

The Lamp



United States Association of
Consecrated Virgins

May 30, 2010
Feast of The Most Holy
Trinity

Volume 15, Issue 2

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINS:

Having finished 47 Confirmation ceremonies this school year, I am quite reflective about Pentecost, which is just around the corner as I write these words.

Pondering the Upper Room, where the apostles were gathered, it is noteworthy that Mary was with them. She too was filled with the Holy Spirit anew, even as she had been full of grace as the Angel greeted her with the Spirit's breath some 33 years earlier.

Acts 1:14 notes that after the Ascension, they all returned to Jerusalem and "All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers." We also know, from the end of John's Gospel, that Mary had been given by Jesus to the Beloved as his mother as well, and hence the beginning of Mary's role as Mother of the Church.

From all of this, I would like to offer a few reflections about how Mary, precisely as a virgin, models for us how to live out our consecration.

First of all, the consecration of Mary was sealed from the time of the Incarnation and Gabriel's greeting. However, the specification of her life was always to be attentive to Jesus—hearing the will of God and doing it. Thus, as Jesus gave his mother to his disciple and to us, he gave her to us as she was for him, that is, attentive. Her relationship to the Church is not as the Church's master or guide but as the one who is most attentive to the will of God as manifested in the Bride of Christ, the Church. Consecrated virginity calls forth from our sisters this same kind of attentiveness to the Church, as the place where they will hear the word of God and find the strength to act upon it.

Secondly, I like to think that Mary was not just one of the ones present in that Upper Room who was in accord with the rest, but that she played a pivotal role in helping to bring about that accord. All those disciples were a mixed crew. Their normal human temptations were still alive and active—the hubris, the pride, the cowardice, and the jealousy were still present. Nothing mattered for Mary except her Son and the will of God. Now unattached, but attached to all, she models for consecrated virgins the summons to be those who further unity, something that can only be done by a sacrificial and generous love.

Thirdly, they prayed together. Consecrated virginity is a commitment to pray. Mary did not sit by herself in splendid isolation, but she joined the fearful and weak and prayed with and for them. Presumably she prayed for the coming of the Holy Spirit. My sisters, this life as a consecrated virgin is a life for others, for all others. If our prayer is not conscious of that then our daily lives will not be conscious of that.

Mary, the Blessed Virgin, is a wonderful model of life in that Upper Room, a place in which we wish to place ourselves. There, may we all be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. A blessed Pentecost time to all of you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Bishop of Lansing

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Special Points of Interest:

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The preface of the ancient rite for the consecration of a virgin, written by Pope Saint Leo the Great, gives us insight into the significance of the gift of virginity: “Christ dwelling in the virgin, his bride, showing her glory in the vast context of God the Father.” The prayer of consecration spoken by the Bishop also points to the meaning of virginity: “Our nature was corrupted when the devil deceived our first parents, but you have restored it in Christ. He is your Word, through whom all things were made. He has made our nature whole again, and made it possible for mortal people to reflect the life of angels.” (Cf. Rite, Consecration to a Life of Virginity for a Woman Living in the World, #24) These words, “our nature whole again” call to mind the teaching of Vatican II on the integration of the physical, spiritual and divine aspects of the human being: “... man considered whole and entire, with body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will.” (Cf. *Gaudium et Spes* # 3,1). Our vocation to Christian virginity is a call to make a donation of our entire selves, our whole selves, including the physical.

Mary, the virgin mother, is surely the key to the meaning of our virginal vocation. In Mary’s motherhood, the expectation of a chain of generations for the Messiah is fulfilled. In Mary, precisely as virgin, what is expected became reality. She is the first to inaugurate the “fullness of time.” In Jesus Christ, her son, is revealed the profound mystery of the nuptial union, for He Himself is the true and unique spouse. With the light of the incarnation, it is human marriage that becomes a sign, for the reality of marriage is now shown in the wedding of Jesus Christ with His Church. (Cfr. Mt 22, 1 ss; Eph 5,31-32) Jesus teaches that the sexual dimension of human marriage is a dimension that belongs only to this life, preceding the ultimate reality of resurrected life, in which there will be no taking of husband or wife. (Cf. Mat 22, 23-33)

A virginal vocation is a vocation lived in anticipation of the resurrected life to come. It is a vocation lived in witness to Christ’s spousal relationship with His Church. A virginal vocation somehow transcends the limitations of this life and allows one to begin to experience a return to that original state of mankind as created by the Eternal Father, before original sin caused a digression from his plan for creation.

Jesus’ spousal relationship with the Church is virginal, and since the first centuries, the Church has understood that a life of virginity reflects this essential nature. Saint Ignatius of Antioch wrote, “there are marriageable women living in the state of virginity, in honor of the flesh of Christ.” (Cfr. Ignatius of Antioch 107, c a) Such teaching of the Fathers of the Church, which proposes a transcendental, eternal meaning to physical virginity that is offered to Jesus Christ, was not possible before Jesus. Physical virginity offered to Christ took on a transcendental, eternal meaning when Christ restored the human being to his original state of creation – when He made our nature whole again!

It is interesting to review the words of the Fathers of the Church concerning virginity and marriage. Perhaps the words sound strange to our modern ears, as they speak of virginal as “uncorrupted” bodies, but perhaps, too, this is the time in history that we might rediscover and re-propose a deeper meaning of virginity, in light of the words of the Fathers of the Church, and in light, too, of the “theology of the body” teachings of Servant of God Pope John Paul II, teachings which bring us to a deeper understanding of the created good in the physical expressions of our sexuality, in both marriage and virginity. So, we proceed to explore some words of the Fathers of the Church...

By the year 150, Saint Justin wrote: “...there are many virgins, women and men, who have followed the teaching of Christ and are now sixty or seventy years old, continuing to keep their bodies uncorrupted.”(cfr. *Apology I* 15, 6,340). Origen (185-254) interprets Christian marriage as a sign of the marriage of Christ with His Church and he adds that virginity is superior to marriage in the sense of its transcendental meaning, because it is the realization of our future life and not an image of the mystical nuptials. (cfr. *De oratione*, 23, *Greek Patrology of Migne*, 11, 490) Saint John Chrysostom (344-407) considered virginity something exceptional and constantly declared that both virgins and married couples are called to be saints. (cfr. *In Mt homiliae* 7,7, *Greek Patrology* 57, 91) .

Saint Ambrose (350-397) always linked the understanding of Christian virginity with an understanding of ecclesiology and Christology, going so far as to name consecrated virginity as a sacrament in the sense that it is a true sign, in this life, that reflects the reality of the future eternal life with Christ, the very meaning of the mystery of Salvation. Christian virginity is participation in the mystery of Christ’s body, and as the Church is virgin and fruitful, the virgin is called to also be fruitful. (cfr. *Latin Patrology of Migne* 16, 219, *De virginibus* III, 1, 1) The Word who became flesh lived as a virgin, and took his flesh from the virginal womb of Mary – by consequence, it is clear that the state of living in Christian virginity is a Christ-like state. (cfr. *De virginibus* I, 3, 13)

In reference to women living as virgins, Saint Ambrose said that a virgin is a sacrament of Christ, as the Church herself is a sacrament of Christ. As a spouse of the Word, she is a spiritual and fruitful mother, as the Church herself is a spiritual and fruitful mother. Saint Ambrose saw in this virgin the feminine characteristic of not being the one who courts the man, but being the one who is a helper to him. (cfr. *De virginibus* I, 6,30)

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Council News

Current council members and officers are:

Judith M. Stegman, President, 2010 – 2012; Diocese of Lansing

Magalis Aguilera, 2010-2012, **Member-at-Large** (appointed **Vice-President** thru 2012); Archdiocese of Miami

Louise Pare, Treasurer, 2008 – 2010; Diocese of Lansing

Twanna Bolling, Member-at-large, 2008-2010 (appointed **Secretary** through 2010) Archdiocese of Chicago.

Shalina Stilley, Member-at-large, 2009-2011, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Team Announcements:

Formation Resource Development Team: Mary Kay Lacke:

The Information Conference on the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World sponsored, each year, by the USACV has proven to be a rich resource for those inquiring about the vocation whether they be women discerning this vocation, recently consecrated virgins, or diocesan personnel working with women in regard to the vocation.

It is important for us to pray that those whom the Lord is sending to the Conference respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and come to the Conference. It is also important that we encourage attendance by those we know who would benefit from the Conference. The deadline for registration is **July 5, 2010**.

Two of the talks that have been given consistently in the recent past have been revised and expanded for this year's conference. Judith Stegman has significantly enhanced her presentation on the Vocation Tree through text, graphics and Power Point to more clearly focus on the vocation of consecrated virginity lived in the world. This presentation will prove very beneficial for the inquirers. The talk on the Rite of Consecration has been reworked by Mary Kay Lacke to draw from the text of the Rite the deeper implications regarding the distinct spirituality of the consecrated virgin. Both talks aim to identify the uniqueness of our vocation in the life of the Church.

Membership Team: Shalina Stilley. The 2010 Membership drive is proceeding well, and we thank all who have already registered. If you need an application form or have any

questions about membership, please feel free to contact me at shalinastilley@hotmail.com.

Candidate Care Team: The candidate care package travels to Fort Dodge, Iowa. Any recently consecrated virgins who would like to share their invitations, etc. with others, please send two copies to:

Barb Swieciak

149 s. 24th Street

La Crosse, WI 54601

Recording Team – Magalis Aguilera reminds us that the following recordings are available:

*2009 Convocation, and prior convocations

*Information Conference presentations

*EWTN appearance, August 2009, Judith Stegman

**Consecrated Virgins in Today's Church*, a DVD and discernment guide on the vocation of consecrated virginity

*Other vocational CD's

Upcoming events:

2010 National Convocation of United States Consecrated

Virgins:

July 14-18, 2010

Mundelein Retreat and Conference Center
Chicago area

See article on page 7 for more details.

2010 National Information Conference:

August 4 to 8, 2010

The Cenacle, Chicago
(brochure available at www.consecratedvirgins.org)

See Mary Kay Lacke Formation Resource Development Team announcement, for more details.

Next issues of The Lamp -

following our new quarterly schedule. Please submit articles three weeks prior to publication date:

September 8, 2010, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

December 12 2010 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

February 2, 2011, Feast of the Presentation and World Day of Consecrated Life

Reflections of Consecrated Virgins

Anniversary reflections. Beginning with this issue of “The Lamp,” we will include reflections from consecrated virgins celebrating significant anniversaries...we begin our series with words from Loretta Matulich, one of the first virgins consecrated in the United States after the restoration of the Rite in 1970.

Reflections on the Eve of 36 years of Consecrated Virginity

-Loretta Matulich

“Jesus Christ is in control, even when people do not recognize it.” These were the final words spoken to us when we said good-bye for the last time to Fr. Cyprian Vaggagini, OSB, at the Camaldolese monastery in the mountains of Italy. Shortly afterward, Fr. Vaggagini passed into God’s eternal Presence. But, those words of faith and wisdom live on in my memory.

In this written reflection of my nearly 36 years of consecrated virginity, I will not narrate the extraordinary story of how I found out about the Consecration in 1962, nor how the bishop said Yes to me for the Consecration in 1974. Some of you have heard it already. I will, however, relate to you the *meaning* of those 36 years.

By Divine Providence, great people of faith have come into my life to inspire me. Fr. Vaggagini was one of them. Another, through his books, was Fr. Walter Cizek, SJ. His absolute trust in Divine Providence, honed to perfection during his years in the Lubyanka Prison in Moscow and then in Siberia, showed me the simplicity of living the faith --but all with decisive, peaceful trust in Divine Providence. I can reflect now, as I am sure each person who reads this account can, on how Divine Providence sends into our lives people, opportunities, and circumstances to protect and form us in order to live consecrated virginity. Another person influential in my life was the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, whose book *The World’s First Love* with its chapter on “Virginity” showed me in 1960 that this gift of grace was also my calling. Subsequently, I made that private promise of perpetual virginity while still in my teens in that year. Archbishop Sheen promoted also the daily Holy Hour before the Most Blessed Sacrament, which I embraced years ago.

Through St. Therese of Lisieux’ autobiography, I found a friend. Her words assure me when she says something like, “I am sure that God would not give us certain good desires if He did not intend to fulfill them.” How many of those good desires God has fulfilled and is fulfilling even now in my life—ways to build up the Church in the spiritual life, especially in the consecrated life, through teaching and writing; communication with prisoners; sponsorship of or-

phans through Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos; help to widows; support of the holy priesthood; and work for the missions. These areas of service to build up the Church go back even to my childhood. I shall relate one example here.

In the 1950s on television in Los Angeles, where I grew up, each week we watched Archbishop Sheen’s program, *Life Is Worth Living*. I was fascinated by the thought of support for the missions to spread the faith. So, one summer I engaged my sister, who was in grade school (I was in junior high school then), to go with me each afternoon on the beach and spot the vacationers who had bought a hamburger and coke for their lunch. We approached these people and asked them if they wanted their empty coke bottles any more. When they said “No,” we took the empty coke bottles and subsequently turned them in at the local grocery store for the deposit. All summer vacation we continued this. By the end of the three months, we had collected something like \$11.50. This amount we sent to Archbishop Sheen, then National Director for the Propagation of the Faith. Needless to say, he wrote us a personal letter of thanks. How many bottles, you ask, did we collect? Well, you can do the math: each coke bottle in those days was worth 2¢. Do you suppose that the CEO of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company ever knew that his product was helping to build the faith in the foreign missions?

Today our Catholic magazines register much distress over the effects of the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the laxity and abuse which set in, in the 1970s. However, I shall give another perspective. Despite all the rough seas, rip tides, and undertows of those decades, the Holy Spirit was quietly working in the depths of the hearts of His faithful. It was those decades that we now recognize to be the very years that He was inspiring young women from around this country (and the world) to yearn for the Consecration of Virgins. Two were in Boston, also consecrated in 1974, and I was on the West Coast. Others were in various parts of this country and in Europe, where the practice of the faith sometimes now seems to be ebbing. “Jesus Christ is in control, even when people do not recognize it.” Jesus Christ is with His Church until the end of time; “Nothing is impossible to God.”

But, who is this Jesus Christ? Pope Benedict XVI has pointed Him out to us: “God is love.” This Jesus Christ is Love Himself! He is our Spouse.



Reflections continued

From Cherie Benzin:

I received the consecration to a life of virginity on April 8, 1995 from the hands of Bishop Edward Head.

During the fifteen years that followed, the USACV was formed and I was able to attend one retreat. What a joy to meet other consecrated virgins (they really do exist!) I was so privileged to meet Archbishop Burke and hear him speak. Also during those years, two more women were consecrated in our diocese. How happy I was that Judith Stegman was able to attend one of those consecrations. But the road to consecration, and after, has not always been an easy one, as our diocese does not fully encourage and support the vocation.

Like many of us, I started out seeking a vocation as a religious sister. But God had other plans and after several years, I finally gave up my search. My prayer was, "Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but You will." (Mk 14:36)

A formation director gave me an article on consecrated virginity. Without seeking it, several more articles crossed my path. Remember, this was the late 1980's before Google and the internet. Believing this was my true vocation, I contacted the Vicar of Religious and she structured a six-year formation program.

Finally, a month before his retirement, Bishop Head consecrated me. I treasure the many notes he sent me over the years. Throughout these years, I received love and encouragement from Lori Rose Cannizzaro, Diane Farr, and Loretta Matulich. When I lost my job, consecrated virgins prayed for me and some sent financial assistance.

April 8, 2010 was a pleasant day, and our church was still beautifully decorated from Easter. White lilies were everywhere! I had the Mass offered for the repose of the soul of my beloved Bishop Head.

Just like Jesus, who travelled from Calvary to His glorious resurrection – I believe as consecrated virgins, we must embrace the cross to receive the glorious crown of being His spouse.

Something Ancient, Something New continued

The Second Vatican Council presented virginity using the same interpretation as the Fathers of the Church, teaching the preeminence and superiority of the virginal vocation for all called to live the virginal vocation. Saint Paul taught that if a person is not able to live in the state of celibacy or virginity, it is because this person has not been called to do so. God doesn't take back a gift that He gives a person. Rather, the gift lingers in the person's soul, awaiting his or her decision. The virginal vocation, if received as a gift from God, lasts forever; it is not a temporary vocation.

The vocation to consecrated virginity, lived either in the world or in the monastery, represents a distinct gift from God, and reflects a dual dimension of communication as God calls the virgin, and she accepts His call. The virgin is consecrated by the Church through the hands of the Bishop; she doesn't consecrate herself.

The teaching of the Fathers of the Church, the Vatican Councils, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church all define Christian virginity, lived for the Kingdom of God, as a donation of the virgin's whole self to God, in Jesus Christ His Son. The element of physical virginity is an essential part of that "whole self". Virginity is a gift received from God, and the response of the virgin to the call to consecration is in her living forever the gift of virginity, in the Church and for the Church.

Let us end with words from Saint Ambrose: Through the prayers of the gentle Virgin Mary, Mother of God, whose life is a model for all (St Ambrose, De Virginitate, 2, 2, n. 15) may our vocation increase daily and may we as consecrated virgins bring more abundant fruit of salvation for the glory of God and the Church of Jesus Christ.

Additional announcements

Brides of Christ, the second in a Symposium of the Virgin Saints, will be held Saturday, October 2, 2010 at the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist. For more information, please contact [Barb Swieciak](mailto:Barb Swieciak@dioceseoflacrosse.com) at bswieciak@dioceseoflacrosse.com. The Symposium is sponsored by the Diocese of LaCrosse Office of Consecrated Life.

Anniversary Celebration – Aliceanne Sawyer invites all to celebrate her 20th anniversary of consecration on May 31, 2010 at Christ the King Church in Hillside, New Jersey. Please rsvp to Aliceanne Sawyer, 154 Cross Slope Court, Manalapan, NJ, 97726

Living Out the Grace of Our Consecration

By Diane Christine Farr

In the introduction to the Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity, we read: “In the rite of consecration the Church reveals its love of virginity, begs God’s grace on those who are consecrated and prays with fervor for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”

a. People who question why physical virginity is a requirement for receiving the consecration are perhaps missing an important point. It is this virginity of body and soul given entirely to Jesus that the Church esteems and celebrates in the consecration of virgins. The Church has first honored perpetual virginity as seen in the Mother of God. Her virginal heart and womb became the beautiful shrine enclosing the Son of the Eternal Father. The Immaculate Virgin was that first garden enclosed, the delight of the most Blessed Trinity. The consecration points to the dignity of women and the holiness of living a virginal life centered in God. With a joyful heart the consecrated virgin mystically receives an understanding of the richness and beauty of her bridal union with Christ.

In his book, “In Defense of Purity” Dietrich von Hildebrand states; “The holier we are, the more does our entire personality share in the divine life of Christ and with and in him glorify God.” He explains how the consecrated virgin’s marriage to Christ completely transcends the relationship expressed in earthly marriage. He goes on to say, “The mystery which the sacrament of marriage signifies- the nuptials between Christ and His Church is expressed even more directly by consecrated virginity; since the virgin and the Church are wedded to the same husband, Christ.” Von Hildebrand explains that Christ alone can invite a soul to that marriage with Himself. His insight into this special call is as follows; “We have already seen that the state of perfection presupposes a special call from God. This is pre-eminently true of the specific wedlock with Christ that results from consecrated virginity. Here Jesus’ secret call to the soul plays an even more central and more indispensable part. That call is not simply, “Follow me”, but “Come my beloved, and be wed.”

All of nature seems to be invested with His divine beauty as we hear His call and find ourselves drawn to a deeper form of prayer and contemplation of all that He is. These times of silence, especially before the Blessed Sacrament, are vital to nourish our souls and help us to answer God’s call to service for others. Von Hildebrand tells us, “A greater love, then, is what the life of Christ’s bride must represent, a greater love of Jesus, the source of love, but also a greater share in Jesus’ love for all creatures.”

Friendship with other consecrated virgins is always a great blessing. We must remain focused on our beloved Jesus through the joys and sorrows of life.

Our divine Spouse will continue to take us deeper into the mystery of our beautiful vocation and the wonders of his infinite love. It is necessary that we learn perfect love through sharing the cross with Jesus. Let us cultivate with care our own garden enclosed that we may welcome our Bridegroom as He comes to us at every moment of our lives.

A word of Congratulations to **Kerry Hubata**, who, on May 2, 2010, was presented the 2010 *Mater Dei* Award by the St. Joseph College Seminary at Loyola University, given annually to honor women in the community who have exemplified the spirit of Mary’s dedication to the Lord.

Life Corner

By Florence Sundberg

Recently I attended a celebration of the life and legacy of John Cardinal O'Connor, offered by the Sisters of Life, an order founded by the Cardinal. People from all walks of life came to honor their Cardinal. There were Christians and non-Christians, the rich and the poor, the healthy and the disabled, scholars and poets and priests and nuns, artists, musicians, athletes, lawyers, CEOs of businesses, teachers, mechanics, married couples, medical personnel - so many came!! Each had been blessed by the presence of Cardinal O'Connor in their lives. These were Cardinal O'Connor's people, a people of hope and of joy and of holy determination to fight, as did the Cardinal, for life - no matter what the cost.

Cardinal Egan celebrated Mass and gave a wonderful homily about the urgent necessity to stand for life, looking to the example and inspiration of three of the greatest advocates for life: Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa and John Cardinal O'Connor.



Archbishop Dolan of New York, Father Connor of EWTN, Attorney Helen Alvare and Mother Agnes, Superior of the Sisters of Life, were the speakers. They spoke of how, after Pope John Paul II had been to Dachau, he made his priority the defense of life from conception to natural death. Same with John Cardinal O'Connor; he wanted to abolish abortion forever; he felt that the pro-life issue was not just a Catholic issue but a civil rights issue, just as the one that led to the abolition of slavery. This is not about politics, it is about life! Cardinal O'Connor said that those who stand for life are counter-cultural and that the task of creating a culture of life is monumental and requires a lot of grunt work, and holy determination. (Believe me, this is true!) The Cardinal said that if one human life is threatened, then all life is threatened. When we fight for one human life, born or unborn, we fight for all life. If we are to persevere in this work, we must deepen our prayer and sacramental life, holding fast to Christ and to His Church.

We hold fast to hope knowing that darkness cannot overcome the Light of Christ: "The Light came into the world and the darkness could not overcome it." When William Wilberforce, the great opponent of slavery, became disheartened at the overwhelming obstacles he had to face and overcome and was tempted to retreat, he was told: "You should not fear, for if this be a work of grace, it cannot fail."

I hope we will remember this when we, who face obstacles to life and to love every day, are tempted to give up. May the Holy Spirit come upon us, each of us, and let us know how we may serve the cause of life. May He give us the grace and the courage and the wisdom to stand up for life, to speak out clearly and boldly in defense of life, knowing that the newly conceived infant in the womb is truly a tiny reflection of the life and the love of God. May Christ, our beloved Spouse, hold us to Him in prayer, in love, and in supplication for all life that comes to us from the Father's immense love.

2010 Convocation

All consecrated virgins are warmly invited to attend the 2010 National Convocation of United States Consecrated Virgins, to be held July 14 to 18, in Mundelein, Illinois. Please contact Louise Paré if you haven't received a brochure and registration form. We look forward to exploring our theme, "Consecrated Virgins: in the world, but not of the world," in formal presentations, as well as in two symposium-style times of discussion. The first of these discussion periods will focus on the living out of our consecrated lives within the workplace, and the second of these discussion periods will focus on the practicalities of daily living as consecrated virgin. Please refer to the convocation brochure for more details. We welcome in advance your input regarding specific matters you'd like to see discussed in either of these periods. Please also let us know if you would like to offer a 5-10 minute presentation as a part of either of the discussion periods.

In this issue of "The Lamp," Bishop Boyea gives a glimpse of insights we can expect as he continues his presentations on "Being with Christ in the Upper Room," which he began with us last summer. Our own Shalina Stilley, now "Dr." Shalina Stilley, philosophy professor, will examine the views of Saint Thomas Aquinas on virginity and apply this to questions often asked today about the meaning of virginity, physical and spiritual, in our vocation. Dr. Magalis Aguilera, clinical psychologist, will offer practical applications of the meaning of virginity in our sexuality as women, speaking from her professional and personal experience. Judith Stegman will explore the historical, theological and canonical meaning of living as consecrated virgins *in the world*.

Our days together will also include much opportunity for prayer and enjoyable convivium as sisters in Christ. We look forward to seeing many of you in July!

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Consecrations

United States:

✦ May 2, 2010, **Geri Gerding**, Diocese of Peoria, at the hands of The Most Reverend Daniel Jenky, in the Cathedral

Other Countries:

France

✦ March 25, 2010, **Geneviève Allye**, Archdiocese of Abidjan, at the hands of The Most Reverend Jean Pierre Kutwa

Argentina

✦ April 10, 2010, **Maria Luisa Roldan**, Diocese of Moron, at the hands of The Most Reverend Luis Guillermo Eichhorn.

✦ April 24, 2010, **Patricia Rodriguez**, Diocese of San Isidro

Italy

✦ November 11, 2009, **Amelia Ventimiglia**, Diocese of Catania, at the hands of Bishop Salvatore Cristina

✦ February 14, 2010, **Pinella Travaglia**, Diocese of Messina-Lipari, at the hands of Bishop Calogero La Piana

from the President's journal . . .

It seems like a long time since I've last written this column. It's spring now; Michigan's cold is past once again; another long "tax season" has transpired; and we've participated in the entire Paschal Mystery once again, from Ash Wednesday through Pentecost Sunday. These patterns come each year, and yet they are always new, aren't they? New as we come to learn to experience each event more and more in union with our Divine Spouse.

Several updates to report: I travelled to Rome in early February to deliver the English and Spanish translations of the conferences and homilies from the Rome 2008 International Congress-Pilgrimage of Consecrated Virgins. With the gracious assistance of our sisters from Germany, Austria, France, and Canada, work is progressing well on the German and French translations. Any help translating the texts into Italian is still greatly needed. While in Rome, it was a joy to also have a chance to visit with Archbishop Burke.

In early June, Magalis Aguilera, Mary Kay Lacke, and I will travel to Regensburg, Germany to participate in a gathering of consecrated virgins who have just formed a new association in Germany. Please pray for our travel, and for consecrated virgins throughout the world as we work to come to a deepened understanding of this ancient vocation.

a. If you haven't visited the site lately, I think you'll enjoy visiting vocationtree.org, where you'll be able to work with an interactive version of the Vocation Tree, in Spanish and in English. You'll also see in the store that complete lesson plans for 4th to 8th grade are now available. I recently developed a PowerPoint presentation on the Vocation Tree, a presentation which flows into a detailed presentation on the vocation of consecrated virginity. Hopefully we'll soon be able to make this available to any consecrated virgins who may be giving presentations on our vocation.

Finally, although you don't see it quite yet, I expect that this summer we will be able to make real progress on the renovation of our USACV website. Thanks to Marilyn Wagner, newly consecrated virgin from the Diocese of Toledo, for her gracious offer of assistance.

Judith Stegman

Elections Fall 2010

Two Council positions, Treasurer and At-Large Representative, will open January 1, 2011.

We encourage members to consider running for these leadership positions in the Association. Details of our governing structure can be found in the organizational statutes and bylaws of the USACV, which are available upon request. In summary, what you need to know for these elections:

Election Process

Written notification of a member's desire to run for an open Council position must be received by midnight on Friday, October 29, 2010. Details of the election process will be announced in the September newsletter.

Position Terms, Descriptions and Responsibilities

Treasurer

Term: January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2013.

Eligibility to run for office (Article III Section D3): Open to any current voting member who has been a member or actively involved in the Association for the two previous years and has the necessary qualifications to carry out the responsibilities of Treasurer.

Duties (Article V Section E): To serve as a member of the Council [see duties below].

To be responsible for the collection of dues, collection of other income, payment of bills and accounting of all receipts and disbursements.

To prepare and submit to the Council an annual budget and financial report.

To prepare and submit financial reports as needed for the meetings of the Council and membership.

To prepare and submit an annual financial report for all members.

To administer the goods of the Association in accordance with these statutes and under the overall direction of the Episcopal Moderator (cf. canon 319 par. 1), and to give a yearly accounting to him.

To faithfully account to the Episcopal Moderator, on behalf of the Association, for the disbursement of contributions and alms which have been collected (cf. Canon 319 par 2).

At Large Representative

Term: January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2013

Eligibility to run for office (Article III Section D3): Open to any current voting member who has been a member or actively involved in the Association for the two previous years.

Duties (Article V Section A):

To collaborate with other Council members in the governance of the USACV in accord with the provisions of the organizational statutes, with particular

focus on the ecclesial objectives (Article II) of the Association.

To make every effort to attend the annual membership meeting and the annual Council meeting held with the Episcopal Moderator. To participate in other Council meetings or discussions as needed.

If serving as the Council representative on a standing committee, to facilitate ongoing communication between the Council and the committee.

If elected as an At-Large Representative, to make every effort to accept an appointment as Vice President (Article V Section C) or Secretary (Article V, Section D), recognizing that some responsibilities of the offices may be delegated to others (Article IV, Section A).

Other Notes – both positions

Council members rely heavily on email to facilitate communication, since we are geographically in all parts of the United States.

The Association's travel budget currently covers accommodations and meals for Council members during the annual Council meeting with our Episcopal Moderator.

Please Consider Running for Office

Please do consider running for office, and encourage other members to run – sometimes all it takes is a personal word!