

The Lamp

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United States Association of
Consecrated Virgins

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY

USACV

www.consecratedvirgins.org

December 12, 2018 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

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

At the recent gathering of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops most of our conversation was about the abuse crisis and the failure of the bishops to act or to hold one another accountable. The candor among the bishops was quite amazing and healthy. When I have explained the situation to folks in the diocese, I often phrase it this way, in three categories.

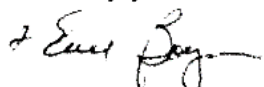
First of all, regarding the abuse of minors the dioceses have done a good job of creating the 2002 Charter and all that followed from that, such that our environments are quite safe. The vast majority of reports coming after 2002, including the Pennsylvania report, deal with matters which happened prior to 2002. That does not mean that there will not be sin in the future, but our safe environments have hopefully reduced that possibility greatly. Now the graphic descriptions of what happened prior to 2002 are awful as is any abuse of a minor and the wounds in the lives of those folks are permanent, especially the spiritual wounds.

Secondly, we have the Archbishop McCarrick situation. Bishops were not included in the 2002 Charter, as I understand it, due to an intervention by Rome, since Bishops could only be corrected or removed by Rome. The USCCB meeting was meant to address that situation, but as you know, decisions regarding those documents have been delayed until after the February meeting in Rome with the Pope and the presidents of the various Conferences of Bishops from around the world.

Thirdly, we are dealing now more with the violations of priestly celibacy involving another adult, something not covered by the Charter but covered by moral and canon law. How to deal with these matters is a learning process for me: what calls for an end to ministry; what calls for repentance and forgiveness. I certainly need your prayers in these cases as do all your bishops, that we will act wisely, courageously, and prudently.

In this Advent and Christmas season please keep especially any victim of sexual abuse in your prayers. And I wish all of you the blessings of these Holy Days.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Bishop of Lansing

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Something Ancient, Something New

Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son,
and Enlightened by the Holy Spirit

Three times in the recognized apparitions of our Blessed Mother, she has identified herself by the Eternal Father's election: to be His chosen daughter, to be the Mother of His Son, and to be the enlightened charity of His Church.

The first of these times was In Lourdes, France, with her words: "I am the Immaculate Conception." In the Roman Catholic Church, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception gained additional significance with the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes in 1858. At Lourdes, a 14-year-old girl, Bernadette Soubirous, claimed that a beautiful woman appeared to her and said, "I am the Immaculate Conception." Many believe the woman to have been the Blessed Virgin Mary, and they pray to her as such. Pope Pius X defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception "not so much because of proofs in Scripture or ancient tradition, but due to a profound *sensus fidelium* and the Magisterium." Speaking of the witness of the Church Fathers in claiming for Mary titles such as "free from all contagion of sin," Pope Pius XII wrote: "If the popular praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary be given the careful consideration they deserve, who will dare to doubt that she, who was purer than the angels and at all times pure, was at any moment, even for the briefest instant, not free from every stain of sin?"

Among all human beings, only Mary was granted the most high privilege of being conceived without original guilt. God, prodigal in his gifts, has been miserly of this. There are saints in whose favor God had made impotent the rage of tigers and lions, and the activity of flames. Some saints have been sanctified in the bosom of their mother; but the exemption of any from the original stain of sin is a benefit that Mary does not share with anyone.

And admirable is the way Our Lord had in adorning Mary with such a privilege. Because if by a new creation, he had immediately given himself to the Immaculate Virgin, there would be in that miraculous conception nothing but a derogation from the law that he had established for the propagation of the human race. But it was not like that. Mary will be born pure, of parents contaminated like other men; from a corrupted source will sprout, or the Lord will spring forth, the most crystalline stream.

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

The privilege of Her Immaculate Conception is the foundation upon which rests every building of Mary's greatness. This privilege alone attracts, as it were, all other privileges. Knowing that Mary was conceived without original sin, it is no longer necessary to ask for whom the divine motherhood will be reserved, the incorruption in the grave, the anticipated resurrection.

Mary's Immaculate Conception is the meaning of her being the Mother of God's Son. Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis (fourth century) wrote: "Enclosed within the spotless womb of the Blessed Virgin was the Lamb that in his eternal sacrifice has taken away the sins of the world."

--- Much of the above reflection on Mary's Immaculate Conception is taken directly from Father Saturnino Oses, S.J., *Horas de Luz*, 3rd Ed. Translated by Magalis Aguilera)



The second apparition recognized by the Church is The Tepeyac in Mexico, where Our Lady of Guadalupe had this to say to Juan Diego (now Saint Juan Diego): "Know for certain, least of my sons, that I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of the True God through whom everything lives, the Lord of all things near and far, the Master of heaven and earth" (See *The Wonder of Guadalupe*, by Francis Johnston, Tan Books and Publishers, Inc, Rockford, Illinois, 1981).

"It is my earnest wish that a temple be built here to my honor. Here I will demonstrate, I will exhibit, I will give

all my love, my compassion, my help and my protection to the people. I am your merciful mother, the merciful mother of all of you who live united in this land, and of all mankind, of all those who love me, of those who cry to me, of those who seek me, of those who have confidence in me. Here I



will hear their weeping, their sorrow, and will remedy and alleviate all their multiple sufferings, necessities and misfortunes."

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

The third apparition is a simple one but full of spiritual meaning. She is the same lady who visited us in fulfilment of the Eternal Mission that the Eternal Father gave to her before the Cross where His Eternal Son was giving up his life for our Redemption. She stands there and was suffering the martyrdom of Her Immaculate Heart! And as she stood there, she was surprised in her pierced heart with a joyful command from her dying Son: "Mother here is your son, son here is your mother."

And in the ocean of this same area, at the entrance of the Gulf of Mexico, on the Island of Cuba, our Mother calmed the curled waters of a bay impacted by the winds of a strong hurricane, to save three men. Three men were in an ocean; three men were working like Peter, Andrew, James, and the others. Those were fishermen and these three men were looking for salt in midst of the furious winds. Two different places and times, but the same Sea of Mercy – the mercy of the Eternal Father revealed through the Virgin Mary.

She did not speak during this apparition of her image, but in the miraculous base of wood where the Image was held, she showed her intercession as our Blessed Mother and manifested herself: "I am the Virgin of Charity." This is a title belonging to Eternity. The Eternal Father is LOVE. The theological virtue of LOVE will not be consumed because Love is the meaning of Eternity.

A devotional rendering of the image of Our Lady of Charity features "two Indians" and an African passenger on their legendary ship. The history of the Virgin of Charity began around 1612. The image is thought to have been brought by Spaniard colonists from the town of Illescas, a province in Toledo, Spain where a similar statue of the Virgin Mary of Charity was already well-venerated.



Pope Benedict XV declared Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre the Patroness of Cuba on May 10, 1916. In 1954, American author Ernest Hemingway donated his Nobel Prize in Literature medal for *The Old Man and the Sea* to the people of Cuba at the shrine of Caridad del Cobre in Cuba. The medal is very rarely present in the image and only worn during solemn and Papal occasions. (Stephen K. Ryan, *Ernest Hemingway keeps a promise with the Virgin Mary*, MysticPost.com)

Our Mother is the Queen of Virgins. This advocacy and image of our Mother as Our Lady of Charity is not limited to a single country. Rather, it is a light coming from the fountain of the essence of the Eternal Father's Love. Charity is a theological virtue. Saint John the Evangelist defines the Eternal Father as Love (see Jn. 4:8). Hope and Faith will be fulfilled in Eternity, but Charity will be the very reason for Eternity.

The dominant meaning of our Blessed Mother's virginity is her humility. She offered her *fiat* in order to fulfill the will of The Eternal Father and abandoned herself with humble spirit to live for her Son and to keep attentive to the needs of His Church after He ascended into heaven. Her mission is to be Mother of His Church.

The stronghold of her spirituality is the psychological integration of her virginity. In her "yes" we learn that our "yes" is not due to our being single women but is because we have been given the gift of virginity. Mary obeyed the will of the Eternal Father not in order to do an act of negation of her maternity but because she made a profound decision to love. She was greeted as "full of grace" and the divine grace that she received was to give herself while being embraced within her radiant donation in body, soul, and spirituality, in the splendor of the divine grace she received during the greeting of the Annunciation.

During this time of Advent and our Lord's Nativity, let us contemplate these three advocations of our Blessed Mother: 1) Her Immaculate Conception: chosen by her Eternal Father as his humble daughter; 2) Mother of God's Son: "I am the perfect and perpetual Virgin Mary, Mother of the True God through whom everything lives, the Lord of all things near and far, the Master of heaven and earth"; and 3) Enlightened by the Holy Spirit: Our Lady of Charity who had deposited in her bosom the "beloved Son" of the Eternal Father (Mt. 3: 17) and was filled in the totality of her being with the Charity that comes from that Eternal Love.

By Magalis Aguilera and Judith Stegman

**USACV Council
Members and Officers**

**Judith M. Stegman, President, 2016-2018;
Diocese of Lansing.**

**Magalis Aguilera, Member-at-large, 2016-
2018 (Appointed Vice-President through
2018);
Archdiocese of Miami.**

**Margaret Flipp, Treasurer, 2017-2019;
Diocese of Arlington.**

**Linda Ann Long, Member-at-large,
2017-2019 (Appointed Secretary through
2018)
Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis.**

**Emily Byers, Member-at-large, 2018-2020;
Diocese of Lafayette in Louisiana.**



See President's Journal for changes to take place January 1, 2019.

**Upcoming Events Sponsored by the
USACV**

**2019 United States Convocation of
Consecrated Virgins**

July 22 – July 26

See article page 8

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

July 30 – August 2

**St. Francis Retreat and Conference Center
DeWitt, Michigan, (Diocese of Lansing).**

More information to come.

Announcements and News

Retreat for Consecrated Virgins

Sponsored by Loretta Matulich and Regina Dibbs. To be held at Our Lady of Peace Retreat Center in the Archdiocese of Portland (OR) from Sunday, June 16, 2019 after dinner to Monday, June 24, after breakfast. The retreat topic will be, "To Be Parented by God and Our Blessed Mother So We Can Begin to Live on Earth as in Heaven." The retreat master will be Fr Philip Scott, the founder of the Family of Jesus the Healer. Cost is \$255 for check-in on Thursday and check-out on Sunday. This is our usual number of days in the past retreats, but a retreatant may come for the entire length of the retreat. In order to have a general idea of how many rooms to reserve, if you think you can come kindly get in touch with Regina Dibbs by January at firstjn416@gmail.com.

Recordings are Available

Recordings are available from the 2018 National Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World, and from

the 2018 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World, and from the 2018 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins. Please visit the website, www.consecratedvirgins.org.

Upcoming Issues of The Lamp:

February 2, 2019 Feast of the Presentation and
World Day of Consecrated Life

May 31, 2019 Feast of the Visitation

September 8, 2019 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin
Mary

December 12, 2019 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

From the President's Journal:

We are pleased to announce that on December 3, 2018, by a margin of 77%, members of the USACV approved restated organizational statutes for the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins. Effective January 1, 2019, reflecting its two sections, our new name will be: The USACV and International Resource Center for the *Ordo Virginum* (USACV/IRC).

Highlights of the new plan:

The USACV will continue to be directed by a leadership team of 5 U.S. consecrated virgins. The initial team: **Linda Ann Long**, **Emily Byers**, **Francesca Riddick**, **Amanda Schrauth**, and one to be announced. The primary objective of the USACV section is to “foster communication, solidarity, and support among consecrated virgins living within the jurisdiction of the USCCB.” The USACV section will have members, as it does now, and be responsible for member lists, the prayer line, *The Lamp*, Monday Morning Mail, planning of the annual convocation, and other activities.

The International Resource Center for the *Ordo Virginum* will be directed by a leadership team of 2 U.S. and 4 non-U.S. consecrated virgins. The initial team: **Magalis Aguilera** (U.S.), **Judith M. Stegman** (U.S.), **Maria Luisa Öfele** (Germany), **Renu Rita Silvano** (India), **Maria Luisa Meza** (El Salvador), and one to be announced. The primary objectives of the IRC section are to “encourage ongoing in-depth growth of understanding of consecrated virginity” and “to promote an accurate understanding of the vocation of consecrated virginity through programs of education, printed materials, and other media.” The IRC will be an online center offering resources in English and Spanish in collaboration with virgins around the world.

Vocational resources may include materials and online courses in line with *Ecclesiae Sponsae Imago*, podcasts, resources for dioceses, pertinent links and newsletters regarding *OV* activities.

The Overall Leadership Team for the USACV/IRC will consist of the 11 members of the leadership teams of the two sections. The overall leadership team has responsibility for the annual Information Conference held in the U.S., website development and maintenance, archives, inventory and sales fulfillment, and oversight of the budget and finances of the USACV/IRC. **Mary Kay Lacke** will serve as the director of the Information Conference.

Officers of the USACV/IRC: **Judith M. Stegman** will serve as the initial president and will serve as initial treasurer (for two years, or less, if another treasurer can be prepared). The position of secretary is yet to be filled.

Involvement of Consecrated Virgins: The next few years, especially 2019 and much of 2020, will be devoted to transition and planning. The ideas and input of consecrated virgins are most welcome as we move ahead. In a particular way, U.S. consecrated virgins are invited to collaborate with both the USACV and the IRC, and virgins from other countries are invited to collaborate with the IRC. Other notes: **Margaret Flipp** will serve as Assistant Treasurer; **Anne Gishpert** will continue as Archivist; **Elizabeth Lam** will continue to manage the USACV website; **Theresa Marshall** will continue to host the Information Conference; **Mitzi Smith** is coordinating the 2019 U.S. Convocation; **Florence Sundberg** will continue to handle the prayer line.

By Judith Stegman



International groups of virgins in Miami in 2018 (left) and in Rome in 2016 (above).

Consecration Announcements

United States:

September 9, 2018 Judith Catherine Lyness, Diocese of Madison, at the hands of The Most Reverend Robert C. Morlino. The consecration was in a Solemn Pontifical Mass that took place at Saint Mary's Church in Fennimore, Wisconsin, in the Diocese of Madison.

September 14, 2018 Jackie Hintze, Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, at the hands of The Most Reverend Bernard Hebda.

September 15, 2018 Leandra Mae Hubka, Diocese of Winona-Rochester, at the hands of The Most Reverend John M. Quinn.

September 15, 2018 Alicia Renee Pousson, Diocese of Lafayette (LA), at the hands of The Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel.

October 7, 2018, Marge Giesken, Diocese of Grand Rapids, at the hands of The Most Reverend David John Walkowiak.

October 7, 2018, Patty-Jo Mantel, Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, at the hands of The Most Reverend Bernard Hebda.



Judith Lyness poses with her bishop, The Most Reverend Robert C. Morlino. We were saddened to hear of Bishop Morlino's unexpected passing on November 24, 2018. May he remember the virgins in his eternal priesthood.



Most Reverend David John Walkowiak prays the prayer of consecration over Marge Giesken.

The Consecrated Virgin and Her Bishop

Since the time of the early Church, a major characteristic of the vocation to consecrated virginity has been the virgin's relationship with her diocesan bishop. He exhorts and encourages her to a greater holiness of life and she responds by taking his recommendations to heart in a filial and friendly relationship with him and his successors.

It is the Bishop who decides on a virgin's suitability for consecration and supports her with opportunities for initial as well as ongoing formation. He sees that she is included in diocesan activities for consecrated persons and takes a personal interest in her well-being and progress. She in turn serves the Church in ways that are suited to her own talents and abilities.



Alicia Pousson relaxes with The Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel.



Leandra Mae Hubka stands with The Most Reverend John M. Quinn.

Patty-Jo Mantel with The Most Reverend Bernard Hebda.



Jackie Hintze celebrates with Most Reverend Bernard Hebda, priests and servers.

Upcoming Consecrations

January 12, 2019 Marianne Cano, Diocese of Orlando, at the hands of the Most Reverend John Gerard Noonan. All are invited and welcome! Consecration will take place at Ascension Catholic Church in Melbourne, Florida (2950 N Harbor City Blvd). Marianne especially asks for prayers as she prepares for Consecration. Contact Marianne at mcano@lasalette.us for more information.

2019 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins

My dear sisters,

It is with great joy that I invite you all to the beautiful city of San Antonio for the 2019 Convocation. We will be staying at the Oblate Renewal Center (5700 Blanco Rd, San Antonio, Texas), a truly beautiful retreat house.

One of the Center's most beautiful attractions is the Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto of the Southwest. It is an outdoors area with seating for 300 people. Beneath the grotto is a perpetual Adoration chapel.

The grounds are exquisite with a variety of flowers and greenery around paved walkways. There are many little places with benches and religious statuary for prayer and meditation. There is also an outdoor Stations of the Cross that we will walk and pray together one evening.

The buildings of the Renewal Center are lovely with beautiful bedrooms that include a private bathroom and shower. The dining hall has floor to ceiling windows that overlook the grounds. The conference rooms are spacious and there are several smaller rooms for smaller groups, spiritual direction, and Confessions. There is also a separate chapel across the courtyard for Mass and daily prayers.

Located a short fifteen-minute drive from the Center is the National Basilica of Saint Therese of Lisieux. It is absolutely breathtaking. Pope Saint John Paul II visited the Basilica when he was in San Antonio and the Basilica is home to a life-size statue of him as well as first class relics of Saint Therese. We are planning a morning Mass in this beautiful Basilica.

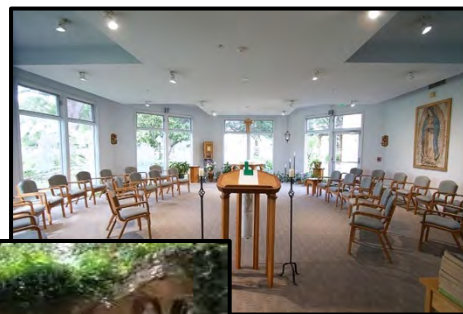
Also located in San Antonio is the downtown area known as the River Walk. The River Walk is a city park and network of walkways along the banks of the San Antonio River. Located a level below the streets of San Antonio, the River Walk is lined with shops and restaurants. The Alamo and the Cathedral are all within walking distance. There are also scenic boat rides available. We plan to have lunch here after our Mass at the Basilica.

The dates for the Convocation are July 22, 2019 through July 26, 2019. The price for the Convocation is estimated to be \$560. The Renewal Center is handicap accessible with bedrooms located on the ground floor and also has wheelchair accessibility to all the sites on the grounds. The Basilica and the River Walk are also handicap accessible.

- Mitzi Smith (mysmith57@yahoo.com)

Please be in touch if you would like to help with planning or have questions. More information will follow.

Oblate
Renewal
Center
Conference
Room



Lourdes Grotto
on the Renewal
Center Grounds



National
Basilica of
Saint Therese
of Lisieux



Oblate
Renewal
Center



Consecration Anniversary Reflections

Consecrated virgins who celebrate significant anniversaries during 2018 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*. We continue 2018 reflections with the following:

Anniversary Reflections: 25 Years

Judith Stegman, Diocese of Lansing, consecrated August 21, 1993.

Twenty-five years ago, I received the great gift of consecration to a life of virginity. Jesus Christ became my divine Spouse, and each day is new as He invites me to live more intimately in union with Him. These years of living consecrated virginity have been the greatest treasure, embracing both times of trial as well as times of joy, in Him. The sermon of St. Augustine that we read in the Office on the last Saturday of the liturgical year expresses this excellently:

Let us sing alleluia here on earth, while we still live in anxiety, so that we may sing it one day in heaven in full security. . . Even here amidst trials and temptations let us, let all men, sing alleluia. God is faithful, says holy Scripture, and he will not allow you to be tried beyond your strength. So, let us sing alleluia, even here on earth.

But in the next life, when this body of ours has become immortal and incorruptible, then all trials will be over. . . . O the happiness of the heavenly alleluia, sung in security, in fear of no adversity! We shall have no enemies in heaven, we shall never lose a friend. God's praises are sung both there and here, but here they are sung in anxiety, there, in security; here they are sung by those destined to die, there, by those destined to live forever; here they are sung in hope, there, in hope's fulfillment; here they are sung by wayfarers, there by those living in their own country.

So, then, my brothers, let us sing now, not in order to enjoy a life of leisure, but in order to lighten our labors . . . Sing, but continue your journey. Do not be lazy, but sing to make your journey more enjoyable. Sing, but keep going.

I rejoice with a song of thanks in my heart for the gift of these twenty-five years of grace!



Anniversary Reflections: 15 Years

Jeanne Ouellette, Diocese of Portland (ME), consecrated March 2, 2003.

Our lives are like the waves of an ocean. Calm before the storm. When we were born, we were not aware of anything, that is, in our memory. It took time to develop. But it is our soul that gave us life by God's holy will.

As consecrated virgins, we strive to please our spouse, Jesus. Is it easy? Not always, especially when God allows what I call "bumps and potholes." It's learning experiences and purifications. We follow Jesus in our falling, we get up, persevere, and continue to carry our crosses.

Looking back at my life, I now know why I roamed the desert for 40 years. I had to experience life to the fullest in order to be able and be a better caregiver to the ones I encountered in hospitals, nursing homes, home bounds, etc., and yes, even in my own current residence. There are many opportunities to practice the virtues of patience and love and kindness. I have been showered with so many graces and blessings, living in Jesus' house — friends, etc....

There is wisdom in old age (73). You see where God's holy and providential will was in your life. A path that was especially for you alone. The greatest miracle and treasure we have is Jesus's presence among us in the Blessed Sacrament, the omnipotence and grandeur radiating his love to us. He awaits us with open arms and surrounds us with his immense love.

A Meditation by Jeannie P. Ouellette

The Seaside

One day as I yearned to be alone and to be able to spend some time in quiet reflection, I decided to go strolling along the seaside. The morning sun was gleaming brightly. I saw the glow and felt its warmth even though it was only mid-morning. I gazed up above and saw the clear blue sky and a few puffs of

clouds that were drifting by. Seagulls were in flight with wings outspread and were peacefully gliding along the balmy sea breeze.

Before me, I saw and heard the roaring sound of waves. They kept rolling in while losing some of their energy, thus quietly reaching the shore with a murmur. I felt the refreshing coolness of their spray and greatly enjoyed the savory taste of the salt on my lips. I was in awe at the beauty that surrounded me. There was life on that beach, in the sea, and in the heavens above. I felt like a wee grain of sand, one among many. As I was able to contemplate and marvel at the vastness of the sea, I saw it as a reflection of God's immensity; my spirit was raised in love, praise, and thanksgiving for God's wondrous creation and for the beauty of this universe.

Maria Purificacao Almeida, consecrated December 8, 2003 in the Archdiocese of New York.

Our Lady gave me her very special feast day, the Immaculate Conception, to be my Consecration day. At the outset, I had to overcome some hurdles which took a lot of time but with the active help of Raymond Cardinal Burke, then Bishop in Wisconsin and Loretta Matulich, former President of the USACV, we managed to overcome them all. I was one of the first candidates to formally request from the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York to be a Consecrated Virgin.

I worked for the United Nations Headquarters in New York City for many years. As such my professional life brought me to work closely with the member states of the United Nations. Its work, sometimes politically sensitive, gave me a broad vision of world affairs and valued experience. These aspects imbued in me the noble values that this Organization stands for. Working intimately with colleagues of all races and traditions of our small planet Earth instilled and inspired me each day for newness for a life of prayer and work (*Ora et Labora*) for peace and justice.

One of my varied assignments was the "Question of Palestine". I was the Chief of Palestine and Decolonization Section of the Department of Public Information. On the occasion of my Consecration, the Palestinian women offered me an

elegant cape with all the flags of the United Nations embroidered on it. I wore it on my white long dress with a broad white sash round my waist. On this sash was a painting of Sister Lucia's private apparition of Tuy, Spain, which stood out prominently amidst the Nations of the world.

Throughout the Consecratory Act, I prayed for the nations of the world and, especially during the prostration for the Litany of the Saints, for peace in the Holy Land. I am sure God heard my prayer but we do not know when HE will answer it completely. There must not be favorites in the Holy Land because God loves us all. My friends and colleagues from the UN participated in this glorious and ceremonious act by the late Bishop William McCormick and in sacred music by the men's choir of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

I continue to pray for the evangelization through Our Lady of Fatima. In her honor, I continue to offer statues and other religious objects to my friends in the countries in which I travel. Annually, I spend a month or two at the feet of Our Mother of God in Fatima. Sometimes I host a couple of pilgrims. "Fatima" was the name of the prophet Mohammed's daughter. I have met a lot of Muslim pilgrims from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other middle eastern countries who come to venerate Our Lady of Fatima.

My very dear sisters, the Consecrated Virgins --- you all, each one of you, are dear to me and you are in my prayers. Our President, Judith Stegman, Vice President, Magalis Aguilera, and former President, Loretta Matulich know me very well. Some of us in the USACV are young and beautiful. I am assured of your talent and skill since I had the opportunity to know you at the convocations. I am convinced that you will carry the torch forward as we move on.

What I have written is my offering to you. Each one of you are a precious treasure of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Mother. May we in our own special love dedicate every moment of our short lives to HIM, who is ONE and ALL. AMEN!



Anniversary Reflections: 10 Years

Katherine Reda, Archdiocese of Boston, consecrated August 15, 2008.

Thank you for the offer to give a 10th year anniversary reflection! I believe we as consecrated virgins are to live in this world, in this time, to be a witness of the love Jesus has for all of us! Not a day goes by that there is strife, anger, sadness and chaos . . . that is the world . . . JESUS is steady, He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. I am honored and happy to share this message with all. I may not shout this from the street corners, but in quiet ways, in my role as a nurse, I share our faith as often as I can. Folks are so interested when they see my wedding ring, some ask "what does your husband do"? Leads to many interesting opportunities to spread our vocation to so many who have not heard of us.

I also continue to write to all in our local seminary, I type a letter, make copies and hand address the names and envelopes. I explain consecrated virginity and let the seminarians know that they are being held in prayer daily.

I am so happy as I start my 10th year as spouse of Our Lord. Please know that I pray for each of you, my sisters in consecration!

Anniversary Reflections: 5 Years

June Baker diocese of Steubenville consecrated April 8, 2013

Having been asked to put down something about what my consecration means to me, I have gone from really wanting to do that to thinking, "What in the world will I say?" And also, am I aware of what he has done within me?

As I write that, there pops into my mind a fault/sin that I battled with most of my life and I believe that my consecration has been the catalyst that has enabled me to put it out of my life.

The doctrine that begins and ends the entire Bible is that the spiritual life is a marriage covenant with God himself. That my whole life has been a love affair with Jesus Christ is absolutely mind-boggling and my consecration has been a call to deepen that.

Redemptive suffering has always been a practice in my spiritual life because when I belonged to the Order of the Blessed Sacrament and of our Lady (popularly known as the Sacramentines) it was the aim of all we did, as it is for any cloistered-contemplative order.

However, I think that it, redemptive suffering, has become more directed, more specific and less general since my consecration. I do not have much physical suffering; I owe that to Blessed Solanus Casey, O. F. M, Cap. But whatever I do have I make use of to pray for the Church and for our world. Especially, I pray for our priests who are, so many times, falsely charged.

Since my consecration, my whole life has become walking with a sense of his presence and being in the "eternal NOW" when I am at mass and confession.

Judy Peikert, Diocese of Birmingham, consecrated September 26, 2013.

Praised be Jesus Christ! This is just a note to say "Thank You" to our Divine Spouse for choosing me to be His, completely and forever, and also to say "Thank You" to all of my sisters in Christ for your prayers and support over these first five years of my consecration to our Beloved Jesus --- a blessing beyond all blessings! We are not only His spouse, but also a sacramental, which is so hard for me to comprehend. I believe, though, that as long as we are faithful to Him in our daily lives, live chastely and obediently, that one day we will be greeted by Him with open arms into His heavenly embrace, in His Kingdom, there to live with Him forever.



Life Corner

Saint John Paul II believed that without two essential values, civilization cannot endure: “the dignity of the human person and the sacredness of human life.” Who are the guardians of human life? We are the guardians in a special way because we are the spouses of Christ, the spiritual mothers of His children.

Mother Teresa believed that abortion, the deliberate killing of human babies in the womb, is the source of all evil. The crisis we are experiencing now in the Church stems from the fact that the ‘other’ is not seen as sacred, is not seen as the Image of Christ. Surely, we would never abuse another if we were able to see Christ in that person. Let us pray for our Shepherds and for all entrusted to their care that they will guide and protect and nurture their people in imitation of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. And let us pray for Our Holy Mother the Church who is being wounded by her sons that, drawn by the love and concern of their Mother, those sons who have wounded her will return like the prodigal son to his father, seeking mercy and forgiveness and will henceforth walk in the footsteps of Jesus, imitating Him while drawing others to Him by the beauty and holiness of their lives.

Advent Reflections

By Anne Gishpert

This comes from a holy card my great aunt Minnie gave my great aunt Ruth. Minnie died in 1969, so it was some time before that: *God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son. John 3:16 A Child is born to us, and a Son is given us! Isaiah 9:7 These two quotes were followed by the following: We salute Thee! O Infant Jesus, We adore Thee! O Infant Jesus. We love Thee! O Infant Jesus. We thank Thee! O Infant Jesus. We praise Thee! O Infant Jesus. We bless Thee! O Infant Jesus. We glorify Thee! O Infant Jesus. We detest our sins! O Infant Jesus. We weep for our ingratitude O Infant Jesus. We promise to amend O Infant Jesus. We are grieved for Thy sufferings O Infant Jesus. We mourn for Thy humiliations O Infant Jesus. Oh, come let us adore the little Babe of*

Bethlehem! The Jesus, the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Creator and the Judge of the World! Venite Adoremus, Alleluia!

My own reflection: In the quiet stillness of night, our loving Father sent to Earth--His only begotten Son, Jesus, the Lord. Now, this night was no longer quiet or dark--for the heavenly hosts filled the sky, singing the praises of the Holy Child born in a stable in a small insignificant town to a humble virgin maiden. This Child was born to a world who needed His Light. That night--so long ago--a great star led the poor shepherds to the manger to worship and adore (such a tiny Child). This Child, so innocent, humble, small, is Love Incarnate, born for all the world. A world grown tired and harsh, a world searching for it knew not what. And now, the Child is here to lead all to Himself. And we, today, at the close of 2018 — do we worship and adore this same Holy Child? Do we truly? With ALL of our hearts? Do others see His light reflected in us? As our Holy Mother Mary gives her Child to us as our Spouse, do we reflect her love for Him to all? During this short, but holy season of Advent and into the Christmas season, let's spend more time adoring and loving this Child Who is so forgotten in our (once again) dark, cold, searching world. His light and love are waiting for every person. May we be more aware of those around us who need Him.



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USACV
www.consecratedvirgins.org

**United States Association
of Consecrated Virgins**

228 N. Walnut St.

Lansing, MI 48933

Email:

info@consecratedvirgins.org

President@consecratedvirgins.org

Fax: 253-270-5507

www.consecratedvirgins.org