

December 12, 2023 — Our Lady of Guadalupe

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


Advent is a great time to contemplate Mary, due both to the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception as well as the great Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. What strikes me is how God prepared for our salvation by the sending of the Son of God. He did this preparation through Mary and in Mary and with Mary. She obviously did not know all the ramifications of her Fiat and certainly knew nothing at the time of her own conception. Nonetheless, God was preparing something great in those moments in Mary’s past.

That is something I would have all of us think about during this Holy Season. God has been preparing us for this day and this moment for all the years of our lives and even from the time before we were conceived. It is very worthwhile to look back, even at just one incident in our past, either distant or relatively recent, which has prepared us for where and when we are today.

At the time this may have meant nothing to us, or, in fact, it may have been an event which either pleased or displeased us. As we look back and ponder, it would be good to thank the Good God for using that means to get us to our present moment.

This is the time of gift-giving and I believe God has been giving us many gifts over the years. They may not have been received as such at the time, but perhaps now is the time to receive that past “gift” and give thanks for it.

A Most Blessed Christmas and New Year to all of you. .

Sincerely yours in Christ,

 Most Reverend Earl Boyea
 Bishop of Lansing

Inside this Issue	Page
Something Ancient, Something New	2
Volume III of <i>Ordo Virginum</i>	7
From the President’s Journal	5
Pray With Us! Virtual Vespers	5
Our Anticipation of Heaven	6
Rome 2025?	7
Life Corner	8
USACV-IRC Team Members	8
Consecration Announcements	9
Upcoming Consecrations	9
Upcoming Issues	9
Anniversary Reflections	10
A Note from the Archivist	11
Membership Announcement	11
2024 Convocation	12
Candidate Discussion Group	14
In Memoriam	15
Submissions Accepted	15
2024 Information Conference	16
Recordings Available	16

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

Our Blessed Mother in her advocacy of
Our Lady of Guadalupe

Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and Enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Three times in the recognized apparitions of our Blessed Mother did she define herself by the Eternal Father's election upon her: to be His chosen Daughter, the Mother of His Son, and the Charity of His Church, Enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

The first was In Lourdes, France, when she said: "I am the Immaculate Conception." In the Roman Catholic Church, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception gained additional significance from the repeated apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes in 1858.

The second was the apparition at the Mountain of Tepeyac in Mexico. We'll return to this.

The third apparition was a simple one yet full of spiritual meaning. She is the same lady who visited us in fulfilment of the eternal mission given her by the Eternal Father at the Cross, when His Eternal Son gave his life for our redemption. She stood there suffering the martyrdom of Her Immaculate Heart! She was surprised in her pierced heart upon hearing the joyous command from her dying Son: "Mother here is your son, son here is your mother" (Jn. 19:26–27). Years later, in an ocean of this same type at the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico to the Island of Cuba, our Mother calmed the curled waters of a bay impacted by strong hurricane winds, in order to save three men. Three men in an ocean—three men who were working like Peter, Andrew, James and the others. Those men were fishing and these three men were looking for salt in the midst of the furious winds. Two different places and times, but the same Sea of Mercy—the mercy of the Eternal Father through the Virgin Mary. She didn't speak in this apparition, but in the miraculous base of wood with her image she showed her intercession as our Blessed Mother and manifested herself: "I am the Virgin of Charity." This is a title belonging to eternity. The Eternal Father is Love. The theological virtue of Love will not be consumed because Love is the meaning of eternity.

The second appearance in Tepeyac Mexico was in December 1531: "How many great things God has placed in You!" "I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary."

"How many wonders is this great wonder! The devil is chained to all the descendants of Adam and only one girl is freed from the tyranny of the devil. A scorching fire destroys everything, and in the midst of the general fire remains an intact stem, which not only does not burn or disfigure, but from it the most beautiful of flowers will sprout, and produce the fruit that will be the salvation of the world. A fierce tyrant carries the desolation throughout the earth and spreads its cruel domination everywhere; but a single creature resists and defeats him, and she becomes the owner of the field. This girl, this stem, this city, is the Blessed Virgin Mary. Holy city of God, praise you! How many great things God has placed in You!" (from an early text, unidentified).

"I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary." In Tepeyac resounds the meaning of her words in the Magnificat. Due to her "Yes" as the Immaculate Virgin, "all generations will call me blessed."

The first apparition of our Lady of Guadalupe was on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which was celebrated at that time throughout the Spanish Empire on December 9. There were two appearances on December 9, one on December 10, and two on December 12, all to Juan Diego. The fifth apparition was to Juan Bernardino, Juan Diego's uncle, in order to cure him.

Our Lady of Guadalupe had this to say to Juan Diego (now Saint Juan Diego): "Know for certain, least of my sons, that I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of the True God through whom everything lives, the Lord of all things near and far, the Master of heaven and earth." She continued, "It is my earnest wish that a temple be built here to my honor. Here I will demonstrate, I will exhibit, I will give all my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to the people. I am your merciful mother, the merciful mother of all of you who live united in this land, and of all mankind, of all those who love me, of those who cry to me, of those who seek me, of those who have confidence in me. Here I will hear their weeping, their sorrow, and will remedy and alleviate all their multiple sufferings, necessities and misfortunes." (*The Wonder of Guadalupe* by Francis Johnston, Tan Books and Publishers, Inc, Rockford, Illinois, 1981).

On October 12, 1945, Pope Pius XII decreed Our Lady of Guadalupe to be "Patroness of all the Americas." Her feast day is December 12, and it is a Holy Day of Obligation in Mexico.

How is it that our Most Blessed Mother also has a temple in a place reserved for her in our nation, under this same advocacy of "Our Lady of Guadalupe"? Why is her shrine also in an area of hills, in Wisconsin? Has she not also asked for a house in our nation to show her maternal love to all her children—those given to her at the very moment when God's Son gave up his life to save all of us? Why did she first appear on the feast of Her Immaculate Conception?

"One hundred and fifty years ago in 1846, twenty-two bishops of the United States unanimously petitioned Rome to have Mary, under her title of the Immaculate Conception, declared the official patroness of our country. I am pleased to read in the *Handbook* of the close connection between the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe. It is universally believed that Mary appeared on the Tepeyac Hill as the Immaculate Conception and there is also clear evidence that she is 'with child'" (Sean O'Malley, O.F.M., Cap., Bishop of Fall River in the Preface to *A Handbook on Guadalupe* by the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA, USA, xiii).

Our Eternal Father, who called our Most Blessed Mother at the cross of his dying Son, opened for us the eternal doors of His Kingdom. He designated Mary of Nazareth, His Son's mother, to be the mother of the Church of His Son. The Church that is a sacrament of salvation needs the maternal love of the Immaculate Mother. Jesus Christ opened His eternal love for all of us when His heart was pierced on the cross. The Immaculate Mother declared herself as our mother in Tepeyac, and revealed herself to Juan Diego as a mother who cares for us with a unique motherhood. She said to Juan Diego:

"Know for sure, my dearest and lowliest son, that I am the perfect, ever virgin, Holy Mother of the One great God of Truth Who gives us life, the Inventor and Creator of people, the owner and the Lord of what is around us and what is touching us or very close to us, the Owner and Lord of the sky, the owner of the earth. I want very much, I desire very much that they build my sacred little house here, in which I will show Him. I will exalt Him in making Him manifest. I will give Him to the people, in my compassionate gaze, in my help, in my salvation,

because I am truly your compassionate Mother. . . Go to the residence of the Bishop of Mexico and you will tell him how I am sending you, so that you may reveal to him that I very much want him to build me a house here. . ." (*A Handbook on Guadalupe*).

How is it that the Blessed Mother also has a house here in our nation? "The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe was founded so that the Mother of God might speak to more and more of her children of America, as she expressed her ardent desire to do during her apparition to Saint Juan Diego at Tepeyac Hill on December 9, 1531. Through your pilgrimage, may the Mother of God speak to your heart. Through her maternal love, may you discover anew the great mystery of God's mercy and love at work in your daily life" (His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, Founder, Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, "Welcome to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe" in a publication by and about the Shrine, 2008, revised 2021, p. 2).

Why is the sanctuary of our Lady of Guadalupe also built upon a hill in Wisconsin? Immediately after the Annunciation by the Angel Gabriel, our Blessed Mother left to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was in her sixth month of pregnancy. She went to Ain Karem in the mountains of Jerusalem to assist her cousin and her cousin's child who was chosen to prepare the people for the eternal Son's mission. Mary's voice was the instrument of sanctification of John the Baptist in his mother's womb. "When I heard your greeting the baby in my womb leaped for joy!" (Lk. 1:44). Mary came to Tepeyac to unite a divided continent and in the history of salvation to alter the course of the human history of that people—she would balance in her maternal love the will of the Eternal Father in those hearts divided by hate and other gods. In each of our Mother's apparitions that are recognized by the Church we observe that her mission is pointed to a specific time and place as she comes to fulfill the words of Her Divine Son: "Woman, here is your son. . ."

His Eminence Cardinal Burke held a vision of Marian devotion and land in La Crosse was granted to fulfill that vision, with a landscape offering pilgrims a sense and understanding of the presence of God's plan of salvation for each of them: "From the time I was named Bishop of La Crosse on December 10, 1994, I began to reflect upon and pray about the pastoral needs of the whole Diocese, which were soon to become my principal care. Having grown up

in the Diocese and having been ordained a priest for the Diocese, my reflection and prayers was filled with deepest affection for the people of the Diocese. When I was installed as the Eighth Bishop of La Crosse on February 22, 1995, I spoke about my pastoral concern for the family which has suffered so many assaults in our time. I also expressed concern about the violence who more and more marks our American culture” (Burke, “The Original Vision of Cardinal Burke” in publication by and about the Shrine, p. 11).

Has she not also asked for a house in our nation to show her maternal love to all her children, given to her at the very moment when God’s Son was dying, in order to give life to all of us? Why did she first appear on the feast of Her Immaculate Conception?

“Our Lady of Guadalupe asked that a little house be built for her at Tepeyac Hill. She indicated immediately the purpose of the little house or shrine: to provide a place in which she could show forth God the Father in all His mercy to His children and so draw His children to Him. In our devotional life, a shrine always reminds us of the ultimate destiny of our earthly pilgrimage, returning home to God the Father. . . In Mexico, the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe recalls the great sign of God the Father’s love, the appearance of the Mother of God to His children of America” (Burke, “Shrine and Pilgrimage; the Importance of Shrines” in publication by and about the Shrine, p. 9).

Our Blessed Mother, without doubt, first appeared in Tepeyac on the Feast of Her Immaculate Conception, and it is “the Virgin Mary, conceived without sin” who is the patroness of our country (Pope Pius IX, 1847). There is further meaning behind our nation’s celebration of her feast on December 12, in parallel with her fifth appearance to Bernardino. The privilege of her Immaculate Conception is the foundation upon which rests Mary’s greatness. This privilege alone attracts, as it were, all other privileges. Mary’s Immaculate Conception is the meaning of her being the Mother of God’s son. Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis wrote in the fourth century: “Enclosed within the spotless womb of the Blessed Virgin was the Lamb that in his eternal sacrifice has taken away the sins of the world” (Father Saturnino Oses, S.J., *Horas de Luz*, 3rd Ed., trans. Magalis Aguilera).

Our Blessed Mother came to America to visit us and to stay with us in her powerful intercession as

Mother of our Divine Lord Jesus Christ. Because of Him, she is also our most Blessed Mother. On July 31, 2011, Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke announced that Pope Benedict XVI granted the affiliation of the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse to the Papal Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome. With this affiliation, pilgrims visiting the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe have the opportunity to gain the same plenary indulgences that may be obtained at Saint Mary Major. (See publication by and about the Shrine, p. 12). Consecrated virgins held our 2022 United States convocation at the Shrine in La Crosse, and look forward to many more graces there, especially when the planned retreat house is completed. Our Lady of Guadalupe, our Blessed Mother, pray for us.



Volume III of the Ordo Virginum series

Shalina Stilley, Diocese of San Diego

“Volume III, about virgin saints, continues to come along nicely and is in the editing stage at this point. If you have volunteered to write about a Saint but haven’t yet submitted it, please contact Shalina at catherinestilley@gmail.com. Artists, too, are invited to contact Shalina if you haven’t yet been in touch.

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

Sanctum Propositum or Vow –
What is the Difference?

In the September 15 issue of *The Lamp*, I contrasted the words “*sanctum propositum*” used in reference to consecrated virgins, to the language of public vows or sacred bonds used in regard to members of religious institutes, secular institutes, societies of apostolic life, and diocesan hermits. I discussed a question that had arisen as to whether a *propositum virginitatis* was equivalent to a solemn vow of chastity. Although the language of solemn and simple vows wasn't used in the early Church, it is clear that the rite of consecration is more than a simple devotional ceremony. From its very earliest usage, it was understood that the rite consecrates the espousal between the virgin and Christ. Continuing this discussion:

The etymology of the word *votum* (vow) reveals a link to the concept of *propositum* (a resolution or decision). The Latin word *voveo* (I desire), and the Latin noun *votum* hold a range of meanings, from an intention to a pledge, depending on a person's internal desire. The 1983 Code of Canon Law defines a vow as “a deliberate and free promise made to God about a possible and better good, [that] must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion” (c. 1191 §1).

Neither the 1917 nor the 1983 Code of Canon Law defines “*propositum*.” Latin-English dictionaries define “*propositum*” as something that is proposed, an intention, a resolution, a plan, or a proposition. The use of the words “*sanctum propositum*” (“holy resolution”) in canon 604 of the 1983 code identifies the specific resolution of the virgin as being in the realm of religion.

Generally speaking, a *propositum virginitatis* is not equivalent to a vow: a vow of virginity cannot exist without a *propositum* of virginity, but the converse is not true. A person can form a *propositum* about conserving chastity forever without wanting to pronounce a vow, or without using the particular formulation of a vow. There is a distinction between the initial *propositum virginitatis* of a virgin and the *sanctum propositum* of the virgin during the solemn rite of consecration. A woman early in her life may form

the *propositum* to remain in virginity, but it is only after this is tested and the Church discerns with certitude that the virgin is committed to be united exclusively and indissolubly with Christ, that the Church agrees to proceed to the rite of consecration.

A *propositum* of virginity refers to an individual's inner decision to live the Gospel as a virgin; it is a private decision. The *sanctum propositum* of the virgin which is 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. In the rite of consecration to a life of virginity, the bishop consecrates the virgin who has publicly affirmed her *sanctum propositum*, thereby constituting her in the public state of consecrated life in the Church as one who is perpetually, mystically espoused to Christ.

Taken from Judith M. Stegman, “*Sanctum Propositum* of the Virgin” in “*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; ProQuest Number 22623763, Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest LLC, 2019) 149-160.

Pray With Us! Virtual Vespers

Consecrated virgins, candidates, and friends continue to join for Virtual Vespers on various feast days and memorials of our Blessed Virgin Mother and of virgin saints. Here are the next dates – mark your calendars! A link will be sent out a few days before each session. If you don't receive the link, email info@consecratedvirgins.org.

- Wednesday, **December 13**, Saint Lucy at 8pm ET (7pm CT, 6pm MT and AZ time, 5pm PT)
- Sunday, **January 21**, Saint Agnes at 8pm ET (7pm CT, 6pm MT and AZ time, 5pm PT)
- ***CANCELLED** — Monday 2/5 because there is a virtual candidate discussion group that evening
- Monday, **April 8**, transferred Solemnity of the Annunciation at 9pm ET (8pm CT, 7pm MT, 6pm PT and AZ time).

By Diane Christine Farr
Diocese of Rochester (NY)

How do we as Christians anticipate heaven by our lives here on earth? How do we as consecrated virgins view this question?

We gain a new perspective by seeing our lives and relationships in light of our eternity with God. Seeing things from this vantage point can help us discern what is truly important. When we read the last judgment scene from St. Matthew's Gospel, we see that how we have treated one another is a determining factor in how we will spend eternity. This is a beautiful reflection of the complete self-giving of the Three Divine Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. So we come to understand that this complete self-giving must be replicated in our own lives.

As we reflect on our own vocation, we ponder these words taken from the homily for the consecration of virgins – "The Church is the Bride of Christ. This title of the Church was given by the fathers and doctors of the Church to those like you who speak to us of the world to come, where there is no marrying or giving in marriage. You are a sign of the great mystery of salvation proclaimed at the beginning of human history and fulfilled in the Church". The homily goes on to say, "Make your whole life reflect your vocation and your dignity. Our holy mother, the Church sees in you a chosen company within the flock of Christ." Keeping with this theme of the flock of Christ, we read in St. John's Gospel, "He who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To Him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear His Voice and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out." (John 10:3)

When a woman is being called to consecrated virginity, it is truly the voice of her Divine Shepherd and Bridegroom that she hears beckoning her to a greater intimacy with His Heart. As brides of Christ

we have a tremendous responsibility to maintain an attentiveness to this voice due to the seriousness of our vocation. It is with gratitude that we ponder the reality that Jesus has called us each by name. Our response should be one of deep humility and profound reverence as well as a joyful loving heart.

We read further in St. John's Gospel, "I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own and my own know me; as the Father knows me and I know the Father" (John 10:14-15). Do we pause to consider that in drawing us to Himself, Jesus is calling us to the same kind of communion of love and knowledge that He has with His Heavenly Father? We are invited to live in the light of the presence of God and to share in the inner life of the Most Holy Trinity. We pray for the grace to be able to overcome circumstances and the difficulties of life in order to contemplate this mystery and understand and value that which is most important.

Our Lord taught us to pray in the Our Father, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven". We know that the aim of Jesus' entire life was to do the Will of the Father. Our prayer is that the Divine Will may be our sustenance, forming the life of God's Kingdom in our souls. As brides of Christ, we unite ourselves with Him in glorifying the Father's Holy Will. We desire to join our homage and praise to that of the blessed in Heaven. It is with joy that we unite ourselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary our model. We exclaim with wonder, how beautiful, how holy, and how pure is our Mother. God's Will had perfect dominion in Our Lady's soul and so she comprehended well the deep mysteries of God and just how far mankind had fallen from communion with his Creator.

The grace of our consecration is itself an anticipation of our life in Heaven, but we need to enter more deeply into the mystery. We must acquire a greater understanding of what it means to

be espoused to Jesus Christ, the Eternal Bridegroom of the Church. We contemplate the fruits of the Holy Spirit at work in His Most Sacred Heart and how they are made manifest in our own lives. The Holy Spirit has revealed to us the self-giving love of our Divine Bridegroom, calling for our response in a like manner. We have experienced the holy joy which we come to understand, that Jesus desires to keep our virginity for Himself like a fragrant bouquet and pledge of our love.

True and lasting peace is not so much the absence of problems but the presence of one who is the source of that peace. Remember that peace was the first gift Jesus imparted to His apostles after His Resurrection. It is with immense gratitude that we thank our Lord for His infinite patience with us due to our faults and failings. This teaches us to be patient with others as well as ourselves. Our Divine Savior and Spouse is the source of goodness itself and He wishes to clothe us with the sanctity of His Holy Will. We must radiate His goodness by the offering of our own lives to God. It is when we learn to anticipate the needs of others, going out of our way for them, that we learn the value of kindness. This is the kindness of our beloved Jesus who loves us and gives Himself totally to us. We have not come to know the Heart of our Bridegroom if we have not shown great kindness and compassion. Jesus gives us the greatest example in being faithful to His Heavenly Father's Will in everything.

As brides of Christ, we strive to be faithfully attentive to His presence with us. Maintaining a spirit of interior silence and prayer is vital to achieve this goal. It is very easy to lose our focus and become troubled by many things. Jesus always keeps calling us back to Himself. It is most important for us to learn from Jesus who is gentle and humble of heart. A spirit of gentleness should pervade all of our actions as we seek to acquire our

Lord's own temperament. The bride must reveal the gentle manner of her Bridegroom. All was perfect order and harmony in the soul of Christ. We must become docile in His hands, allowing Him to work as He pleases in the depths of our souls. In our anticipation of Heaven, we recognize that our origin and sanctity are only from God.

The grace of the consecration of virgins is itself a type of anticipation of the life to come. The grace of holy virginity is a beautiful flowering that begins in the depth of the soul and includes the physical dimension as well. It is a sacred and exclusive bond that one forms with Jesus the Divine Bridegroom. As consecrated virgins we consider it a gift of God's Mercy that we have been drawn by the Holy Spirit to belong entirely to Jesus by the sweet ties of virginal love. Jesus Himself imparts a celestial beauty to this gift of virginity that touches every aspect of our being. We pray that when we arrive in Heaven, we will be completely filled with the light of God's transforming love. We will recognize ourselves in God and He will recognize Himself in us. We will rejoice forever as we enter the eternal wedding Feast of the Lamb.

May our lives be a symphony of praise to the Most Holy Trinity.

Rome in 2025?

Pope Francis has chosen the motto "Pilgrims of Hope" for the 2025 Jubilee Year. The Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life has announced a Jubilee of Consecrated Life to be held October 8-9, 2025, in Rome, with the title, "Pilgrims of hope, on the path to peace." Preparatory stages are taking place now. A Jubilee Celebration for consecrated persons, by country, is also planned for February 2, 2025. Please see a letter discussing the Jubilee year plans from the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, addressed to all members of consecrated life: [DICALSAL to all members of consecrated life](#). More details to come!

By Florence Sundberg
Archdiocese of Hartford (CT)

IN DEFENSE OF LIFE: I must again repeat what Mother Teresa said: "If we would kill the innocent baby in the womb of the mother, what would we not do?" and she believed, as do I, that the slaughter of infants is the root cause of all the evils in our world. Evil is the absence of empathy, of the capacity to feel the pain of others. Dorothy Day spoke of a 'harsh and dreadful love' which not only feels the pain of others but acts to relieve that pain through compassion and unconditional love: the love of Christ crucified for us. The tiny infant in the womb feels excruciating pain while his/her life is being terminated. Jesus died because of His own 'harsh and dreadful' and unconditional love for each of us and we must at least try to love as He loved. Yes, this will cost us dearly, but so many voices in positions of power and influence are pushing for abortion, the killing of innocent babies, up until a moment before birth. I ask again: what kind of person fights not to save lives but to destroy lives?

We cannot, we must not, be indifferent. Each life created by God is precious to Him and He needs us to protect these little ones...He works His love, His healing, His compassion in and through each one of us. I wonder why those who march and shout and demand that we 'save the planet' do not also march and cry out to save human babies? The planet is nothing without human beings to tend and nurture it. When a decision is made to terminate the life of a baby in the womb, how will we defend the life of that innocent baby and protect the mother from a lifetime of pain and regret?

We are each entrusted with a 'ministry' but there will be no one to carry out these ministries if millions of babies are terminated along with the 'ministries' entrusted to them by God. The killings in Gaza, Israel, Palestine are, I believe, the after effects of the slaughter of innocent lives. The reverence for life is diminished - the Light of Christ grows dim and our planet is descending into darkness. We must bring Christ's light and His love and peace and compassion into His world, the world He has entrusted to us. Darkness must not

grow stronger than the Light: love must not be conquered by hatred or - indifference. We have a choice: life or death, good or evil, blessing or curse. If we choose life we will surely be blessed. If we choose evil then we have chosen darkness - the choice is always ours to make, not just once but over and over again.

Choose wisely and well as God so desires and we will then be prepared to make every decision according to the Will of the Father. Humanity is in a deadly crisis of faith and we need to support and pray for each other that God's will shall be accomplished in all of us, in all ways and at all times. As Tiny Tim once said: May God bless us each and every one. May it be so.

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

USACV Leadership Team

Jenna Cooper 2022-2024; Archdiocese of New York (NY).

Claire Halbur ____-2023; Diocese of Phoenix (AZ).
(*Secretary of the USACV-IRC and USACV Online Presence*).

Elizabeth Lam 2023-2025; Diocese of Oakland (CA).
(*USACV Website*).

Joani McCann 2022-2024; Archdiocese of Boston (MA). (*Convocation Liaison*).

Francesca Riddick 2022-2024; Diocese of Joliet (IL).
(*USACV Membership and eTapestry*).

IRC Leadership Team

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

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.

Renu Rita Silvano; INDIA, Archdiocese of Bombay.
Two Unfilled Positions

Other USACV-IRC Services, among others

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

Mary Kay Lacke; Coordinator of the Information Conference in English, Diocese of Steubenville (OH).

Anne Gishpert; Archivist, Diocese of Pueblo (CO).

Florence Sundberg; Prayer Chain Coordinator, Archdiocese of Hartford (CT).

Amanda Schrauth; Publication of *The Lamp*, Diocese of Rapid City (SD).

Consecration Announcements

November 18, 2023 — **Susan Pieper**, at the hands of the Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann, Archbishop of Kansas City (KS).

November 22, 2023 — **Mary E. Del Olmo**, at the hands of the Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, Bishop of Fort Worth (TX).

November 26, 2023 — **Sarah Daszczuk**, at the hands of the Most Reverend Jerome Listeki, Archbishop of Milwaukee (WI).

December 8, 2023 — **Aubrey Coulter**, at the hands of the Most Reverend Carl A. Kemme, Bishop of Wichita (KS).

December 8, 2023 — **Margaret (Maggie) Hartman**, at the hands of the Most Reverend Timothy L. Doherty, Bishop of Lafayette (IN).



Mary E. Del Olmo



Susan Pieper

Upcoming Consecrations

December 16, 2023, consecration of **Trimiko “Miko” Melancon**, at the hands of the Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans (LA), at 11:00am at St. Louis Cathedral, 615 Pere Antoine Alley, New Orleans, LA 70116.

December 22, 2023, consecration of **Theresa Klinkhammer**, at the hands of the Most Reverend Donald Hying, Bishop of Madison (WI), at 11:00am at St. Maria Goretti Catholic Church. Adoration and Confession will be available from 10:00-11:00. All are warmly invited to attend. Please RSVP theresa.klinkhammer@gmail.com.

January 13, 2024, consecration of **Ashley Roberts**, at the hands of the Most Reverend Dennis M. Shnurr, Archbishop of Cincinnati (OH), at 11:00am at the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Peter in Chains in Cincinnati.

Upcoming Issues of the Lamp

February 2, 2024 Feast of the Presentation and World Day for Consecrated Life

May 31, 2024 Visitation of the Blessed Virgin

September 8, 2024 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

December 12, 2024 Our Lady of Guadalupe



Sarah Daszczuk



Carol Bruce
(in traditional
Croatian dress)



Consecrated virgins who celebrate significant anniversaries during 2023 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*.

30 Years

Judith Stegman
consecrated August 21, 1993
in Diocese of Lansing (MI)
now Archdiocese of Miami (FL)



“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways” (Rom. 11:33). How the circumstances of life change over a thirty-year period of time, and with each change—from operating an accounting practice in Michigan, to studying canon law in D.C., to caring for a mother in Hospice of Cincinnati, to living in Miami in service of the *Ordo virginum*, to assisting my family after my father’s recent death—I reiterate in prayer, “How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways!”

I recall on the day of my consecration, as I was walking down the aisle after the Mass amidst a church full of family and friends, I thought to myself that something much greater than me had just happened. I was overwhelmed with the vastness of God, with “the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.” Over the years, throughout the stresses, throughout the recognition of personal faults, throughout the difficulties and the many joys, the awesome reality is that the Eternal Father has chosen me to witness to his glory by betrothing me to His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, I exclaim, “how unsearchable are his ways.”

As I prepared my house in East Lansing to receive guests for the consecration Mass thirty years ago, a large hornet nest suddenly appeared on the branch of a small tree in my front yard. It was impossible to pass safely to the front door. An emergency call to the exterminator took care of the immediate hazard, thanks be to God. He who had called me to Himself showed me then that He would care for me in every

circumstance and overcome every threat of evil that might hinder the path. How many times this has proven true over these years!

The Gospel at my consecration Mass was that of the ten virgins anticipating the coming of the bridegroom, and to keep this Gospel message foremost in mind, my consecration ring displays a lit oil lamp. My hope, my prayer, is that on this journey of life I might keep the lantern of my soul full of oil, that I might be counted among the wise virgins who are prepared to meet the Bridegroom.

20 Years

Catherine Shoemaker
consecrated June 28, 2003
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
(WV)



As I reflect on my vocation, I enjoy reviewing the early signs along the way, like tiny seedlings spouting. In my elementary school years I realized that I would never marry, but I never wondered what else that might be connected to. Also during those years, after seeing me reading a book (any book I had) while walking the boundary to keep the sheep in their pasture, my mother would occasionally comment on “Cathy reading her breviary.” (I still don’t remember when I realized what a breviary is.) The memory that makes me chuckle is the fact that, because one required course in my major was only offered at Penn State’s main campus I HAD to transfer there as a sophomore instead of waiting until I was a junior. The only advantage I could see in the move was that I would be able to go to daily Mass there. It took about another 30 years or so to arrive at my “Aha moment !”. That happened at the USACV Conference in New Jersey in the late 1990’s. The first evening there I knew I had found what had been drawing me all those years.

While waiting for my consecration Mass to begin, I overheard one of the priests ask the priest who had been my pastor in Philadelphia, “Is she ready for

Anniversary Reflections

this?”, to which he replied, “She’s been ready for 20 years.” That was a wonderful confirmation of this life which, through the following 20 years and all its uncertainties (West Virginia? Really?), has allowed me to begin to realize what it means to be espoused to Him whom the angels serve and of Whom I can truly say, “He Who Is is my beloved.”

The Lamb is from a photo of the banner which I had at the reception after my consecration.



but God’s will, that my consecration was always on his providential timing.

Since I am retired and older my consecration enables me to live my life in a more contemplative and prayerful setting.

Shortly after I was consecrated I went through some extensive skin cancer treatment, and realized our sweet Lord had gifted me with a special cross, I cannot put into words, the joy of being the bride of Christ, and being able to walk beside and to learn his ways.

I often look at older couples who have celebrated many years of marriage, and how they somehow learn to become as one even to the point of resembling one another in a physical way, and this is my hope that my consecration has endowed me in such way that I may someday humbly be a reflection of God’s love to draw souls to Him.

20 Years

Maria Almeida
consecrated December 8, 2003
in Archdiocese of New York (NY)
now Archdiocese of Goa and Daman (India)

These photos are from the celebration of my 20th anniversary in the *Ordo Virginum*. The parish priest of our Church celebrated Holy Eucharist in my home for the first time. It is a treasure given me by the Father. I had five friends join, and they had a small cake and coffee.



5 Years

Judith Lyness
consecrated September 9, 2018
Diocese of Madison (WI)

I recall that I really wanted my consecration to be September 8 however, our parish priest thought it more practical to have it on September 9 as it was a Sunday and more people could attend. And so I reflect that it was not my will,



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 always bring smiles and memories. You can email Anne at anne.gishpert@gmail.com.

Membership Announcement

Thank you to all who contributed to our 2023 membership drive. Your contributions help us to advance a number of projects that help promote our vocation. We are sincerely grateful for your generosity!

Please note that if you have not registered for the 2023 membership you will not be able to vote in the upcoming election. If you are unsure you can contact Francesca Riddick at usacvmembership@gmail.com.

The USACV plans to sponsor a modified convocation of consecrated virgins in 2024 as we focus on serving at the National Eucharistic Congress. Consecrated virgins are already participating in areas of the Eucharistic Revival in their own dioceses and parishes. By participating together at the Congress next July, we will give expression to the consecrated virgin's innate love for her Eucharistic Spouse.

About the National Eucharistic Congress:

<https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/>

WHEN: July 17-21, 2024

WHERE: Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, IN

WHAT:

- † A historic gathering of the Church in America
- † Five powerful days of worship, formation, and fellowship
- † A world-class lineup of speakers
- † Dynamic participation tracks



NATIONAL
**Eucharistic
Congress**

About Our Participation as Consecrated Virgins (and candidates for consecration*):

REGISTRATION:

Each of us needs to secure our own passes to the Congress, and we've been offered a discounted rate. **Please register for the Congress at this discounted rate of \$200** (usually \$299 - \$375). You may register here: www.eucharisticcongress.org/register-standard. Notes on registration questions:

- Page 1: "I am registering as" Answer: General Attendee or Group
- Page 3: "If you are attending with an organization, apostolate, or religious order, what is the name of your group?" Answer: United States Association of Consecrated Virgins.
- Page 3 or 4: "What general sessions do you plan to attend?" Answer: sign up for all the general sessions, unless you know you will not be present on a particular day.
- Page 5: choose: Individual Congress Pass \$375.
- Page 7: enter the group code: *contact Lorraine Manlolo for the group code*. The price will then change to the reduced rate plus a \$6 service charge and you'll be prompted to enter credit card information.

Please be in touch with Lorraine Manlolo when you register for the conference, or if you have registered through another organization. Let Lorraine know if you are interested in housing at the retreat center (see below). [PLEASE REGISTER SOON FOR THE NEC](#).

HOUSING:

Housing for the Congress is very limited, and the USACV is fortunate to have secured 40 rooms at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, where the cost for four nights, including breakfast and dinner, is \$450. Thanks be to God that we have received offers of financial help for consecrated virgins who may need assistance in order to attend, so, with this in mind, virgins who wish to attend should register for the Congress and reserve retreat center housing, even if unable to afford the full cost. Just let us know that you have need of some financial assistance. **After you register for the Congress at the discounted rate, please email Lorraine to let her know your intention regarding housing (Lorraine.manlolo@gmail.com)**. We need to have your reservations soon.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Keynote speakers for the Congress have been scheduled and the organizers are still working on plans for breakout sessions. They are still working on the breakout groups, which will consist of conversations among panel members. We are waiting a response to our inquiry about leading breakout sessions and volunteering. The general schedule can be found at: <https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/schedule>. We anticipate that consecrated virgins staying at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House will have breakfast and morning prayer together at the retreat center before moving to the Congress venue for Mass (10:45-12:15) breakout/event experiences (2:00-4:00). Evenings may be spent at the retreat center focused on our vocation and building relationships among us and/or revival sessions at the NEC.

The Serra Club has graciously paid for the USACV (*Ordo Virginum*) to be a NEC Sponsor, entitling us to a 10x10 booth space, our sponsor name listed in the official program, and other benefits. Please be in touch with Lorraine if you would like to assist with our booth!

NEXT STEPS:

- † Obtain your Congress Pass (do this now; see “Registration” above for instructions).
- † Let Lorraine know your housing plans, and especially if you plan to join at the retreat center. (do this after obtaining your Congress Pass; see “Housing” above).
- † Register for the convocation and service opportunities (we will open this step as soon as possible, as more details are arranged with the Congress planners).
- † Plan for the cost. The total cost of this 2024 modified convocation is likely higher than other convocations (\$200 pass + \$450 housing + transportation + misc). If you anticipate needing financial assistance, please let Lorraine (or Judith) know as soon as possible. Likewise, if you are able to donate to help others, please let us know.

NOTES:

- * Who is invited to this 2024 United States Convocation of Consecrated virgins?
All consecrated virgins are warmly invited, as are candidates for consecration who are referred by their dioceses.

Questions? Please contact one of our convocation 2024 planning team members: Lorraine Manlolo (lorraine.manlolo@gmail.com); Carolyn Blaszczyk (pacv2008@gmail.com), Jenna Chang (jgchang1@gmail.com), Joani McCann (joani.mccann@gmail.com), or candidate Jill Rodts (jillmr96@gmail.com).



Grounds of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat Center.



Lucas Oil Stadium



Photos from the recent Eucharistic Congress in Auriesville, New York (October 20–22, 2023).

Photos courtesy of Jeffrey Bruno.

During the mile-long Eucharistic procession at the Eucharistic Congress in Auriesville. A sea of thousands joined in.



Background:

Consecrated virgins from across the country recently proposed hosting a virtual candidate discussion group. Inspired by women across the country inquiring about the life and charism of consecrated virginity, this group felt compelled to facilitate an opportunity where aspirants as well as those interested in discerning our beautiful vocation would be able to meet regularly to learn about different tenets of this way of life. We also found that many consecrated virgins were interested in participating, to deepen their own understanding and love for this charism and foster community within the *Ordo Virginum*!

After much prayer and planning, our inaugural discussion group was held on Monday, November 6, via the USACV's GoTo platform. Elizabeth Black, a consecrated virgin of the diocese of Grand Rapids (MI), was our first presenter. She masterfully presented on the history of this vocation and its place in the Church, guided under the consecrated virgin's lived reality of "following the Lamb." There were many women who participated in this initial session, including those who were interested in learning more about our way of life as well as other consecrated virgins. The inaugural discussion group was well received, and attendees expressed gratitude at the opportunity to participate in this discussion and eagerness to join in the upcoming virtual sessions.

Invitation:

This message is meant particularly for diocesan personnel who work with candidates for the *Ordo virginum*, and for those who are accepted by their dioceses as aspirants or candidates for the vocation of consecrated virginity lived *in saeculo*, that is, in the ordinary circumstances of life.

The United States Association of Consecrated Virgins sponsors a quarterly opportunity for candidates for the *Ordo virginum*, who are referred by a diocesan representative, to participate in a virtual candidate discussion group on topics relevant to the vocation of consecrated virginity. This discussion group is limited to those who are referred by their dioceses, and is intended for those who have already attended an Information Conference sponsored by the USACV. It is meant to be a supplement, and not a substitute, for diocesan-based formation. Consecrated virgins are also welcome to participate.

2023–2024 Dates, Times, and Topics: 6:30pm to 7:30 pm MT

- † Nov. 6, 2023 "Following the Lamb": History of Vocation (including charism as virginal and spousal). Presenter: Elizabeth Black.
- † Feb. 5, 2024 "Union with the Lamb": Eucharistic and Ecclesial Dimension of the Vocation. Presenter: Taryn Watkins.
- † May 6, 2024 "Bride within the Flock": Communal Dimension and Spiritual Maternity. Presenter: Claire Halbur.
- † Aug. 12, 2024: "Living for the Lamb in saeculo". Presenter: Dr. Judith M. Stegman, JCD.



Registration:

Registration information and online registration forms are available here: [OV Candidate Discussion Group Registration](#).

Questions? Please contact info@consecratedvirgins.org.

In Remembrance of Our Deceased Sister

Ann Fox,
consecrated June 4, 1947
in the Archdiocese of Boston (MA),
entered eternal life on August 30, 2023 at the age of 89.



In Memoriam by Mary Bastedo, Archdiocese of Toronto (Canada):

Having graduated from the University of Michigan, her home state, Ann earned a degree in Social Work at Fordham in 1958. While in New York, she was inspired by Dorothy Day and by the Kennedy Child Study Centre. Her work focused on counselling parents of children with intellectual disabilities. Just a few years after the Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity was issued in 1970, Ann was consecrated by Cardinal Medeiros, Archbishop of Boston in 1974.

In Boston she served for many years as the executive director of the South Boston Neighborhood House; in 1997 she co-founded the Paraclete Center, an after-school enrichment program for urban children. In December 1999 Ann was introduced to Aloisea Inyumba, the Rwandan Minister for Women and Gender, who came to see the school



in South Boston and said, “This is what we need in Rwanda.” She invited Ann to visit Rwanda. Ann arrived in 2001, as the painful process of truth and a reconciliation was beginning. Aloisea asked her to help build a middle school for girls that would focus on developing leadership skills. After several years of fund-raising with women in Boston and collaboration with the Benebikira sisters, a Rwandan order with strong experience in education, a beautiful school complex was built called Maranyundo. Hugely successful, it has expanded to be a high school, focusing on STEM subjects. During the pandemic Ann made sure that all the students had a tablet, from which they could continue studying remotely. Many of the graduates have gone on to universities in Canada and the US.

I met Ann at the USACV conference in 1999. We became friends and visited back and forth between Boston and Toronto. In January 2017 I spent a month with her in Rwanda. Ann’s warm, simple way of being present with people, her sense of trust and her sense of humor have been an inspiration to me. She was endlessly creative and determined in problem-solving and she delighted in networking, bringing together those with resources and those in need.

Ann found a home among the Benebikira sisters; they created an apartment for her in their motherhouse in Save, where she spent most of the pandemic. In August 2022 she sold her house in Boston and moved permanently to Rwanda. That is where she desired to die and be buried. Ann was buried in the Sisters’ cemetery, right beside the memorial for the sisters who were murdered in the genocide. Dec. 16, would have been her 90th birthday.

Submissions Accepted

If you would like to submit an article or artwork for consideration in a future edition of The Lamp, please email it to [Amanda Schrauth](mailto:Amanda.Schrauth@consecratedvirgins.org) at info@consecratedvirgins.org. We accept articles and artwork from consecrated virgins related to our vocation or related to Our Lady and the virgin saints. 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.

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY

USACV
www.consecratedvirgins.org

**United States Association
of Consecrated Virgins**
PO Box 442170
Miami, FL 33144

**Email: info@consecratedvirgins.org
president@consecratedvirgins.org**

www.consecratedvirgins.org

The USACV-IRC is pleased to announce the 2024 Information Conference on the *Ordo Virginum*, which will be held in a virtual format once again. The conference includes prayer together. Testimonials from consecrated virgins, presentations on significant aspects of the vocation of consecrated virginity lived *in saeculo*, and times for questions and answers.

This conference is a valuable resource for anyone with a serious interest in discovering more about the vocation of consecrated virginity, including those who are pursuing the consecration as aspirants or candidates; diocesan delegates for consecrated life; diocesan vocation directors; other diocesan representatives responsible for discernment and formation for this vocation; and consecrated virgins themselves.

The Information Conference is a prerequisite for participation in Candidate Discussion Groups (see page 14).

2024 Virtual Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity

Dates: Friday to Sunday, September 6 to 8, 2024

Time: 1:00-6:00pm ET each day

Format: Webinar

Coordinators: Judith Stegman and Leadership Teams of the USACV and IRC

Presentation topics:

† Overview of Vocations in the Catholic Church, and the Ecclesial Identification of the *Ordo virginum*

† The Liturgical Rite of Consecration and the Marian Dimension of the Vocation

† The Liturgy of the Hours and Prayer Life of the Consecrated Virgin

† Historical Aspects of the Consecration of Virgins; Virgin Saints

† Sacred Scripture and the Witness of the *Ordo Virginum*, in *Ecclesiae sponsae imago*

† Mystical Espousal to Christ, the Son of God

† Living *in saeculo* and in the Local Church

† Personal Testimonies of Consecrated Virgins Serving on the Team

† Psychological Maturity for Living the Virginal Vocation

† Prerequisites for Admission to the Virginal Consecration

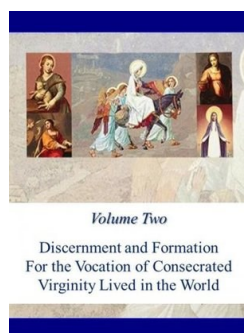
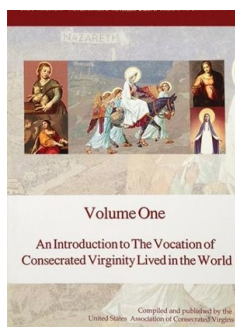
† Stages of Preparation for Admission to the *Ordo virginum*

† About Associations, the *Ordo virginum*, and Next Steps



Artwork by
Marion Biestek

Online registration is not yet open. To pre-register, please email: info@consecratedvirgins.org.



Recordings Available!

Links to recordings from the virtual sessions of the 2022 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins (held in La Crosse) and the 2022 Virtual Information Conference on the *Ordo virginum*, are now available. If you attended a particular conference in person or virtually, and would like to receive a link to the conference you attended, at no charge, please email info@consecratedvirgins.org with your request. If you did not attend the conference, links to the recordings are available for purchase through our online store at consecratedvirgins.org.