

## May 31, 2022 — The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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

The Eucharist! We are in the process, in our country, of preparing for a Eucharistic Congress in 2024. To varying degrees, each diocese is teaching about and celebrating the Eucharist at the diocesan and parish levels. This has also included or will include Eucharistic Processions, especially associated with the great feast of Corpus Christi.

Such a celebration is primarily because the great gift of the Body and Blood of our Lord in the Eucharist merits any festal attention we can give. But there is another reason: so many have a confused understanding of the Eucharist, mostly that it is nothing more than symbolic. We all, including you, my sisters, need to promote the reality of what Jesus had expressed in the Gospel of John, chapter six, that Jesus has given us his flesh and blood as real food for eternal life.

So, I encourage all of you to become involved in whatever is being prepared in your own diocese or parish to further a true understanding of this great gift of the Lord Jesus, a gift which demonstrates the depth of his love for us and his desire to remain with us and us with him.



Sincerely yours in  
+ *Earl Boyea*

Most Reverend Earl  
Boyea  
Bishop of Lansing



By Marion Biestek

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## *Something Ancient, Something New*

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

The manifestation of our Most Divine Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection, during all of the forty days before His Ascension into heaven, represents for all the Church a joyful expectation of His second coming.

We contemplate how the words of the Divine Master to his apostles at the Last Supper were the testament in which we can find the way of perfection in our lives towards Him in heaven: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places; otherwise I would not have told you I am going now to prepare a place for you. And after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you to myself, so that you may be with me where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus said: ‘I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him.’” (Jn. 14: 1-7).

Our Lord Jesus Christ revealed the mystery of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us: He is true man and true God and He is the visible God who showed with his mortal life, death and resurrection the WAY. For a follower of our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, the way is clear. Saint John of the Cross in his mystical contemplation of Christ's Way uses a poetic style to present the revelation of this way. His spiritual canticle shows diverse approaches to accomplish The Way, The Truth and The Life. The overall plan of the poem embodies several aspects of life of the

lover, and is expressed in the communion between Christ and the soul.

It is an ongoing process to embrace communion and we read in Saint John's Canticle that this includes the anxious loving search for the Beloved. Anxiety in this step is not a functional or endogenous anxiety disturbing the integral human being; rather, it is an external or exogenous adaptation of the senses to follow the Divine Lord. In other words, it is that zone of confluence of human psychology integrating body, soul and divinity into a mystical experience of love.

Following Saint John of the Cross, the first mystical encounter with Jesus Christ is called the spiritual betrothal; in this encounter, the life of union with him is nonetheless disturbed by many outward and inward impediments. This happened with the martyrs and virgin martyrs of the Catholic faith when they had a mystical encounter with Jesus and their senses were transformed into the senses of the soul. They experienced healthy anxiety because the Beloved Lord Jesus Christ, for both men and women, had a mystical encounter with them.

Consider the history of Saint Paul the Apostle, who lost the sense of bodily vision when he was illuminated by the light of Jesus Christ resurrected. The Divine Lord opened his ears and he listened to Him who commanded him to change



his way; he instead took the Way of Jesus Christ Resurrected. He understood that the love of Jesus Christ is eternal and he embraced our mortal life when he heard the words: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9:4). He was transformed when he understood the Truth of Jesus Christ, which is Life lived in the new commandment of Love.

At the Last Supper, Jesus Christ, our Divine Lord, gave all of us the new command of love. In his sermon during this last supper, he summarized the profound and simple way he was asking them to live: “If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world can never accept since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you. I shall not leave you orphans; I shall come to you. In a short time the world will no longer see me; but you will see that I live and you also will live” (Jn. 14:15–19).

The complete plan of salvation is summarized on the day of Pentecost when the apostles were enlightened with the light of the Holy Spirit; they understood how the Lord at the Last Supper had given them the key for our salvation: “You will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Whoever holds to my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me; and whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and reveal myself to him” (Jn. 14: 20–21).

Jesus Christ ascended to His Eternal Father’s house and the promise of the Paraclete was fulfilled. When the apostles received the Holy Spirit, at that exact moment they were transformed; instead of protecting their own lives they were preaching the Life their Divine Lord had announced to them. They were no longer afraid to

follow the Truth. They did not condition the Truth by adjusting their preaching to the society of that time, to the Roman Empire idolaters, to try to please every single person with what they were to teach. They discharged from that people their male and female gods and they preferred to die than to please those who asked them to worship false gods.

The Eternal Father prepared for His Son a people who have only one God—Him. The Eternal Father considered that the intrinsic meaning of Himself was lost in the original sin; His image was distorted by original sin and men carried that distortion as an engram or print of the true image at the very creation of the human soul.

Jesus Christ sent His apostles to preach the Gospel and to baptize in the name of the Holy Trinity those who accepted the message of salvation. Today, there is no longer any consideration given that the civilized world needs evangelization in order to announce the mystical meaning revealed by our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, that he is the WAY; that salvation is found in His way, His truth, and His life. There is no other life but Himself. There is no another name but the name of Jesus Christ by which we are saved. He said, “No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14: 6).

In Him, the Eternal Father gives to every single man the opportunity to recognize, through Jesus Christ, that He is Our Father. No one comes to the Father if the Father doesn’t call him, and the Eternal Father calls us through His most Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

When we read the document of the Second Vatican Council, “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions” we note that the answer can be found in the words spoken at the Last Supper, when Our Divine Lord Jesus Christ left us the testament of love, to be lived in Him.



The Church presents in that Declaration these very interesting questions: “Men look to their different religions for an answer to the unsolved riddles of human existence. The problems that weigh heavily on the hearts of men are the same today as in the ages past. What is man? What is the meaning and purpose of life? What is upright behavior, and what is sinful? Where does suffering originate, and what end does it serve? How can genuine happiness be found? What happens at death? What is judgment? What reward follows death? And finally, what is the ultimate mystery, beyond human explanation, which embraces our entire existence, from which we take our origin and towards which we tend?” (See Vat II, *Nostra Aetate* 1, October 28, 1965).

Jesus’ power and freedom are the two great treasures He left to His Church both to evangelize that age as well as the present age. There is a great light that shines from the teaching of Jesus Christ to his apostles to be witnesses of the Gospel with their own lives, not living in the freedom of material details but rather in the complete power that comes from Him when one follows His Way, Truth and Life in the spiritual light of eternal love. “He summoned the Twelve and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to cure the sick. He said to them, ‘Take nothing for the journey, neither walking stick, nor sack, nor food, nor money, and let no one take a second tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there and leave from there. And as for those who do not welcome you, when you leave that town, shake the dust from your feet in testimony against them.’ Then they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news and curing diseases everywhere. . . . When the apostles returned, they explained to him what they had done. He took them and withdrew in private to a town called Bethsaida”

(Lk. 9: 1-6, 10). To trust in his Divine Providence is to illuminate His way: the mercy he shows to pardon sinners, and the mercy he shows in saying to them “do not sin more” (Jn. 8:11).

Our Divine Lord is the answer to all those questions of our good people of faith. They are expected to grow with the measure of the Word revealed to us by the Son of God among us. He is the measure of true humanism, compassion, and mercy. He expects that His teachings will make us grow as we search His measure. “An ‘adult’ faith is not a faith that follows the trends of fashion and the latest novelty; a mature adult faith is deeply rooted in friendship with Christ. It is this friendship that opens us up to all that is good and gives us a criterion by which to distinguish the true from the false, and deceit from truth.” (Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, homily Vatican Basilica April 18, 2005) These words are like a synthesis of the answer of our Divine Lord and Spouse to those in the Gospel, about carrying out the will of the Eternal Father.

Our most Blessed Mother and Queen of Virgins did not have economic security. From the Cross, her Son gave her to the Church in the person of Saint John, the beloved disciple. Becoming Mother of the Church meant that she was also called to live in witness to her resurrected Son. During all of her years she lived among the Church in silence and solitude, but her solitude was on behalf of the children of the Church given to her by her Divine Son, who ascended into heaven.

The virgins of the ancient Church, as well of the virgins of the today’s Church, do not have economic security from the Divine Lord because, just as their Mother and Queen, they live in silent witness to the Divine Bridegroom. Their belonging and their inheritance is the same Divine Lord who called them to follow Him. This must be a joy for virgins, as it was for the Tribe of Levi who received

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

Come, Holy Spirit, come!

You'll read in this issue of "The Lamp" plans for the upcoming USACV-sponsored Convocation of Consecrated Virgins in La Crosse, Wisconsin, as well as plans for the July Information Conference on the *Ordo virginum*, to be held virtually once again. Our inaugural Spanish-language Information Conference was appreciated by many, and you can read about it on page 16.

We celebrate today, May 31, the 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the renovation of the rite of consecration of virgins and consequently the restoration of the consecration for women living *in saeculo*, that is, in the ordinary circumstances of life. As the *Ordo virginum* becomes more widely known in the Church, so does the need for a deepened understanding of the precious gift of virginity, given by the eternal Father and confirmed by the Church through consecration at the hands of the Bishop, to live as a bride of Christ in the midst of society. Such is the purpose and meaning of all of the work of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins and International Resource Center for the *Ordo virginum*—consecrated virgins together serving our Divine Spouse by teaching and sharing our lives as brides of our Lord Jesus Christ.



no inheritance other than the Lord God Himself, as we read in the Holy Scriptures. When Joshua led the Israelites into the land of Canaan the Levites were the only Israelite tribe that received cities but were not allowed to be landowners, because "the Lord God of Israel is their inheritance, as he said to them" (Josh. 13:33).

Consecrated virgins are called to announce the message of the Eternal Kingdom with the testimony of their lives, following the Spouse wherever He goes in this mortal life and into eternity. The virginal life is reflected in the words of Saint John of the Cross in his canticle, as those who live the life of Jesus Christ in perfect union with him, the Bridegroom. The consecrated virgin is called to live spiritual marriage with her Divine Spouse in the mutual and total gift of herself, expressing her complete donation to Him in the communion of Love with Him and from Him to others.

All Christians are called to the eternal wedding feast of the Lamb who is Spouse of the Church, for this is the Christian vocation. The consecrated virgin in her being is a witness of that feast, as even now her desires are for perfect union with the Beloved in glory. This is our life—to work and to live in joyful expectation of the culmination of our union with our Divine Lord and Spouse. That complete perfection has a culmination in eternity but begins early in our life and later, at the very moment of our consecration, our life is transformed into an icon of His Kingdom to come. We expect his Parusia and we live for that. (See "The Spiritual Canticle" in *The Collected Works of St John of the Cross*, translated by Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D., ICS Publications, Institute of Carmelites Studies, Washington, D.C., 1991).

## Consecration Announcements

**February 5, 2022 — Christine Pinheiro, Diocese of Peoria (IL), at the hands of The Most Reverend Louis Tylka.**

**February 11, 2022 — Amy Roza, Diocese of Orlando (FL), at the hands of The Most Reverend John Noonan.**

**April 23, 2022 — Julie Radachy, Diocese of Knoxville (TN), at the hands of The Most Reverend Richard Stika.**

On April 23, I finally was able to say, as St. Agnes did, “I am espoused to Him whom the angels serve.” At that moment of my consecration Mass at the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Knoxville, Tennessee, my heart was filled with tremendous and indescribable joy.

While there were many beautiful moments—so many that I cannot possibly share them all—one of the lines that I’ve been pondering since my consecration is: “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.” As I settle into life as a new consecrated virgin, I pray that I will be able to follow Him closely even while on earth.

On my consecration day, I had the pleasure of celebrating with a couple consecrated virgins, my family, and my friends, and I greatly enjoyed those moments along with the quiet time spent in Adoration with my Divine Spouse before my consecration Mass.

At the end of the day, I enjoyed praying my first Hour of the Divine Office as a consecrated virgin with other consecrated virgins, candidates, and discerners as well as praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet. I was so excited to be able to end the day with all of you for the first time as a consecrated virgin. Being in this virtual community was the perfect ending to my consecration day.



Christine Pinheiro



Amy Roza



Julie Radachy





### ***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:**

***September 15, 2022 — Elma L. Espinoza, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Mendota, CA, at 5:30pm, Diocese of Fresno (CA), at the hands of The Most Reverend Joseph V. Brennan.*** All are warmly invited to attend. The consecration is scheduled to be live-streamed on the parish Facebook page at [facebook.com/guadalupechurchmendota](https://facebook.com/guadalupechurchmendota).

### **Canada:**

***October 1, 2022 — Holly Garnett, of the Military Ordinariate of Canada, at the Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception (Diocese of Kingston), at 2pm, at the hands of The Most Reverend Scott McCaig.*** All are warmly invited to

By Florence Sundberg  
Archdiocese of Hartford (CT)

IN DEFENSE OF LIFE: We have stood silently by while promoters of the culture of death have marched to demand a right to abortion. They threw baby dolls to the ground and stomped on them during their march of death: grotesque to say the least! Where are the defenders of life? Why aren't all people of good will as vocal and demonstrative as those who reject God and reject the right for the littlest among us to live? Pope John Paul II spoke of grave and overwhelming evil when he spoke of the horrific slaughter of babies who survived the attempts to abort them and who were then subjected to the most inhumane brutality and how difficult it is even to pray when we are reduced to a sense of incomprehension at the annihilation of innocent infants. He tells us to hold on to hope and never let go; hold on to the hem of Jesus' garment no matter how deep the darkness and fear. This, says Pope John Paul, brings us profoundly into the prayer of Christ on the Cross and releases His power at work in each of us giving us the courage to go on, to go deeper even in the poverty of our prayer. We need only say "Jesus" and He comes and releases our battered souls and offers us hope and enables us to believe that He hears even the weakest and most humble cry for help. And we who have a voice must be a voice for those who cannot speak – the innocent, vulnerable babies in the womb.



*The Triumphant Lamb*  
by Shannon Ryan

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY  
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## Consecrated Virgins Praying the Anima Christi

By Diane Christine Farr  
Diocese of Rochester (NY)

One the most beautiful prayers is *Anima Christi*. It has the potential of drawing us into a deeper intimacy with Jesus if we take the time to consider its meaning. As consecrated virgins, let us ponder the richness and depth of wisdom contained in each petition of this prayer

*“Soul of Christ Sanctify me.”*

The interior life of Christ was perfectly centered on fulfilling the Will of His Eternal Father. Christ’s memory, intellect and will were continuously occupied with the Divine Will that reigned in Him. He was all intent on the salvation and sanctification of mankind. The pattern of true holiness has its source in Jesus Christ our divine Lord. We are sanctified only in Him and through Him. As consecrated virgins we follow and enter into this interior life of our Divine Spouse. He in turn forms our sanctity and becomes the life of our souls embellishing them with His own qualities. He wishes to see in us a reflection of His own Holy wisdom, divine purity, compassionate goodness and heavenly beauty.

*“Body of Christ Save me.”*

The second person of the most Holy Trinity accomplished our salvation by taking on a human nature. It was in and through His sacred humanity that Christ brought about our redemption and sanctified the actions of our daily lives. It is in holy communion that we receive the living and resurrected Christ as our nourishment and sustenance. As consecrated virgins we honor Jesus’ resurrection through our gift of virginity. This gift involves the whole person consecrated to God both body and soul in a unique way. Thus, we reflect the resurrected state of eternal life.

*“Blood of Christ inebriate me”*

In holy communion we receive the most precious blood of Jesus which has been poured out for us. It is a pledge of eternal life and the new wine of true joy. This is the joy of the bride of Christ who with gratitude recognizes her bridegroom and delights in Him. She sees the great value of applying the precious blood to all souls in her prayers for them.

*“Water from the side of Christ wash me.”*

Jesus said to Peter, “Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with Me.” John 13:8

Every one of us must surrender ourselves completely to Jesus to be cleansed as only he can do. We encountered Jesus with His purifying ability in baptism, confession, holy communion and in silent prayer. It is important for us to acknowledge our need for this salvific washing that can only be accomplished by our Savior. As brides of our Lord it is Jesus who will prepare us for Himself, cleansing and clothing us with His own purity and holiness. We eagerly desire to receive this vital healing and live only in God’s will. We are grateful for such an outpouring of God’s mercy towards us.

*“Passion of Christ Strengthen me.”*

When we consider the passion of our Lord it is impossible for the human mind to comprehend what he endured for our sake. He experienced the pain and the horror of each sin as He beheld the ugly state to which mankind had reduced itself. The extent of Jesus’ interior suffering far exceeds His physical sufferings. We pray that our beloved Jesus who has gone before us will strengthen us in all of our own sufferings. We desire to be His angel of consolation as we allow ourselves to be present to the needs of those around us.

*“O good Jesus hear me.”*

Jesus who is goodness itself always hears those who sincerely pour out their hearts to Him. He is



always ready to bestow His grace on those who are disposed to receive it. God has created each person for a particular purpose and is beloved by Him in a special way. God has given us an outpouring of His love for us in the beauty of nature. As consecrated virgins our Lord wishes to hear the voice of our praise and adoration as a response to His love. We may say we love you Jesus in the beauty of the flowers, and we recognize your presence as we inhale their fragrance. Turning to the works of redemption, we place our love on each aspect of Jesus' life right up to His glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven.

*"Within your wounds hide me."*

The first thing Jesus did when he appeared to his apostles after his resurrection was to show them the wounds in his hands, feet and side. These visible wounds would become permanent signs and reminders of the infinite love which Jesus suffered for us. Along with these signs, Jesus bestowed on us the tremendous gift of his perennial peace. His peace must have supreme rule over our hearts. The consecrated virgin must say with a contemplative gaze, it is by these wounds that Christ has made me his bride, binding me to Himself in an everlasting marriage. As we see in the Song of Songs how the dove makes its home in the cleft of the rock so also the bride of Christ makes her home in the most sacred heart of Jesus. It is in this Heart that she finds her rest and places all of her trust. It is in this heart that she learns the intimate knowledge of divine love which she carries into her daily activities.

*"Never permit me to be separated from You."*

All Christians should be united with Christ, their Divine Head in order to be effective in the work of evangelization. He is the life-giving vine, and we are the branches. The consecrated virgin has come to know Christ as her spouse, and it is through constant prayer and attentiveness that she will grow in this holy knowledge. To be with Jesus in all

circumstance must form her contentment. She has given Him her will and He has given her His will as a gift. Her consecration renders her virginal state as a beautiful tribute to the love which exists between Christ the heavenly bridegroom and his consecrated virgin. The bride of Christ must be inseparable from her Lord in everything.

*"From the evil enemy defend me."*

There is sovereign power in the most holy name of Jesus and in the victory accomplished through His paschal mystery. This power overcomes every evil with its surpassing strength. It is with humble confidence that the consecrated virgin considers the magnitude of the one to whom she has been espoused. He is her defense in all things. In the peaceful acceptance of her own frailty and the cross that she must carry, She will conquer everything as she follows the divine Lamb to victory.

*"In the hour of my death call me and bid me come to you that with your saints I may praise you forever and ever."*

Jesus has overcome every fear that Satan uses against us, including the final fear of death. Perfect love will cast out all fear from our souls. If we have used our time wisely and given ourselves completely to God then the final surrender to him in death will be a joyful one. As consecrated virgins we have heard the call of our holy Spouse and entered deeply into the mystery of the divine nuptials through the gift of holy virginity. We have spent our entire lives preparing for the final call of Jesus, the bridegroom of the Church. We have endeavored to spread His truth and His light throughout the world during our lives. We pray that Jesus Himself will prepare us to enter into the eternal light of His holy presence and take our place in the choir of virgins.

May we fill all of heaven with praises in gratitude for our beautiful vocation. All glory be to the most Holy Trinity.

### *A Note from the Archivist*

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

### *Upcoming Issues of The Lamp*

**September 8, 2022** Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

**December 12, 2022** Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

**February 2, 2023** Feast of the Presentation and  
World Day for Consecrated Life

**May 31, 2023** Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

### *Submissions Accepted*

If you would like to submit an article, artwork, or a reflection for consideration in a future edition of *The Lamp*, please email it to [info@consecratedvirgins.org](mailto: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](mailto:info@consecratedvirgins.org).

### *2022 Membership Drive*

Francesca Riddick, Diocese of Joliet (IL)

We kicked off our 2022 membership drive this March. Thank you to all who have already registered. The generosity of our members is truly inspiring and we thank you for your support. Those of you who were able to give a little or a lot more than the base dues, please know that others are being helped through your generosity. We are looking forward to seeing many of you this summer in La Crosse, Wisconsin!

### *Volume Three of Ordo Virginum*

Shalina Stilley is leading the effort to complete work on the third volume of the USACV series, *Ordo Virginum — The Restoration of the Ancient Order of Virgins in the Catholic Church*, which will cover the lives of virgin saints who lived out their vocation in the world, and not as part of a religious order. If you are interested in helping, or would like more information on the project, please contact Shalina at [catherinestilley@gmail.com](mailto:catherinestilley@gmail.com). She tells us we still need volunteers to write on Dorothy of Cesarea and Anastasia.

### *Pray With Us!*

Claire Halbur, Archdiocese of Phoenix (AZ)

In recent months, virgins and candidates from across the states and beyond have had the joy of gathering once every month or two, via video call, for shared prayer times. The first virtual chanted Vespers was held on January 21st for the Memorial of St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr, and again on the Memorial of St. Agatha (February 5th). On the Vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday, our virtual prayer included the sung Divine Mercy Chaplet as we united in intercessory prayer on behalf of the Church and the world. Virgins have expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect in this way, encouraging one another in living our vocation and praying the Divine Office in a communal setting. After this summer's convocation, we plan to continue this offering a few times in the Fall, so stay tuned for dates in *Monday Morning Mail* and/or *The Lamp*!

## Anniversary Reflections

Consecrated virgins who celebrate significant anniversaries during 2022 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).

### 30 Years

Corinne Dudschus and Maureena Dudschus,  
consecrated February 1, 1992,  
Archdiocese of Seattle (WA)

On February 1, 2022, we, Corinne and Maureena Dudschus, celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Consecration to a Life of Virginity. It was a very joyful day. A priest friend, Father Kurt Nagel, offered a special Mass for the two of us and we had lunch together. We thank God for this blessing!

It is amazing how fast these 30 years have gone by. Our vocation is a prayerful, hidden life that is confusing to the world. But it is a precious and wonderful gift that God chose us to be His Spouses, for which we thank Him every day!



### 25 Years

Carol Lankford, consecrated July 10, 1996

*I received the Consecration to a Life of Virginity for Women Living in the World at the hands of Bishop Michael F. McAuliffe, S.T.D. on July 10, 1996.*

*The following verses were placed on the back cover of the program prepared for those in attendance for the Liturgical Celebration of Consecration within the*



*Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and express well my journey then and now:*

*THE LORD OF THE DANCE*

*Would you like to dance?*

*I said my yes!*

*and laid my head upon his chest.*

*Close he drew me*

*nervous, I*

*to feel his warmth embracing mine.*

*Nervous and awkward*

*stumbling, me*

*trembling hand*

*weak in knee*

*I wasn't sure*

*how to begin.*

*I misunderstood*

*what was happening.*

*Surrender, said he*

*and let me lead*

*just trust and relax*

*and soon you'll see.*

*The dance he chose*

*just right for me*

*his grace and his movement*

*guiding me.*

*I repeated, YES!*

*Let the dance go on*

*Jesus is leading*

*yes Lord, lead on.*

*Ann Veronica Hofios*



## Anniversary Reflections

I am eternally grateful to the Lord for the gift of my Consecration. Indeed, His love is better than life itself! — Psalm 63:3.

For the remainder of my reflection, I wanted to share, with His permission, a few of the many “arrows” placed personally and etched firmly by Jesus in my heart’s “quiver” (Ps. 127) which have sustained and blessed me both in times of deep trial and great joy. May we never forget these words of love—known only by, and given uniquely to, each one of us—and use them in times of battle against the enemy, richly savor them frequently, and be continually receptive to His voice in the future...as we grow more and more deeply in love with Him.

“It was not you who chose me but I who chose you.” —John 15:16

“...your husband is your Maker, whose name is the Lord of hosts...” — Is 53:5

You looked with love upon me and deep within your eyes imprinted grace; this mercy set me free, held in your love’s embrace, to lift my eyes adoring to your face (Canticle stanza 32). — St. John of the Cross

“If you are willing to bear serenely the trial of being displeasing to yourself, you will be for Jesus a pleasant place of shelter.” — St. Therese of Lisieux

“No amount of exterior work is as pleasing to God, as useful to the church and souls as that loving contemplation, in which the soul allows God to act as he pleases in her.” — Blessed Abbot Marmion

“One act of thanksgiving when things go wrong with us, is worth a thousand thanks when things are agreeable to our inclinations.” — St. John of Avila

“Prayer is like a queen who has constant access to the King.” — St. Therese of Lisieux

“The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.” — Psalm 119:72

“May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!” — Song of Songs 1:2

“God has created me to do him some service that he has not entrusted to another, I am necessary to his purpose—I have my mission.” — St. John Henry Newman

“The power of Christ’s Cross and Resurrection is greater than any evil man could or should fear.” — “Crossing the Threshold of Hope” by Pope St. John Paul II

## 15 Years

Karen Webb, consecrated November 18, 2007

Like I’ve seen others say, these last years have gone so fast! My consecration was on November 18, 2007, nearly 15 years ago. It was a many-year winding road



(including a very fruitful 9 months in a religious order) leading up to that moment. But our Spouse is very good at leading us just where He wants us to go, in His way and time, and looking back, it’s easy to see His hand in it all.

There have been many surprises along the way so far. What hasn’t been surprising is His faithful love and mercy: I’m fond of saying to Him that He takes better care of me than any earthly

husband ever could. I expected suffering after being consecrated but had no idea what form this would take or how much there would be. I also didn't expect how many consolations, nor how much patience and kindness, the Lord would show me. It's very typical for Him (it seems to me) to make a point of showing me the most kindness at the times I least deserve it.

Over these last years, I would say the Lord has been (and will surely be till I die) teaching me three things: a) how to love others better, both those easy and hard to love, b) humility, in many ways (I agree with whoever said "my pride is going to die 15 minutes after I do") and c) the practice of patience, with both people and things, my having lacked so much patience earlier in life.

Only He knows how far I've come or how far I have to go. In the meantime, I think about the devotional book *He and I* and its passage that reads, "Each soul is My special favorite -- I use some only to reach the others." He's certainly used others to reach me, and it's my frequent prayer to be used to help others know of the divine love that I learned first about in childhood from my parents, and my Spouse continues to teach me about, to this day and beyond.

## *10 Years*

Emily Byers, consecrated June 16, 2012,  
Diocese of Lafayette (LA)

On December 24, 2011, the Christmas Eve before I was consecrated by my bishop, the reading from the prophet Isaiah caught my attention: "*For as a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so shall your God rejoice in you.*" It was one of those rare moments when the proclamation of Sacred Scripture entered not only into my ears but also into

my heart of hearts. My eyes brimmed with tears of gratitude that I had been chosen by God the Father to be the bride of His Son, and I decided that this was the verse I would have engraved inside my wedding band— and on my heart— when I was consecrated the following June, on the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In difficult moments, I thought, I would be able to look at my ring and remember that God chose me and that my Spouse truly delights in me, even in my smallness and my many imperfections... And praise Him, this has turned out to be true. That verse from Isaiah has been a reminder through so many seasons of sickness, grief, and self-doubt to cling always to Christ the Bridegroom and to trust in His fidelity.

While on my most recent anniversary retreat in December 2021, I asked the Lord to point me to a new Scripture verse to guide me through the next decade of consecrated life. I kept coming back to John 15:4: "*Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.*" This was perfect! If there's one thing Jesus has been trying to teach me over the last ten years, it is the need to depend utterly on Him. For someone who struggles with perfectionism (among other things), relinquishing control can be incredibly challenging; however, I am starting to see that it's the only path to true trust and intimacy with the Lord.

There wasn't any room inside my wedding band to engrave another verse, but Jesus took care of that, too. My mom and I stumbled upon a vintage platinum wedding band at her parents' house that we think must have belonged to my great-grandmother in the 1920s. It was my size and matched my own platinum band exactly! That hundred-year-old wedding band, which I wear with my first one, is both a sign of gratitude for the heritage of faith I have received from my family and also a reminder to abide in Christ and to depend on Him in everything. As I continue to live as His bride in the world, I know He will always take care of me. He is faithful! *Deo gratias!*

## 2022 Convocation of Consecrated Virgins

Jenna Cooper, Archdiocese of New York (NY)  
and Joani McCann, Archdiocese of Boston (MA)

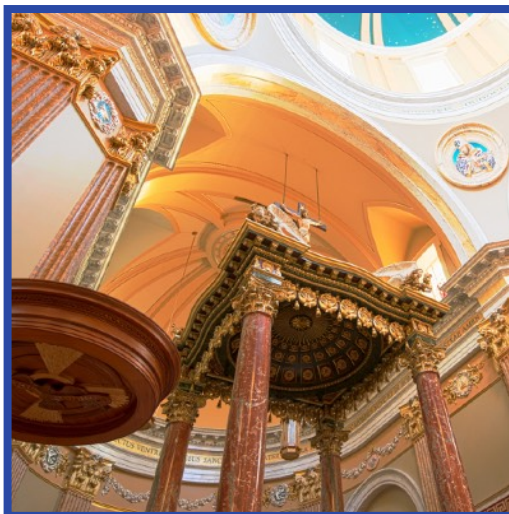
The 2022 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins will be held from Friday, June 24 (the solemnity of the Sacred Heart) through Tuesday, June 28 in La Crosse, WI. This year's theme is: "Communion in the Bride of Christ."



Together, we will be reflecting on the idea of "communion" in its various meanings: communion as membership in the Church, which is the Bride of Christ; communion with Jesus in the Eucharist; and sisterly communion within the *Ordo virginum*.

We will be staying at the Franciscan Spirituality Center in downtown La Crosse. The Franciscan Spirituality Center is located in the historic motherhouse building of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. The Franciscan Spirituality Center was built with beautiful nineteenth-century Victorian architecture, and it is known for its stunning chapel, where we will gather together each day for Morning and Evening Prayer. Despite being located in the center of a city downtown area, the Franciscan Spirituality Center has a wonderfully prayerful atmosphere overall. All of the bedrooms for retreatants at the Franciscan Spirituality Center are newly-renovated and include a private bath.

Most of our daytime programming for the 2022 Convocation will be held at the nearby Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Guadalupe Shrine was built in the early 2000s by the now-Cardinal Burke when he was the bishop of La Crosse, Wisconsin. It was intended as a pilgrimage site dedicated to Our Lady as Empress of the Americas, and it serves as a place of spiritual



refreshment and renewal for many in the local area and beyond. The Shine also has a special focus on prayer for pro-life issues and for the strengthening of the family. As we have been planning the Convocation, the staff at the Shine have told us that they are delighted to be able to welcome a gathering of consecrated virgins!

In addition to our times of prayer together, we will have presentations on our Convocation theme as an opportunity for ongoing formation. The schedule provides time for personal prayer, unstructured time to enjoy the Guadalupe Shrine, recreation, and time for friendly social conversation among those attending. There will also be opportunities for adoration and confession.

We will be joined this year by the Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Episcopal Moderator of the USACV and Bishop of Lansing, who will give us a presentation on Sacred Scripture and who will celebrate our opening Mass. And once again, we are very happy to have Fr. David Whiteside join us as our chaplain, as he did in 2019 and 2021.

We warmly invite all consecrated virgins, both from the United States and from other countries, to attend. The invitation is also extended to any candidate for consecration who has attended a previous Information Conference and has been accepted by the bishop of her diocese as an aspirant or a candidate to receive the consecration of a virgins.

The convocation fee is \$450 for single room occupancy, including all meals and four nights of lodging. Because this does not cover all costs of organizing the convocation, please consider making an optional donation. We are also



happy to welcome “commuters,” i.e., those either coming in for the day from home, or who plan to stay in La Crosse someplace other than the Franciscan Spirituality Center (if you plan to join us as a commuter, please let us know so we can adjust the Convocation fee).

Consecrated virgins may also register to virtually attend live-streamed sessions of the Convocation. Please see the program and registration form for details. We ask for a donation of \$40 to help cover the cost of the equipment and tech support needed to livestream the Convocation. Those who are not able to offer a donation may attend at no charge or for whatever donation is possible.

For more information or to register online, see our website: [consecratedvirgins.org](http://consecratedvirgins.org). You can also contact Joani McCann ([joani.mccann@gmail.com](mailto:joani.mccann@gmail.com)) or Jenna Cooper ([jenna.marie.cooper@gmail.com](mailto:jenna.marie.cooper@gmail.com)) for with specific questions. We hope to see many of you in La Crosse this summer! Registration deadline is June 10th, so register soon!



### Upcoming Events

2022 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins, sponsored by the USACV,  
June 24-28, 2022  
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe,  
La Crosse, WI  
(see article, pages 14-15)

2022 Virtual Information Conference  
on the *Ordo virginum*, sponsored by the  
USACV-IRC,  
July 29-31, 2022  
(see article, page 16)

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

### USACV Leadership Team

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

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

### 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 Great Falls-Billings (MT).

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY

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

## 2022 Information Conference

Mary Kay Lacke, Diocese of Steubenville (OH)

The USACV is pleased to host the 2022 Information Conference in a virtual format once again. Conference team members found this format was very beneficial to women interested in this vocation from all across the United States and other English-speaking countries, since there are no travel expenses involved. The conference includes prayer together, personal testimonials from consecrated virgins, and times for questions and answers in addition to core presentations on the life of consecrated virginity lived in the world.

As hostess of this event, I encourage anyone with a serious interest in finding out more about the vocation of consecrated virginity, or who is pursuing the consecration as an applicant or candidate, to attend this conference. Also invited are diocesan delegates for consecrated life or other diocesan personnel involved in the preparation of virgins for consecration.

### ***Virtual Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity***

**Save the Dates:** Friday to Sunday, **July 29-31, 2022**

**Time:** 1:00-6:00pm EDT each day

**Format:** Webinar

**Coordinators:** Mary Kay Lacke and Judith Stegman

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 Espoused to Christ, the Son of God

- Living *in saeculo* and in the Local Church
- Personal Testimonies of the 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

Registration information to be posted soon on the [consecratedvirgins.org](https://consecratedvirgins.org) website. To pre-register or express interest in attending, please contact [info@consecratedvirgins.org](mailto:info@consecratedvirgins.org). Resources available in the online store at [consecratedvirgins.org](https://consecratedvirgins.org).

## Report on the 2022 Spanish Language Information Conference

The inaugural Spanish language Information Conference (*Conferencia informativa virtual sobre la vocación a la virginidad consagrada*), held March 25–27 in a webinar format, welcomed thirty-four participants. Thanks to all who prayed for the conference and assisted. Presentations were given by Dr. Magalis Aguilera, Maria Luisa Meza, M.A. (El Salvador), Dr. Maria Torres (Puerto Rico), Prof. Maria Andrea Green (Argentina), and Dr. Judith Stegman. Claire Halbur also offered her testimony and assisted with music and song. Participants included a good number of consecrated virgins from Mexico, and consecrated virgins, candidates, and inquirers from Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Chicago. Diocesan priest delegates for consecrated life and spiritual directors were also among those who attended. We hope to make recordings of the conference available on a private channel in the coming weeks.