these treasures leads us to a new maturity in the love we hold for our Spouse, a love Theresa of Avila said should be full of life and evident to others. It is a love involving the totality of our being, body, soul, and spirit, as we mature in our sublime vocation as Christian virgins. The words of the Church invite the consecrated virgin to this life intimately tied to her Divine Spouse: “Your joy and your crown, even here on earth, will be Christ, the Son of the Virgin and the Bridegroom of virgins. He will call you to his presence and into his kingdom, where you will sing a new

song as you follow the Lamb of God wherever he leads you” [Cf. Rite of Consecration]

Our spirituality is not inwardly focused! As we unite our affections with those of our Divine Spouse, we delve deeply into solidarity with His Holy Church, Spouse of our Spouse, and with the whole human family in “the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time.” [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Preface #1]

This world’s civilization may be dying away, but another civilization is being born, a civilization described by John Paul the Great as a “civilization of love.”

Isn’t this the vocation of the consecrated virgin, then, to unite with her Spouse to bring birth to this “civilization of love”? Surely there is pain in the delivery process, but it is a pain we will experience in union with our Divine Spouse as we unite our wills and affections to his and allow our lives to mirror his passion, death, and resurrection.

—Magalis Aguilera and Judith Stegman

Consecration Announcement: Archdiocese of New York, Barbara Blumers will be consecrated July 8, 2006. Barbara wishes to extend an invitation to her ceremony; for details please call her at 914-395-3293. [We will try to include more notices of consecrations in our next newsletter!](#)

Council News - Fall 2006 Elections!

Two Council positions,

President and At-Large Representative, will open January 1, 2007. We encourage members to consider running for these leadership positions in the Association! Details of our governing structure can be found in the organizational statutes and bylaws of the USACV, which are available upon request. In summary, what you need to know for these elections:

Election Process

Written notification of a member's desire to run for an open Council position must be received by midnight of Friday, October 27, 2006. Details of the election process will be announced in the next newsletter.

Position Terms, Descriptions and Responsibilities

President

Term: January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2009.

Eligibility to run for office (Article III Section D3): Open to any current voting member who has been a voting member for the two previous years and has the necessary qualifications to carry out the responsibilities of President.

Duties (Article V Section B):

1. To convene and coordinate the meetings and activities of the Council.
2. To assure that members are

Please Consider Running for Office

Please do consider running for office, and encourage other members to run – sometimes all it takes is a personal word!

kept advised of ongoing discussions and decisions of the Council.

3. To appoint ad hoc committees between annual meetings (Article VII, Section B). To assure the appointment and approval of standing and ad hoc committee members by the Council (Article VII, Section C).
4. To serve as liaison and act in the name of the Association with ecclesial and secular bodies, seeking consultation from Council and Association members whenever possible.
5. To be responsible for the editorial content of publications and other resource materials of the Association.
6. To communicate with and represent the Association to various ecclesiastical persons, institutions, and offices.
7. To be in regular communication with the Episcopal Moderator concerning the affairs of the Association, and to assist him with the preparation of his annual report to the CICALSAL regarding the status and activity of the USACV.

At Large Representative

Term: January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2009

Eligibility to run for office (Article III Section D3): Open to any current voting member who has been a member or actively involved in the Association for the two previous years.

Duties (Article V Section A):

1. To collaborate with other Council members in the gov-

ernance of the USACV in accord with the provisions of the organizational statutes, with particular focus on the ecclesial objectives (Article II) of the Association.

2. To make every effort to attend the annual membership meeting and the annual Council meeting held with the Episcopal Moderator. To participate in other Council meetings or discussions as needed
3. If serving as the Council representative on a standing committee, to facilitate ongoing communication between the Council and the committee.
4. If elected as an At-Large Representative, to make every effort to accept an appointment as Vice President (Article V Section C) or Secretary (Article V, Section D), recognizing that some responsibilities of the offices may be delegated to others (Article IV, Section A).

Other Notes – both positions

1. Council members rely heavily on email to facilitate communication, since we are geographically in all parts of the United States.
2. The Association's travel budget currently covers accommodations and meals for Council members during the April Council meeting in St. Louis with Archbishop Burke. Travel expenses for this meeting and various meetings attended by the President have not yet been reimbursed by the Association. If this is a deterrent to running for office, we invite a potential candidate to discuss the matter with our treasurer to see if donations might be available.

USACV Pastoral Planning Meetings—

In the past few newsletters we have requested your prayer support for planning meetings of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins, two days of meetings dubbed “Sharing Our Good News.” Participants in these meetings would grapple with the task of putting structure to the many ideas that have come forward regarding the work the Association has been invited to carry out in the areas of study, education, communication, communion, and participation in the new evangelization.

Success! Only the guidance of the Holy Spirit, assisted by your prayers, could move ten individuals to think together for two days and to propose a flexible plan for carrying out the mission of the USACV. All elected Council members were present along with three other consecrated virgins, a candidate, and Dr. James Galvin, a respected and experienced consultant for faith-based organizations of all sizes.

Meetings took place in Lansing, Michigan, and Monsignor Michael Murphy warmly welcomed the group on behalf of Bishop Carl Mengeling, who was away on retreat. Monsignor Robert Lunsford also showed the support of the local Church by participating in early discussions. It is with great appreciation for your prayers and words of encouragement that we present this initial summary of our work.



“Finding practical ways to carry out our work, designing a flexible long range plan, building on what we have begun, discovering some strategic breakthroughs”, these were identified as goals of our planning days. At the outset, Dr. Galvin encouraged us to move from mere discussion towards dialogue that could generate ideas, a movement which required us to shift from being knowers to being learners, from competence to vulnerability, from arrogance to humility, and from observers to participants.

Our dialogue moved along this path:

The meeting process

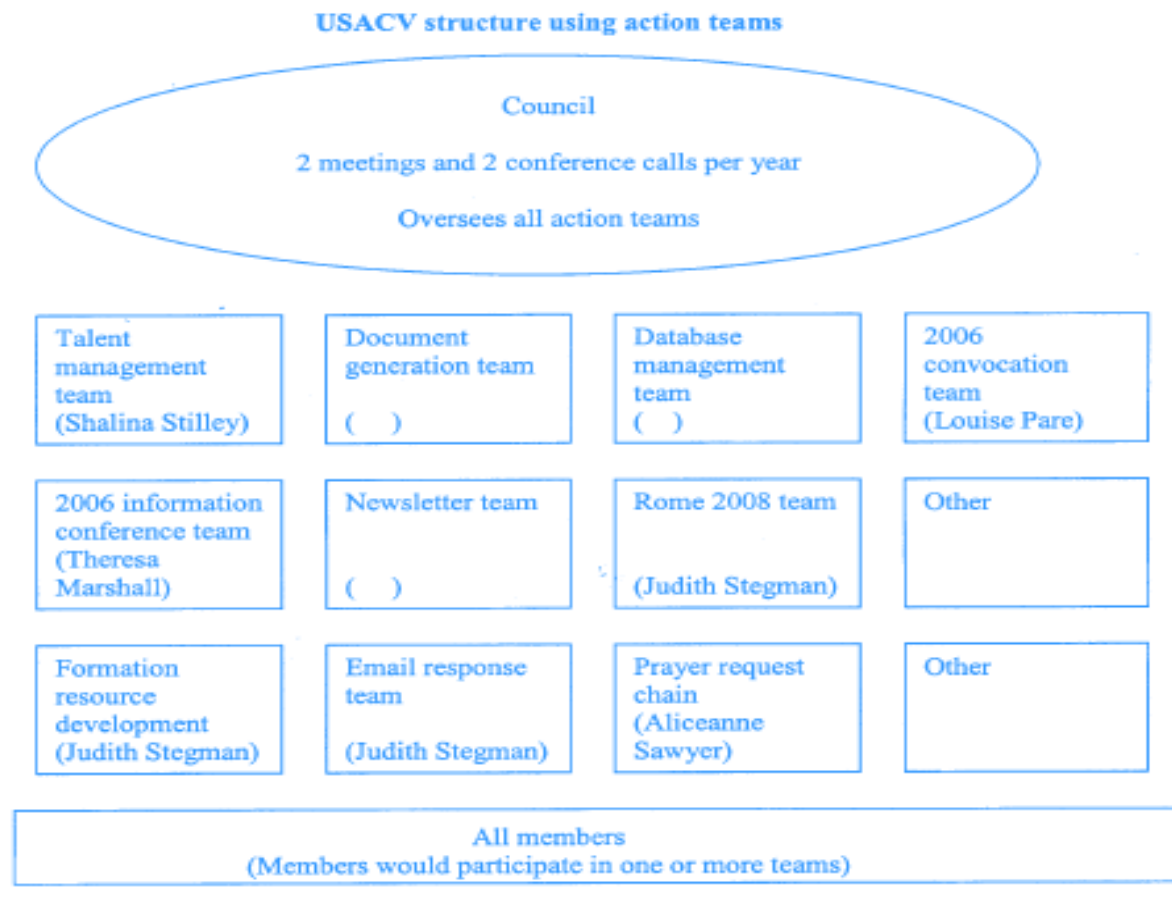
- ❖ Discussion and affirmation of the three-part mission of the Association summarized in the phrase: *To Serve the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity*
 1. Communication and communion: Foster communication, solidarity, and support among consecrated virgins living within the jurisdiction of the United States conference of Catholic Bishops.
 2. Education and formation: Promote an accurate understanding of the nature of the vocation of consecrated virginity through programs of education, printed materials and other media, especially for those contemplating the vocation.
 3. Study: encourage ongoing in depth growth of understanding of consecrated virginity, with other consecrated virgins throughout the world.
- ❖ Comparison of other professional associations to the USACV
- ❖ Description of the USACV functioning at its finest
- ❖ Learning the typical way for associations to organize
- ❖ Identifying obstacles the USACV faces
- ❖ Listing current structure and activities of the USACV and people responsible
- ❖ Listing tasks handled by the president
- ❖ Listing tasks and activities requested of us by others or desired by members
- ❖ Listing what the USACV is not
- ❖ Generating an organizational structure on paper using action teams; grouping tasks to be accomplished into proposed teams
- ❖ Listing where we are now compared to where we want to be and how action teams might accomplish this
- ❖ Identifying potential pitfalls to using action teams
- ❖ Diagramming steps to take now towards this structure
 1. Agreeing on Council meeting schedule
 2. Honing in on relationship between action teams and Council
 3. Identifying existing action teams and leaders
 4. Identifying action teams to begin this year; beginning to identify leaders
 5. Decision to conduct a talent survey among members
- ❖ Detailing a description of tasks for the proposed Document Team

SUCCESS! *And now the next step!!*

Structure Using Action Teams

A structure using action teams builds on the strengths of our volunteer organization, an organization with plenty of talent and ideas. An action team concept builds on the strengths of individual members and encourages members to work closely together – in itself nourishing communion among us. It's a simple plan and one that naturally grows out of our previous discussions about organizing around our mission and it is a plan that allows room for the many ideas that have been and will be generated by our members.

Here's the idea, showing action teams already begun and those to be formed this year. Identified team leaders are also shown.



Possible future teams:

- ❖ Public Relations/Communications (Design, TV, radio)
- ❖ Website management
- ❖ Candidate care
- ❖ Recordings Production
- ❖ Materials distribution
- ❖ Fundraising
- ❖ Archives
- ❖ Study resources (international)
- ❖ Speakers
- ❖ Educational materials

There are many gifts, but the same Spirit. The action team approach builds on the diverse gifts of our members. Skilled leaders will be needed for each team, leaders who will take responsibility for a task and build a team to carry out the work.

[Continued page 6](#)

from the President's journal

I write on the afternoon of the celebration of the Most Holy Trinity - a mystery that stands at the very heart of our faith. Perhaps the vocation of consecrated virginity is a bit analogous as it seems a mystery to many and yet stands at the heart of Consecrated Life in the Church.

Fundamental to all forms of Consecrated Life in the Church is the commitment to a life of perfect chastity lived for the sake of the Kingdom

[VC #32]. And yet only the form of Consecrated Life described in Canon 604, the Order of Virgins, is solely characterized by a life of perfect chastity. The centuries have given rise to many flowerings of Consecrated Life, each offering its distinct charism to the Body of Christ - and the witness has been strong! So much so, in fact, that the core witness of Consecrated Life, the life of perfect chastity, must be re-presented on its own merits.

How many times a consecrated virgin is misunderstood as she describes the essence of her vocation as her mystical betrothal to Christ, rendered in response to the gift of virginity given to her from eternity. Thanks be to our divine Spouse for drawing us together as an association to discover, clarify, and offer this virginal vocation of love of Christ to the Church and to the secular culture about us.

-Judith Stegman

SUCCESS! continued

. How does this fit into the current governing structure of the USACV? What is the role of the Council in relationship to the teams? Here's how we see it working:

❖ *The Council* will appoint team leaders, define the mission of each team, and determine the pattern for each team leader to report progress back to the Council.

❖ *Team Leaders* will build the team (using the work of the talent management team as a resource) and assure that the mission of the team is carried out, reporting back to the Council as agreed.

Planning Participant Comments

"It seemed like such a natural and simple plan when we finished the days' work."

"This plan builds upon the foundation of work begun by Loretta and others. It's really not new."

"The idea of having ten teams plus is not a brand-new notion of how to drive the bus - some of these teams have already been in existence." (Readers may guess that this bus analogy came from Ann Stitt.)

"When the idea of a planning session or 'Share the Good News' session was introduced, my whole being rejoiced, as John rejoiced

when Jesus was introduced in the womb of Mary. I felt so exuberated. So many times I just wished there was a way we could uniformly reach our Bishops and priests, seminarians, deacons, vocations offices and others, and I've prayed very hard for the day we would be able to share it intelligently and spiritually. Sitting in on these sessions was so exhilarating and enlightening. Our day is now. So many ideas came to us from each member . . ."

(Aliceanne Sawyer)

We commit this work to the care of our Blessed Mother as we, like she, prepare the way for Jesus!

YOU - Talent Survey Watch your In-boxes! Watch your mail boxes! Members of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins have recently been sent a talent survey so that we can begin to invite participation in these teams. We invite you to prayerfully consider responding to the survey and offering your skills to the service of our vocation.

Information Conference 2006

The 2006 national Information Conference is scheduled for August 2 to August 4, 2006 at the Cenacle in downtown Chicago, Illinois. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about and experience the vocation of Consecrated Virgins Lived in the World. Theresa Marshall is the event coordinator; flyers and registration forms are available on our website or upon request. Archbishop Burke will present “The Essentials of Consecrated Virgins” and those gathered will have opportunity to share prayer and discussion about the vocation.

USACV Council and Officers

Judith M. Stegman, President, 2004 – 2006; Diocese of Lansing

Magalis Aguilera, 2004 – 2006 (appointed Vice-President to December 31, 2006); Archdiocese of Miami

Louise Pare, Treasurer, 2005 – 2007; Diocese of Lansing

Shalina Stilley, 2005 – 2007; Diocese of Milwaukee

Aliceanne Sawyer, 2006 – 2008 (appointed Secretary to December 31, 2006); Diocese of Newark

Message from Carmen Muñoz: To Love and to Serve: The Order of Virgins according to Canon 604. A limited number of copies of an English translation of AMAR Y SERVIR: El Orden de las Vírgenes según el Canon 604, written by Spanish consecrated virgin Gloria Irene Alvaro Sanz, will be available to consecrated virgins and candidates in time for the celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This translation, made with the Author's permission by United States consecrated virgin Carmen M. Muñoz, will be available for a suggested donation of \$8.50 to cover printing and shipping. For more information or to request a copy, please contact: Carmen M. Muñoz; FIATcmm@juno.com or c/o P.O. Box 212594; Augusta, GA 30917.

2006 Convocation of Consecrated Virgins in the United States:

Theme: “Prefer nothing, absolutely nothing to the love of Christ”

When: Wednesday August 9, beginning 5pm with Evening Prayer to Sunday morning August 13.

Where: Our Lady of the Snows Shrine in Belleville, Illinois. Transportation will be available from the St. Louis airport. We encourage you to begin now to make travel arrangements.

Registration information and cost: Cost will be \$325 for double-occupancy room and board. Registration forms will soon be mailed to consecrated virgins and made available on the website. The forms will detail additional fees for airport transportation and single-occupancy rooms.

Who is invited: All consecrated virgins are warmly invited to attend, as well as candidates for the Consecration who have attended an Information Conference.

Program details: Archbishop Burke, Episcopal moderator for the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins, will offer presentations on our convocation theme in light of the Encyclical Letter of Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*. We are also pleased that the Archbishop will participate in our convocation by offering Holy Mass and being available for personal meetings.

“**Affective Maturity and the Nuptial Mystery in the State of Consecrated Virginit**y” is the title of a presentation to be given by **Dr. Lawrence J. Welch**, Professor of

Systematic and Dogmatic Theology at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in Saint Louis. In an essay co-authored with Father Guy Mansini, O.S.B., (“In Conformity to Christ”, April 2006 issue of *First Things*), Dr. Welch touched on this topic in relationship to those preparing for priesthood. He looks forward to connecting to consecrated virginity understandings expressed by Pope John Paul II, who spoke of affective maturity as presupposing an awareness of love that involves the entire person and expresses itself in the nuptial meaning of the human body.

Other plans are in the works for an enjoyable, enriching time of spiritual renewal and friendship.

. We hope you will join us!

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News from our WWWeb Master

We are happy to announce that sometime during the next several weeks our webmaster will have uploaded the entire, up-to-date Information Packet on our website, www.consecratedvirgins.org. This compilation of conferences, summaries of the Fathers of the Church, history of our vocation, and much more will be available for reading and downloading free of charge. The Information Packet will continue to be available in printed version through our Association, and order forms are available through our website. Hearty thanks to Vickie Hamilton, candidate in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and to Loretta Matulich, consecrated virgin of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, for their hours of labor to make this online version of the Information Packet a reality.

Question concerning reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the home of a consecrated virgin living in the world:

“A number of consecrated virgins have been given permission by their Bishops to have the Most Blessed Sacrament reserved in their homes. I would be grateful for some information on this matter from the Episcopal moderator for the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins.”

Archbishop Burke responds:

“In all of the institutes of the consecrated life, the devotion to the Holy Eucharist is central. For the consecrated virgin, who, by a special title, is a bride of Christ, the communion with Our Lord Jesus in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and prayer before the tabernacle are at the heart of her consecration. For that reason, when it is possible, it is recommended that a consecrated virgin be given permission to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved in her home.

The permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament is subject to all of the usual conditions which are given in the code of Canon Law (can. 934 §1, 1°, 2°; can. 936; can. 938 §§1-3 and 5; 940; and 941 §§1-2). The consecrated virgin must have a fitting room in her home, which can become the chapel of the Most Blessed Sacrament. It is essential that the place of the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the home of a consecrated virgin be a room which is used for no other purpose. In other words, it is not permitted to keep the Blessed Sacrament in the room where the consecrated virgin sleeps, eats or carries out any other mundane activity.

With regard to the celebration of the Mass in the place of the reservation of the Eucharist, if it is possible, the Mass should be celebrated in the chapel at least twice a month. If it is not possible for the Mass to be celebrated there, a priest may renew the Sacred Host periodically by bringing the Blessed Sacrament to the chapel and consuming the Sacred Host which has been in the tabernacle and replacing it with the recently consecrated Sacred Host.”

Note: Only the diocesan Bishop may grant permission for reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the home of a consecrated virgin.



Of special note at this time is the upcoming Ordination to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ of our webmaster, Hieromonk Arsenius of Annunciation Hermitage of the Baker Diocese. The Most Rev. Robert Vasa, Bishop of Baker, will ordain him and another deacon in the Cathedral of St. Francis de Sales, Baker City, Oregon, Saturday, June 17, 2006. Our webmaster will continue in his vocation as a hermit, serving the Church through prayer and asceticism, after his Ordination. Let us pray for him. Assurance of prayer can be sent to him at this email address: webmaster@consecratedvirgins.org. Loretta Matulich will attend the Ordination Mass.