

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

One of the greatest challenges of celibates and virgins is to realize the primordial challenge from God that we be fertile and multiply. For us, the first part of responding to this challenge is to imagine how this is even possible. Obviously, this will be accomplished as a spiritual fecundity. Our life of prayer for the Church and the world, both in general and in particular is a primary way to fulfill this duty. Are there other ways?

This will depend on our method of “living in the world.” Whatever it is that we do, be it Church work or completely secular labor, there we encounter fertile soil. Each of us then must determine how best we can help the Word of God take root, both by our example and by our words. God will give the increase, but we must plant seeds. Fecundity of any kind should always be the result of love and therefore love is the primary seed which we will plant. Our intentionality in this regard is critical.

The second part of our response to the challenge God gave us in Genesis is actually to do something. Again, our intentionality is critical. The more conscious we are about this responsibility as a responsibility will motivate us to act. We are meant to be missionary disciples even as celibates and virgins. Thus we must daily consider how we might be accomplishing this mandate of the Lord. It would be good to include this in our daily examen.

So, my sisters, please let us respond generously to God’s summons to us to be fruitful and multiply and thus manifest our spiritual fecundity.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Bishop of Lansing

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## Something Ancient, Something New

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

Our Mother Queen of Peace is a title that stems from Mary's call to be the Mother of the Prince of Peace. The Eternal Father created her in the image of the Church of His Son, which at the same time is the image of His Son's Mother, who also is the Mother of the Church: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

Jesus Christ is the Word become flesh due to His Mother's "yes" to the will of the Eternal Father. She was created in the essence of the Eternal Father "full of grace," as is revealed in the Greek name the angel used in addressing her: "*chaire kecharitomene*," meaning she has been, still is, and forever will be the object of God's benevolence. As we are baptized into Jesus Christ and become children of God, and as Jesus Christ is the King of Peace, His Mother, the Mother of the Church, is the Queen of Peace.

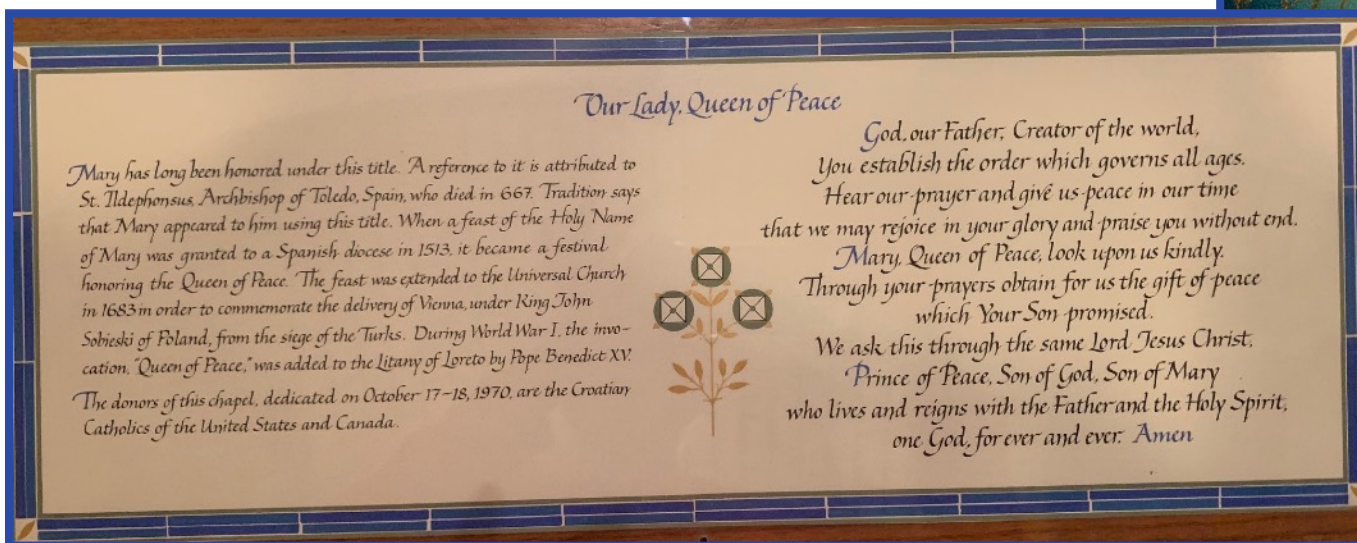
In our Roman Catholic Church and in the Orthodox Church, the special veneration due to the Virgin Mother of God is known as hyperdulia, a veneration second only to the adoration reserved to the Triune God. She is venerated and honored as the most exalted of all creatures, for no other creature—angelic or human—has a greater power than Mary to intercede for the grace of God on behalf of His children.

Our Blessed Mother received the title "Queen of Peace" from the Magisterium of the Church. During World War I, for example, Benedict XV placed the world under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and added the invocation of Mary Queen of Peace to the Litany of Loreto. In numerous letters, Benedict XV also personally addressed the pilgrims at Marian sanctuaries, naming Mary the Patron of Bavaria, Germany, and permitting in Mexico, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Guadalupe.

Benedict XV authorized the Feast of Mary Mediator of all Graces. He condemned the misuse of Marian statues and pictures, dressed in priestly robes, which he outlawed April 4, 1916. He issued the Apostolic Letter *Inter Soldalica* of March 22, 1918, in which he described Mary's mission as our Queen Mother: "As the blessed Virgin Mary does not seem to participate in the public life of Jesus Christ, and then, suddenly appears at the stations of his cross, she is not there without divine intention. She suffers with her suffering and dying son, almost as if she would have died herself. For the salvation of mankind, she gave up her rights as the mother of her son and sacrificed him for the reconciliation of divine justice, *as far as she was permitted to do*. Therefore, *one can say*, she redeemed with Christ the human race."



Images by Judith Stegman of the Chapel of Our Lady, Queen of Peace, in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC.



Benedict XV lived in a disturbed world, as his pontificate was dominated by World War I and its tragic aftermath, which he termed "the suicide of Europe." He rested in the intercession and protection of our Blessed Mother for her children. He promoted Marian veneration throughout the world and Marian devotions in May. He was very attentive to providing places where the Blessed Mother might be the Mother of Peace for all her children.

On May 10, 1916, Pope Benedict declared the image and Marian title of Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre as Patroness of Cuba, at the request of the soldier veterans of the Cuban War of Independence; this was a symbol of love and peace for the stabilization of the people after a war. Benedict's first encyclical, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum* (Appealing for Peace) extended a heartfelt plea for an end to hostilities. Late in the war, in May-October 1917, the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima occurred in Portugal; our Mother's message appealed for peace in a world torn by war.

The Eternal Father confirmed Benedict XV's honoring and invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of Queen of Peace – let us look at various places in the world where the title has been extended:

- Statue of Our Lady of Peace in front of Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica.
- Our Lady of Peace is the patroness of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, founded by Peter Coudrin in Paris during the French Revolution.
- When the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary established the Catholic Church in Hawaii, they consecrated the Hawaiian Islands under the protection of Our Lady of Peace. The Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace in Honolulu is the oldest Roman Catholic cathedral in continuous use in the United States.
- There are famous statues of Our Lady of Peace located in Paris and Honolulu.
- Our Lady of Peace Church in Viville, Belgium.
- Pope John Paul II consecrated and dedicated the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace of Yamoussoukro in Côte d'Ivoire to Our Lady of Peace.
- Parish churches throughout the world are named in honor of Our Lady of Peace, especially in Ireland and the United States.
- The Shrine of Mary, Queen of Peace, commonly known as the EDSA Shrine, in Metro Manila, the Philippines. The Shrine commemorates the alleged role of the Virgin in the revolution of February 1986 that ended President Ferdinand Marcos' 21-year dictatorship. Mary is said to have shrouded the more than 1 million peaceful demonstrators on the EDSA highway from possible air attacks by troops loyal to Marcos; a mural inside the shrine's nave depicts the miracle.
- The Foujita chapel in Reims, France is dedicated to Our Lady, Queen of Peace, as a reaction to the horror and devastation caused by the 1945 bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- The chapel at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas is dedicated to Our Lady Queen of Peace.
- Our Lady of Peace statue in El Salvador. According to tradition, in 1682 some merchants found an abandoned box on the shore of Salvador's Mar del Sur. Unable to open it, they tied the box on a donkey's back and set out to inform the local authorities. As they passed the parish church, the donkey lay down. They were then able to open the box and to their surprise found it contained an image of Our Lady holding the Child. As inhabitants of the region heard of the marvelous discovery in the abandoned box, they put down their weapons and immediately ceased fighting. Thus the image was given the title of Our Lady of Peace, with liturgical celebration is held on November 21 in memory of its arrival at San Miguel. Pope Benedict XV authorized the canonical coronation of the image in 1921 (from "El Salvador: Nuestra Senora de la Paz", Marian Library, University of Dayton).



Honolulu, Hawaii

The Holy Church of our Divine Lord Jesus Christ stands now in the midst of a convulsed world. The children of the Church experience the convulsions of division, and subscribe to relativism in terms of what is good. The truth of the Gospel is stated in the words of Jesus Himself: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. It is not as the world gives that I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid" (Jn. 14:27).

Let us invoke our Lady Queen of Peace that the peace given to the Church in the ministry of the Apostles be the product of the teaching of the truth of her Son.



By Judith M. Stegman

As brides of Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church, it is the hope and privilege of consecrated virgins to stand in witness to the love of the Church for Jesus Christ, displayed often in acts of love for the least of His brethren. Although we may live far apart from one another, especially in the United States, we are united in our prayer for one another and for Mother Church. These past months have been full of blessings as consecrated virgins have also had opportunity to share time together. Our 2019 convocation is highlighted on page 13; the presentations and discussion of *Ecclesiae sponsae imago* opened a new depth of conversation among the gathered consecrated virgins. We appreciated the formative content and distinctive presentation styles in the talks offered by consecrated virgins on the Vatican instruction. I opened with a canonical introduction to *ESI*; Dr. Magalis Aguilera followed with a graphical presentation on the integration of psychological, spiritual, and divine dimensions of the virginal vocation; Emily Byers made her debut by discussing with clarity the stages of discernment and formation identified in *ESI* and how these correspond to the stages presented in the USACV Volume II on discernment and formation for the vocation of consecrated virginity. Maria Luisa Oefele offered beautiful slides to support her reflections on *ESI* and the Rite of Consecration showing consecrated virginity as *kerygma* of the Gospel; Jenna Cooper also offered her debut presentation, considering with clarity and depth *ESI*'s presentation of the consecrated virgin's intrinsic relationship to the local Church; Dr. Renu Silvano enraptured all of us with her joyful and personal presentation on scriptural aspects of *ESI*,

delivered via video recording; and as the capstone, Maria Luisa Meza demonstrated the topic of her talk not only in words but also in a lively presentation style that actively engaged her audience: "Consecrated Virginity: A Life Worth Living." I highly recommend the convocation recordings (CD and DVD) to all who were not able to participate in person.

A few short weeks after the convocation, the USACV-IRC hosted the 2019 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity (see report on page 7). Information Conference presentations are revised each year to reflect deepened insights into the meaning and living of our vocation, and the excellent group of attendees this year were particularly appreciative of the vocational assistance that was offered. We are now beginning to make plans for the 2020 Meeting of the *Ordo virginum* in Rome (see p.17) where consecrated virgins from around the world will once again meet together to encourage one another in our lives as brides of Christ.

### **Upcoming Events Sponsored by the USACV**

**International Gathering of the *Ordo virginum* in Rome, called by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, in celebration of the golden anniversary of the renewed Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity. May 28 to May 31, 2020.**

*See article, page 17.*

Note: Due to the Rome gathering, there will be no 2020 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins.

**2020 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World**  
tentative dates July 28 to July 31, 2020  
location to be announced

## Announcements and News

### *Upcoming Issues of The Lamp:*

**December 12, 2019** Feast of Our Lady of

Guadalupe

**February 2, 2020** Feast of the Presentation and

World Day of Consecrated Life

**May 21, 2020** Solemnity of Corpus Christi

**September 8, 2019** Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

Mary

### *Available:*

Please check out our online USACV store for the following hot items at [secure.consecratedvirgins.org](https://secure.consecratedvirgins.org):

**NEW:** Recordings from the 2019 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins (DVD and CD) on *Ecclesia sponsae imago*.

**NEW:** Recordings from the 2019 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginité Lived in the World

**BEST-SELLERS:** *Ordo Virginum* series books:

Volume One: *An Introduction to the Vocation of Consecrated Virginité Lived in the World*

Volume Two: *Discernment and Formation for the Vocation of Consecrated Virginité Lived in the World*

### *Membership Reminder:*

From [Francesca Riddick](#), membership chair of the USACV: If you have not yet registered as a 2019 Member or Friend of the USACV, we encourage you to do so soon, showing your support for the work of the USACV-IRC. Membership forms are available on the USACV website.

## Nominating Committee

This summer at our annual meeting during the convocation in Mundelein, a nominating committee was formed. The purpose of this nominating committee is to help facilitate the selection of a new team member who would fill an upcoming vacancy on the USACV Leadership Team, in January 2020. The committee will also look for potential candidates to serve as treasurer of the USACV-IRC. This nominating committee consists of 4 members: [Francesca Riddick](#), [Joani McCann](#), [Mary Kay Lacke](#), and [Virginia Meyer](#) who will begin the process of seeking out possible candidates. Our thanks and gratitude to [Linda Ann Long](#) for her years of service to the association as she steps down from the leadership team.

If you are a consecrated virgin and feel called to serve our vocation in our leadership team or if you would like to nominate someone, please contact [Francesca](#) at [friddick45@gmail.com](mailto:friddick45@gmail.com).

## 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 you to be a full voting member 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 2018 and 2019 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.

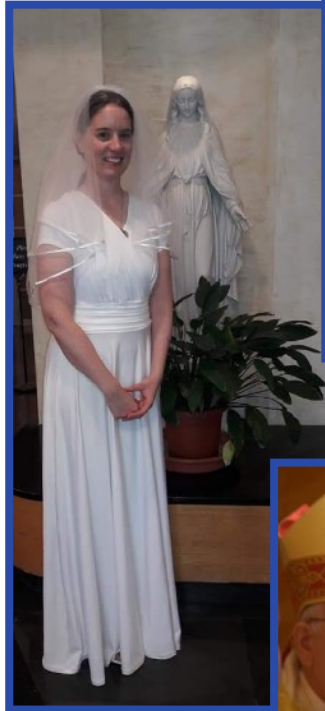
## Consecration Announcements

### **Consecration Announcements:**

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

### **United States:**

**July 13, 2019 — Deborah Such in the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York at the hands of The Most Reverend Nicholas A. DiMarzio.** See photos to the right.



### **Canada:**

**July 6, 2019 — Three women of the Archdiocese of Ottawa were consecrated at the hands of The Most Reverend Terrance Prendergast, S.J.** See photo below of Tanya, one of the newly consecrated virgins.



## Upcoming Consecrations

### **United States:**

**September 8, 2019 — Linda Ann Andrejek, 2:00pm at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Lombard, IL, Diocese of Joliet, at the hands of The Most Reverend Daniel Conlon.** All are warmly invited to attend.

**November 16, 2019 — Weena Isabelle Gaulin and Dawn Hausmann, 10:30am at St. Mary's Cathedral, Diocese of Lansing, Michigan, at the hands of The Most Reverend Earl Boyea.** All are warmly invited to attend.

## 2019 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World

Information Conference Report prepared by Mary Kay Lacke, Director of the Conference

The 2019 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World was held at St. Francis Retreat and Conference Center in DeWitt, Michigan, from July 29 to August 2, 2019. This beautiful facility is a great setting for the purpose of this conference with plenty of space for the participants to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider the vocation to a life of consecrated virginity lived in the world. The staff and the priests who served the conference were very gracious hosts.

Thanks to [Theresa Marshall](#), the Coordinator of the Information Conference, fifteen women from California all the way to the Midwest and Ontario, Canada, attended the conference. Theresa has such a great way of making sure that the registrants “evolve” into attendees.

Bishop Earl Boyea served the conference for the opening Mass and gave two presentations on the vocation in Scripture and the meaning of the vocation in the life of the Church. He was also available to meet privately with individual participants who wished to meet with him. The Association is so blessed to have him as our Episcopal Moderator.

During the two-day conference in DeWitt, [Judith Stegman](#) led the team of consecrated virgins serving those present by their giving a series of talks that described the place of the Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist in the life of the consecrated virgin, the stages of admission for one being called to the consecration, the integral virginity and psychological maturity necessary for consecration, the significance of a consecrated life lived “in the world,” the spousal identity of the consecrated virgin, as well as the essential points for discernment of the public nature of the vocation to a life of virginity lived in world. References to the 2018 Vatican document on this vocation, *Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*, enriched the presentations very much. Besides Theresa, other team members included [Dr. Magalis Aguilera](#), [Karen Bussey](#) and [Mary Kay Lacke](#).

Mealtimes at the Information Conference are a wonderful setting for processing the material presented there and to interact with people who are seriously considering consecrated virginity as a possible vocation for themselves. Women expressed how grateful they were to associate with others who were discerning this call. Often they experience the solitude of being the only person in their state or surrounding area who is pursuing or living this vocation.

May the Lord be praised always! May Our Mother intercede for us! And may those called to live out the vocation to a Life of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World respond wholeheartedly to that invitation day-by-day!





All creation rejoiced at the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For she became God's masterpiece, surpassing all creatures in perfection and holiness. Even nature celebrates her birthday by creating the September blooming aster in her honor. All of her privileges including her Immaculate Conception, her perpetual virginity and her divine maternity stem from the fact that she possessed the Divine Will as the prime life of her soul. The Holy Trinity worked prodigies of grace in the life of the Immaculate Virgin.

Truly the mother of God and all that she represents is the highest model of virginal love for the consecrated virgin. The virgin also shares in the special consecrated gift of perpetual virginity, and this is no trivial matter. With this in mind, we remind ourselves of the three questions the bishop asks the candidate during the rite of consecration. The bishop asks these questions after the homily:

- "Are you resolved to persevere to the end of your days in the holy state of virginity and in the service of God and his Church?"
- "Are you so resolved to follow Christ in the spirit of the Gospel, that your whole life may be a faithful witness to God's love and a convincing sign of the kingdom of heaven?"
- "Are you resolved to accept solemn consecration as a bride of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God?"

For each of these questions the candidate responds, "I am." As brides of Christ we must ponder deeply the meaning of God's call to this holy state of virginity. We have been chosen to serve God and his Church in a unique way. If people had a greater sense of the sacredness of the sacrament of marriage, perhaps our vocation would be better understood. The call to consecrated virginity is of divine origin for we cannot articulate the beauty of its sublime nature by ourselves. The homily for the rite reminds us, "The life you seek to follow has its home in heaven. God Himself is its source."

Indeed, God delights in seeing the soul as beautiful as it was when he issued it from His creating Will. For all people, no matter what their vocation, are called to plant their foundation firmly in the life of the Holy Trinity.

A woman seeking her consecration to virginity has already formed the desire within her heart to give herself exclusively to Jesus the Divine Love, to which she freely responds. Consecrated virginity is a heavenly gift flowing from the Divine Will for the good of the entire Church. This is why it is suggested that the entire congregation be in attendance at a consecration.



The gifts of the Holy Spirit play a major role in the formation of the consecrated virgin. We must maintain careful attentiveness to prayer. We should have the intention of dwelling in unity with the supreme light of the Divine Will so that we may possess perfect order and harmony in all that we do. In this way the beauty, wisdom and sanctity of our Creator may be manifested in our own lives.

It is the virginity of our whole being that becomes a channel through which a mutual and loving gift of self occurs between bride and Bridegroom. Virginity of body and soul are united in this gift of self that is completely consecrated to God. When a virgin accepts Christ in receiving solemn consecration, she receives Him with reverent humility and tender love. In this loving exchange the virgin acquires a deep knowledge of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and a fuller understanding of his mission. She strives to come to the point where she perceives the life of Jesus within her as more than her own. It is in and through this intimate communion that the joy of the Bridegroom is made manifest in the bride. For He Himself is truth, goodness, and beauty.

So, we may say that holy virginity has everything to do with our deepening knowledge of our Bridegroom Jesus in His holiness and radiant purity. The gift of virginity is the jewel that God places in our hands, and when we see the face of our Beloved reflected in this jewel, we carefully confide it to His Heart. We are clothed in a white bridal dress of virginal purity so that we may direct our feminine spousal love to our Lord alone. Holy virginity is the exquisite flower planted by the Divine Gardener, carefully cultivated and preserved in all of its integrity for His gaze alone. This grace does not cause us to close in on ourselves, but instead gives us the freedom to proclaim Christ's wedded love for His Church. We are called to be living examples of the Gospel, signs of God's mercy and the kingdom of Heaven. It is through our union with our Divine Spouse that we become more available to the needs of others, including our sisters in Christ. In times of great suffering we not only need to become aware of the fact that Christ suffers with and in us, but also that he promises to give us His enduring peace. We call upon the Divine strength of God's Will to carry us through our pilgrimage.



When a woman receives the grace of consecrating her virginity, her virginal state becomes holy as her entire life is caught up in the mystery of the Transcendent God. Her vocation possesses an eschatological nature that speaks of the kingdom of heaven. It is only the silent and uncluttered heart that can recognize and respond to the invitation of the Divine Bridegroom and His infinite love. May there be a whole company of virgins, raising their hearts in prayerful praise and adoration, rendering perfect glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## Anniversary Reflections

Consecrated virgins who celebrate significant anniversaries during 2019 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*.

### Anniversary Reflections: 45 Years

Submitted by Ann Sitt  
Archdiocese of Boston (MA)  
(consecrated June 2, 1974)

The math of the calendar says it, but I don't feel all that time has gone by. It's the same with events such as the JFK assassination and the lunar landing. Our holy vocation is in the world, which means we, too, face abortion, shootings, human trafficking. It is good to keep in mind how Jesus assured the promised defeat of evil, giving us His own example of defending Himself with the Word of God. In Him, in His Word, we are strong and peace-filled, especially when dealing with something we don't and often cannot understand. The shock of evil cannot shake us, nor pervade the armor listed in Ephesians 6. The violence, the gross and blatant arrogance is sad to us, but Jesus saw it, too, and His help and His healing remains with us. Knowing and remembering that He sees it, too, protecting and guiding us, making it unnecessary to try to figure out a reason for a situation or an event. Using the Sevenfold Gifts, those tools of the Holy Spirit, on all that we see and hear and know and understand, gives us the peace and strength we so much need. Trusting God as St. Paul did, in his own weakness and not knowing how to pray, is never a mistake!

Working on my fourth quarter-century, each day I begin by thanking God for this day, using Pope Emeritus Benedict's suggestion (Feb 27, 2013 General Audience): *Thank You, Lord, for this day. Thank You, Lord, for making all of creation. Thank You, Lord, for making me. Thank You, Lord, for making me a Christian.* (I add: *Thank You, Lord, for making me a consecrated virgin.*) I don't just say the words, I pray them, saying each word slowly, in His Presence.

Another thing I've been doing now is cutting out the word **YES** (often found in ads) and putting it around where I'll see it as I go around my apartment. For that's what we do in any vocation, saying "yes" to Him. As a bride of Christ it is of course a very sacred "yes" always to Him in what I do, whether it's praying, or mopping the floor, or accepting what age brings, or rejoicing gratefully for all those fruits of the Holy Spirit. Seeing and seeking Him Who is Above brings us beyond all limitations, imperfections, and impossibilities. We live in the great Victory already won for us on the Cross and in the Resurrection.

The passage from 2 Peter that is in the Liturgy of the Hours (you'll come over it once a month or so) seems to sum up how it is with us. God is Good! It is our person-to-Person relationship with Him that makes all the difference, that works for all the good in the world. He Who designed each flower, every butterfly, also the trees, and us with so much beauty, so much love, is always showing something of Himself, Who is Good, Truth, Love, Light, Life.

## *Anniversary Reflections: 15 Years*

Submitted by Anne Gishpert  
Diocese of Pueblo (CO)  
(consecrated July 31, 2004)

After nearly 18 years in religious life, still totally in love with Jesus and His Church, but not knowing what to do or where to go.... my pastor in Denver sent me to speak with a Sister in the Archdiocese. Sister was the first person to tell me about our vocation as a consecrated virgin living in the world. New to me and a breath of fresh air! I was relieved that there would be a place for me to be consecrated. I moved to the Pueblo diocese and spoke with Bishop Arthur Tafoya, now deceased. He had never heard of our vocation either and I didn't at the time know where to find information about it. Bishop Tafoya was very gracious. I knew him from years before when I attended university in Pueblo and was very active in diocesan functions before my entrance into the convent.

He helped me transition from religious life to life outside the convent. In 2003, one year after coming to Pueblo, he went to the USCCB meeting and asked different bishops what they knew about our vocation. It was from that meeting that he learned about us and gave permission for me to be consecrated. He chose the date of July 31, 2004 for my consecration at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Pueblo.

During these 15 years I have had many "moments" that stand out. If I were to name them all, it would take most of "The Lamp," so I will only share a few. I was blessed to be able to attend the May 2008 International Congress for Consecrated Virgins Living in the World in Rome. Seeing so many women from around the world in love with our Divine Spouse caused me Great JOY and awe

that we all LOVE the same Spouse with all our hearts! Seeing it made it more real for me. During this time in Rome two, out of many, highlights have continued to stay with me. I have had a devotion to St. Agnes for many years prior to this trip. While in Rome several virgins and I were able to visit the church dedicated to her and pray before her tiny skull upon the spot of her virginal martyrdom. At St. Mary above Minerva, we lit our candles, reminding us of the day we lit them in our consecrations, and as a reminder to be wise virgins, always keeping our lamps lit. I could feel the presence of the virgins who have gone before us, cheering us on. I have never forgotten this deep spiritual experience. I have the picture of all of us taken outside of St. Mary Major in my living room where I am able to remember and pray for all of us throughout the world.

Besides these Roman memories, I treasure the time spent at the annual convocations. The Lord has blessed me with many sisters in Christ. I feel especially connected to our virgin sisters when I pray the Liturgy of the Hours in my chapel knowing sisters are praying with me everywhere and that I am not "alone."

## *Anniversary Reflections: 5 Years*

Submitted by Karen Ann Lombardi  
Archdiocese of Baltimore (MD)  
(consecrated February 2, 2014)

"I bound Myself by oath; I made a covenant with you and you became Mine" (Ezekiel 16:8). I first encountered this Scripture passage inscribed on the side of the Covenant House shelter for homeless and runaway youth where I worked after college. At that time, I was not a practicing Catholic. Years later,

## Anniversary Reflections: 5 Years

Submitted by Stacy Cretzmeyer  
Diocese of Charleston (SC)  
(consecrated August 15, 2014)

as I entered into a Catholic chapel, I dipped my hand in a Holy Water font, made the sign of the cross, and immediately remembered those words, recalling that the Lord had made a covenant with me at my Baptism and I am His. The Lord gently guided me home to the Catholic Church and eventually invited me to belong to Him even more closely as His bride. In a moment of pure grace, I had the spiritual indifference to pray: “Lord, my answer is yes; I just need to know what I am saying yes to,” and He revealed to me His call to live a life of prayer and apostolate while living in the world and trusting Him. I later discovered that this call—this vocation—had a name: Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World. On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, I was consecrated at the hands of Archbishop Naumann in that same chapel (the St. Lawrence Catholic Campus Center) where the Lord had spoken the words from Ezekiel 16 to me. Now, five years later, my Divine Spouse continues to surprise me and assure me at every step. I have confidence in Him and His call for me. On my retreat before my consecration, a quote from Caryll Houselander’s book, *The Reed of God*, struck me: “God knew Our Lady’s trust in Him was absolutely without limit. Everything He did to her in the future emphasized the same thing. His trust in her trust in Him.” I remember thinking, “Oh no, Lord. You can’t trust me like that. Am I ready for this?” And the Lord patiently answered, “You are as ready as you need to be for this moment. I will provide the grace that you need at each moment to continue to live your ‘yes.’” And He has! It’s not always easy (because I’m not always easy)—but the journey is full of grace, joy, and love. I live each day knowing that my Divine Spouse has made a covenant with me and that I am His.

Greetings to all. With great gratitude in my heart, I celebrated the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my consecration on August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Five years ago, I could not have imagined the blessings that this vocation would bring to me, but indeed it has. I should say, Our Lord has! My consecrated life has brought me much joy and peace, especially in service to my parish through intercessory prayer for the needs of my parish, the Church, married couples and families, the youth who are struggling, and so many who are experiencing crises, illnesses, and losses. I continue my work as a counselor, which sustains me as well as challenges me, and also continue to co-lead our "Spiritual Motherhood of Clergy" seminar and prayer cenacle in my parish. We are now using Kathleen Beckman's excellent book, *Praying for Priests ~ An Urgent Call for the Salvation of Souls* (Sophia Institute Press), which I heartily recommend. Please pray for all those in the path of the hurricane, and be assured of my prayers for all your concerns and intentions. May Our Divine Lord and Spouse bless each one of you in a very special way!





## 2019 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins

Convocation Report prepared by Joani McCann

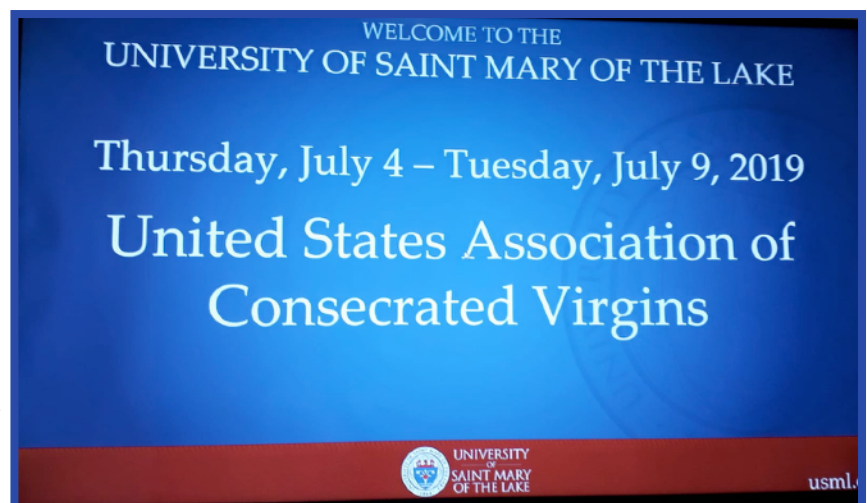
The 2019 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins was held at USML Conference Center in Mundelein, Illinois from July 5-9 2019. The Theme was “*Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*: A Practical and In-Depth Study for the Consecrated Virgin”. In attendance, we had 30 women, 1 Priest and 1 Bishop. Two Consecrated Virgins came from other countries, Germany and El Salvador.

Each day was packed with informative presentations and group discussions, mostly about the Instruction *Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*, which was released in the summer of 2018. We were blessed to have present the Episcopal Moderator of the USACV, Bishop Earl Boyea, who opened our Convocation with the celebration of Holy Mass. On Day 2, Bishop Boyea again celebrated Holy Mass and offered two presentations on the Book of Revelations. On that same day, we had a presentation by [Judith M. Stegman](#), J.C.L., titled *Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*: Canonical Introduction. [Dr. Magalis Aguilera](#), Psy. D. presented Psychological, Spiritual, and Divine Principles of the Virginal Vocation.

Day 3 was opened up with Sunday Holy Mass, presided by Fr. David Whiteside, our Priest Chaplain for the Convocation. [Emily Byers](#), M.Th. presented on “Discernment and Formation in ESI & Ordo Virginum Vol. II; [Maria Luisa Oefe](#) spoke about “Consecrated Virginité as Kerygma of the Gospel: Reflections on ESI and the Rite of Consecration”. “Consecrated Virgins and the Local Church: Theological and Canonical Considerations in Light of *Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*” was the topic presented by [Jenna Cooper](#), J.C.L. that evening.

On Day 4, we watched a video presentation sent by [Dr. Renu Silvano](#), STD titled Scriptural Aspects of ESI. [Maria Luisa Meza](#) presented “Consecrated Virginité: A Life Worth Living” to conclude our presentations. Fr. David Whiteside presided at an early evening Holy Mass. That evening we celebrated 2019 significant Anniversaries.

Day 5 began with prayer and group closing discussions. As we gathered with Holy Mass, the Convocation was concluded with Holy Mass. It was a wonderful opportunity to pray together and reflect upon this recent instruction about Consecrated Virginité, and various themes around *Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*, with our sisters with whom we share this beautiful vocation.



## 2019 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins - Participant Reflections

Linda Ann Long of the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis (MN): "It is always so good to come to Convocation to meet sister virgins whom I have not met before and to reconnect with long time friends. This year we had the pleasure of not only Bishop Boyea's gracious company and instruction but also that of Fr. David Whiteside. Both are true treasures of our vocation. I am most grateful."



Joani McCann of the Archdiocese of Boston (MA): "The talks were great... lots of great info to reflect on... and it is just so wonderful to visit with our beautiful Consecrated Virgin sisters!"



Marge Giesken of the Diocese of Grand Rapids (MI): "The Convocation last week was a very holy time for me. I have been searching for a long time to fulfill my life, and last October I took a prayerful step in that direction. The Convocation was the next spiritual step for me. All of the sessions gave me a much deeper understanding of the call to a life of Virginity and how to live that call fully. I came home so much more enriched, and met beautiful women answering the same call. Thank you to all who worked to put this together. It was my first experience and will definitely not be my last."

Maria Luisa Oefele of the Diocese of Regensburg (Germany): "It was a great gift to join all of you during the past convocation in Mundelein. The reflections about ESI given by the different speakers, the comments and discussions we shared and the celebrations of the Liturgy, have been very refreshing for me. I arrived back in Germany today (Sunday noon) and feel very encouraged after the experience of the past days together. It's so good to share with all of you our vocation, life, prayer and projects. Let us keep united in prayer together with the Virgin of virgins, the woman of the Magnificat! Much love from Regensburg/Germany!"

Sophia Winiarski of the Archdiocese of Hartford (CT): "The convocation talks, especially on *Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*, the rich celebrations of Eucharist and prayer, and the fellowship, deepened my relationship with Jesus, as Spouse, Husband and Bridegroom as well as enhancing my understanding of our vocation. Father David's presence and ministry were supportive and challenging to better grow in likeness of our Bridegroom, especially



through recollection, detachment and cooperation with God in sacrificial Love. I left with a full and grateful heart for all who worked so hard to make it a rich experience, and for the graces and blessings that continue to flow.”



Maria Luisa Meza of the Diocese of Sonsonate (El Salvador): “I feel very blessed to be part of the *Ordo Virginum*. It is certainly an enormous gift to be a bride of Christ and to share this honor with so many Consecrated Virgins around the world. It is always a joy to learn more about the lives of those women who with spousal love are dedicated to the Lord Jesus in consecrated virginity! I feel very close to you spiritually, even if I live very far away from you. I consider you my family. So thank you very much for welcoming consecrated virgins from other countries at the United States Convocation. I



treasure all the in-depth discussion we had on our vocation as well as our prayer times and Masses with heavenly music. I shall start praying so that I get to see you at least once a year.”



Mary Kay Lacke of the Diocese of Steubenville (OH): “I can't tell you how glad I am that I was able to attend the Convocation! It was an especially rich event! All those involved in the planning and those who presented talks, organized liturgical events and social events did a terrific job...just superb! I especially appreciated the opportunity to share with virgins whom I had not met before....as well as with dear friends whom I have known "forever." The times of prayer and mealtimes were especially blessed. A post-convocation blessing was a communication with Dr. Renu Silvano with whom I have had a long-time friendship. We both praised God for the great blessing of our shared vocation.”





Weena Isabelle Gaulin, candidate for the Diocese of Lansing (MI): “I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Judith, Joani, Francesca, Most Reverend Bishop Boyea, the other speakers and all involved in the preparation work to grace us with a delightful, informative, and memorable Convocation! May GOD who is pleased with and praised through your dedication reward you a hundredfold!

As I found myself walking on the beautiful grounds of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, and marveling at the beauty of each bride Jesus has called for himself, I perceived his words in my soul.

Later on that evening, I was awakened during the night to write the following prayer:

Come Lord Jesus, walk in Your garden!

Come Lord Jesus, walk in Your garden today!  
Come and walk in the midst of these trees that You  
have Yourself planted.

Not one is alike: Different trunk, different  
foliage, different fruit –

Yet, each one is planted in You, the *Essence of Tree!*  
Come and walk in Your garden today!

Size your trees,  
Come and collect their fruit which is rightfully  
Yours!

Come rest under their shade!  
If necessary, prune them—that Your Word be deeply  
renewed and made alive in them—their very sap!  
May Your Sacred Sap—Your Word—infuse in them  
deeper Wisdom, deeper Knowledge, infused divine  
Understanding.

Come Lord Jesus, walk in Your garden today and be  
pleased with these trees You have created!

Come and smile upon them with the radiance of  
Your Light, nurturing them that they may ascend to  
new heights  
– Until they reach Your grandeur and finally touch  
You, Lord, Who are the *Everlasting Tree!*



Convocation photos provided by  
Maria Luisa Oefeale and Amanda  
Marie Schrauth.



## Rome 2020 Meeting of the Ordo Virginum

**International Meeting of the *Ordo virginum***  
**Rome May 28-31, 2020**, the Solemnity of Pentecost  
Auditorium Antonianum – Viale Manzoni 2



*The Spirit and the bride say, “Come”! Maranatha! (Rev. 22:17)*

*Ordo virginum* 50 years after promulgation of the renewed Rite

### Planning Notes:

(Quotations are taken from a “Useful Information” sheet provided by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life, available at: <http://bit.ly/2020Rome>.)

1. Letter of invitation: The Office of the General Secretary of the USCCB has forwarded a letter to all United States Bishops from His Eminence João Braz Cardinal de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), in which His Eminence extended an invitation to an international gathering to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of the *Ordo Consecrationis virginum*.

2. Who is invited: “The meeting is reserved for women who are already consecrated, diocesan Bishops and episcopal delegates for the *Ordo virginum*.”

3. The program: “The Meeting aims to be a celebration, remembering and sharing the journey made by the *Ordo virginum* in these fifty years, exploring how this form of consecrated life is present today in the Church and in the world and fostering a discussion to guide the journey into the future. The theme chosen for the Meeting recalls the pneumatological, christological and ecclesiological foundation of this vocation, as well as the prophetic and eschatological tension that animates it. The program includes, in addition to liturgical celebrations, other moments of common prayer, and a meeting with the Holy Father. Through theological interventions, testimonies of some consecrated virgins and diocesan Bishops, the following thematic groups will be considered:

- The revision of the *Ordo Consecrationis virginum* in the context of the liturgical reform desired by Vatican II
- The flowering anew of the *Ordo virginum* from 1970 to the present, as a charismatic richness at the service of the Church’s mission
- Membership in the *Ordo virginum* as an experience and school of communion with the church
- The roots of the *Ordo virginum* in the local Church, as a principle of a distinctive formative teaching

There will also be a presentation of the current state of the *Ordo virginum* in the world, to be prepared using the information sent from each country by January 20, 2020.”

4. Registration: Registration forms are to be completed and received by CICLSAL no later than January 30, 2020 from the designated official representative for each country.

- For the United States, the designated representative is Judith Stegman, who is being assisted by Joani McCann.

- Registration forms must be received by Joani McCann by January 25, 2020. Send completed registration forms to Joani at [joani.mccann@gmail.com](mailto:joani.mccann@gmail.com) or 188 Madison St., Dedham, MA 02026. Registration forms can be obtained from Joani or be accessed on the USACV website at [bit.ly/USACV2020](http://bit.ly/USACV2020).

- The maximum total number of participants will be about 600/700. After receiving the registrations, CICLSAL will send confirmation of the number of consecrated virgins who can participate from each nation. Judith Stegman / Joani McCann will communicate this information to consecrated virgin participants in the United States.

- As a guide, the registration fee will be 150 / 200 Euro, which will cover expenses, including the cost of some of the meals according to the program, to be determined at a later date.

- Registration and payment of the fee must be completed by March 1, 2020. Details of the exact amount of the payment and how it is to be made will be communicated later.

5. Translations: Simultaneous translations will be offered in Italian, English, Spanish, French, and German.

6. Travel and housing: Travel to and from Rome, transportation in Rome, housing and meals in Rome, are on your own.

7. Other notes:

- The USACV-IRC hopes to be able to offer the option of some group housing in Rome. Interested? Please let Joani McCann know as soon as possible, so that we can begin to consider arrangements.

- The USACV-IRC is also considering the possibility of an optional pilgrimage in Rome following the Meeting, for a few days or a week. Interested? Please let Joani know soon.



## *In Memory of Our Deceased Sister*

*“It is these who follow the Lamb  
wherever He goes.” (Revelation 14:4)*

May the Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Spouse of virgins, welcome our recently deceased sister into the heavenly kingdom. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace.

June Baker — August 12, 2019  
(consecrated April 8, 2013)

*Tribute to consecrated virgin June Baker,  
submitted by Mary Kay Lacke:*

June Dolores Baker, 87, passed away peacefully on Monday, August 12, 2019, under the care of Bolger’s Country Club Manor and Charity Hospice in Steubenville, Ohio.

She was born in Detroit, MI, June 7, 1932. She was preceded in death by her parents Mary and Frank Baker and five siblings. June is survived by many nieces and nephews.

June entered religious life with the Sacramentine Sisters, a cloistered order in New York where she lived before taking leave to care for her ailing mother. After leaving the order she came to Steubenville, Ohio, to earn a degree from Franciscan University. Before her retirement in 2009 she was the Director of the RCIA program at Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Lindenhurst, New York.

She was a member of Triumph of the Cross Parish in Steubenville as well as a member of the Charismatic Covenant Community of God’s Love and the Secular Franciscan Fraternity, the Portiuncula Fraternity of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

On the transferred feast of the Annunciation on April 8, 2013, June was consecrated to a Life of



The urn of June Baker’s remains.

Virginité Lived in the World by Bishop Jeffrey Mark Monforton, the recently ordained bishop for the Diocese of Steubenville, who considered it a great privilege to confer this consecration. As June prepared for her consecration, she reflected on the beauty and power of the rite of consecration. She was really awed by the privilege of being consecrated and so grateful to God!

In his homily during June’s funeral Mass on August 19, Bishop Monforton stated how honored he was to be the principal celebrant at this celebration of Our Lord’s Resurrection. June and the Bishop both hailed from the Detroit area. They found several connections in their common experience.

He praised her directness, her deep love for Christ and her living out of the Beatitudes as a humble servant, loving the Lord. The gospel reading chosen for her funeral was St. Matthew’s account of the Beatitudes. The Bishop observed that consecrated virgins living in the world are called to live the Beatitudes and this is exactly what June did. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit,”* is an attitude of the soul that June demonstrated in her life, an attitude that the Bishop challenged his listeners to imitate. The Bishop concluded his homily by honoring June for her fidelity to her Bridegroom, saying, *“This consecrated virgin, this Bride of Christ, loved Jesus and she made sure others knew about Him. How do you and I in the eternal perspective of things demonstrate to others our love for Christ...as ones who are poor in spirit?”*

If you would like to write and submit a remembrance or memorial for a deceased consecrated virgin to be published in a future edition of

*The Lamp*, please email it to Amanda Schrauth

By Florence Sundberg

I realize that I focus a great deal on life issues that are detrimental to the well-being of so many, such as abortion and human trafficking, poverty, persecution, oppression. In prayer recently I focused more on the many—and there are many!—who defend life, who stand for the oppressed and the persecuted, the lost and the lonely, the poor and disenfranchised. And so let us praise and pray for all those who do cherish life—all life—but in particular those mothers and fathers who choose life for their

babies rather than abortion under extremely painful, dangerous and difficult situations. Perhaps no one notices their struggles, their fears and their sacrifices, but God does and as God honors them for their self-sacrificial love so too must we as we hold them in prayer that they will have the courage, the strength and the faith to persevere under the providential care of a Father who loves them and watches over them always. For all these mothers and fathers, let us pray.

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

USACV Leadership Team

**Linda Ann Long** (2017)-2019; Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis (MN). (*Communications*).

**Emily Byers** (2018)-2020; **Secretary of the USACV-IRC**; Diocese of Lafayette (LA). (*USACV Online Presence*).

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

**Amanda Schrauth** 2019-2020; Diocese of Great Falls-Billings (MT). (*Publication of "The Lamp"*).

**Joani McCann** 2019-2020; Archdiocese of Boston (MA). (*Convocation Liaison*).

IRC Leadership Team

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

**Judith Stegman**, **President of the USACV-IRC** 2019-2025, **Treasurer** 2019-2020; USA, Diocese of Lansing (MI).

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

**Maria Luisa Oefe**; GERMANY, Diocese of Regensburg.

**Renu Rita Silvano**; INDIA, Archdiocese of Bombay.

Other USACV-IRC Services, among others

**Mary Kay Lacke**; Information Conference director.

**Theresa Marshall**; Information Conference coordinator.

**Margaret Flipp**; assistant treasurer.

**Anne Gishpert**; archivist.

**Elizabeth Lam**; website coordinator.

**Florence Sundberg**; prayer chain coordinator.

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