

## May 31, 2021 — The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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

Our Diocese of Lansing has distributed enough candles to our parishes to provide each household with one. These were meant to be lit one hour each day during the octave after the Solemnity of Pentecost with appointed prayers. A practical purpose of this exercise was to welcome back our parishioners since the obligation to attend Mass has been reinstated as of Pentecost. But the deeper purpose was to engage our diocese in seeking the Holy Spirit's wisdom and courage and love in order to strengthen our discipleship and move us to Announce the Gospel of the Lord.

A candle, a light, is a very important symbol used by all of you as part of your consecration ceremony. It is basically a call to be what we profess to be, to be seen to be what our mouths claim we are, to be light in the midst of darkness. Obviously, we don't achieve this goal by our own means. It is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, the Spouse of every consecrated virgin, who empowers and emboldens us to be, to speak, and to act as His light in our world today.

If you still have your light from your consecration, perhaps you can light it for eight consecutive days in prayer for the more active presence of the Holy Spirit in your life. Another candle can serve the same purpose. As God proclaimed over the chaos, "Let there be light," may he do the same over you as well as the Spirit of God, his very Breath, hovers over you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Bishop of Lansing

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## Something Ancient, Something New - The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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

The feasts of our Most Blessed Mother and Queen always present a teaching of love for our hearts and souls. We are her children and each country, from every part of the world, desires to give her a particular name. People become proud when an apparition of our Blessed Mother confirms their wishes, and in their hearts she becomes their “unique” mother, as children love their own unique mothers. Our Blessed Mother has been loved since the very beginning of the Church when, in the upper room, the apostles waited in expectation for the coming of the promised Holy Spirit.

The apostles looked on her as their Mother and what has impressed me is an old picture of a tearful Peter, on that “dark night” of His life, telling Mary that he had denied Jesus as His Master. The virgins of the ancient Church wanted to live the virginal state of life as our Mother did, for love of her virginal Son. She was touched by the Eternal Father’s will as she decided to live as a virgin in the early years of her life. “But there is a widespread misconception that Marian devotion started with the Council of Ephesus in 431, when Mary was defined as the Theotokos, the “Mother of God”, an article of faith that is binding for all believers” (Michael Hesemann, Epilogue to *Mary of Nazareth: History, Archeology, Legends*, San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2016, p. 255). In fact, Marian devotion is as old as the Church herself.

The Gospel of Luke prophesies and requires veneration for Mary. “Behold, from henceforth all generations will call me blessed” (Lk 1:48). Elizabeth was depicted by Luke as at the first to honor Mary when in *Ain Karim*, filled with the Holy Spirit, she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women,” and named her “the mother of my Lord” (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Daughter of Zion: Meditations on the Church’s Marian Belief*, quoted in Hesemann, cited above).

As Mary of Nazareth was chosen and visited by the Archangel, she went without delay to the mountains of *Ain Karim* to visit Elizabeth. The title of Our Lady of the Visitation is one of the most

important for the whole Church, precisely because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was given flesh in the virginal womb of our Most Blessed Mother, visited with His mother, the mother of that man who was prepared to be His precursor.

Preaching on the Visitation, Pope Benedict XVI said: “This event is not merely a courteous gesture but portrays in great simplicity the encounter of the Old Testament with the New. Indeed the two women, both of them pregnant, embody expectation and the Expected One. The elderly Elizabeth symbolizes Israel which is awaiting the Messiah, whereas the young Mary bears within her the fulfillment of this expectation for the benefit of the whole of humanity” (Pope Benedict, homily).

In Hebrew, the name “Mary” is “Miriam,” which, using the analogy of the spoken Hebrew language, could mean “lady” or “madam.” The Archangel’s visitation to Mary of Nazareth was the second time in six months that the Angel Gabriel had been sent by the Eternal Father to announce a message related to the incarnation of His Son. The first message from God was to Zechariah, announcing the coming birth of John, the precursor or forerunner of Jesus (Lk 1: 5–25). John the Baptist was sanctified in his mother’s womb when Mary of Nazareth visited her cousin to assist her at the time of John’s birth. The Blessed Virgin Mary was the first to help the Son of God announce the joy of the Eternal Kingdom.

At the sound of Mary of Nazareth’s greeting to Elizabeth, the child John leapt for joy in his mother’s womb and was filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, in His mother’s womb, used her voice to confirm the call of the one who would cry out in the wilderness that the time is near and who would baptize with water. This type of baptism is unique in the Old Testament, because it was not the purification initiating a ritual sign, rather it meant a complete moral transformation. The teaching regarding John’s baptism was that



Fresco of the Visitation at  
Saint George Church in  
Kurbino, North  
Macedonia

those who freely requested the baptism and entered the water were making a declaration that they would do penance, make complete contrition for all of their sins, and live a life of witness to the Kingdom to come. This baptism was administered by John only once, and a person's personal conversion was the initiation of a complete new life; the rite was a personal and prophetic inspiration given to a person to fulfil his mission. At the banks of the Jordan, John acted under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that he received in his mother's womb.

Several investigations attempting to explore the origin from which John took the rite failed. John was not from the sect community of the Essenes, although studies in the 17<sup>th</sup> century discovered "Mandelo's Church" at the Bank of The Tigris—an heretical church that had the nickname of "Christian" and practiced according to Saint John the Baptist. Later studies corroborated that John the Baptist had no relationship to this group: the heretical practices were completely inconsistent with Saint John's baptism of penance as illustrated in the Gospel and the account of the Jewish historian Flavio Joseph.

The Gospel of Luke confirms the plan of God in the beautiful and secret harmony between the preparation and fulfilment of the plan. John was a harmonic secret instrument in Mary's visitation and in our Divine Lord's mission of salvation: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world" (Jn. 1: 6–9).

The second message of the Archangel Gabriel announced the "true light . . . coming into the world": the plenitude of time arrived, and the Father was sending His Son born of woman, born under the law, as the Redeemer, to redeem those under the law (see Gal. 4: 5).

The voice of the angel resounded again in a little town, in a humble house that was full of light because the virgin had prepared her soul to belong solely to the will of the Eternal Father. She lived a modest life because she was born to serve, as her Son

came to serve as our redeemer—to serve and not be served. Jesus was born as a child and began His earthly life as every other child begins life. He did not perform any miracle in order to not be a child because He reserved His power to perform miracles for the time when He would confirm His eternal doctrine; the time of His magisterium did not happen immediately after His birth.

The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth offers a lesson of love to us to understand the mystical meaning of our own vocation of virginity, a vocation which is hidden and has no power outside the eternal power that comes from the Holy Spirit.

When the "eternal voice of God sounded," Nazareth is not mentioned in the Bible, nor in the "Talmudic infolios" of Josephus, nor in the pages of Hebrew files. Today what is preserved in Nazareth is the Fountain of Miriam and the Sanctuary of the Annunciation. Through the angel of the Annunciation, the Lord's voice sounded in the little town of Nazareth in the region of Galilee: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned" (Is. 9:2). The prophecy was fulfilled in the Gentile region of Galilee.

What was in the heart of our Mary of Nazareth? In her own being, with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, she made a personal decision to keep her virginity for the Lord. Her "*motu proprio*" was strengthened by her fidelity to the will of the Eternal Father.

She grew in faith, not knowing the exact way that the will of the Eternal Father would be fulfilled in her and the House of David. What she did know was that His promise of a redeemer would be fulfilled—a promise He had made at the time original sin entered human nature. She read the prophets of the Old Testament who revealed that the Eternal Father promised an eternal Kingdom to the House of David, and yet David had died. What then was the complete meaning of that promise? She trusted in the words of the Eternal Father.

Mary of Nazareth needed to make a decision so that her parents could remain faithful to the rules about virgin daughters. She belonged to the

descendants of the tribe of David, and Elizabeth was her relative, who, like Zechariah, was of the tribe of Levi. A marital union between one tribe and another was not a foreign arrangement, and Elizabeth was a descendant of the Tribe of Judah with a Levite father. The voice of the Eternal Father sounded first in descendants of the tribe of Levi, who had particular religious duties for the Israelites as well as political responsibilities. It was in carrying out these duties that John the Baptist observed to Herod that his matrimony was not legal, and ultimately suffered martyrdom

The virginal vocation of Mary of Nazareth began in her being from the moment of her conception, and grew as she matured into womanhood. She was educated in the Temple of Jerusalem and she left the temple in integral maturity in body, soul, and the divine grace of a virginal vocation given her by the Eternal Father. The first words from the Archangel came as a revelation of her integral virginity, with the greeting of the Eternal Father: "Hail Mary," "*Kecharitomene*"; this was a unique word for a unique lady. "*Chaire, kecharitōmenē, ho kyrios meta sou!*" Hail, "Full of Grace," the Lord is with you!" No one else in human history is "κεχαριτωμένη" (*kecharitomene*).

Our Mary of Nazareth, full of grace, trusted in the Eternal Father that her promise of virginity would be her donation to His will for her. As a starting point, she needed to follow the rules that Jewish virgins were to be married with a man decided upon by her father. Mary followed the rules but she explicitly told Joseph that she had vowed her integral virginity to the Eternal Father.

Apocryphal work of the late second century presented Joseph as having had children from an earlier marriage, and this understanding is still held in Orthodox churches. Western churches, however, hold to Saint Jerome's argument that both Joseph and Mary must have been lifelong virgins and that the "brothers" of Jesus mentioned in the Holy Scriptures must have been his cousins.

The ways of God are not our ways and trusting in Him is the solution for each of the faithful who walk in His will. The Eternal Father knows His

plans for us. He prepared and He executes His plan for us; the only obstacle that exists is our freedom to accept, or not, his lovely plan for us.

Mary of Nazareth, illuminated by the grace of God, was not surprised by the greeting. She was humble before it, and yet that greeting which came from the Eternal Father communicated to her that she, like the first virgin before the Fall, was free of the debt of sin—she was free to obey.

Zechariah hesitated at the first visit of the Archangel. Six months later Mary of Nazareth did not hesitate. She was a mature virgin who had made the decision to keep her virginity in an integral state; she asked the Archangel the meaning of the word of God that he was announcing to her.

By her question, she explicitly recognizes that she does not know any man and that she has no intention or desire to know man. She questioned for the very reason that she knew the Eternal Father had accepted her "*propositum*" of eternal virginity and she understood that the custom of her culture did not admit the voluntary celibacy of a daughter of Israel. She trusted that the Eternal Father had prepared Joseph to protect her perpetual virginity, and she was open to hearing the Archangel's message and accepting it.

The annunciation of the archangel to Zechariah; the annunciation of the archangel to Mary of Nazareth, asking her consent to be the mother of the Son of the Eternal Father; the visitation of Mary of Nazareth to Elizabeth, the sanctification of John the Baptist in his mother's womb—all are pieces of God's divine plan and its fulfilment as we accept His will upon us.

As consecrated virgins, we can trust in our Most Blessed Mother and Queen's availability to come quickly when we are in need of her help. The visitation to Elizabeth was her way of being present at the time of her cousin's need, and she is so honored to confirm that she is a channel of the Father to reveal His Son. Her visitation to any consecrated virgin at the present time is as possible as it was in *Aim Karim* for Elizabeth. Her presence of intercession is a fact of love and a revelation of her Son's mystery in His spousal relationship with each one of us.



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

In the past two issues of *The Lamp*, we began to take a closer look at the five phrases of canon 604 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which succinctly provide the ecclesial identification of the *Ordo virginum*. The first phrase of the canon underlines the distinctness of the *Ordo virginum* as its own form of consecrated life, and the second phrase distinguishes the *sanctum propositum* of the consecrated virgin. Today's article focuses on the third phrase of canon 603:

- Similar to these forms of consecrated life is the order of virgins who,
- Expressing the holy resolution of following Christ more closely
- **Are consecrated to God by the diocesan bishop according to the approved liturgical rite (*ab Episcopo dioecesano iuxta probatum ritum liturgicum Deo consecrantur*),**
- Are mystically espoused to Christ, the Son of God,
- And are dedicated to the service of the Church.

This third phrase of canon 604 speaks to three essential aspects of the *Ordo virginum*: the mandatory role of the diocesan bishop, consecration to God, and the requisite use of the approved liturgical rite. The entire tradition of the Church reserves to the bishop himself the work of accepting the virgin's *propositum* and consecrating her, on behalf of the Church. So it is no surprise that canon 604 requires the use of the liturgical rite of consecration found in the Roman pontifical, and the rite itself establishes that it is the diocesan bishop who admits and consecrates a virgin. In a beautiful passage, St. Thomas Aquinas points to the theological harmony found in the reservation of consecration to the diocesan bishop. Following his observation about the meaning of virginal consecration as representative of the integrity of the spiritual marriage of Christ and the Church, Aquinas observed:

Therefore, as spiritual marriage is represented by carnal marriage as to its fecundity, so it is necessary for there to be something that represents the spiritual marriage as to its integrity; and this is done in the veiling of virgins, as is shown by all the things that are brought forth and done there. And because of this only a bishop, to whom the care of the Church is committed, espouses the virgins, by veiling them not for himself but for Christ, like a friend and attendant of the bridegroom. (Aquinas, *Commentum in quatuor libros sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi* Liber IV, Dist. 38, Q. 1, art. V.)

The virgin's consecration according to the approved liturgical rite is an indication of the public nature of the consecration, just as a wedding is a public event. The liturgical act also distinguishes this form of consecrated life from that of the religious or secular institute, the society of apostolic life, and diocesan hermits—the emphasis in the *Ordo virginum* is the consecration of a person, at the hands of the bishop, according to a prescribed liturgical rite found in the Roman Pontifical.

The canon's reference to the order of virgins as those who are “consecrated to God” is juridically significant: the nature of the rite is that of a “consecration,” which can be juxtaposed on the one hand to “religious profession,” and on the other hand to a “benediction.” Study of the nature of consecration is most enlightening and can only be touched upon in this article.

Contrasting consecration to religious profession: An act of religious profession (*actus profitendi*) is a declaration or a manifestation; it is an act by which a person openly, publicly, and freely confesses one's state and embraces the religious rule of one's own institution. Vows of chastity made by unmarried women in a rite of religious profession are public canonical acts that are accepted by the Church; they are subjective in that a woman offers herself and binds herself to live in accord with the constitutions of an institute or society. There is a distinction between this action and the public canonical action of the consecration of a virgin, by which the virgin renews her *propositum* (her intention) to live in perpetual

virginity and accepts consecration as a bride of Christ. Through the celebration of the rite of consecration, the Holy Spirit acts to consecrate the resolve of the virgin to remain in the virginal state for her lifetime, thus constituting her a sacred person in the Church. The *consecratio virginum* is “an act of the Church by which the bishop, as its recognized representative, chooses a virgin within her humanity and dedicates her totally, radically and forever for the service of God, for the triumph of his love” (D.M. Huot, “La Consécration des Vierges 9,” 160).

Both the professed religious and the consecrated virgin have given a total donation to God. Through her profession, the religious also binds herself to a religious family; both aspects—the total donation to the Lord and the bond with the institute—are essential elements for religious profession. The consecrated virgin gives this total donation in her *propositum*, and “the Church confirms the donation (the vow of virginity) and, by this, passes the virgin to the domain of the sacred, which is a direct effect of the rite of consecration” (Marie-Paul Dion, “Les effets du rite de la consécration des vierges,” 284).

Prior to its revision in 1970, the ceremonial for the consecration of virgins in the Roman Pontifical carried a double title that dated back to the thirteenth century: *De benedictione et consecratione virginum*. It was an unusual title because of the disparity in meaning of a “benediction” and a “consecration,” and discussion ensued after the Second Vatican Council as to the most proper title for the rite. The title “consecration” prevailed for the revised rite, pointing to the nature of the consecrated virgin as *sanctimoniales*, a sacred person, made so through the rite of consecration at the hands of the bishop. The rite, in fact, changes the juridical condition of the virgin to that of a sacred person in the Church (see *Praenotanda* to the rite of consecration, 1).

— 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) 161–170

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](mailto:anne.gishpert@gmail.com).

## Upcoming Events

### United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins

*Sponsored by the USACV*

**July 2 to July 6, 2021**

**Enders Island, Connecticut**

See article, page 15.

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

**July 30 to August 1, 2021**

See article, page 13.

*Planificado tentativamente: Conferencia  
informativa sobre la vocation de la virginidad  
consagrada, español, 5 al 7 de noviembre de  
2021.*

By Florence Sundberg  
Archdiocese of Hartford (CT)

Recently I came upon a quote from St. Joan of Arc: "I am not afraid for God is with me. I was born for this." I am constantly being made aware of the atrocious, inhumane practices of organizations like Planned Parenthood and, at times, I ask myself: what's the use? They and other organizations like them are very powerful and will continue the slaughter of innocent babies no matter what I say or do and I just want to give up. Then I give myself over to the Lord in prayer and I am strengthened and determined to continue to fight for these tiny, helpless babies because if we do not win this battle for their lives then other strategic battles for life, for goodness and for virtue, will fail. As has often been said – without the right to life there can be no other rights. When we destroy these innocent babies created by God in His image, we are damaging the very Face of God on this earth. Let us pray together to know our part in this battle for life; we are one body in Christ and when one of us is harmed or is suffering then we all must bear that pain and weep with Jesus who weeps the tears of all humanity. And then we must stop weeping and act in union with Jesus and Mary to do something to STOP THE KILLING! Silence means consent.



Photos of the Consecration  
of Simi Sahu.



### 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*.

### United States:

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

### Upcoming Consecrations

### United States:

*August 15, 2021 — Lauren Gault, at the Cathedral of St. Paul in Pittsburgh, PA, at noon, Diocese of Pittsburgh (PA), at the hands of The Most Reverend David A. Zubik.* All are warmly invited to attend. Contact Lauren at [lmgault22@gmail.com](mailto:lmgault22@gmail.com) for more information.

*September 11, 2021 — Angela McCormick, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, at 10 am, Diocese of Portland (ME), at the hands of The Most Reverend Robert Deeley.* All are warmly invited to attend. The consecration will be live-streamed on the [portlanddiocese.org](http://portlanddiocese.org) website.

### Canada:

*June 9, 2021 — Crystal Hampson, at 7pm, Diocese of Saskatoon (SK).* The live stream of the celebration will be posted at [saskatoonmass.com](http://saskatoonmass.com).



## *Queen of the Divine Will, a Model for Consecrated Virgins*

By Diane Christine Farr  
Diocese of Rochester (NY)

We read in Deuteronomy one of the most important and solemn exhortations given to God's people. "Hear O' Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today." (Deut. 6 4-6).

These words of scripture were lived out in a most extraordinary way in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She surpassed all saints combined in her love of God and her maternal love for all souls.

As consecrated virgins, we find in her a model of perfect love and a life lived completely in the Divine Will. We allow her to guide us and with confidence and peace we place our will under her protection. She in turn will help us to live our vocation as fully as possible.

Holy Mary loved God with all her heart and so recognized and received the divine beauty of virginity given to God alone. At the Annunciation, God would bless this gift by filling her virginity with the splendor of the Incarnation. She would become the true Ark of the covenant containing the Holy and Eternal Word of God. The Immaculate Virgin is the most beautiful and beloved masterpiece of the Holy Trinity.

As consecrated virgins we have given our entire lives over to the mystery of Divine love. It is with holy reverence that we follow our Blessed Mother in receiving the precious grace of perpetual virginity. Our Lord Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom has communicated His divine beauty to His consecrated virgins and we joyfully responded by loving Him with all of our heart. He adorns the virginity of body and soul with this divine beauty preparing us for Himself alone. Loving God with all of our heart means that all of

our thoughts, words, desires and affections must be oriented toward divine love. In receiving the gift of living in the Divine Will, we experience a fuller understanding of what it means to love God and others divinely.

The Blessed Virgin loved God with all of her soul and thus she received Divine Wisdom. She recognized her origin and gave praise and adoration to her creator, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior" (Lk 1:46-47). Her example leads us in a profound adoration of the Holy Trinity. Our Lady tells Luisa Piccarreta that the Divine Fiat was the primary cause of her Immaculate Conception, her sanctity, Divine maternity and all of her other privileges. "All of my sublime prerogatives which the Church so honors me are none other than the effects of the Divine Will which dominated me and reigned and lived in me" (Piccarreta the Virgin Mary in the kingdom of the Divine Will; day five).

As consecrated virgins we receive many graces flowing from our Lady's privileges. We share in the sublime nature of her perpetual virginity. It is through her Divine maternity that we are given a Bridegroom who both shares our nature and draws us into His Divinity.

Her Immaculate holiness and the grace of living in the Divine Will is our model of true sanctity. Her union with her Divine Son in our redemption calls us to unite our prayers and reparations to those of Christ in his offering to the Eternal Father. As spouse of the Holy Spirit, Mary's soul was illuminated by the light of Divine love. Her memory was filled with all that her Divine Son did and suffered. St. Luke tells us, "And Mary kept all these things reflecting on them in her heart" (Lk 2:19).

Not one pain or work of Jesus escaped the notice of His mother. Their hearts were united in



all things. Mary's intellect was filled with holy wisdom and a deep understanding of sacred scripture that she pondered in her heart. She gave her will as a gift to the Holy Trinity and in exchange lived completely of the Divine Will.

The Blessed Virgin loved God with all of her strength in all that she did and suffered throughout her life. It took the strength of the Divine Will to carry her through the terrible pain of her Son's passion and death.

As brides of Christ and daughters of Mary, she is with us as we carry our cross and are led to the peace of Christ's resurrection.

In volume 7 of Luisa Piccarreta's writings Jesus says, "This is exactly my purpose for this reason I frequently speak to you of perfect resignation. This is because by living in my Will the soul acquires the most heroic love. She succeeds in loving Me with my same love and becomes all love. She is continuously in contact with Me and therefore in Me with Me and for Me the soul does all I want."

As consecrated virgins we strive to bring this love of God to all souls through our prayer, work and personal outreach. Our love of God is reflected in our love of other people. It is important for us to ponder with Mary how much God has first loved us and that this is the foundation of all of our lives. It is vital that we convey this truth to others.

We close with these words from the rite of consecration of virgins. "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."

## **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*).

**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



www.consecratedvirgins.org

## *In Memory of Our Deceased Sisters*

Our sister in consecration, Kathleen Danes, of the Archdiocese of Miami, passed to eternal life on February 23, 2021 at 80 years of age. Kathleen was consecrated by The Most Reverend John C. Favalora on June 22, 2003, and now as archbishop emeritus of Miami he concelebrated her funeral Mass.

Kathleen was actively involved and loved by her parish community, St. Paul the Apostle Church in Lighthouse Point. She was employed for many years at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida. Consecrated virgins who gathered for our 2018 convocation in Miami, Florida, met Kathleen, and knew her as a peaceful and enthusiastic bride of Christ even as she struggled physically with partial paralysis after a stroke. Kathleen was hospitalized for weeks with her last illness, and faithful relatives and friends from her parish family were encouraged by her joy and faith during the struggle. Consecrated

virgin Magalis Aguilera remained especially close to Kathleen over the years, and although not permitted to visit in the hospital, Magalis and Judith Stegman were able to speak with Kathleen days before her death, and later to be present at the interment of her remains in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Cemetery in North Lauderdale. Kathleen's niece has given us the cross from her casket and the artwork acknowledging the Apostolic Blessing imparted to Kathleen by Saint Pope John Paul II on the occasion of her consecration to a life of virginity. Magalis and Judith look forward to displaying these in the physical home of the International Resource Center for the *Ordo virginum*.

May Kathleen Mary Danes rest in peace, in the arms of her beloved Spouse. May perpetual light shine upon her, O Lord. Grant her happiness and peace forever.



*As we prepared final notes for this issue, we learned of the death of our sister in consecration, Jewel Brennan, who passed to eternal life on May 27, 2021. May perpetual light shine upon her, O Lord, and may eternal rest be granted to her. May she rest in peace.*

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 [info@consecratedvirgins.org](mailto:info@consecratedvirgins.org).

## 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](mailto:info@consecratedvirgins.org).

### Anniversary Reflections: 10 Years

Paula Willenbrink  
Archdiocese of St. Louis (MO)  
(consecrated June 2, 2011)

The date was June 2, 2011, the day I became consecrated to the Lord as a consecrated virgin, the most beautiful and important day of my life, next to Baptism that is. Reflecting on the past 10 years one word keeps resonating within me and that is *faithfulness*. Jesus is so faithful in many ways. He is the faithful lover always with me and He is with me in such a special way in the Blessed Sacrament during Eucharistic Adoration. His love and peace surround me while I spend precious time with the One Who loves me infinitely and whom I love with my whole being.

His faithfulness has extended into my secular life as I'm able to witness to people who have never heard of this unique vocation. He has been with me during good times as well as difficult times. He has provided for me in so many ways taking care of me financially when I was out of work and about to lose my condo. I could write a book about the many times He has been there for me. Whenever I have gone through a trying time He speaks in prayer from the depths of my being, saying "I will take care of you. I will provide."

The most dramatic time He has been faithful was when I was in a very bad car accident in April of 2019 which put me in the ICU for 3 weeks. My organs even began to fail the night of the accident but through His mercy and faithfulness I came out

of that situation, 7 months later, still able to return to work. I credit having my job as a parish secretary, which I love, to His faithfulness in finding me a job. And even when I started this job and I didn't have a car to get there, and no public transportation was available, wonderful friends took me to and from work. Then out of the blue Jesus found me a car almost like new even though it was 10 years old, it had only 32,000 miles on it.

I am so thankful to Jesus for drawing me to Himself and giving me this special vocation where I am His and He is mine.

### Anniversary Reflections: 5 Years

Shannon Rose Ryan  
Archdiocese of Portland (OR)  
(consecrated June 29, 2016)

It has been a rewarding journey since I was consecrated 5 years ago. It has not always been easy. The initial period after my consecration was filled with an intimate feeling of the closeness of my beautiful Spouse. But ever since then, He has chosen to hide Himself – which is what I mean by “not easy.” I’ve had to adjust my attitude of grasping at “feeling.” I’ve had to let go of my expectations, to learn to walk the way of Our Lady’s humility and acceptance of what is, to acknowledge that my spousal journey is all about desiring only Him and nothing else (including the feeling of His closeness). I know within my soul that He is always with me and has never left me, ever. And I am overjoyed to be His Spouse forever.

As I face the last years of my life – whether that be 1 year or 30 more – I know with great gratitude that He has always been with me, protecting my virginity and my desire for truth; ordering my steps to follow certain strange paths that I would not have chosen; of caring for me tenderly when I did not know it. I feel greatly blessed.



***Upcoming Issues of The Lamp:***

**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

**May 31, 2022** Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

***Membership Update:***

From [Francesca Riddick](#), membership chair of the USACV: Thank you to the many people who have registered as members in 2021 and have 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 a holy understanding of our vocation of love for Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom.

2021 USACV Member and Friend registration forms, both paper and online, are available on our website at [consecratedvirgins.org](https://consecratedvirgins.org). Link here. We invite 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.

If you have questions, please contact Francesca at [usacvmembership@gmail.com](mailto:usacvmembership@gmail.com) for more information.

***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 Shalina Stilley at [catherinestilley@gmail.com](mailto:catherinestilley@gmail.com).



“Saint Joseph, Terror of Demons  
and Protector of Virgins”  
by Shannon Ryan



## 2021 Information Conference for the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World

*Note: Due to the pandemic, last year's Information Conference was held virtually, and the resulting benefits seemed to outweigh the negatives as more people were readily able to participate due to the savings in travel time. After conducting a survey of diocesan delegates for consecrated life about the preferred venue for 2021, we have decided to once again hold the conference virtually; to hold the conference over a three-day weekend, rather than two weekdays; and to shorten each day to a five-hour period (with breaks). We are also seriously considering plans for a Spanish-language Information Conference.*

### **Venue, Dates, Time:**

The 2021 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity will be held virtually as a webinar, from 1:00pm to 6:00pm ET each day on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday July 30 to August 1.

[Reserve la fecha, planificado tentativamente: Conferencia informativa sobre la vocación de la virginidad consagrada, español, 5 al 7 de noviembre de 2021].

### **Program:**

Presentation Topics, subject to change:

- Overview of Vocations in the Catholic Church, and Ecclesial Identification of the *Ordo virginum*
- Scripture and the Witness of the *Ordo virginum*, in *Ecclesiae sponsae imago*
- The Liturgy of the Hours and Prayer Life of the Consecrated Virgin
- Historical Aspects of the Consecration of Virgins; Virgin Saints
- The Liturgical Rite of Consecration and the Marian Dimension of the Vocation
- Mystically Espoused to Christ, the Son of God
- Living in the World and in the Local Church
- Psychological Maturity for Living the Virginal Vocation
- Prerequisites for Admission to Consecration
- Stages of Preparation for Admission to the *Ordo virginum*

The schedule will include time for questions and answers, personal testimonials by consecrated virgins, and hopefully small group breakout room discussions.

### *Presenters:*

The Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Bishop of Lansing and Episcopal Moderator for the USACV and prepared consecrated virgins – the exact list of speakers will be announced soon.

### *Who is Invited:*

- Anyone with a serious interest in learning about the vocation of consecrated virginity lived in the world is invited to attend.
- Diocesan delegates for consecrated life or other diocesan personnel involved in the preparation of virgins for consecration are warmly invited to attend and encouraged to arrange to participate together with aspirants, applicants, and candidate in your diocese.
- Aspirants, applicants, and candidates for consecration are encouraged to attend.
- Consecrated virgins seeking to deepen in their vocation and to assist those preparing for consecration are also warmly invited to attend.

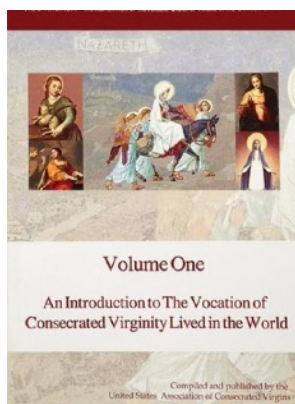
### *Registration:*

Participants must register in advance to attend the full conference. Registration forms and cost will be announced in coming weeks. To pre-register or express interest in attending, please contact [info@consecratedvirgins.org](mailto:info@consecratedvirgins.org).

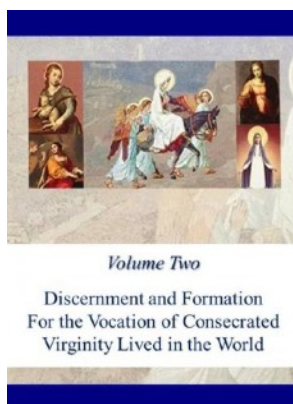
### *Questions?*

Please contact [info@consecratedvirgins.org](mailto:info@consecratedvirgins.org).

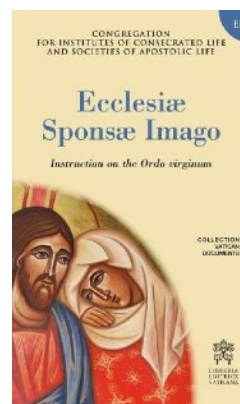
Key resources for the Information Conference (available in [our online store](#)):



<https://bit.ly/USACV1>



<https://bit.ly/USACV2>



<https://bit.ly/USACV-ESI>

## 2021 Convocation of Consecrated Virgins

We are pleased to announce that registration is still open for the 2021 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins, July 2-6, 2021, with the theme: *Saint Joseph, Guardian of Virgins*. Registration forms, paper and online, can be found on the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins website: <https://consecratedvirgins.org>.

### *Dates and Location*

The Convocation will be held from Friday evening, July 2 through Tuesday lunch, July 6 in Enders Island, Connecticut, at the St. Edmund's Retreat Center.



### *Who May Attend*

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 been accepted by the Bishop of her diocese as an aspirant or a candidate to receive the Consecration of a Virgin Living in the World.

### *Program*

The Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Episcopal Moderator of the USACV and Bishop of Lansing, Michigan, will virtually offer his third installment of teaching on the Book of Revelation. We will miss his vibrant in-person presence, but this year continues to be different in so many respects. We are pleased that he will be able to address us virtually. His Eminence Sean Cardinal O'Malley, Archbishop of Boston, also plans to offer us a virtual presentation. Father David Whiteside plans to serve as our chaplain. A number of consecrated virgins will offer presentations on virgin saints and martyrs who have lived their lives in the world.

We will gather together in prayer for Lauds, Holy Mass, Vespers, and Adoration. As well, the schedule provides time for personal prayer, recreation, and conversation among the virgins attending. We understand that kayaks and perhaps a sailboat adventure will also be available, along with, hopefully, an evening of fireworks over the ocean on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Meditations on the Rosary***

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, on the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord in 2021, published a letter to consecrated virgins of the *Ordo virginum* inviting us “to unite in prayer with the proposal of a meditated Rosary prepared in collaboration with consecrated women from many countries.” During the convocation, we plan to pray the rosary together using the meditations offered by CICLSAL.

### ***Virtual Participation***

As soon as we have more concrete details, we will open registration for virtual participation in a number of convocation sessions that will be live-streamed. At this time, we plan to pray the rosary in conjunction with Evening Prayer each day, and to livestream these sessions, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, July 2 to July 5. The USACV Association Meeting is planned for Monday afternoon, July 5, and association members will be welcome to participate virtually.

### ***Registration***

To date, 21 virgins have registered to attend the in-person convocation, and many have expressed interest in attending virtually. There are still a few spaces available for additional in-person registrations. Registration forms are available on our website, at [www.consecratedvirgins.org](http://www.consecratedvirgins.org).

### ***Questions?***

Please contact the convocation coordinator, Joani McCann: [joani.mccann@gmail.com](mailto:joani.mccann@gmail.com).

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY



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

### ***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 [info@consecratedvirgins.org](mailto: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).