

# The Lamp



United States Association of  
Consecrated Virgins

June 3, 2012  
Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Volume 17, Issue 2

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINS:

June 3, 2012 The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

## The Hound of Heaven

I fled Him down the nights and down the days  
I fled Him down the arches of the years  
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways....

From those strong feet that followed, followed after  
But with unhurrying chase and unperturbed pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
They beat, and a Voice beat,  
More instant than the feet:  
All things betray thee who betrayest me....

For though I knew His love who followed,  
Yet was I sore adread, lest having Him,  
I should have nought beside.

On retreat this past month, it suddenly dawned on me, as the director read this section of Francis Thompson's famous poem, that the Lord has been calling to me to enter into a deeper relationship for a number of years. I, however, have been rather content with things as they are. A large part of me simply does not want to move beyond this state. Why? The answer is that last line—that in having the Lord, I should have nought beside.

The Lord wants everything, all of us, so that Jesus can be all in all. It is this fear of becoming "nothing" which keeps us from taking the plunge. Yet, particularly you, my dear consecrated sisters, you have set yourself upon this road to the deepest intimacy with the Lord. Allow him to catch you; certainly there is deep fear in what he will change in us. But that is the very nature of love. In this holy season, at the end of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord, we celebrate what those mysteries revealed—the inner life of the Most Blessed Trinity. It is a life for the other. That is love.

A most blessed feast to all of you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Earl Boyea  
Bishop of Lansing

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Light can be shed on the spirituality of the consecrated virgin by employing the concepts of spiritual theology applied to the study of the Saints, whose lives show us that it is possible to be saints (CCC 2013), and to reach Christian perfection. Radical words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself call us to this perfection, “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). Through the grace of God, all Christians can “reach this perfection” (CCC 2013); through the grace of virginity, the consecrated virgin is called to manifest the fruit of this grace while living in the midst of the world. The stronghold of the spirituality of the consecrated virgin is to live as a witness to Jesus Christ, Bridegroom of the Church, and to live this witness in the world, without belonging to the world. She lives as an icon of the spiritual and mystical meaning of being in a spousal relationship with Jesus.

The consecrated virgin must pass through the way of perfection of her Spouse, a way not inspired by the spirituality of the founder of a monastery or institute of consecrated life, but the Way of the Cross itself. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that in order to grow in this way of perfection, it is necessary to live the ascetical life (CCC 2015). Asceticism is the effort of the Christian struggling to acquire perfection; the meaning comes from the Greek root “askesis,” meaning “exercise” or “effort.” The active elements of ascetical theology are penance and mortification. Saint Paul compared the exercise of spiritual asceticism to the work of an athlete: “Athletes deny themselves all sort of things. They do this to win a crown of leaves that withers, but we a crown that is imperishable. I do not run like a man who loses sight of the finish line. I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. What I do is discipline my own body and master it for fear that after having preached to others I myself should be rejected” (1Cor 9:25-27).

The way of perfection in our spousal spirituality as consecrated virgins involves both practical and infused processes, as we discover in the ancient teaching of the Fathers of the Church as they discuss the three stages of spiritual life: The Purgative Way, as the way of the beginners; the Illuminative Way, as the way of the proficient; and the Unitive Way, as the way of the perfect (Cfr. St. Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*, Part 2).

The consecrated virgins of the ancient Church, both those who lived in the first century and those who lived during apostolic times, learned what we now refer to as *ascetical theology* or *mystical theology* from the teaching of Saint Paul and Saint John, the Apostle. *Mystical theology* focuses on the “mysterious” or “secret,” from the Greek word “mysterion.” The lives of the virgins of the ancient Church were clear examples of lives lived in mystical spousal union with Jesus Christ. These lives were *active* in their self-disciplined practice of asceticism, and *passive* in their reception of the infused gifts of the spiritual way of perfection. Often, too, these early virgins received the crown of martyrdom as a reward for their faithful love of their Divine Spouse. Their lives reflected the way of Christian perfection taught by our Divine Lord, with a high degree of virtue and strength of character.

The clearest example of walking this way of perfection is found in the life of the Mother of Jesus, our Mother and Queen. She is called “the Virgin” for her superior qualities; never having known a man, and totally dedicated to God, she served Christ, Her Son, unto the Cross, listening and keeping the Word of God in her virginal heart, poor and obedient. It is this complete conformity with Jesus that has made the Virgin Mary, throughout Christian tradition, the icon of the Church in its definitive state as both *Virgin* and *Bride*. (Cfr. Dominique Pichard, “Actualization of the Ritual of Consecration of Virgins, Booklet Number 8, September 1975, Chile, page 197).

# Council News

## Current council members and officers are:

**Judith M. Stegman, President**, 2010 – 2012; Diocese of Lansing

**Magalis Aguilera, Member-at-large**, 2010 – 2012 (appointed **Vice-President** thru 2012); Archdiocese of Miami

**Nicole Battini, Treasurer**, 2011 – 2013; Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

**Mary Kay Lacke, Member-at-large**, 2011-2013 (appointed **Secretary** through 2012), Diocese of Steubenville

**Florence Sundberg, Member-at-large**, 2012-2014, Diocese of Hartford

## Upcoming events:

### 2012 National Convocation of United States Consecrated Virgins:

July 18-22, 2012  
Mundelein Retreat and  
Conference Center  
Chicago area  
(see article page 5)

### 2012 National Information Conference:

July 31-August 3, 2012  
Bethany House  
at St. Francis Retreat Center,  
DeWitt, Michigan  
Lansing area.

(see article page 5)

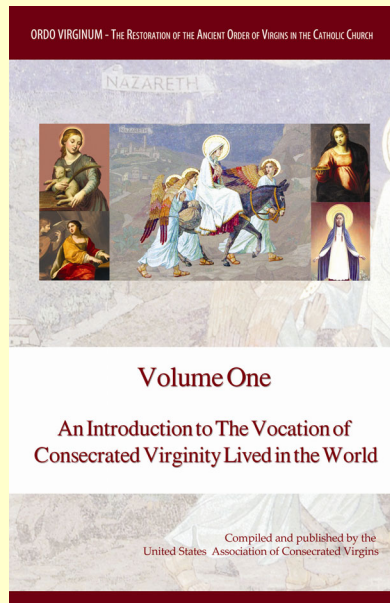
2013 -July 30 –August 2–tentative

### Fall 2012 Elections.

Please see announcement concerning  
Fall 2012 elections on page 6.

## Formation Resource Development

**Team: Mary Kay Lacke** We hope to have the first volume of *Ordo Virginitum: the Restoration of the Ancient Order of Consecrated Virginitiy in the Catholic Church* published and printed in time for the 2012 Convocation. We are very pleased with the cover design prepared by Alfonso Gutierrez, an artist friend of Magalis Aguilera in Miami. The printers are hard at work to complete the publication of Volume I, *An Introduction to the Vocation of Consecrated Virginitiy Lived in the World*.



Judith Stegman and Magalis Aguilera met with Mary Kay Lacke, May 10-14, to outline the content of the next few volumes of the series:

- Volume II will examine historical aspects of the consecration of virgins in the Church. We hope to complete this volume within the next several months.
- Volume III will look at our Blessed Mother and the virgin saints. We will be inviting consecrated virgins to personally contribute to Volume III by choosing a virgin saint or martyr to prayerfully research and study as a model in the way she impacted her own culture. More

will be said about this writing project at the USACV Convocation at Mundelein in July.

- Volume IV will reflect on the subject of virginitiy in the writings of the Fathers of the Church through the centuries, beginning with the Ancient Fathers and continuing to the present day.

**Membership Team: Magalis Aguilera** reports that many members have registered for 2012. Reminders will be sent soon to those who have not yet registered. We will also soon be updating the *Monday Morning Mail* and *Prayer Request Network* recipient lists to reflect current membership.

Two future *Symposiums for Consecrated Virgins*, sponsored by the Diocese of LaCrosse Office of Consecrated Life:

October 13, 2012 Symposium on Our Lady of Guadalupe, in LaCrosse. Bishop Callahan, Bishop of LaCrosse, will offer a presentation and celebrate Mass. Overnight accommodations will be available at a reasonable price.

April 13, 2013 Symposium on St. Joseph, in De Pere, The National Shrine of St. Joseph, near Green Bay. Bishop Callahan and Bishop Ricken, Bishop of Green Bay, will offer presentations. Overnight accommodations will be available at the Abbey.

Registration information and additional details can be obtained from Barb Swieczak, 608-788-7700 ext 2240, or scwjoy@gmail.com.

## Upcoming issues of *The Lamp*:

- September 8, 2012 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- December 12, 2012 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- February 2, 2013 Feast of the Presentation and World Day of Consecrated Life
- June 2, 2013 Feast of Corpus Christi;

Please send articles in electronic format at least 10 days in advance.

## Consecration Announcements

### United States:

May 31, 2012, **Sharon Borgert**, Archdiocese of Cincinnati, at the hands of The Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr.



### Australia:

Early 2012, **Donna-Anne Philippa**, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, at the hands of The Most Reverend Mark Coleridge.

### Canada:

September 4, 2011, **Paula Fortin**, Diocese of Quebec.

December 8, 2011, **Suzanne Richard**, Diocese of Montreal

December 9, 2011, **Lise Beliveau**, Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil.

March 26, 2012, **Claire Chenier** and **Betty Man**, Archdiocese of Saint Boniface, at the hands of The Most Reverend Albert LeGatt. (see message from Claire and Betty)

### Costa Rica:

May 5, 2012, **Marianella Thames**, Diocese of Cartago, at the hands of The Most Reverend José F. Ulloa.

### France:

October 1, 2011, **Claudie Gaspar** and **Emmanuelle Bintner**, Diocese of Poissy, at the hands of The Most Reverend Eric Aumonier. (These consecrations took place in the church of Notre Dame de Poissy where St. Louis was baptized in the year 1214.)

### Upcoming Consecrations:

June 16, 2012, **Emily Claire Byers**, Diocese of Lafayette (LA)  
All consecrated virgins are cordially invited to attend the Consecration of Emily Byers at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Lafayette, Louisiana on Saturday, June 16, 2012, Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Mass of Consecration, celebrated by Bishop Michael Jarrell, will begin at 10:30 a.m., with a reception to follow in the parish hall. Emily's contact information: emily.claire.byers@gmail.com; or 411 Dulles Dr. Apt. 7103, Lafayette, LA 70506.

## Notes from around the world

### Canada

God is Love

A message from **Claire Chenier** and **Betty Man**

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012, during the Holy Mass celebrating the Feast of the Annunciation, we received the *Consecration to a Life of Virginity for Women Living in the World* at the hands of Most Reverend Archbishop Albert LeGatt, Archbishop of St. Boniface, Manitoba, Canada. Our Holy Cross Church was packed and the atmosphere was prayerful and joyful. In the presence of eight priests, as well as relatives and friends, we stated our intention "to follow Christ in a life of perfect chastity."

This celebration crowned our devotion to Jesus and His Church. In fact, we both experienced the deep love of God in our early adult life. We realized that the love of Jesus is so personal that He would die just for 'me'. In our twenties, we chose Jesus as our Spouse and dedicate our whole lives to Him. We have been living our commitments in a private manner for many years.

Two years ago, we shared with Archbishop LeGatt, our desire to profess our love for Jesus publicly for greater service to His Church. He introduced us to the Consecration of Virginity for Women Living in the World. The USACV Information Conference on this vocation held in DeWitt, Michigan, which we attended last year, was a big help to understand more fully the meaning and beauty of such a special call and vocation. With the help of our spiritual director, we proceeded with the preparation and petition for this Consecration.

God is indeed merciful; He has looked with favor on His handmaids. We are grateful for the loving kindness that Jesus has shown us. With our Blessed Mother Mary as our model and guide, we hope to follow the multitude of virgins who chose to dedicate themselves body and soul by an everlasting covenant with Jesus our Heavenly Bridegroom.

'May Jesus be our glory, our joy and our whole desire. May He be our comfort in sorrow, our wisdom in perplexity, our protection in the midst of injustice, our patience in adversity, our riches in poverty, our food in fasting, and our remedy in time of sickness.' (Adapted from the Prayer of Consecration.) See photo page 5



## 2012 Convocation: July 18 – 22, 2012

announcement from Nicole Bettini

***Mystical Union with Christ: Bridal Mysticism***, will be the theme for the 2012 Convocation of United States Consecrated Virgins. The convocation will be held Wednesday through Sunday: July 18—22, 2012, at the Mundelein Retreat and Conference Center at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois.

We warmly invite all consecrated virgins, both from the United States and from other countries. With regard to those who are candidates for consecration—the invitation is extended to any virgin who has attended a previous Information Conference **and** who has formally been accepted by the Bishop of her diocese as a candidate to receive the Consecration of a Virgin Living in the World. **Registration deadline is June 25. Convocation schedule and registration details are available on the website.**

The days together include two presentations by Bishop Boyea on the three stages of the soul in a virgin called to a spousal relationship with Christ: purification, illumination and mystical union, and the ways she can foster openness to mystical union with her Divine Spouse. Judith Stegman and Mary Kay Lacke will give presentations on the Church as the Bride of Christ and Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit. In addition, we will hold afternoon symposium-style discussions on our own practical experience of the two ways of purification and illumination. The days will be hinged around our times of prayer together: Morning Prayer, Holy Mass, and Evening Prayer. As well, the schedule provides time for personal prayer, recreation, and conversation among the consecrated virgins at the gathering.

## 2012 Information Conference – announcement from Mary Kay Lacke

The USACV 2012 National Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World will be held from Tuesday evening, July 31 to Friday, August 3, at Bethany House of the St. Francis Retreat Center in DeWitt, Michigan (Diocese of Lansing). Over the years, this conference has offered countless women significant help in the discernment of their vocation to a life of consecrated virginity lived in the world. Through input given by attendees and the experience of those conducting the Conference, it has been modified over the years to become a strong component in the discernment process. A presentation on the discernment process per se, that was introduced at the 2011 Conference, will be expanded in the 2012 Conference, in response to an expressed need for this information.

Conference registrations are beginning to come in, but it continues to be important that the word is spread about the Information Conference. We're pleased to also note that Sign Language interpretation for the deaf will be available at this year's conference. A flyer and registration form is now available on the USACV website:  
[www.consecratedvirgins.org](http://www.consecratedvirgins.org).

### Hosting future convocations

Consecrated virgins are welcome to submit proposals for hosting future convocations in your locale.

Please see guidelines posted on the usacv website.

**Claire Chenier  
and Betty Man  
on their  
consecration  
day**



**Consecrated virgins celebrating 5,10,15, and 20 year anniversaries of consecration during 2012 have been invited to offer reflections for the September or December issues of *The Lamp*.**

# 2012 Council Elections

Two Council positions, President and At-Large Representative, will open January 1, 2013. 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 on Friday, October 25, 2012. Details of the election process will be announced in the next issue of *The Lamp*.

## *Position Terms, Descriptions and Responsibilities*

### President

Term: January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015.

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 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 USCCB regarding the status and activity of the USACV.

### At Large Representative

Term: January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2015

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 governance 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.
3. To participate in other Council meetings or discussions as needed.
4. If serving as the Council representative on a standing committee, to facilitate ongoing communication between the Council and the committee.
5. 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

Council members rely heavily on email to facilitate communication, since we are geographically in all parts of the United States.

The Association's travel budget currently covers accommodations and meals for Council members during the annual Council meeting with our Episcopal Moderator. Travel expenses for this meeting have not been covered by the Association budget. Within budgetary constraints, some portion of travel expenses incurred by the President for attendance at meetings on behalf of the Association have been able to be reimbursed by the Association. We invite potential candidates to discuss these matters further with our treasurer.



## Luxemburg

Renée Schmit reports that Luxemburg and Belgian consecrated virgins met together in conference with their bishop, who knows the vocation of consecrated virginity well. They hope to meet us all again, in Lux-



emburg or in the USA or in Rome. (See photo)

## Germany

Our sisters in Germany have completed Volume Two of their texts on the vocation of consecrated virginity, a volume which includes the homily delivered by Cardinal Burke at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary

celebration of Magalis Aguilera in Rome. The book also includes German translations of the 2008 Congress presentations by Cardinal Rodé and Gloria Irene Alvaro, as well as a text by Maria Luisa Öfele on the spirituality of the consecrated virgin. To purchase the book (in German), please go to:

[http://www.eos-verlag.de/spiritualitaet/geistliches-leben/geweihte-jungfraulichkeit?set\\_language=en](http://www.eos-verlag.de/spiritualitaet/geistliches-leben/geweihte-jungfraulichkeit?set_language=en)



## Spain

The Diocese of Cartagena in Spain celebrated 40 years of consecrated virginity. The first five virgins for the diocese were consecrated there on May 31, 1972, in the Santuario de la Virgen de la Fuensanta; 24 gathered for the anniversary celebration.

## Life Corner

By **Florence Sundberg**

There is an assault on religious freedom in our country. It is possible that Catholic institutions could be mandated to offer insurance coverage for contraception, sterilization, and abortion inducing drugs. If left unchallenged, who knows where this will lead? The Church's refusal to comply is being framed as a 'war against women,' as if having the life of her baby terminated in the womb is good for any woman.

Our Bishops are asking us to get engaged, to stand for life and for the freedom of conscience and religion in the public square, or risk losing these very freedoms we so cherish. They have called for a "Fortnight for Freedom," a 14-day period of prayer, education and action in support of religious freedom, beginning on June 21, ending on Independence Day, July 4th. A Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Lori on June 21st at the National Shrine of the Assumption in Baltimore; on July 4th, Mass will be offered at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. by Cardinal Wuerl, broadcast on EWTN, to close the "Fortnight for Freedom."

We know that what is conceived in the woman is human, not in the process of becoming human, and: "...therefore, from that moment of conception, his rights as a person must be recognized, among which is the inviolable right of every innocent human being to life... it must also be defended in its integrity, tended and cared for... in the same way as any other human being as far as medical assistance is concerned." (Donum Vitae) Without the right to life, all other 'rights' are meaningless. Please support our Bishops any way you can during their "Fortnight for Freedom."

May the Lord bless us all, and our Bishops in a special way as they stand on the front line of the battle to protect and defend the freedom of the Church. Let them know that we support them and that we will stand with them.





**United States Association  
of Consecrated Virgins**

300 West Ottawa Street  
Lansing, Michigan 48933-1577  
USA

**Fax: 253-270-5507**

**E-mail:**  
[info@consecratedvirgins.org](mailto:info@consecratedvirgins.org)  
[President@consecratedvirgins.org](mailto:President@consecratedvirgins.org)

● [www.consecratedvirgins.org](http://www.consecratedvirgins.org)

**Prayer of John Henry Cardinal Newman**

*The more, O my dear Lord, I meditate on Thy words,  
works, actions and sufferings in the Gospel  
the more wonderfully glorious and beautiful I see  
Thee to be.*

*And therefore, O my dear Lord, since I perceive Thee  
to be so beautiful, I love Thee and desire to  
love Thee more and more.*

*Since Thou art the One Goodness, Beautifulness,  
Gloriousness, in the whole world of being,  
therefore I love Thee with a singular love, a one,  
only, sovereign love... And I would lose every-  
thing whatever rather than lose Thee.*

*For Thou, O my Lord, art my supreme and only Lord  
and Love.*

From Meditations and Devotions, 1953, John Henry Newman  
submitted by Ann Stitt

*from the President's journal . .*

I write on June 1, Feast of Justin Martyr, after having just viewed the film, "For Greater Glory" with two other consecrated virgins. Truly it is a worthwhile film, as we see 20<sup>th</sup> Century martyrs for religious freedom. We couldn't help but recall the martyrdoms of the early virgin saints who gave their lives for the sake of keeping intact their virginal love for Christ alone. Emotions of great pride swelled in our hearts as we watched the courage of these ordinary men, women, and children, in the face of horrific government imposed restrictions on their freedom to worship as Catholics. Viva Cristo Rey!

Yesterday, May 31 was a joyful day spent in the company of six virgins, freely celebrating the consecration of Sharon Borgert in Cincinnati. This was the first consecration for Archbishop Dennis Schnurr, whose homily included a most interesting exegesis on Christian virginity as an eschatological sign. We six shared stories of our consecration days, how we fell in love with our Divine Bridegroom, the grace of our Blessed Mother, all the good wedding stories.

This ancient, restored vocation of consecrated virginity is prone to some confusion as people try to classify the life. Although a consecrated virgin is, of course, not married to a human spouse, it isn't correct to refer to consecrated virginity as a "single" vocation, or a "lay single" state. Consecrated virginity is very much a married vocation. Likewise, although consecrated virginity is lived in the midst of the world, and, as such, is a "secular" vocation, the vocation is not a "lay" vocation. Consecrated virginity is a form of Consecrated Life, as is religious life, monastic life, the eremitical life, and the life of members of secular institutes. The consecrated virgin is a woman of the Church; she is in a public state of consecrated life in the Church. She is consecrated "bride of Christ" and lives each day growing in union with Him, her true love.

*Judith Stegman*

**Additional Announcements:**

**Special Invitation:** Bishop Francis Kane, Auxiliary in Chicago, cordially invites consecrated virgins to attend "Bishops Reflect on the Amazing Holy Mass" on September 22, 2012 in Milwaukee. The all day conference will include presentations by Archbishop Jerome Listcki (Milwaukee), Bishop Robert Morlino (Madison), Aux. Bishop Francis Kane (Chicago), Bishop Frank Dewane (Venice, Fl), and Aux. Bishop Donald Hying (Milwaukee). Registration information is available at [www.rosaryea.org](http://www.rosaryea.org). Mention on your registration form if you are a consecrated virgin, so that seating arrangements can be made.

**A new book by Raymond Cardinal Burke, *Divine Blood Made Flesh*, is scheduled soon for publication in the United States.**