

February 2, 2021 — The Presentation of the Lord and World Day for Consecrated Life

To the Members of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins,

Last year at this time I wrote briefly about St. Joseph. Since the Holy Father has again called us to honor the foster father of Jesus, here are a few more reflections. When my father was 50 years old, he had ten children, the oldest of whom was a priest, and the youngest were twin girls aged ten. Five still lived at home and the rest were off in the world. The thought that occurs to me when I ponder this is that I am certain that Dad, when he married my mother in 1950, had no idea what was in store for himself. His fathering over those subsequent 30 years was not of his own creation, but was given to him.

St. Joseph is called a “just man.” I presume that Joseph found out about Mary’s pregnancy because she told him and that she told him the truth, that this was God’s doing, that this was God’s Son. Secondly, I presume that Joseph’s justice is not a function of his selfishness, but rather of his goodness. Therefore, to call Joseph a just man means that Joseph, knowing that Mary was pregnant and that the child was the Son of the Most High God, also knew that he could not wed Mary and claim that child as his own—for it was God’s child, and he, Joseph, was unworthy to claim to be his father. Joseph’s justice meant that he had to drop all claims to Mary and to any future progeny with Mary.

When the angel then speaks to Joseph, the angel tells Joseph that God needs Joseph: God needs Joseph to bring this child into the House of David and God needs Joseph to name this child, Jesus.

So, Joseph was given a wife, a child, a family that was not his own and Joseph was told to be the father of this family. Is this not how it is with all of us? We all like to think that our families are ours, but really they are gifts to us. We were gifts from God to our parents and all those who come into our lives are also be gifts to us.

The nature of such a gift is that we cannot predict it or even plan for it. Our lives take many turns. In those turns we are asked to see divine providence at work and then be open to whatever grace God wishes to give us. Joseph models this for us. He sacrificed any dreams he may have had, any plans for the kind of family he may have wanted, in order to be the father God wanted him to be. His whole self was sacrificed to Mary and Jesus. This is no small thing. God entrusted to Joseph the entire mystery of salvation. Is not that mystery far greater than any of our own human dreams. St. Joseph, pray for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Earl Boyea

Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Bishop of Lansing

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By Dr. Magalis Aguilera, Psy.D. and
Dr. Judith M. Stegman, JCD

Our Blessed Virgin Mother, Mary of Nazareth, was created with free will to say “Yes” or “No.” Eve in Paradise was created with free will to say “Yes” or “No.” Mary said “*Fiat*” (“Yes”) and Eve said “No.”

The vocation of virginity as a state in the Church has its stronghold in our Most Blessed Queen. Our vocation leads us to ask before the consecration: “What is the significance of these virgins who follow our Mother’s call from the Eternal Father to live in perpetual virginity?” The Catholic Encyclopedia presents this answer:

“There are two elements in virginity: the material element, that is to say, the absence, in the past and in the present, of all complete and voluntary delectation, whether from lust or from the lawful use of marriage; and the formal element, that is the firm resolution to abstain forever from sexual pleasure.”

Why did Eve fall? It was a matter of free will. Let us consider the meaning of the biblical interpretation of free will, as we keep walking in the way of perfection in our vocation.

Humans created by God possess free will and are thus capable of originating evil. In the very first chapter of the Bible God commands humans to be fruitful and to exercise dominion over the animal kingdom and the earth (See Gen. 1:26). The fact that God must command us to carry out His will reveals that we are not forced to carry out His will. We can choose to obey God or not because “God created man in His image” (Gen. 1:26). Unlike animals, which act mainly on instinct, we resemble our Creator in our capacity to display such qualities as love and justice. And like our Creator, we have free will.

Before the fall, the human soul was integrated in good. After the fall, evil was discovered and thus the free will had a two-fold choice to make, between good and evil. Adam and Eve fell into sin although it occurred in their complete free choice to obey or disobey God. When Jesus Christ became incarnate in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, the history of our salvation began to transform everything anew.

In the Book of Deuteronomy we read: “I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways . . . then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. . . I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (Dt. 30:15–19). To the Jewish people “to love God” and “to drill God’s love into their children” was established in the understanding that free will is a product of the intrinsic human soul, for God breathed into Adam the breath of life (see Gen 2:7), but the ability to make a free choice is through the part of the soul that is united with God (see Joseph Jacobs, Issac Broyde in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 2006).

When Jesus Christ freed men through his passion, death, and resurrection, we received a new understanding of free will. Jesus Christ, who is the Word of the Eternal Father, taught us the same meaning for free will that the Eternal Father taught through the hagiographers in the Old Testament: “The good person out of the good treasure *of the heart* produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance *of the heart* that the mouth

speaks” (Lk. 6:45). Jesus taught that it was out of the person’s own heart that “evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, and slander” arise (Mt. 15: 19).

We see from these words of Jesus Christ that men are free to decide to love, or to do evil. They are free to decide whether or not they will obey the law of the Eternal Father given in the Old Testament: “Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest. Bind them at your wrist as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead” (Dt. 6:4–9).

Using the words of the Apostles, the Church teaches that we cannot love the will of the Eternal Father if we don’t live in the teaching of Jesus Christ. Saint Paul, for example, taught that doing what one doesn’t want to do results from a misunderstanding of the law of love because of a lack of faith in Christ. Law binds the living, not the dead, as Paul exemplified by speaking of marriage, which binds in life but is dissolved through death. Similarly, Christians who through baptism have died with Christ to sin (Rom. 6:2–4) are freed from the law of slavery that occasioned transgressions, which in turn produced death (cf. Rom. 7:1–15).

Our free will is rooted and grounded when baptism makes us alter-Christus. The power of Christ’s resurrection makes it possible for us to bear the fruit of newness of life for God. We receive the Holy Spirit in baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit illuminates us to follow the law of love. To follow the law of love is to accept the

commands of God as a protection from the evil one who tries to push the baptized away from the commandments of God, rendering him unfaithful.

The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church states that "Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one’s own responsibility” (CCC 1731). The Catechism explains that "God created man a rational being, conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own actions. ‘God willed that man should be ‘left in the hand of his own counsel,’ so that he might of his own accord seek his Creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him’” (CCC 1730). The section ends by noting the role of grace: "By the working of grace the Holy Spirit educates us in spiritual freedom in order to make us free collaborators in his work in the Church and in the world" (CCC 1742).

In the continued spiritual growth in our virginal vocation, a full image comes to mind as we picture the complete planet Earth and see the Eternal Father fulfilling the promise He made after the fall of Adam and Eve. He promised to send a redeemer to free us from the disobedience to which the human creature was submitted by Adam and Eve in their free choice of disobedience. Who would say YES? Who would be free of original sin? Who would be the Mother of the new Adam? Eve had failed as the first virginal woman. Where would the new virgin live?

The Eternal Father, who is omnipresent, visualized in Paradise a woman who would follow his will, and that woman was one who lived in the region of Palestine at the precise time when the Roman Empire governed the region. In His omnipresence, He knew about the Roman Empire.



Our Lady of
Lukawiec (Tartakow)

Also in His omnipresence, He used the power of that Empire and when the Word was fulfilled His only begotten son was born in Bethlehem. At the time he was born, Jewish Palestine, as well as some of the neighboring Gentile area, was ruled by Rome's friends and allies of Herod. Palestine was important to Rome because it lay between Syria and Egypt, two of Rome's most valuable possessions. In preparing the Church of His Son, the Eternal Father took all of this into account.

The Eternal Father chose our Blessed Mother to live in perpetual virginity, and His choice of her in fulfillment of the promise made to our first fathers in Paradise did not compromise the free *propositum* she made and clarified to the Messenger Archangel Gabriel, asking how it was that she, as a virgin, could conceive a child.

When the Archangel conveyed to her the plan of the Eternal Father for her virginal state, the Blessed Virgin understood and offered her *sanctum propositum* in a complete decision of love as she accepted the invitation to become the Mother of God's son. She understood exactly what Saint Ambrose later expressed in his mystical understanding of virginity: "Who can deny that this mode of life has its source in heaven, which we don't easily find on earth, except since God came down into the members of the earthly body? Then a Virgin conceived and the Word became flesh that flesh might become God" (Ambrose, *Concerning Virgins*, Bk. 2).

In the Blessed Mother's answer to the Archangel, it is important to understand that it is not because of a promise of the Eternal Father that Mary of Nazareth decided to love His will. The Old Testament presents a virgin's father who made a promise when he faced a terrible battle. He promised to sacrifice the first person who greeted him if he returned safely to home. The first one to greet him was his daughter. He had to be faithful

to his promise and she was sacrificed in her virginity, although she had not held a *propositum* to die as a virgin (see Judg. 11:30–39).

The Blessed Virgin Mary of Nazareth was chosen because she was open to the grace of virginity. She loved the will of the Eternal Father and she made a decision. Love is a decision; it is not an imposition. She was chosen to serve our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father as well as her Divine Son. In her life, she passed through experiences of free choices: to accept her Son's death on the Cross; to accept being left in this mortal life after Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven; and to accept being made the Mother of the twelve apostles and, in them, the Mother of the Church.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the image of our virginal vocation and as we live in this mortal life, her life is our inspiration. She passed through all the "valleys of tears" as we also pass. She was without her visible "child," who had died on the Cross, because of her love for us as her spiritual children.

In the most profound mystical example for us, she waited for the moment she would return to the Father's House, but she kept in her heart the words of the Prophet on that first Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple: "In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Cantic of Zechariah, Luke 1: 68-79).

We are guided by His Light and we rest in our Mother and Queen's constant intercession for the Church of Her Son and for us as witnesses of His Kingdom to come; we live as our Mother, serving and following Christ in perpetual virginity according to our *sanctum propositum*.

By Dr. Judith M. Stegman, JCD
Archdiocese of Miami (FL)

In the December issue of *The Lamp*, we began to take a closer look at canon 604 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, pointing out that the five phrases of the first paragraph of the canon succinctly provide the ecclesial identification of the *Ordo virginum*. Today's article will consider the second of the phrases of canon 604:

- Similar to these forms of consecrated life is the order of virgins who,
- **expressing the holy resolution of following Christ more closely (*sanctum propositum emittentes Christum pressius sequendi*)**,
- are consecrated to God by the diocesan bishop according to the approved liturgical rite,
- are mystically espouse to Christ, the Son of God,
- and are dedicated to the service of the Church.

The first phrase of the canon attests to the juridical recognition the Church gives to the *Ordo virginum* as a distinct form of consecrated life, not identical to religious or secular institutes, and not a society of apostolic life. Instead, as we saw last month, the *Ordo virginum* is added to (*accedit*) the forms of consecrated life as its own distinct form, with its own peculiarities and distinctions.

The second phrase of the canon further characterizes the *Ordo virginum* as those who express “the holy resolution of following Christ more closely.” The primary *object* of the virgin's holy resolution, to “follow Christ more closely” inherently links the *Ordo virginum* to other forms of consecrated life—identical words are used in canon

573 to describe the fundamental meaning of a life that is consecrated through profession of the evangelical counsels. The phrase finds its source in the Vatican II document *Perfectae caritatis* which distinguishes consecrated life as “a life dedicated to God,” and summarizes as the ultimate norm and highest rule of religious life “the following of Christ set forth in the Gospels” (see *PC* (1966) 1, 2a). Xaverius Ochoa points out that the consecration to follow Christ more closely is “distinguished from religious profession and pertains to the natural state of religious” (*Commentarium pro religiosis et missionariis* 57 (1976) 208).

At the same time that this second phrase closely links the *Ordo virginum* to the natural state of religious/consecrated life, the phrase also distinguishes the *Ordo* from other forms of consecrated life by citing the virgin's commitment as a “*sanctum propositum*,” rather than a vow or other sacred bond. This is a significant point. The liturgical rite of consecration refers to the virgin's lifelong commitment to follow Christ in the holy state of virginity not as a vow or sacred bond, but instead as a resolve or decision (*volo*) to persevere in a firm resolution or decision (*propositum*). The member of the religious institute, secular institute, or society of apostolic life, and the diocesan hermit, are constituted into the juridical state of consecrated life in the Church by means of public vows or sacred bonds, but this is not the case with the consecrated virgin. The virgin implores the favor of consecration upon her *propositum virginitalis* (resolve to live in virginity), and “only after having received the certitude that the virgin is committed to be united exclusively and indissolubly with Christ,” will the Church, through the diocesan Bishop, proceed to consecrate the virgin. (D.M. Huot “La Consécration

des Vierges 17,” *Informationes* 9 (1983) 165). While a *propositum* of virginity refers to an individual’s inner decision to live the Gospel as a virgin, the *sanctum propositum* of the virgin which is publicly received by the Bishop in the name of the Church, during the solemn rite of consecration to a life of virginity, binds the virgin in a way that is equivalent to a public vow of chastity and constitutes her in the public state of consecrated life in the Church as one who is perpetually, mystically espoused to Christ.

— taken largely from Judith M. Stegman, “*Mystically Espoused to Christ the Son of God (c. 604 §1)*”: *The Basis for Proposing Juridic Principles to Guide the Development of Norms for the Ordo virginum* (Washington D.C., 2019 and Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest LLC, 2019) 147-160.)

***Vultis in sanctae
virginitatis proposito ac
Domini Ecclesiaeque
servitio ad extremum
vitae perseverare?***

Are you resolved to
persevere to the end of your
days in the holy state of
virginity and in the service
of God and His Church?

A Note from the Archivist

Anne Gishpert, USACV-IRC archivist, reminds consecrated virgins who have not done so to please send her a copy of your consecration certificate (providing this copy also enables United States virgins to be full voting members of the USACV). Anne also keeps the USACV "family" albums, which include mementos from consecrations. You are warmly invited to send Anne the program, invitation, holy cards, photos, or other items from your consecration. Anne especially asks those consecrated in recent years to send these so that she can update our albums. The "family" albums travel each year to our convocation and information conference, and always bring smiles and memories. You can email Anne at anne.gishpert@gmail.com.

Consecration Announcements

Consecration Announcements:

The USACV invites dioceses and candidates for consecration to send announcements of upcoming consecrations, so that we can publish these in *The Lamp* and in a bi-weekly e-newsletter that is circulated among the consecrated virgin members of the USACV. Of course, after a consecration, we are also pleased to publish the announcement and photo(s) in *The Lamp*.

Upcoming Consecrations

United States:

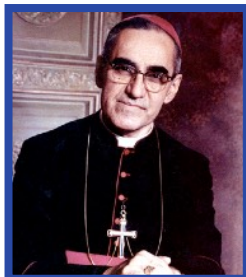
February 11, 2021 — Simi Sahu, at the Cathedral of St. Ignatius of Loyola in Palm Beach Gardens, FL, at 5pm, Diocese of Palm Beach (FL), at the hands of The Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito.

All are warmly invited to attend.

By Florence Sundberg
Archdiocese of Hartford (CT)

In these times many are finding it very hard to remain positive or hopeful. It seems as if the forces, the powers of evil, have been unleashed in our country and they are creating havoc and causing many to despair. But we are a people of hope because we are Christ's and He is ours and with Him nothing is impossible. I always keep in mind the words of Archbishop Romero when, as his people were being killed and the Churches attacked, he fell to his knees in utter despair and raised his eyes and his hands to heaven and cried out to the Lord God: "I can't! You can! I can't! You must!" We must not give in to discouragement for it does not come from God but from the evil one who brings darkness and doubt into our thoughts. But we are a people of hope and our hope does not depend on politics or politicians. We have an administration committed to extending the time limit in which innocent babies can be killed in the womb of the mother up until a moment before birth; and which is attempting to force Catholic religious communities like the Little Sisters of the Poor to pay for these killings. We must pray and do all we can, as God so wills, to stand against this evil agenda. I am remembering St. Maximilian Kolbe who stood against the Nazi regime through the power of prayer which gave him the courage and determination to act, to write, to speak out no matter the cost. It cost him his life but his courage and love of Christ and His Church and of God's people have caused ripples of hope to extend to all who are suffering, oppressed, persecuted. May our Bishops and Pastors, our Shepherds, find and use the courage that Christ gives them to stand against everything that is not in compliance with Christ and His Church. These new mandates promoting the mass extermination of innocent babies are a blight on mankind because these are innocent babies, created by God, who are being torn out of

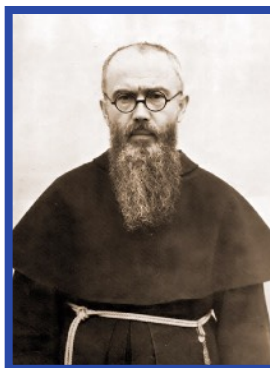
life before they have even begun to know the caress, the care and the nurturing of their mother; they are weak and vulnerable and those who should protect them from harm are asking, instead, that they not be permitted to live. This is a crucial



Saint Oscar
Romero, 1978

moment in each of our lives, a time of decision: do we remain silent hoping others will stand against the wall of evil heading towards us, do we just go blithely on our way ignoring the cries of the innocent, doing nothing, saying nothing? The Father chose us for His Son and that choice brings tremendous responsibility because Christ's children are ours and we must stand with Him and with them, no matter how powerful

the forces of evil are. Christ is ours: we can't! He can! We can't! He must! And He will. I keep saying this and it brings me courage and determination to stay in this battle for life ... and for the soul of America.



Saint Maximilian
Kolbe, 1936



Saint Jeanne Jugan,
Foundress of the Little
Sisters of the Poor

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY
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By Diane Christine Farr
Diocese of Rochester (NY)

All Christians are called to a deep communion with God in their lives. On February 2nd, we celebrate the day of consecrated life. Using a passage from scripture and the beginning of the prayer for the consecration of virgins, we will reflect on how we may become a paradise for Jesus. We will also include aspects of the gift of living in the Divine Will. We read in 1st Corinthians, “An unmarried woman or a virgin is anxious about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy in both body and spirit, 1st Cor. 7:34.

As consecrated virgins we are anxious for the salvation and sanctification of all people. This work is brought about by both interior and exterior means. As we pour all of ourselves into the Divine Will, uniting all we do with all that Jesus has done, we operate in a divine manner and universal manner affecting all souls. We mix the water of our prayers and good works with the wine of Christ’s Salvation, immersing our reparations and sufferings with those of Jesus and offering them in the Divine Will, giving us an immense privilege toward helping our brothers and sisters on their journey to the kingdom of heaven.

The consecrated virgin loves Jesus with an undivided heart. The spousal dimension of our being is consecrated exclusively to God. This vocation involves the entire person. The consecrated virgin is holy both in body and spirit since her whole being has been set apart for sacred use only.

In this beautiful aspect we reflect the Blessed Virgin Mary our mother. The glory of holy virginity is the beauty of a sacred space reserved for God alone. The distinct mark of our vocation is this gift of virginity both received by God and preserved for His honor and love. It is through the

grace of our consecration that we give ourselves totally to Christ our Bridegroom and he in turn gives himself totally to us.

The prayer of the consecration of virgins begins, “Loving Father, chaste bodies are your temple, you delight in sinless hearts. Our nature was corrupted when the devil deceived our first parents, but you have restored it in Christ. He is your Word through whom all things were made. He has made our nature whole again and made it possible for mortal people to reflect the life of angels.”

The consecrated virgin reflects the life of angels in perfect purity and constant praise and adoration of the most Holy Trinity. We are drawn to a high level of contemplative love. We are called to be a paradise for Jesus. The consecrated virgin also reflects Christ in His risen humanity. We anticipate the state of the blessed in heaven as well as our own resurrection.

In becoming a paradise for Jesus, we must surrender ourselves completely to Him allowing His will to reign in us. We must go back to the original purpose for the creation of mankind. We were meant to live in perfect harmony with the Divine Will. The same order and harmony that exists in the Holy Trinity was meant to be found in our souls. Few of us stop to consider the beauty and dignity of the human soul.

We are of an infinite value to Jesus for he paid an incalculable price for our salvation. The Divine Will is the sun that illuminates the celestial paradise of our souls, giving us light and infused knowledge. All of our acts united with those of Jesus in the Divine Will are as so many brilliant stars in the celestial heaven.

Every prayer, every act of love, reparation and adoration reflect the many bonds of communication with our beloved Jesus. We center all of our thoughts in His peace directing our gaze

always toward Him. His will is our life. Clothed with his own infinite love we offer Him the perfect requital of love.

In a beautifully planted garden, we find a great variety of flowers with various colors and fragrances. This is a reflection of the celestial garden of our heart where God wishes to find all of His attributes present. Forming our entire life in His will, He wants to clothe us with His own sanctity. Our Lord continually works in this garden, enlisting our cooperation in its cultivation. We desire to be perfectly attentive and mindful to the work of the Divine Gardener.

This garden is meant to radiate the splendor and perfume of heaven for it contains the holiness of Divine Wisdom, strength, beauty, mercy, goodness, purity and perfect love. Jesus walks with His bride in this garden always drawing her into a deeper knowledge of His own Heart. He wants to find perfect rest in His garden dispersing the clouds of disturbance by the penetrating light of His most holy will. The joy and remembrance of His Holy presence sustains His bride in the daily carrying of the cross. When it seems as though He is far away, we remember that in order to repair for man's willful separation from God, he allowed himself to feel the apparent absence of the Divinity. This knowledge causes us to love Him more.

When we fuse ourselves completely in the Divine Will, it is the nothing ascending to the all and the all descending to the nothing. A more pure and noble gift we could not receive. We need to be consciously aware of our nothingness in order to receive the fullness of Divine Life.

As consecrated virgins, God has bestowed an immense dignity upon us. We exist for His glory and for the consolation of other people. Our communion with our divine Bridegroom is

nourished by a profound prayerful silence in the depth of our souls.

It is with immense gratitude in our hearts that we thank Jesus for the gift of His Immaculate mother. She is His most beautiful paradise wherein He was pleased to dwell. Medieval artists have depicted Mary with the Christ Child in an enclosed rose garden. Today symbolic gardens are still planted in her honor. We contemplate her exquisite beauty as we say with St. Gertrude, "Hail white lily of the Holy Trinity. Hail fairest rose of heaven."



**USACV and International Resource Center
for the *Ordo Virginum*
Leadership Team Members and Officers**

USACV Leadership Team

Emily Byers 2021-2023; Secretary of the
USACV-IRC; Diocese of Lafayette (LA).
(*USACV Online Presence*).

Francesca Riddick 2019-2021; Diocese of Joliet
(IL). (*USACV Membership and eTapestry*).

Amanda Schrauth 2019-2021; Diocese of Great
Falls-Billings (MT). (*Publication of "The
Lamp"*).

Joani McCann 2019-2021; Archdiocese of
Boston (MA). (*Convocation Liaison*).

Elizabeth Lam 2020-2022; Diocese of Oakland
(CA). (*USACV Website*).

IRC Leadership Team

Magalis Aguilera; USA, Archdiocese of Miami
(FL).

Judith Stegman, President of the USACV-IRC
2019-2025; USA, Archdiocese of Miami (FL).

Maria Luisa Meza; EL SALVADOR, Diocese of
Santa Ana/San Miguel.

Maria Luisa Oefe; GERMANY, Diocese of
Regensburg.

Renu Rita Silvano; INDIA, Archdiocese of
Bombay.

Other USACV-IRC Services, among others

Karen Webb 2021-2023; Treasurer of the
USACV-IRC; Diocese of Rochester (NY)

Mary Kay Lacke; Information Conference
director.

Theresa Marshall; Information Conference
coordinator.

Anne Gishpert; archivist.

Florence Sundberg; prayer chain coordinator.

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY

USACV
www.consecratedvirgins.org



“Saint Joseph and his Son” by Shannon Ryan

Submissions Accepted

If you would like to submit an article, artwork, or a reflection for consideration in a future edition of *The Lamp*, please email it to Amanda Schrauth (info@consecratedvirgins.org). We accept articles and artwork related to our vocation of consecrated virginity, related to Our Lady and the virgin saints, and related to Saint Joseph during this Year of Saint Joseph (2021).

Anniversary Reflections

Consecrated virgins who celebrate significant anniversaries during 2021 are invited to submit an anniversary reflection for *The Lamp*. These anniversary reflections are popular among our readers as they convey a personal look at life lived as a bride of Christ in the *Ordo virginum*.

If you would like to submit an anniversary reflection, please email it to info@consecratedvirgins.org.

In Memory of Our Deceased Sisters

If you would like to write and submit a remembrance or memorial for a deceased consecrated virgin to be published in a future edition of *The Lamp*, please email it to Amanda Schrauth (info@consecratedvirgins.org).

Save the Date

**United States Convocation of
Consecrated Virgins
Sponsored by the USACV
July 2 to July 6, 2021
Enders Island, Connecticut**

Normally our February edition of "The Lamp" includes many details about the upcoming summer convocation. With the pandemic, however, we are holding off on finalizing arrangements. We have Enders Island reserved, and we hope to gather together in July!

Consecrated virgins, please send your thoughts on this to Joani McCann

(joani.mccann@gmail.com). Please also let Joani know if you are interested in helping with the convocation.

2021 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World

Our 2020 Virtual Conference was very warmly received by participants, and plans for a 2021 in-person or virtual information conference are under consideration by USACV-IRC leadership team members. Please be in touch with Judith Stegman (president@consecratedvirgins.org) with your thoughts and suggestions.



2019 United States
Convocation of
Consecrated Virgins

Upcoming Issues of The Lamp:

May 31, 2021 Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

September 8, 2021 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

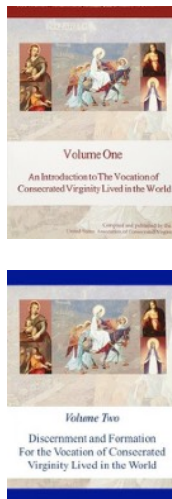
December 12, 2021 Feast of Our Lady of
Guadalupe

February 2, 2022 Feast of the Presentation and
World Day for Consecrated Life

Membership Update:

From [Francesca Riddick](#), membership chair of the USACV: Thank you to the many people who renewed your 2020 membership and helped us with your generous donations. Your continued financial support of our association helps defray our costs and helps us in the many projects we are undertaking to promote our vocation.

2021 USACV Member and Friend membership paper forms are ready now on our website at consecratedvirgins.org. Link [here](#). Online forms for 2021 will be available soon. We invite (and encourage) all United States consecrated virgins to support our work by registering as Members of the USACV. We warmly invite consecrated virgins from other countries to support our work by registering as Friends of the USACV-IRC. We likewise invite diocesan delegates for consecrated life, as well as others who work with consecrated virgins and those discerning and preparing for consecration, to register as Friends of the USACV-IRC. As in previous years, we will officially begin our 2021 Membership Drive in March.



USACV Election Results:

By unanimous vote, Emily Byers was recommended by USACV members to serve another three year term on the USACV Section Leadership Team, and Karen Webb was recommended to serve as treasurer of the USACV-IRC. The USACV-IRC Leadership Teams will soon make these appointments official, although terms began January 1, 2021. Many thanks to Emily and to Karen for offering their service in filling these important roles of service.

Many Thanks to Margaret Flipp:

Many thanks also to consecrated virgin Margaret Flipp who has most faithfully served the USACV as treasurer or assistant treasurer since January 1, 2014. May our Divine Spouse continue to bless you, Margaret, as you follow the Lamb wherever He leads.

Volume 3 of Ordo Virginum:

As many readers of “The Lamp” know, Volume 3 of the USACV series, *Ordo Virginum—The Restoration of the Ancient Order of Virgins in the Catholic Church*—is planned as a volume on virgin saints who lived out their vocation in the world, and not as part of a religious family other than the *Ordo virginum*. Shalina Stilley, working with Mary Kay Lacke, is re-igniting our work on this volume. We are still looking for volunteers to help us write essays on specific virgin saints. If you are interested in helping, or would like more information on the project, please contact Shaline Stilley at catherinestilley@gmail.com.