

May 31, 2019 Feast of the Visitation

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

Reflecting on one of the talks given by Fr. Cantalamessa to the bishops this past January at Mundelein Seminary in Chicago, it occurred to me that his point would benefit all of us. He noted that oftentimes seminary formation is compared to Jesus' own calling of and formation of his disciples. He then noted that Jesus was quite the failure. Their formation did not prevent them from running away at the arrest and death of Jesus. It took the overpowering of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to get them going as missionaries.

Fr. Cantalamessa then cautioned us that Jesus wasn't really a failure because he planted the seeds which would flourish under the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit needed something to work on. But without the Holy Spirit, none of the "life-coaching" of Jesus would have led the apostles anywhere.

It seems to me that something similar is always at work in all of our lives as Christians and certainly as consecrated virgins. Whatever preparation we have had, whatever gifts we may bring to our state of life, whatever having remained a virgin all our lives may mean to us — all of this is without purpose unless it is anointed by the Holy Spirit. Certainly, the Holy Spirit has already begun that good work in each of you in your Baptism and Confirmation. However, it is good for each of us to pray daily that each day will see the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit in our lives, even as he hovered over creation and brought order out of chaos and as he hovered over the Virgin Mary and gave us life.

You have prepared well and are well-prepared. May the Holy Spirit use you for the glory of God and the salvation of his people.



Sincerely yours in Christ,

Earl Boyea

Most Reverend Earl Boyea, Bishop of Lansing

Inside this Issue

Page

Something Ancient-Something New	2
USACV and International Resource Center Leadership	4
2019 USACV Membership	4
Upcoming Events	5
Announcements and News	5
From the President's Journal	6
2019 Convocation of Consecrated Virgins	7
In Honor of Our Deceased Sisters	8
Memorial for Jennie Lucero	8
The Flowers of the Paschal Mystery	9
2019 Information Conference	11
Consecration Announcements	12
Anniversary Reflections	12
Life Corner	12

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

There are many points of view in a discussion about our way of love with the Divine Lord Jesus Christ. In this article we will reflect on several aspects of our virginal vocation in view of the Vatican instruction “Ecclesiae sponsae imago.” This instruction is a response to an ancient vocation in the Church that was put “on hold” for ten centuries, during which time the consecration of virgins was not permitted for women living in the world. In 1970, however, when the liturgical rite of consecration to a life of virginity was once again permitted, not only for those living in the religious family of a monastery, but also for those living in a family in the world, the ancient vocation of consecrated virginity became a new vocation in today’s Church.

“Ecclesiae sponsae imago” responds to the newness of this ancient vocation; it is an instruction that was greatly anticipated and is appreciated by the virgins who have been consecrated in the nearly fifty years that have passed since the revision of the rite of consecration in 1970. “Something Ancient Something New” in this issue of The Lamp attempts to contemplate and enrich some of the discussion of the psychological aspects of our integral humanity, as addressed in the instruction.

In regard to the process of discernment and formation, n. 87 of the instruction states:

To confirm her human maturity, the following indications will be considered: *a)* realistic self-knowledge and a calm, objective awareness of her own talents and limits, together with a clear capacity for self-determination and an appropriate attitude towards the assumption of responsibility; *b)* the capacity to establish healthy, serene and generous relationships with men and women, together with a correct understanding of the value of marriage and motherhood; *c)* the capacity to integrate her sexuality with her personal identity and to direct her affective energies in a way that expresses her own femininity through a chaste life that is open to a wider spiritual fruitfulness.

A footnote indicates that n. 87 (c) was elaborated from a quote of Benedict XVI “[who] spoke of an ‘ecology of man,’ based on the fact that ‘man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will’” (*Address to the Deutscher Bundestag*, Berlin, September 22, 2011). Furthermore, we see that the phrase “the capacity to integrate her sexuality” comes from teaching of the Magisterium of the Church: man is an integration of his physical dimension; his spiritual dimension (faculties of the soul—knowledge and free will), and his life of grace (given to us from Jesus Christ, true man and true God, through baptism). The terminology “ecology of man” is also used by the Magisterium in reference to different aspects of human life: 1. In situation: the physical environment that includes time and space; 2. In relation: the family and social environment including school, place of work, the Church; 3. In vocation: the call through baptism to be “another Christ” (*alter Christus*); and 4. In “*devenere*”: the ongoing process of vocation and spiritual life culminating in eternity.

In our professional approach, human psychology refers to the zone of confluence of body, soul, and the divine grace of God received in baptism. The virgin discerning her vocation does so in a specific environment as she searches out the mystery of our divine Lord Jesus Christ as true man and true God. She discovers her own sexuality as a woman in the context of her identification with Jesus Christ, and this enriches her own identity as an integrated person. In her capacity to make a free decision to say “yes” to the gift from God of a virginal vocation, and to love Jesus Christ, she enriches the meaning of being a virgin. As she contemplates living the way of love with Him, it is by the very means of her feminine sexuality that she as a person approaches the spousal image of Jesus Christ. Sexuality is a distinction the eternal Father made in creating the sexual identity of man and woman; thus sexuality is an expression of the woman’s being as created by Him.

When the eternal Father created the virgin Eve, He created her from the side of the man who was created in His image and likeness. What this means is that they were created in the essence of the virginal being of the eternal Father—the same virginal being by which His Son’s mother was created, and from whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, was created the human nature of His Son in the virginal state.

Jesus Christ as God has no beginning or end. By her baptism, the woman who is called to the virginal vocation is chosen to live forevermore the virginity of the Most Holy Trinity. In the mystery of her vocation, she, like the Blessed Virgin Mary, embraces the life of virginity in witness to the life of virginity she will live in eternity, because in the eternal home there will be no giving or taking in marriage (see Mt. 22:30). The virgin belongs to Jesus Christ and she follows him, in her own time and space, in the same virginal state as Jesus Christ himself lived. In eternity, in a virginal betrothal (“*desposorium*”), she will be following the Lamb—Jesus Christ, true God and true man—as His spouse. In her virginal consecration, a woman prefigures the image of the Church, Spouse of Jesus. The personal identity of the virgin consecrated to Christ is expressed in her manifestation of affection for her divine Spouse, conveyed in her temporal work of prayer as she witnesses to the image of the Church in the midst of this mortal world.

ESI 88 states:

In vocational guidance and when there is need to describe the characteristics of this vocation and the requirements for admission to consecration, the condition of virginity will be presented starting with the rich symbolism of its biblical foundations, within the framework of an anthropological vision solidly based on Christian revelation. On this basis the different dimensions, physical, psychological and spiritual, are integrated and considered in their dynamic connection to the lived history of the person and in openness to the unceasing action of divine grace that directs, guides and invigorates her on the path of holiness.

This paragraph addresses our psychological approach concerning the dimensions or capacity of the integral human being: physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions are all considered in the context of human integration. “Dynamic” as a psychological approach, or system, affirms that human acts are understandable and predictable only through an analysis of previous experiences and motivational states of the organism, rather than through a simple description of the objective stimuli temporally preceding human acts (See psychologydictionary.org/dynamic-psychology). In the ongoing process of our lives, it is not enough for us to rest on a determinism based upon past experiences. Rather, we should instead rest in the grace of God that comes from the Holy Spirit, who alone can give us the actual grace we need to work through the ongoing process of following in the path of holiness. As we described above, this is the dimension of divine grace at work in the integral human being, moving us in our way of love for the divine Spouse.

Our virginal vocation does place an important focus on past experiences. In the case of a woman who will marry a man, there is no impediment to the wedding if the woman does not possess integral virginity. In the case, however, of a woman called to be the spouse of Jesus Christ in witness to the eternal wedding feast, perpetual virginity is itself the gift she offers and returns to the divine Lord who has called her to be His spouse. The virginal vocation is given to the virginal woman, as it was given to Mary of Nazareth. It was the decision of the eternal Father to re-create in His Son’s Mother the physical virginity given to Eve before original sin. Our Blessed Mother was created immaculate in order to be the new Eve, and from her the virginal Son of God was born.

The stronghold of the vocation of consecrated virginity is integral virginity. In the instruction *ESI*, there is also an impression of ambiguity in number 88:

... in the often complex and sometimes contradictory events of human life, helping the person to grasp her uniqueness and the unity of her being, enabling her to make a total gift of self. In this context it should be kept in mind that the call to give witness to the Church’s virginal, spousal and fruitful love for Christ is not reducible to the symbol of physical integrity.

With these words and the following sentence, it seems that the paragraph is trying to establish the case of a woman who has the virginal vocation but loses physical integrity due to an act of rape. This interpretation makes sense in light of *ESI* n. 89:

In vocational discernment and in the formation process prior to consecration, recourse to expert psychologists can be helpful in some cases. ... A personality assessment can be prudently requested if doubts arise about the presence of a psychological disorder.

The physical violation of a woman who had received from God the vocation to virginal consecration is a Traumatic Disorder, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is conceptualized as a Traumatic Brain Injury. In the case of rape, although there is no

impediment for consecration, there is a trauma that could limit the woman's ability to serenely live a life of perpetual virginity.

The woman who has had sexual experience as a product of her own free will does not have an authentic call to a life of perpetual virginity. In the virginal vocation, there is no duality of physical donation—it is not possible at one and the same time to give one's physical body to a man and to give the physical body to God because one has received the call to live in perpetual virginity. The virginal vocation involves an exclusive donation of the integral being of a woman. For the woman who has been called to live in perpetual virginity, physical virginity is an act of free will as she decides to give herself in exclusive love to Jesus Christ.

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

USACV Leadership Team

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

Emily Byers (2018)-2020; **Secretary of 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 Baker (OR). (*Publication of "The Lamp"*).

Joani McCann 2019-2021 (subject to confirmation in fall 2019); Archdiocese of Boston. (*Convocation liaison*).

IRC Leadership Team

Magalis Aguilera; USA, Archdiocese of Miami.

Judith Stegman, President of USACV-IRC 2019-2025;
Treasurer 2019-2020; USA, Diocese of Lansing.

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

Maria Luisa Oefe; GERMANY, Diocese of Regensburg.

Renu Rita Silvano; INDIA, Archdiocese of Bombay.

Other USACV-IRC services, among others

Mary Kay Lacke; Information Conference director.

Theresa Marshall; Information Conference coordinator.

Margaret Flipp; assistant treasurer.

Anne Gishpert; archivist.

Elizabeth Lam; website coordinator.

Joyce Stolberg; *Lamp* layout and design.

Florence Sundberg; prayer chain coordinator.

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY

USACV
www.consecratedvirgins.org

2019 USACV Membership:

from membership coordinator Francesca Riddick:

We would like to encourage all our members and friends to register this year to the USACV. The reasons for doing so are many:

First, and most importantly, you will be in communication with others who are living this vocation. You will hear stories of how other consecrated virgins live around the country. You will hear of their hopes, dreams, struggles and daily victories living in a world so opposed to Gospel living.

Secondly, with your donation, you will be supporting the work of the association in promoting this vocation and help assist in the work of on-going formation of this particular vocation in the heart of the Church.

Thirdly, you will have the opportunity to deepen your own vocational call through the formation and testimony of those who share in this forum.

The 2019 member and friend registration renewal forms are available now on our USACV website, www.consecratedvirgins.org. Thanks to those who have already registered as 2019 members and friends. Your generous support is greatly appreciated.



Upcoming Events Sponsored by the USACV

2019 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins

July 5 to July 9, USML Conference Center,
Mundelein, Illinois (Archdiocese of Chicago).

See article, page 7.

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2019 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).

See article, page 11.

Announcements and News

Silent Retreat for Consecrated Virgins:

A Silent Retreat for Consecrated Virgins, sponsored by Loretta Matulich and Regina Dibbs, will take place June 16 to June 24, 2019, at Our Lady of Peace Retreat Center in the Archdiocese of Portland (OR). The retreat theme will be, “To Be Parented by God and Our Blessed Mother to Begin to Live on Earth as it is in Heaven.” For more information, contact Regina Dibbs at firstjn416@gmail.com.

Save the Date:

May 28 to May 31, 2020, for an international gathering of the *Ordo virginum* in Rome, to celebrate the fifty-year anniversary of the promulgation of the revised Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity.

Upcoming Issues of The Lamp:

September 8, 2019 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

December 12, 2019 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

February 2, 2020 Feast of the Presentation and World Day of Consecrated Life

June 14, 2020 Solemnity of Corpus Christi

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 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*.

Available:

In our online store at www.consecratedvirgins.org:

Ordo Virginum series books:

Volume 1: *An Introduction to the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World*

Volume 2: *Discernment and Formation for the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World*

Recordings from prior convocations

Recordings from the 2018 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World.



By Judith M. Stegman

Over these past months, many questions have come our way in regard to the vocation of consecrated virginity lived in the world and the new 2017 Vatican instruction, *Ecclesiae sponsae imago (ESI)*. Consecrated virgins with particular background and expertise are looking forward to offering presentations on various aspects of the instruction at our upcoming July convocation (see p. 7). In light of the timeliness of the *ESI* topics to be discussed, we are also extending a special invitation to diocesan delegates for consecrated life (or vicars for religious) to join us. Delegates who are interested in attending the full convocation or specific talks should be in touch with me or convocation planners Francesca Riddick or Joani McCann.

Special invitations to consecrated virgins:

- a) From an International Resource Center leadership team member, to all consecrated virgins (even those who are not able to attend the 2019 convocation): "My name is Maria Luisa Meza, a consecrated virgin from El Salvador. For our July convocation, I shall try to make a short video on how the consecrated virgin, as bride of Christ, is called to be an eschatological image of the world to come. I kindly ask you to send me pictures or a brief video showing how in your life you give witness to what we read in *Ecclesiae sponsae imago* #17: 'Christian virginity thus exists in the world as a clear sign of the future Kingdom because its presence exposes the relativity of material goods and the transitory nature of the world itself.' My email address is mlmezaovc@gmail.com. I thank you profusely for your kind contribution!"
- b) To all consecrated virgins: Please send your questions, discussion topics, and ideas for needed vocational resources, to any Leadership Team member before the upcoming convocation. Your ideas will contribute to discussions to be held during the convocation, and ultimately to the convocation proceedings and planning for future endeavors to serve the Church in her support of this spousal vocation of love for Christ.
- c) To those who will attend the convocation: Please be considering a talent to share at our ever-popular talent show, to be held on Sunday evening, July 7.

On a personal note, I have been richly blessed to have had the opportunity to spend the winter months engaged in writing my dissertation in canon law—delving into the topic of mystical espousal to Christ from a juridical-theological perspective.

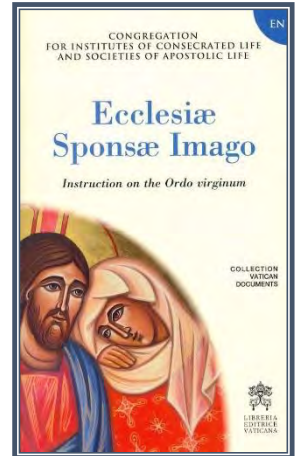


2019 United States Convocation of Consecrated Virgins

July 5-9, 2019 ~ Mundelein, IL

It is with great joy that we invite all **Consecrated Virgins, Delegates for Consecrated Life, and Bishops** to the Annual U.S. Convocation of Consecrated Virgins and announce the theme of this year's convocation: "*Ecclesiae sponsae imago*: A Practical and In-Depth Study for the Consecrated Virgin." Consecrated Virgins from the United States and abroad will gather in Mundelein, Illinois at St. Mary of the Lake University this July in light of this instruction issued by the Vatican last year.

We warmly invite all consecrated virgins to consider attending this important convocation, as well as any Delegates for Consecrated Life who would benefit from the information presented. The Convocation will offer participants time for prayer and sharing throughout these days, with opportunities for Adoration and Confession as well.



Below are the topics of the presentations that will be offered during the convocation:

- "*Ecclesiae sponsae imago*: Canonical Introduction" by Judith M. Stegman, J.C.L.
- "Psychological, Spiritual, and Divine Principles of the Virginal Vocation" by Dr. Magalis Aguilera Psy. D.
- "Discernment and Formation in *ESI* and *Ordo Virginum Vol. IP*" by Emily Byers, M.Th
- "Consecrated Virginity as *Kerygma* of the Gospel" by Maria Luisa Oefele
- "Consecrated Virgins & the Local Church: Theological and Canonical Considerations in Light of *Ecclesiae sponsae imago*" by Jenna Cooper, J.C.L.
- "Scriptural Aspects of *ESP*" by Dr. Renu Silvano
- "Consecrated Virginity: A Life Worth Living" by Maria Luisa Meza

The Convocation will be held at **University of St. Mary of the Lake Conference Center (USML)** in Mundelein, Illinois (a northern suburb of Chicago) from Friday, July 5 through Tuesday, July 9. To access the schedule and registration form, please visit our Web site:

<https://consecratedvirgins.org/>



“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.

Carol Stronach—March 31, 2019 (consecrated August 22, 1997)

Jennie Lucero—March 19, 2019 (consecrated December 11, 2013)

Angela Scannapieco—March 2, 2019 (consecrated January 28, 2001)

Theresita Polzin—January 21, 2019 (consecrated February 11, 1999)

Mary Irving—November 2018 (consecrated June 22, 1985)

Elsie Isaac—September 19, 2018 (consecrated June 28, 2000)

Diana Mae Peterson—August 18, 2018 (consecrated January 17, 1998)

“They stand before God’s throne and worship Him day and night in His temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them. They will not hunger or thirst anymore, nor will the sun or any heat strike them. For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:15-17)

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).

Memorial for Jennie Lucero

Submitted by Mary Therese Wyant:

On the Solemnity of St. Joseph, March 19, 2019, Jennie Lucero went home to her Beloved Spouse. Jennie was born on the Memorial of the Nativity of Our Lady, September 8, 1943, in Anton Chico, New Mexico. Having received her RN degree at the University of Albany in New York, Jennie served the Lord as a nurse in Farmington, New Mexico. She was also very active in the Legion of Mary and other ministries in her parish, St. Mary’s. She also had a great devotion to the Divine Mercy and had a very large image of the Divine Mercy in her home.

Jennie received the Consecration of a Virgin on December 11, 2013, at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Farmington, at the hands of Bishop James Wall, Diocese of Gallup, NM. Vickie Hamilton assisted Jennie during her preparation and we were both blessed to be able to attend and assist at her consecration.

Jennie was even more “low tech” than I am, so we corresponded occasionally by phone or letter. I was able to talk to her briefly two days before she died. She knew we were praying for her and was very grateful. Please pray for her and for her family.



The Flowers of the Paschal Mystery

By Diane Christine Farr

In chapter 3 of the Book of Daniel we read, “Let everything growing from the earth bless the Lord.” How fitting it is that many traditions symbolizing various aspects of the Paschal Mystery have been attributed to many flowers.

The pasque flower with its purple petals and golden stamens blooms in April. It symbolizes the passage of Jesus through His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, culminating with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The sunflower stands for the divine Will, for the sun rising above everything illuminates the entire earth with its light, just as God’s Will is above all things. In the *Prayer for the Consecration of Virgins* we read, “May they give you glory by holiness of action and purity of heart.” In order to achieve this, we should have the intention of fusing ourselves in the order of grace as well as in the divine Will. We desire that all of our acts of love, work and prayer flow continually in the divine Will.

Fragrant pots of basil have been used to decorate Greek churches and it is known as the Holy Communion plant. The fringed petals of the clove pink remind us of the monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament. The scarlet lychnis or Jerusalem Cross signifies the constant light of the sanctuary lamp, for lychnis means “little lamp.” The consecrated virgin places her heart in the tabernacle with Jesus and, in profound adoration, she keeps the lamp of her love ever burning. This is only possible because she draws the flame of her own love from the heart of her Divine Spouse. The early purple orchid is a European wildflower. The reddish blotches on its leaves caused it to be associated with the blood of Christ, especially in the agony in the garden. The consecrated virgin must enter into the interior sufferings of her Lord, wishing to be His angel of consolation. This office will fill her heart with compassion for the sufferings of others. The soft silvery leaves of the plant known as lamb’s ears causes us to reflect on Jesus the Lamb of God. He was meek and silent when condemned to death. As brides of Christ, do we follow this Divine Lamb where He leads us? The pink and white mottled flowers of the yarrow became associated with the marks of the scourging on our Lord’s back. Our Lord incorporated all souls within Himself in order to make reparation for and redeem them. At the scourging, our Lord felt the horrendous pain of those souls who would willfully and obstinately separate themselves from Him.

The passionflower vine produces purple and white flowers with a circle of filaments around the center of the flower. The different parts of the flower signify various aspects of Christ’s passion including the three nails, the five wounds and the crown of thorns. In the crowning of thorns Jesus experienced the horror of every evil thought and disposition of the human mind.

The forsythia with its golden blossoms in the shape of a cross is known as the Easter bush. The dogwood is also associated with the cross. Its four creamy white petals, two long and two short, have a rust colored mark at the base of each, representing the wounds of Christ. Our Lord suffered in His passion a unique pain for every sin committed by mankind. He willingly embraced the cross to repair our lack of correspondence with God’s Will.

Veronica, with its spikes of blue, cross-shaped flowers, was named after the woman who bravely walked through the mob to wipe the face of Jesus. Legend tells us how the violet with its drooping flowers bowed its head in sorrow when Jesus passed by carrying His cross.

The red rose symbolizes Christ's infinite love as well as the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary. The single, five-petal rose stands for Jesus' five wounds. The rose also stands for the pure and perfect love burning in the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The larkspur is known as Mary's tears. The Lily of the Valley also has this title. Pulmonaria with its pink buds and blue flowers and white spotted leaves is known both as Mary's tears and Mary's milk drops. We can never comprehend the immense love and pain that passed between the virgin mother and her divine Son. The morning glory is Mary's mantle. Our Blessed Mother wishes to gather all humanity under her mantle. The consecrated virgin occupies a cherished place under this mantle where she learns the value and dignity of holy virginity. Jesus gave to us the tremendous gift of His own mother while dying on the cross. The bell flower is our Lady's thimble as well as her star. She is the star that leads us to Jesus while she works in our lives as only a mother can. The lovely aster is also Mary's star.

The red poppy is a symbol of Christ's blood while the scarlet begonia represents His Sacred Heart. The bleeding heart symbolizes both the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. As we learn from the Divine Mercy image, the blood and water that flowed from Christ's pierced heart signify both Baptism and the Eucharist. This should make the bride of Christ keenly aware that she draws her entire life and nourishment from her Bridegroom.

We read in the prayer for the consecration of virgins, "Be yourself, their glory, their joy, their whole desire." In her prayer the consecrated virgin wishes to cover all souls with the cleansing power of the precious blood of Jesus.

The elegant Easter lily is a symbol of the radiant purity and majestic beauty of the risen Christ. The consecrated virgin must be filled with His noble beauty and live in the fragrance of His holy presence. She must allow her Bridegroom to adorn her soul with His own purity and the splendor of the knowledge of living in the divine Will. The gift of virginity she has received is a participation in the divine and eternal virginity of the most Holy Trinity. The Father draws her heart to His beloved Son and the Holy Spirit reveals to her the face of her Bridegroom. In complete self-effacement, she knows that her virginity as well as her entire life is totally immersed in Christ. This understanding produces in her soul a heavenly joy and a profound peace. The hyacinth, a sign of grace, is Easter spike and daffodils are Easter bells. The perennial white candytuft is Easter flower and the yellow evening primrose is Easter candle. As consecrated virgins, we need to be harbingers of Easter joy and lights of support for each other. We know that life's difficulties can be overwhelming at times.

For Christ's Ascension we have the lily of the valley as a ladder to heaven and the lilac as an Ascension Day spike. May we ever ascend in the divine Will, giving God perfect glory. The peony is Pentecost rose. Columbine, whose flowers resemble a cluster of doves, is the emblem of the Holy Spirit. We seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as the teacher of divine truths. We contemplate these Paschal mysteries in silent wonder. We complete our reflection with the chrysanthemum. It is an emblem of All Saints' Day and also signifies the golden treasure of the virginity of the mother of God. We share in this grace by guarding this treasure in the depth of our being. As consecrated virgins, we know that true sanctity is not a matter of personal achievements but a total surrender to infinite love and the divine Will reigning in our souls. We have known the divine love of Jesus, our heavenly Bridegroom.

Let us love Him with strength of His own love and share His love with everyone. As we possess the divine Will, let us adore the most Holy Trinity with the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son and the love of the Holy Spirit. May the Trinity reign in the garden of our hearts.

The 2019 Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World is coming soon. Sponsored by the USACV, the conference will be held July 30 to August 2 at St. Francis Conference and Retreat Center in DeWitt, Michigan. Registration forms and a flyer about the conference are now available at www.consecratedvirgins.org.



Top: Chapel at St. Francis Retreat House. Above: Bishop Boyea teaches at information conference a few years ago

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.

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 the 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. For more information, please contact the conference coordinator, Theresa Marshall at Tel. (734)332-4648 or marshallcv@gmail.com. Conference registration forms available at www.consecratedvirgins.org.



Retreat House: Top: Front Entrance. Above: Retreat garden.

Consecration Announcements

United States:

March 25, 2019 Mary A. Seguin, Diocese of Gaylord (MI), at the hands of The Most Reverend Steven J. Raica.

May 24, 2019 Sara Scheunemann, Diocese of Green Bay (WI), at the hands of The Most Reverend David L. Ricken.



Sara Scheunemann with
Bishop David L. Ricken

Upcoming U. S. Consecrations

United States:

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

Consecration Anniversary Reflections

Consecrated virgins who celebrate significant anniversaries during 2019 are invited to submit an anniversary reflection for *The Lamp*. These anniversary reflections are popular among our readers as they convey a personal look at life lived as a bride of Christ in the *Ordo virginum*. More reflections will follow in our September and December issues.

Anniversary Reflections: 45 Years

Loretta Matulich, consecrated August 13, 1974

"As time goes on after my Consecration on August 13, 1974, I can only say that God makes life better and better. The Consecration is a precious and profound gift and one of which I and all of us are totally unworthy to receive. The intimacy with Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary is beyond words, so I will stop here."

Life Corner

By Florence Sundberg

As I become more and more entrenched in the battle against Human Trafficking, I find myself discouraged at times because evil seems so powerful and pervasive; little children are taken and made slaves and torn in body and spirit. I pray that God hears their cries, the little ones who have lost all hope. He calls us to stop and listen too, and then to act to bring His love and compassion to the suffering, the persecuted, the oppressed among us—especially the children! "I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do." Let us join in prayer for the little ones who suffer—in Christ, they are ours and we are theirs because we are Christ's and He is ours. And so, let us pray!

SERVING THE VOCATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINITY



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