

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

Twenty years ago at this exact time I moved from being the Academic Dean at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit to being the Rector of the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. I really enjoyed my brief tenure there.

One of the greatest blessings of this new role was a better understanding of the role of St. Joseph in my own life as he is the patron of the Josephinum. Since he was, with Mary, the presenter of the Lord in the Temple, it is good for us to reflect briefly on him.

He was silent. That struck me the most. Not a word of his is recorded in the Scriptures. Rather, he was a deep listener such that he heard the message of the angels even in his sleep. I cannot approach that kind of silence but I know that his example has called me forward toward his level of contemplation.

He exemplified manhood for his foster son, Jesus. Jesus learned how to pray, how to work, how to respect Mary, how to listen, how to speak, how to be a man from Joseph. As we look at Jesus, we perhaps get a glimpse of Joseph's handiwork.

He was decisive and acted. A warning was all it took for him to lead his family to Egypt and then back to Nazareth. I can only imagine how he would have handled himself if he had still been alive when Jesus was being tortured and executed. I assume, knowing the will of the Father, he would have suffered deeply at Jesus' pain. I need to be better at appreciating what the Lord went through for my sins and my salvation.

My dear sisters, I invite all of us to pray for the Joseph(s) in our lives—certainly, St. Joseph himself, perhaps also our fathers or a good priest or a male friend. Let us be grateful for his presence in our lives. A blessed feast of the Presentation of the Lord to all of you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Bishop of Lansing

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

On May 31, 1970, the Feast of the Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Nazareth to her cousin Elizabeth, “the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, under the authority of Saint Pope Paul VI, decreed the promulgation of the revised rite, referring to consecrated virginity as being among the most excellent gifts bequeathed by Our Lord to His Bride, the Church” (Stegman, Judith M., JCD dissertation, p. 1. For full citation, see President’s Journal).

What is the sacred history that led to this revision of the rite of consecration to a life of virginity for women living in the world? We can make an inference from two historical qualities, for the experience of events is printed both in time and in space. Using our imaginations, we envision the consecrated virgins who preceded us, as they lived in the midst of the world and traveled on “the train to eternity” or “the air craft to eternity” during different times in the history of the Church. With each stop of the train or air craft, the call to live the consecrated virginal vocation was a new time in Church history. What was the new situation like at each stop for the consecration? Ever since the time of the primitive Church, the Church of our Divine Spouse in this world has had the virginal vocation lived in her midst as a sign of the Eternal Kingdom to come.

It was in 1970 that the Church resumed celebration of the rite of consecration of virgins living in the world. But when exactly had the rite stopped being used for these women? If we use a method of inference from events, we first observe in the book *The Christian Virgins of the Primitive Church* that the author included lists of consecrated virgins living in the world covering the Apostolic Era, the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries. In the fourth century he listed fifteen virgins in Spain who were living in the world. Canon 13 of the Council of Elvira in Spain, in that same 4th Century (325), spoke of the institution of *virgines Deo sacratae* (sacred virgins of God) as being long familiar to Spain (see Vizmanos, *The Christian Virgins of the Primitive Church*, 1947). Vizmanos noted that these virgins were consecrated by the bishops and by the pope, as the Bishop of Rome. There is no doubt that the virginal vocation was lived in the world until the sixth century. It was later that the rite stopped being celebrated for virgins living in the world.

There are inferences made that monastic life, appearing in the Early Middle Ages (5th to 6th centuries)

with Saint Benedict, was found to provide a more secure place for parents to put their daughters who were called to the virginal vocation. Additionally, it can be noted that at that time there did not exist an economic system that could protect virgins in case they were not able to support their own living arrangements. Information about specific dates or years in the Early Middle Ages is lacking in regard to our virginal vocation, and we thus look to the lives of the virgins themselves in the first centuries of the early Church (again, see Vizmanos). Information exists about consecrated virgins in later ages, but not with the strong evidence of the virginal vocation that was lived by the virgins in the ancient Church.

It is said that the rite “fell into disuse” for women living in the world, because although it was not explicitly banned until later, by the middle of the eleventh century the practice of consecrating virgins living in private homes was used only in unique situations. This came about “most likely due to the development and flourishing of religious orders and the idea that the cloister presented less danger to a consecrated virgin than living within secular society” (Stegman, JCD dissertation, 88).

“Entering the High Middle Ages [about 1000 to 1300 AD], a complex variety in the status of virgins existed in the Church. Living their commitments secretly, or in some cases seeking public consecration at the hands of the bishop, there continued to be those free women, and slaves, who fostered a life of virginity privately in their own homes. However, a larger number of virgins began to embrace the monastic state, and it was clear that the practice of the bishop giving the veil of consecration to women remaining in private homes was in decline, and even viewed with a certain suspicion. Such was the reality when the Second Lateran Council (1139), during the pontificate of Innocent II, condemned as ‘pernicious and detestable’ the custom of women wishing to be thought of as nuns, who lived in their private dwellings rather than monasteries” (Stegman, JCD dissertation, 90, with reference to 1927 writings of Philippus Maroto on behalf of the Sacred Congregation of Religious).

Saint Angela of Merici (1535) wanted to live in the world and she founded an association of virgins who were to devote their lives to the religious training of young girls. This association was a success and she was invited to begin another school in the neighboring city. Later, however, as the association grew, she was pressured to found a religious family. She placed this new foundation under the protection of Saint Ursula with the goal of elevating family life through the Christian education of future wives and mothers. The

Company of St. Ursula was the first teaching order of women religious.

The Catholic world of the sixteenth century, especially after the Council of Trent (1545 to 1563), exalted the condition of monastic life as the most perfect and noblest of the conditions of life traditionally reserved for women. “The monastic state became the model to which the educational path of every woman had to conform to, even if she was destined to live in the world (as mother, virgin, widow, or married woman). The strong paradigmatic value exerted by the monastic condition of life is clear from the analysis of the pedagogical literature devoted to women published in this period.” (*Costituzioni per le monache* (Constitutions for Nuns, 1539) by Gian Matteo Giberti; and the *Ricordi lasciati alle monache* (Recollections left to nuns, 1575) by Agostino Valier.)

From this context, it is evident that our virginal vocation was in a process of accommodation, because although it didn't appear in the midst of the world, it was lived in the monasteries, gaining saintly virginal women. The liturgical rite of consecration to virginity resisted the impact of the centuries when it was used only for monastic virgins, before it was returned to the original will of the Eternal Father, that is, to be lived as our Blessed Mother the Virgin of Nazareth herself lived, in the world.

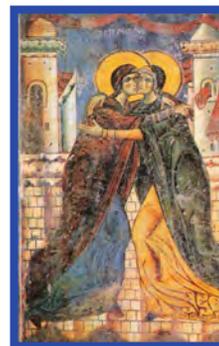
The Church at present is living in the midst of a pagan culture. It pleased the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies the Church, to bestow wisdom in the mind and heart of Saint Paul VI to recognize anew that the rite of consecration must return to its original use—that the virginal vocation might be a light in the midst of the darkness of the world. The mystical “desporium” (bethrothal) of the early virgins illuminated the shadows that surrounded the ancient Church. Their lives mirrored the true face of the resurrected Spouse, the face of our Divine Lord and Spouse Jesus Christ. The rite of consecration was hidden for centuries and returned again to be a living sign of the Eternal Father's will to call virgins for the Church of His Son.

Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the rite happens in this year of 2020. Celebration on the Feast of our Most Blessed Mother in her Visitation confirms the omnipotence of the Eternal Father in the mystery of the incarnation of His Son, for it is the celebration of Mary of Nazareth becoming the Mother of the Divine Lord.

Logic reveals that the first usage of a formal “rite” of consecration was at the Annunciation to the Queen of

Virgins; it was at this time that Mary of Nazareth became the first consecrated Virgin. She said “*fiat*” (“yes”) after listening to the words of the angel Gabriel and trusting in his message: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (Lk. 1:35). What a great ceremony of consecration was this! She alone, with no human community surrounding her, but instead much more as the Holy Trinity as a family was manifested to her: the message of the Eternal Father, confirming His will upon her in the words of the Archangel; the Holy Spirit overshadowing her; and the Child in her womb the Son of God, God Himself.

She in solitude went to visit her cousin Elizabeth because she discovered that the child in her cousin's womb was chosen by the Eternal Father, due to his extraordinary conception. The Angel expressed to her that the one who was sterile was now six months with child. Our Blessed Mother's visit with her cousin is an expression of the plenitude of the Holy Spirit upon her; she began with docile spirit to live her mission as Mother of God and Mother to His Church.



Fresco of the Visitation of Mary at St. George Church in Kurbinovo, North Macedonia.

We have the Blessed Virgin Mary as our model and Mother, and never will we feel alone or disappointed as we face limitations in living alone our own virginal vocations. We praise and thank the Eternal Father for the restoration of the rite that has enabled each one of us to live in the mystical power of consecration to a life of virginity since the very day the Church consecrated us as a witness to the eternal wedding.

We contemplate that the Blessed Virgin Mary is our Queen. She lived before us, and is greater than the personal experiences we must go through as we witness to the coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ. “Nothing is impossible to God” (Lk. 1:37). She learned these words from the Messenger of the Eternal Father and Her faith grew even stronger when she later had to witness Her Son's crucifixion and keep in the midst of His Church as He ascended into heaven.

We join our prayers to the prayers of our Virgin Mother for this coming celebration on May 31, 2020. She continues to help us witness to the eternal kingdom to come of our Divine Lord and Spouse.

By Dr. Judith M. Stegman, JCD

Planning continues for the upcoming Rome 2020 International Meeting of the *Ordo virginum*, being convoked by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), to celebrate the golden anniversary of the promulgation of the revised Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity on May 31, 1970. It has been an historic fifty years for the *Ordo virginum* in the Catholic Church, and is a history worth celebrating. In this President's Journal, I offer reflections on the international gatherings of consecrated virgins that have been held in Rome since 1970.

Rome 1995 Pilgrimage

A 1995 international gathering of consecrated virgins in Rome drew 330 consecrated virgins from eighteen countries to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of the revised rite of consecration. A group of French and Italian virgins planned this first historic meeting of the *Ordo virginum*, sending invitations through national Bishops' conferences to the consecrated virgins of the world. Each of the fourteen U.S. virgins who attended that 1995 pilgrimage has a story of how she providentially learned of it from a source outside the United States, in an age when communications were not facilitated by the internet. As we reminisce, a number of us note that it was not until we were greeted in a Rome Church by women who were dressed as we were, and who prominently displayed lanterns as a symbol of this virginal vocation, that we became certain we were "at home." We enjoyed the communication challenges and found that the presentations and interactions at that Rome gathering brought us to a new depth of understanding of our vocation. It was in 1995 that Fr. Ignazio Maria Calabuig offered a conference that is featured in the USACV's *Information Packet*: "The Consecrated Virgin Lives and Manifests the Wedded Love of the Church for Christ," speaking to the essential meaning of this vocation of mystical betrothal to Christ.

On June 2, 1995—how can we forget the date?—Saint Pope John Paul II met in audience with us to offer some fundamental directives to guide our vocation, under the title, "May Christ be Your Total and Exclusive Love." His words were inspirational: "Love Christ, the meaning of your life. For the consecrated virgin, as St. Leander of Seville affirms, Christ is everything: 'spouse, brother, friend, inheritance, reward, God and Lord.'"

The Rome 1995 pilgrimage to the Eternal City was especially historic for consecrated virgins of the United States, many of whom met one another for the first time in Rome. It

was there that Loretta Matulich, who would become the first USACV president, offered to begin a newsletter—*The Lamp*—for the U.S. virgins. It was there in Rome that a nucleus of virgins began to envision how to make this ancient, newly restored vocation of consecrated virginity lived in the world more widely known and understood in the United States, so that those to whom God had given the precious gift of virginity might follow in the path opened by the Eternal Father for the Blessed Virgin Mary and lived by countless virgin saints over the centuries.

Looking Back (note 1)

What is the significance of the anniversary that was celebrated in 1995 and will again be celebrated in 2020? A single sentence of the 1963 Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council had called for a revision of the rite of consecration of virgins found in the Roman Pontifical (SC 80). On May 31, 1970, the Feast of the Visitation, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, under the authority of Saint Pope Paul VI, decreed the promulgation of the revised rite, referring to consecrated virginity as being "among the most excellent gifts bequeathed by Our Lord to His Bride, the Church." The revised rite preserved many ancient elements including the text of the prayer of consecration, dating back to the Leonian Sacramentary of the fifth century, and an antiphon attributed to the virgin Saint Agnes at her martyrdom, "I am espoused to Him whom the angels serve; sun and moon stand in wonder at his glory" (Rite of consecration, 29). Not only did the revised rite preserve and revive the eminent custom of spiritual espousals to Christ, but it also roused an ancient practice that had fallen into disuse over the centuries: the 1970 rite provided not only for the consecration of nuns with solemn vows, but also for virgins who, like St. Agnes, lived in the world. (note 2)

As soon as the revised rite of consecration was promulgated, Bishops began to celebrate the rite for women living in the world. The earliest consecrations in the United States were celebrated in 1974 using a preliminary English translation of the rite.(note 3) Since that time, records show that there have been approximately 300 consecrations to date in the United States, including six in the 1970's, fourteen in the 1980's, and fifty in the 1990's. Juridical recognition was given to the newly restored *Ordo virginum* in canon 604 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law. The canon is brief, identifying the *Ordo virginum* as a form of life that is similar to, but not identical, to other forms of consecrated life; is directly tied to the diocesan Bishop; and distinctively has as its key effect a mystical betrothal to Christ, the Son of God, as consecrated virgins are dedicated to the service of the Church.

Since 1983, a number of Ecclesial documents have given further direction and recognition to the *Ordo virginum*. Most recently, on June 8, 2018, CICLSAL issued an Instruction for the *Ordo virginum*, in order to establish “the normative principles and directive criteria” to be applied in the pastoral care of the *Ordo virginum* (*Ecclesiae sponsae imago* (ESI) 10).

Rome 2008 Congress-Pilgrimage

The 2008 International Congress-Pilgrimage of the Order of Consecrated Virgins was convoked by CICLSAL in response to the desire of consecrated virgins to gather again in Rome “to continue to enrich, deepen and expand the universal dimension of their theological reflections and prayer.” An international committee of Bishops and consecrated virgins, including two from the United States, prepared the program for the occasion, which drew about 500 consecrated virgins from fifty-two countries, including thirty from the United States. Once again, significant presentations were offered on historical, canonical, and liturgical aspects of consecrated virginity, the foundations of Christian virginity, and essential aspects of the virginal vocation. Consecrated virgins of the United States were involved in many aspects of planning for the event; as well, the program itself included presentations by His Eminence (then-Archbishop) Raymond Cardinal Burke, Episcopal Moderator at the time for the USACV (on the liturgical rite of consecration), Judith Stegman (on virginal, spousal, feminine love for Christ), and consecrated virgin Dr. Magalis Aguilera (her testimony).

On May 15, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI received participants in audience and offered an address reflecting a homily he himself had given at the consecration of a virgin, and which was adopted as the theme of the Congress-Pilgrimage: “Consecrated Virginity in the World: A Gift for the Church and in the Church.” Pope Benedict spoke of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the “prototype” of Christian virgins, of the rootedness of the vocation in the particular Church, and of the total gift to Christ that is explicit in the vocation. He exhorted the virgins, “take care always to radiate the dignity of being a bride of Christ, expressing the newness of Christian existence and the serene expectation of future life. Thus, with your own upright life you will be stars to guide the world on its journey.”

Rome 2016 Symposium

Pope Francis designated 2015 as The Year for Consecrated Life. To bring that year to conclusion, the CICLSAL planned a week in Rome devoted to the theme

“Consecrated Life in Communion,” inviting representatives of various forms of consecrated life, including religious and secular institutes, monastic institutes, new institutes, and those consecrated in the *Ordo virginum*. The week culminated with the celebration of Holy Mass with Pope Francis in St. Peter Basilica on the Feast of the Presentation, February 2, 2016. Twenty-five consecrated virgins from 22 dioceses of the United States made up part of the 600 consecrated virgins who participated in two symposium days dedicated to the *Ordo virginum* during the international meeting. United States consecrated virgin Karen Bussey offered her testimony during the symposium, witnessing particularly to her work with the terminally ill.

Rome 2020 Meeting

Thirty-three consecrated virgins from the United States have registered to attend the 2020 International Meeting of the *Ordo virginum*, to be held in Rome May 28 to May 31. We look forward once again to praying with our sisters from other countries, to deepening in our understanding of this precious vocation of mystical betrothal to Christ, the Son of God, and to encouraging one another in our love for our Divine Spouse.

Notes:

(note 1) *The first paragraph of “Looking Back” is from the Introduction to my dissertation: Judith M. Stegman, “Mystically Espoused to Christ, the Son of God (c. 604 §1)”: The Basis for Proposing Juridic Principles to Guide the Development of Norms for the Ordo virginum* (Washington D.C., 2019; ProQuest Number 22623763, Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest LLC, 2019) 1–3.

(note 2) *The history of the consecration of virgins dates back to apostolic times. In brief, during the first thousand years of Christianity the consecration of virgins was bestowed primarily on women living in the world. During the second millennium, until 1970, the consecration of virgins was primarily reserved to nuns. In 1950, reflecting the fact that the practice of consecrating women living in the world had not completely ceased, the apostolic constitution *Sponsa Christi* of Pope Pius XII decreed that the consecration of virgins, found in the Roman Pontifical, was reserved to nuns (see *Sponsa Christi* Art. III. §3). The 1970 revised rite of consecration once again included a provision permitting the consecration of virgins living in the world.*

(note 3) *In 1975, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) published an official English translation of the rite that was used until 2012, when a revised translation was published in the Roman Pontifical.*

Upcoming Issues of The Lamp:

May 21, 2020 Solemnity of Corpus Christi

September 8, 2020 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

December 12, 2020 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

February 2, 2021 Feast of the Presentation and World

Day for Consecrated Life

Available:

Please check out our online USACV store for the following hot items at secure.consecratedvirgins.org:

- Recordings from the 2019 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins (DVD and CD) on *Ecclesia sponsae imago*.
- Recordings from the 2019 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virgins Lived in the World
- Vocation Tree materials

BEST-SELLERS: *Ordo Virginum* series books:

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

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

Note: There are also a limited number of copies of *Ecclesiae sponsae imago* available, in English and Spanish. Contact info@consecratedvirgins.org for information on pricing and availability.

Membership Reminder:

From Francesca Riddick, membership chair of the USACV: 2020 Member and Friend registration forms are available now on the USACV website. Invitations to 2020 new membership and membership renewals will be sent soon. Thank you for showing your support for the ongoing work of the USACV-IRC.

Dear Consecrated Virgins,

Hello from Oregon! Here's our announcement for our upcoming retreat in June, hosted by the Portland (Oregon) consecrated virgins.

Spend a few days exclusively with the Lord Jesus in a silent retreat with other consecrated virgins and Sisters: "To Begin to LIVE as a Favorite Daughter of Christ the Son in the House of the Father." Fr. Philip Scott, F.J., will conduct our retreat with this theme. The retreat will include Holy Mass, two conferences per day, Eucharistic Adoration, Evening and Night Prayer together, Confession and Spiritual Direction as available, and quiet time for private prayer and reflection. Our Lady of Peace Retreat Center in Beaverton, Oregon (just outside of Portland) invites us. In Franciscan simplicity, the Retreat Center has 24 acres of woodland and paths, a Marian Garden, and Outdoor Stations of the Cross. Transportation via light rail is very economical and readily available from the Portland International Airport and from AMTRAK in Portland to Beaverton. Of course all meals are home-cooked by the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows.

When will this take place? June 16-24, 2020. Suggested donation: \$525 for the entire retreat or \$85 per day.

Contact person and timelines: By the end of February, prospective retreatants should contact Regina Dibb: fristjn416@gmail.com. She will then send a registration form which needs to be returned along with a \$100 deposit. The balance is due on or before May 31, 2020.



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*.

Upcoming Consecrations

United States:

March 25, 2020 — Simi Sahu, 5:00pm at Emmanuel Catholic Church in Delray Beach, Florida, Diocese of Palm Beach (FL), at the hands of The Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito. All are warmly invited to attend.

May 24, 2020 — Skyla Chamard and Miriam Marston, 2:00pm at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Archdiocese of Portland (OR), at the hands of The Most Reverend Alexander Sample. All are warmly invited to attend.

May 30, 2020 — Catherine Howard, 10am at the Holy Family Cathedral, Diocese of Tulsa (OK), at the hands of The Most Reverend David Konderla. All are warmly invited to attend.

A Note from the Archivist

Anne Gishpert, USACV-IRC archivist, reminds consecrated virgins who have not done so to please send her a copy of your consecration certificate (providing this copy also enables United States virgins to be full voting members of the USACV). Anne also keeps the USACV "family" albums, which include mementos from consecrations. You are warmly invited to send Anne the program, invitation, holy cards, photos, or other items from your consecration. Anne especially asks those consecrated in 2018, 2019, and 2020 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.

Upcoming Events

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 14.

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

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

Sponsored by the USACV-IRC

July 28 to July 31, 2020

St. Catherine University,

Archdiocese of St. Paul - Minneapolis

See article, page 13.

*“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 sisters into the heavenly kingdom. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.

Jackie Hintze — November 7, 2019
(consecrated September 14, 2018)

JoAnn Guinther — December 27, 2019
(consecrated October 1, 2009)

Tribute to Jackie Hintze

By Dr. Nicoleta Manciu

The Vicar for Religious and her spiritual director insisted that Jackie and I would work well together. They were asking that I establish with them a one-year program of introducing Jackie to our vocation. “We need to consecrate her soon, before she dies” insisted one of them. “No pressure, doc,” stated the other.

No pressure indeed, I thought, considering that the meeting was without an agenda and over a cup of coffee, but now establishing deadlines to consecrate her before death... Good heavens I thought, the world is going mad!

After going through the formation program of the USACV and underlining what we will be covering, we also established my reporting format to the diocese to let them know our progress. It was all done before I could really grasp the time frame for my obligations.

I needed one more thing on my plate like I needed a hole in my head, I thought. But the vicar was convincing and Jackie’s spiritual director is a very good priest. Can’t say no to that duo!

The first meeting was arranged somewhere midway between Jackie’s western suburb living and my out to the periphery of the diocese hobby farm location. It was a lovely August day and the place we were going to meet for coffee looked closed. A platinum blond, with skinny jeans, flashy shoes, a gauze blouse over some T-shirt, make up on and pink, flashy nail polish was scrolling her phone, her daze dashing back and forth from phone and the street I was walking on. Yeah, that’s not her, I thought.

I took a look around the place just to make sure it’s really closed. CLOSED said the sign.

I said hi to the blond and asked her if she knew when the place opens. She did not know, she was just going to meet somebody there, that’s all. I took another look. Is this her? I was told she was on death’s bed! She had been in and out of ICU for the past 2 months.

Jackie was a childhood diabetes patient. The disease eventually shut down her kidneys and she was on dialysis until her twin sister gave her one of her kidneys. Not only Jackie received a kidney from her sister, but a few years later she also had a surgery to receive a pancreas transplant from a “dead donor.” She no longer needed insulin or dialysis. But in these cases, there’s never is a “they lived happily ever after.”

The problem becomes keeping the recipient's body from rejecting these new organs. Medications do that but they cause bad side effects and place the person at risk for infections that a non-transplant recipient would fight off easily. Most of them become more susceptible to cancer development as well. Essentially, the transplant patients have no defense against seemingly benign bacteria and viruses. And the problems caused by the original disease do not go away.

At any rate, I looked at this young woman and asked if her name was Jackie. "Yes" she answered with a big smile and confused look. Clearly, I as well did not fit the description given to her.

We moved to another coffee place and started chatting about life. Over the next year we covered a lot of topics. It was so clear that she was in love with Jesus and was so since she was a child. She was not aware of the vocation of consecrated virginity until her spiritual director brought it up. And once she read and learned more about it, it was a perfect gift.

Her physical suffering was accompanied by emotional suffering as well. Her parents divorced and her supportive dad passed away a few years ago.

The flashy but modest outfits covered a scarred body from multiple surgeries, a hump on her neck from steroid use to keep the transplants going, and the multiple dialysis access shunts she needed in the past.

And the make up covered a fair face that was fighting off constant nausea related to what later on would be a growing tumor that would take her life.

We continued to get together, albeit infrequently, even after the completion of her year. A bit later, on the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, she was consecrated. She was discharged from the hospital about a week before her consecration day, and returned to the hospital shortly after.

One day we had the chat about finally seeing Jesus face to face after death. She started weeping. "I don't know if I'm good enough," she said. I replied, "I don't know who thinks she is, Jackie!" About six months later after this talk, on the feast of All Saints, I gave Jackie a ride from the hospital to her house. All efforts to help her manage this tumor have been exhausted. She was going home from the hospital this one last time. She was visibly medicated for the pain the tumor caused for years. And the jaundice was profound. We prayed the Rosary during the ride. When we got to her sister's house, I gave her a hug and I think somehow we both knew it was the last for this life.

She died a week later, refusing pain medication until she became unconscious.

Her spiritual director and pastor summed it up best about Jackie. She liked flashy, sparkly things. And the Lord honored that. He took what seemed to all of us a simple person, coal, and under the pressure of suffering transformed it into a diamond.

And I hope that she will sparkle forever in His Kingdom, looking at His face, Who found her lovely to be His bride.

May she rest in peace!

Obituary for JoAnn Guinther

By Fischer Funeral Home

She was born April 7, 1929 in Coshocton Co. to the late Joseph and Bessie (Donley) Guinther. She was blessed to become a Consecrated Virgin on Oct. 1, 2009 by Bishop Frederick Campbell of the Diocese of Columbus. She was a Sister of St. Joseph for 14 years, and worked 30 years at the Mt. Vernon Developmental Center in Nursing Management and Quality Control. She was a member of St. Luke's Parish in Danville.

She is survived by several nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her siblings, John, Raymond, Neal, James, and Robert Guinther, and infant twins William & Wilma Guinther.

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 (aschrauth@gmail.com).



Artwork by Margaret Flipp.



The Presentation at the Temple
WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE

Prayer for Consecrated Persons

GOD OUR FATHER, we thank you for calling men and women to serve in your Son's Kingdom as sisters, brothers, religious priests, consecrated virgins, and hermits, as well as members of Secular Institutes. Renew their knowledge and love of you, and send your Holy Spirit to help them respond generously and courageously to your will. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



SECRETARIAT OF
CLERGY, CONSECRATED LIFE AND VOCATIONS
www.ForYourVocation.org • www.usccb.org

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Consecrated virgins who celebrate significant anniversaries during 2020 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: 15 Years

Submitted by Diane Christine Farr
Diocese of Rochester (NY)
(consecrated February 20, 2005)

It is with immense gratitude that I reflect on my 15th anniversary of consecration as a virgin bride of Christ. I am sure that the graces I have received have strengthened me and have helped me deal with the many challenges in my life. Besides being legally blind, I have been diagnosed with a form of muscular dystrophy. My mother also had it and I took care of her until the Lord called her home in 2011.

My vocation had its beginnings in my childhood when I was six years old. I was being very earnest when I told my aunt that when I grew up, I was never getting married. She said you just wait; in ten years you will change your mind. Oh no I won't I responded. Ten years went by and not only did I not change my mind, but I understood very clearly why this was so. In 1978 at the time of my confirmation, I was beginning to understand that Jesus was calling me and that I was made for him alone. I made a solemn promise of perpetual virginity. I understood that this was something beautiful and permanent. In my early years I thought this commitment would mean living in a contemplative community, but this was not where

God was calling me. When I first read a copy of the rite, I was amazed to see that this was exactly the spirituality I had been living for years. In the years that I waited to receive the consecration I gained a deeper appreciation for its rich meaning.

My father printed a commemorative card for the day of my consecration using a picture from my great aunt, Sister Mary Andrew's religious profession. Helen Groudin came to my home before my consecration. She told me that, "I have come to prepare the bride for her wedding." She made my wedding veil as well as my chapel veil that I now wear at Mass. It meant a lot to me as well that a number of other consecrated virgins were present at my ceremony. One of the blessings that I have received is the large number of wonderful friends among my sisters. I check in with Theresa Drajin every evening, and she often reads spiritual books to me over the telephone.

I have been graciously asked to write for *The Lamp*. Each time that I write an article I believe that I am taken more deeply into the mystery of what it means to be a bride of our Lord Jesus Christ. I try to convey on paper what my Divine Bridegroom writes in the depths of my soul. He has also given me music celebrating the beauty and wonder of our vocation. I sang one of these songs at my consecration Mass.

I have always been close to Mary our blessed Mother and her perfect love and holy virginity have been an inspiration to me. The writings of Luisa Piccareta and the gift of living in the Divine Will have greatly enhanced my spiritual life and my love for the gift of my consecration. I host a weekly study group at my home. I know my consecration is a gift of God's great love and mercy which He has shown

*Excerpt of the Message of
Pope John Paul II for the First
World Day for Consecrated Life in 1997*

me. Day by day I must grow in my loving communion with Jesus my Divine Spouse in order to overcome all difficulties. I give praise to the Holy Trinity for all blessings received. This includes the blessing of my mother and father. I am thankful they said yes to the Sacrament of Marriage so that I might say yes to Jesus in consecrated virginity.

Anniversary Reflections: 5 Years

Submitted by Cara Buskmiller
Diocese of Galveston-Houston (TX)
(consecrated June 20, 2015)

It has been a surprising five years of consecrated life, mostly because four of them were swallowed by medical residency. Learning to be a physician was a time-intensive crucible that challenged my resolve to remain faithful to the Church's teachings on abortion, fertility, marriage, and gender. I still meet challenges, but my current position is much less exhausting. I am now working as an OB/GYN in Houston, Texas, and obtaining more training in high risk pregnancy and research methods. It's a joy to have more time for prayer and to be closer to family. I am struck by how unworthy I am of Him, who so strongly desires intimacy with us. So much more than we do! Let us be sensitive to His will, not ignoring his gentle encouragement. Please pray for my siblings who are no longer Catholic and for one who has now joined SSPX.

1. The celebration of the World Day for Consecrated Life, which will be observed for the first time on 2 February, is intended to help the entire Church to esteem ever more greatly the witness of those persons who have chosen to follow Christ by means of the practice of the evangelical counsels and, at the same time, is intended to be a suitable occasion for consecrated persons to renew their commitment and rekindle the fervor which should inspire their offering of themselves to the Lord.

The mission of the consecrated life in the present and in the future of the Church, now at the threshold of the third millenium, concerns not merely those who have received this special charism, but the entire Christian community. In the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* issued last year, I wrote: "In effect, the consecrated life is at the very heart of the Church as a decisive element for her mission, since it 'manifests the inner nature of the Christian calling' and the striving of the whole Church as Bride towards union with her one Spouse" (VC 3). Thus, I would like to renew the invitation to consecrated persons to look to the future with confidence, relying on the fidelity of God and the power of his grace, who is always able to accomplish new wonders: "You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things" (VC 110).

The full text may be found on the Vatican website at <http://bit.ly/WDFCL>.

2020 Information Conference

Planning is well underway for the 2020 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World, sponsored by the USACV. It is scheduled for July 28 to July 31 at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota. This is a new location for us, and we look forward to enjoying a welcome from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

We encourage *Lamp* readers to promote the Information Conference among those interested in consecrated virginity as a very important and worthwhile event for anyone in the process of discerning a vocation to a life of consecrated virginity lived in the world or preparing for the consecration. The Conference is also important for those who are helping someone in the discernment process or who want to learn more about this vocation: bishops, diocesan delegates of consecrated life, spiritual directors and other consecrated virgins who may be helping a woman to discern.



Entrance to St. Catherine's University.



Bishop Boyea speaking at a previous Information Conference.

The Information Conference will place emphasis on areas that have emerged as important in the discernment and formation process, most especially the preeminence of Our Lady as model and guide in the life of the consecrated virgin, the central place of the Liturgy of the Hours in the spiritual as well as the ecclesial life of the consecrated virgin, and the preparation and formation that are essential for a life of consecrated virginity lived in the world. Along with these topics, other fundamental topics concerning the vocation will be addressed.

Over the years that the Information Conference has been held, many, many women have shared how important the conference was in their discernment process. It is especially good to hear from virgins living the vocation about its value and helpfulness. The consecrated virgins presenting the conference are the best ones to speak about the beauty and worth of the call to a life of consecrated virginity. The USACV is always appreciative of their episcopal moderator, Bishop Earl Boyea, for his thorough presentation on the history of the vocation, dating back to the early centuries of the Church, along with his availability to meet with the inquirers, vocation directors and clergy who attend the conference on behalf of their dioceses.

Joining Bishop Boyea in conducting the conference, a team of consecrated virgins present the key dimensions of the life of consecrated virginity lived in the world. Topics include the content of Rite of Consecration, the distinct spirituality of the consecrated virgin, the meaning of virginal chastity, the various dimensions of “living in the world” and more.

A more detailed explanation of the Information Conference will be published in the May issue of *The Lamp*. Any immediate questions regarding the logistics of the conference may be addressed to the conference coordinator, Theresa Marshall at Tel. (734)332-4648 or marshallcv@gmail.com.



St. Catherine's University

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

Updated — Important 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 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.” (Note: Using information collected from U.S. Diocesan Bishops and the USACV, the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations responded to the CICLSAL survey on the current state of the *Ordo virginum* in the United States.)

4. Registration: Registration forms were 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.

- Thirty three United States consecrated virgins have registered for the 2020 Meeting.

- 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.

- **The registration fee for the event is 150 Euro**, and is to be paid in a lump sum for each country. **Invoices have been sent to each registered U.S. participant, indicating that \$174 (150 Euro) payable to USACV is due by February 29, 2020.** The payment is to be mailed to Joan McCann, 188 Madison St., Dedham, MA 02026. If you are registered as a U.S. participant and have not received an invoice, please contact Joani (joani.mccann@gmail.com) or Judith Stegman (judithstegman@gmail.com).

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.

- The USACV- IRC has reserved a limited amount of housing at the *Santa Maria alle Fornaci* in Rome. Those who have previously arranged with Joani McCann for this housing have been sent an invoice from the USACV indicating the dates they have reserved and the type of room reserved. The invoice indicates the amount of the 25% deposit due to the USACV on February 10, 2020, and the remaining amount due to the USACV on April 20, 2020. Payment will be made by international bank transfer from the USACV to the *Fornaci*, and it is important that participants remit payments by the due dates. If you have asked for housing at the *Fornaci*, and have not received your invoice, please contact Joani or Judith at the email addresses shown above.

- We continue looking into arranging private bus transport between the *Santa Maria alle Fornaci* and the *Antonianum*.

7. Other notes:

- The USACV-IRC continues to investigate options for post-meeting pilgrimage days in Rome on June 1 and June 2, to possibly include visits to the Basilica of Saint Agnes Outside the Wall, the Basilica of Saint Cecilia in Trastevere, and Sant'Agata Dei Goti, the titular Church of Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke. To date, twenty one people have expressed interest in extension days.

- As soon as available, pass along your Rome travel information to Joani McCann.



By Florence Sundberg

Jan. 22nd, 2020: Today is the day of prayer for the protection of unborn children. After they are born who will step up and help them and their families, who will dare to love them? A quote from Dostoevsky's Father Zossima: "Love in Action is a harsh and dreadful thing, compared to love in dreams." When we are children, we perhaps imagine doing great and wonderful things when we grow up. Then, as we get older, reality sets in. "Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing." Will we choose love just the same? What are we willing

to sacrifice for the good of the other? For the life and well-being of the other? Here is what I have witnessed: young girls—and boys—choosing to remain with their abusive captors either to protect their younger siblings or to earn a bit of money for their starving families. Love has so many, many faces. Often we judge badly what we do not know or understand. Young labor trafficked boys are willing to remain at hard labor just so that food is sent to their starving families. These children, young boys and girls, snatched away from their families, their homes and schools, their childhood taken from them, often remain willingly with their captors, their tormentors, from a sense of self-sacrificial love; although they may not understand, they offer their lives so their loved ones may live. Love in action is truly a harsh and dreadful thing but love, sacrificial love, is never in vain. They are joined by Christ Who Himself suffered a harsh and dreadful love in His own passion, even unto being nailed to a cross. As these young children suffer and sacrifice out of love for their families, so Christ suffered for each one of us, and for these children. Let us pray for them that they may know the presence of their Lord God. Although they may not know Him, He knows them. And His love will be their hope. May God grant them His peace and His comforting presence.

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

USACV Leadership Team

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 2019-2021; Diocese of Great Falls-
Billings (MT). (*Publication of "The Lamp"*).

Joani McCann 2019-2021; Archdiocese of Boston (MA).
(*Convocation Liaison*).

Elizabeth Lam 2020-2022; Diocese of Oakland (CA).
(*Member at Large*).

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.

Florence Sundberg; prayer chain coordinator.

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY



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