On this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as a particular encouragement to consecrated virgins, I have suggested that The Lamp print in this space excerpts from a homily of His Eminence Raymond Cardinal Burke delivered on the Feast of St. Cecilia, November 22, 2010, at a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving on occasion of the Ordinary Consistory called by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. For your edification, the entire text of the homily is included as a supplement to this issue of “The Lamp.”

Excerpts from the homily of Cardinal Burke:

“Praised be Jesus Christ, now and for ever. Amen.

Saint Cecilia whose memory we celebrate today was a wise virgin who carefully provided oil for her lamp, so that when her Lord came, He found her waiting and ready to meet Him with her lamp burning brightly. We know little about her life, but, from tradition, we know the essence of her heroic holiness. She was a young Roman maiden, who was raised in the Christian faith. She, in fact, developed so strongly in her love of our Lord, through prayer and penance, that she resolved to offer her virginity to Our Lord as a perpetual gift, that is, to espouse our Lord alone as her Bridegroom for ever. Contrary to her resolve, her father insisted that she marry a certain pagan by the name of Valerian, but, on the day of her wedding, we are told that “amid the music and rejoicing of the guests, Cecilia sat apart, singing to God in her heart and praying for help in her predicament.”

One imagines that she was praying the words of the Psalms according to the ancient chant of the Church, which developed organically from the chant used in Jewish worship and continues today to be singularly suited to the raising of our minds and hearts to the Lord. The Lord heard her prayer, made even more pure and beautiful because it was offered to Him in sacred song. Through the help of an angel, her new husband was converted to the faith and received Baptism at the hands of the Bishop of Rome, Pope Urban. Having come to life in Christ through Baptism, Valerian fully respected Cecilia’s virginal consecration. With Saint Cecilia, he rapidly grew in pure and selfless love, and soon gave, with her, the supreme witness of total and faithful love of our Lord by accepting a cruel martyrdom for the faith.

In the life of Saint Cecilia, we see fulfilled, in a most striking manner, the promise of our Lord’s immeasurable and ceaseless love of all men, without exception, the divine love which we celebrate most fully and perfectly in this Eucharistic Sacrifice. Our Lord promises His holy people: “I will espouse you to me forever; I will espouse you in right and in justice, in love and in mercy; I will espouse you in fidelity, and you shall know the Lord.” Our Lord called Saint Cecilia to espouse Him in love, to offer to Him her virginity, her whole being. Saint Cecilia responded with all her heart, placing her heart completely into the glorious pierced Heart of our Lord. In the Sacred Heart of Jesus, her love was purified and strengthened, so that the witness of her virginal love reached its fullness with the crown of martyrdom. The pure white of her love as a virgin found its consummation in the courageous scarlet of her love as a martyr for the faith.

Continued on page 4
In our previous *Something Ancient, Something New*, we introduced a series of articles in which we plan to delve into the essential meaning of our spousal relationship with Jesus, and the tools we have been given that are designed to lead us towards the fullness of spousal intimacy with Him. In the current article, we discuss the psychological understanding of our affections as one of these tools, as part of this process towards union with our Divine Spouse. We begin by noting that what each of us received, and offered, on the day our Divine Spouse consecrated our virginity in its totality only to Him, is summarized perfectly in the antiphon we sang: *I am espoused to Him whom the angels serve; sun and moon stand in wonder at His glory.*” (Rite of Consecration).

What is the psychological meaning of our affections? Are our affections attributes of soul or body, or is there a difference between affections of the soul and those of the body? Are our affections, instead, a construct more closely related to the totality of our being, and not just to soul or body?

The psychological meaning of affection in the life of the consecrated virgin is best understood as an integral process within her being. The human person has three dimensions: body, soul, and spirit (Divine); the consecrated virgin, in her gift of virginity, receives the capacity to integrate these three dimensions.

In regard to our human feelings of affection, let’s begin by considering the Divine dimension of our being, because all human expressions of affection have their origins in God who created us with the capacity to love: God is love and He first loved us: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.” (Jn 3,16) Jesus Christ, following the way of love of His Eternal Father, gave us this new commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.”(Jn. 15, 13) and “There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (Jn. 15, 13)

No person would be able to love as commanded by Christ if the person did not first receive, and live from, a gift of love from the one who is Love. This gift of love is gift, and yet it requires the consent of our free will to actively accept the gift! In the words of Jesus: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete (helper) to be with you for ever: the Spirit of truth…”(Jn 14, 15-17). We need this great gift, this Spirit of truth, to combat the spirit that is not from God, but from the father of lies. (Jn. 8, 44)

Love is like a fountain of water running from the very essence of God in the mystery of the Eternal family of the Trinity. “Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away” (Song of Song 8,7) because love is the essence of God.

We will continue these reflections on affection in our next edition, particularly in reference to our virginity.

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**U.S. Consecrations**

November 22, 2010, Mary Jo Gretsinger. Mary Jo is currently serving in the Archdiocese of Kaduna, Nigeria, and it was there that her consecration was received, at the hands of Archbishop Matthew Ndagoso.

Upcoming: June 2, 2011, Paula Willenbrink, at 10:00 AM in the St. Louis Basilica Cathedral, at the hands of Archbishop Robert Carlson. All are invited to attend!

**Other Countries:**

**Costa Rica**

August 24, 2010, Ines Esquivel and Orfilia Deng León Quesada, Diocese of Tilarán, at the hands of Bishop Girardi Vitorino

October 16, 2010, Marlene Montenegro and Maria del Carmen Rodriguez, Diocese of Cartago at the Basilica of Nuestra Señora de los Angeles

**Argentina**

December 7, 2010, Ana Claudia Teresa Castelli, Diocese of San Justo, at the hands of Bishop Baldomero Carlos Martini

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

April 10, 2010, Maria Luisa Roldan, San Judas Tadeo, at the hands of Bishop Eichhorn Guillermo Luis

September 17, 2010, Gilda Mónica Carrascosa, Rosa Aurelia, Espejo, Silvia Zulma Garay, and Julia Mónica Saires, Diocese of Santa Fe and Tucumán, at the hands of Bishop Alfonso Delgado.

**France**

September 25, 2010, Marie Tran, Diocese of Nantes

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**Requiescat in Pace**

We have learned of the death of Mary Beth McGovern, consecrated virgin of the Diocese of Colorado Springs. May she rest in peace with her Lord and Spouse.
Current council members and officers are:

Judith M. Stegman, President, 2010 – 2012; Diocese of Lansing
Magalis Aguilera, Member-at-large, 2010 – 2012 (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: We continue to progress in the preparation of publication of the first series of monographs on the material used at the annual Information Conference. Mary Kay Lacke is preparing the works for publication while Judith Stegman is finalizing the publication plan.

Kateri Team: Florence Sundberg: I want to thank all who responded with love and generosity to our sisters in need during these recent months. May the Lord truly bless you. And I want to thank Ann Stitt who is my silent prayer partner in this Kateri ministry. She is faithful and true and humble in her loving service. Thank you Ann with all my heart.

Candidate Care Team: Barbara Swieciak: If you would like to share your consecration invitation, program, or other mementoes with candidates, or if you are a candidate and would like to receive the travelling consecration preparation folder, please contact Barbara Swieciak at 149 S. 24th Street, La Crosse, WI 54601.

USACV Website update report – Judith Stegman: After unfortunate delays and circumstances, I am very pleased to announce that the USACV has contracted with Faith Catholic to prepare a new website. Advent is a time of waiting, and I personally appreciate your patience as we wait for the new site, hoping now to see its birth before the Feast of the Presentation, 2011. The site re-development will be executed in phases.

The focus of Phase One is to quickly get out a new website, with a home page that reflects the dignity of the ancient Order of Virgins. Visitors to the site will be able to readily navigate to educational materials, news, and back issues of The Lamp. The new site will include a shopping cart / online store with credit card processing, and the ability to offer short videos for direct viewing from the site.

Phase Two will introduce a Content Management System to allow us to maintain content ourselves. Phase Two will also include the implementation of a private members-only blogging system.

The USACV has the funds available from previous fund appeals to pay for Phase One. After Phase One is complete, we will receive a quote for Phase Two, including the Content Management System, and the USACV Leadership Council will consider if another fund appeal should be made. At this time, I appreciate your prayers, patience, suggestions, and offers of help! Thank you.

Upcoming events:

2011 National Convocation of United States Consecrated Virgins:
- July 26—31, 2011
- Mundelein Retreat and Conference Center
- Chicago area

2011 National Information Conference:
- August 3—6, 2011
- St. Francis Retreat Center
- DeWitt, Michigan
- Lansing area

Upcoming issues of The Lamp: February 2, 2011 Feast of the Presentation and World Day of Consecrated Life; June 2, 2011 Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, September 8, 2011 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Please send any articles you have in electronic format at least 10 days in advance of the issuance date.

The next Symposium for Consecrated Virgins, sponsored by the Office of consecrated Life of the Diocese of La Crosse, will be the St Agnes Fest, on April 9, 2011 at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from 9 AM to 3 PM. For more information, contact Barb at 608-784-6974 or 608- 788-7700 ext 2240.
The life and martyrdom of Saint Cecilia, in the few details which have come to us, like the life of every consecrated virgin, teaches each of us the reality of Christ’s love in our lives, a love which invites us to espouse Him, to be one in heart with Him in loving one another as He loves us, purely and selflessly. Saint Cecilia, by her virginal consecration, teaches all of us the way in which Our Lord is calling us to give ourselves to Him and to His Mystical Body, the Church, and to all men, in love, whether we are called to lifelong, faithful and fruitful love in the married life, in the dedicated single life, in the consecrated life or in the priesthood. On her feast day, we ask Saint Cecilia to pray for us, so that each of us will remain steadfast in responding to our vocation in life, so that we will never fail to provide oil for our lamps, so that, each and every day, Our Lord will find us waiting and ready to welcome Him, with our lamps burning brightly. We pray, through the intercession of Saint Cecilia, that Our Lord will find us always ready to give our hearts completely to Him.

Providentially, our celebration of the memory of Saint Cecilia coincides with the day on which we offer to our Lord the Holy Mass in thanksgiving for the Ordinary Public Consistory, held on this past Saturday, during which our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI created new Cardinals to assist him in his shepherd’s care of the universal Church. The distinctive vesture of the Cardinal, the scarlet biretta and cassock, uncover the meaning of the position to which he is elevated. The purity and selflessness of the Cardinal’s love of the Church, to whom he, as a priest, is espoused in a way analogous to the consecrated virgin, must be further purified and strengthened, in order that, in the words of the Successor of Saint Peter at the imposition of the cardinalitial biretta, the Cardinal may show himself to be “intrepid, even to the shedding of his blood for the building up of the Christian faith, the peace and harmony of the People of God, and the freedom and the extension of the Holy Roman Church.”¹ The Cardinal has a particular bond with the virgin martyrs. They are a sterling example to him of how he is to love Christ and the Church, while, at the same time, they intercede powerfully for him, so that he may be a sign to the faithful of our Lord’s ceaseless and immeasurable love, “to the end,”³ to the very outpouring of His life for us, on Calvary, His Sacrifice made ever present for us in the Holy Eucharist.

May our celebration of the Holy Eucharist on the Memorial of Saint Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr, unite our hearts more totally to the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, ever open to receive us, especially in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Lifting up our hearts, with the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to the glorious Sacred Heart of Jesus, our lives will be purified and strengthened for a more pure and selfless love of God and of one another. Lifting up our hearts to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we lift up to Him, in a special way, the newly created Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, thanking Him for them and praying that every Cardinal will always find in His glorious pierced Heart the purification and the strength to fulfill the particular responsibilities of service to His Vicar on earth, “intrepid, even to the shedding of his blood for the building up of the Christian faith, the peace and harmony of the People of God, and the freedom and the extension of the Holy Roman Church.”⁴ In the Heart of Jesus, may we all find the wisdom by which we will keep our lamps trimmed, provided with the unfailing oil of His grace, so that at every moment of our lives, we, with Saint Cecilia, will be waiting and ready to meet Him with our lamps burning brightly.

Heart of Jesus, King and Center of all Hearts, have mercy on us.
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America and Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us.
Saint Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr, pray for us.
Saint John Fisher, Bishop, Cardinal and Martyr, pray for us.

Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke
Archbishop Emeritus of Saint Louis
Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura

Endnotes:
2 Hos 2:19-20.
4 Jn 13:1.
5 Cf. note 3.
Consecrated Virgins enjoyed a Festive Cena hosted by Cardinal Burke
Anniversary Reflections

We continue with reflections from consecrated virgins celebrating significant anniversaries:

Theresa Marshall, Diocese of Lansing, consecrated June 3, 1989

In the 20+ years my journey as a consecrated virgin has been about laughter, love and growth. In 1989 when I received the consecration I was sure I was the only one in the world. I was delighted to have been chosen for the call and drunk with love for Jesus, a love he himself has birthed in my heart. I could not explain my vocation to my co-workers and friends and family. I would say, “I love Jesus and He loves me, that is why I did it; what a gift!”

I can say I have learned much these years, but much in the areas of suffering, trust and loving forever. Suffering is a part of life that I have learned to embrace by walking through it. When a friend died at 47 of cancer and later I broke my ankle this past winter and had to be off work for 6 months, I asked Jesus to help me learn the lesson and not complain. Jesus is there. There have been times with Jesus in prayer of great silence and desolation, times in my life of utter confusion and fear, and times in my heart when I am too crushed or hurt to do anything but hold the feet of Jesus at the cross with Our Lady. I realized that suffering truly is the kiss of Jesus on the cross. I can’t make it go away but I sure can endure it because he is with me. The times most transforming, most sacred and precious are the times when there is suffering, trust in him and faith that he will change any circumstance, because his love for me makes him do it. He is worthy of all my trust. Trust is a strange thing. You do not have to understand what will happen but you do have to be sure of the person who holds the solution to all our needs in the palm of his wounded hand. Since he is my spouse, I can do it with great faith and expectation.

I think I have learned the most about love. Jesus is forever. His love is forever too. He is so very humble to ask, even beg for my love. It is a gift I give freely. And in giving it freely, I can be a light that changes the world. I often pray the prayer that I found in the Liturgy of the Hours from an Instruction by Saint Columban, Abbot. It reads:

“Jesus, our most loving Savior, be pleased to light our lanterns, so that they may burn forever in your temple, receiving eternal light from you, the eternal light to lighten our darkness and to ward off from us all the darkness of the world. Give your light to my lantern, I beg you, my Jesus so that by its light I may see the holy of holies which receives you as the eternal high priest entering among the columns of your great temple. May I see you only, look on you, long for you; may I gaze with love on you alone and have my lantern shining and burning always in your presence.

Loving Savior, be pleased to show yourself to us who knock so that in knowing you we may love only you, love you alone, desire you alone, contemplate only you day and night and always think of you. Inspire in us the depth of love that is fitting for you to receive as God. So may your love pervade our whole being, possess us completely, and fill our senses, that we may know no other love but love for you who are everlasting....”

Well, that’s my story so far. This consecration is a heart thing and hard to put in words. If you asked me today why the heck would I be a consecrated virgin you might get the same answer the people got 20+ years ago, “I love Him and He loves me very much. What a gift!”

Mary Therese Wyant, Diocese of Santa Fe, consecrated May 27, 1995

When I celebrated my 15th anniversary of consecration on May 27th of this year, my thoughts centered on gratitude, so that is what I will share with you for my anniversary reflection.

In the Rite of Consecration, at the calling of the candidate, the virgin sings “Now with all my heart I follow You, I reverence You and seek Your presence. Lord, fulfill my hope: show me Your loving kindness, the greatness of your mercy.” Surely the Lord Jesus has been kind and merciful to me, who is so unworthy of so great a grace. I am so grateful to our Divine Spouse for calling me to a life of consecrated virginity, and to our Virgin Mother who obtained this grace for me and helps me to live it out daily.

I am grateful to my Archbishop, Michael Sheehan, who consecrated me, to my former spiritual director, Fr. Tom who prepared me for consecration and was my constant support and guide for many years. For my new spiritual director, Deacon John who so kindly agreed to assist me in living out my vocation. And of course, my dear parents, and friends and fellow parishioners who support me and encourage me in my vocation as they live out their own vocations.

How can I express my gratitude to you my dear sisters in the consecration? While I won’t name specific names lest I leave someone out, you are all so important to me. To those of you who started the USACV and continue it, to all the organizers of our wonderful convocations, to those who volunteer in various capacities and those who simply, yet faithfully and lovingly live out your consecration I am so grateful. Some of you have become good friends and some I only know by name, but we are all united in this special life of love for Jesus, as our Spouse. You are examples to me of fidelity, prayerfulness, patience, forgiveness, selflessness, joy, and charity. I would like to end with a note of thanks to those two special men in all of our lives, our Episcopal Moderator, Bishop Earl Boyea, and our former Episcopal Moderator, Cardinal Raymond Burke, whose goodness to all of us is immeasurable. I keep you all in my prayers every day, please keep me in yours.
Elizabeth Lee, Diocese of Fall River (MA), consecrated May 27, 1995

Pope John Paul II described the unique essence of woman in these words: "The moral and spiritual strength of a woman is joined to her awareness that God entrusts the human being to her in a special way" (Mulieris Dignitatem). Her strength is measured by the order of love. I see the life of a Consecrated Virgin as a particular witness to the dignity of our feminine nature through our inward receptivity. Our feminine nature is one that loves and receives love in both spousal and maternal dimensions. I became aware of this in high school and was torn as to what state of life I was called to — married or religious. I loved children and the thought of giving them up was a crucifixion for me, yet I came to know that my love could not be handed over to just one special person, but had to be shared more broadly with whoever was in need. I dated some fine men, but came to realize that my heart was restless for God and his people. I realized the Lord was calling me to Himself and I knew this calling was about a deeper relationship. This relationship was to be intimately built on love and self-giving to Him and to the family of God. As my consecrated life began, I was soon to discover how, within the call to union and the call to love, there are seasons.

My first few years as a Consecrated Virgin were active. I could deeply relate to the statement in the homily of the Rite of Consecration: “Your motherhood will be a motherhood of the spirit, as you do the will of your Father and work with others in a spirit of charity, so that a great family of children may be born, or reborn, to the life of grace.” His Love was poured out within me and I sought to share in His Love and to draw others towards Him as well. All was joy, peace, wedded bliss — more so than any mortal marriage, since my Spouse was always with me. I would describe that time of my life as the Springtime, when there was new growth and beautiful sharing in the Lord with others.

Summer soon came, which was much like Spring — a deeper appreciation of the hours of prayer, pondering my beloved Jesus in a grateful and ever more intense way — a kind of strengthening and deepening of every initial joy.

The Fall came — as the leaves everywhere seemed striking in their intensity, nevertheless their days were numbered; though life seemed beautiful and serene on the outside — inside a dying process began. Yet there was a general awareness, a knowledge that this must come to me and that it will be for the good. It was a time accompanied by uncertainty and a time of transition from the active life to a more contemplative life. I knew it was then that trust, humility and faith had to deepen. I sensed the need to surrender my will ever more, and understood that Christ’s love would never forsake his own. It was in the mystery of dying that His beauty would shine forth.

The Winter season invariably followed, where I felt the dying process in a harder way, as this season reminded me there is a coldness; there is less light and more darkness. It was to be an experience of abandonment, being cast off, empty, even numb.... It was a sharing in His Passion. Yet as in the bareness of the trees, I knew there was life deep within. It was a time of dormancy and yet pain, leading towards the gift of a more authentic understanding of self and God.... a paradoxical grace. The period of winter is just such a season, as new hope dawns for the next cycle. And as it arrives.... one is forever changed.

These seasons have brought a deeper union, a more complete oneness with Him. True love grows through purification and perseverance, through an expanding “yes” to Jesus. Through these gifts of the seasons, through the gift of a deepened trust of our life with Him, we find joy and peace.

A Tribute to Aliceanne Sawyer

As of January 1, 2011, a new USACV member will be stepping up as our prayer chain coordinator. For the past fourteen years, however, it has been Aliceanne Sawyer who has served in this capacity. On behalf of the USACV Council, I would like to thank Aliceanne for her many years of dedicated service. She has reminded us daily that we are called to “pray without ceasing for the salvation of the whole world”. (Rite of Consecration of Virgins for Women Living in the World) She has also reminded us daily to pray for the specific needs of our suffering brothers and sisters who have asked for our prayers. No detail regarding the needs of others has ever been brushed aside as insignificant, no intention has ever been overlooked. Day and night (and frequently even in the middle of the night) Aliceanne has been there, passing on the prayer requests that consecrated virgins have received. We thank you, Aliceanne, for your diligence and example of attentiveness to the needs of others. May the Lord reward you for all that you have done. We are deeply grateful to you.
Mary Therese Wyant, Diocese of Santa Fe (NM)

Since I don’t have a TV, whenever I want to watch something I go over to my parent’s house. So when I learned that Archbishop Burke was to be made a cardinal, I told my mom and we started to make plans. She was relieved when I decided not to come over at 2:30 in the morning to watch it live! We settled for the 10:00 am encore. I had never seen a consistory before, so it was all very beautiful and moving. When Pope Benedict announced that Cardinal Burke’s titular church would be St. Agatha’s, I said “Mom, he got St. Agatha’s, one of the early virgin martyrs!” My mom’s reply was, “Well, God thinks of everything, doesn’t He?” He surely does, and we thank and praise Him for His goodness.

Mary Kay Lacke, Diocese of Steubenville

Participation in the Consistory was a journey of deepening faith, inward and outward; a journey in time, backward and forward; and a journey within the universal Church.

Firstly, I had never before reflected on the meaning of the role of a Cardinal in the Church. The Consistory expressed in its rituals and prayers the profound call of Christ to the new Cardinals to live out their faith in heroic virtue and to defend His Bride, the Church, even to the point of shedding their blood. I felt a renewed challenge of faith to live more radically my call as Bride of Christ within the Church. I also appreciated at a new level the humility and fortitude of these Cardinals in serving Our Holy Father, extending his leadership as Vicar of Christ through their ministries.

Secondly, I had an experience of all those who had served in this role as Cardinals throughout the ages of the Church; many, many of them having given their lives in bloody martyrdom in defense of the Church; and many more having poured out their lives in white martyrdom for the sake of the Church. Especially through the testimony of Cardinal Burke in his homily at the Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving after the Consistory, I was deeply moved with the realization that this tradition of martyrdom would continue into our future through the fidelity of these new Cardinals.

Thirdly, I reflect on the experience of being part of the universal Church, being able to celebrate with pilgrims from Zambia and Sri Lanka and the Republic of Congo as well as pilgrims from Germany and Denmark, Sicily, France and Spain, and hundreds from the USA, who were there for Cardinal Burke as well as Cardinal Wuerl. I was awed by how invested all these peoples were in their new Cardinals, how invested all these peoples were in their new Cardinals, how committed they were to praying for them and supporting them! I am so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this "cloud of witnesses."

Lastly, it was very wonderful to share this experience with other consecrated virgins (and Judith’s sister-in-law Eileen)!

Florence Sundberg, Diocese of Hartford (CT)

As I watched Cardinal Burke kneel to receive the red hat from Pope Benedict, I was struck by the humble demeanor and reverence of our new Cardinal, who is now a “Counselor to the Pope.” As I heard Pope Benedict assign to Cardinal Burke the Church of St. Agatha dei Goti in Rome, I thought about how appropriate the choice was since Cardinal Burke is so devoted to consecrated virgins and St. Agatha is one of the earliest virgin martyrs of the Roman Catholic Church. May she watch over and bless and protect our new Cardinal as he takes up his new responsibility as “Counselor to the Pope”. I know we will carry his Excellency in our hearts and in our prayers.

Judith Stegman, Diocese of Lansing

Seventeen consecrated virgins from various countries met in Rome to celebrate in a particular way with His Eminence Raymond Cardinal Burke as he received red hat and cardinalitial ring from His Holiness Benedict XVI. The days in Rome weren’t easy, with hard rain, cool temperatures, and unpleasant crowds – but these elements were quickly overlooked as we were drawn into the prayerful splendor of solemn liturgical celebrations and the ageless wonder of ceremony. There is plenty of ceremony at the Vatican!

Friday afternoon, November 19, found me approaching the Swiss Guard at the Bronze Door to request Consistory tickets reserved for the consecrated virgins. That same evening was a small reception held by the United States Ambassador to the Holy See, in honor of the two soon-to-be new U.S. Cardinals. On Saturday morning, the lines formed in St. Peter’s Square by 6:30 AM for the 10:30 AM Consistory.

Picture A Once admitted into the Basilica, our group chose center aisle seats, even though these were further from the front, in order to be close to the procession and perhaps catch a good glimpse or photo of our Holy Father. B Consecrated virgins were seated together, draped in white mantilla’s as sign of our consecrated state, reading our office books and praying rosaries before the Consistory began. C Beautiful liturgy aids displayed the Latin text as well as the vernacular (Italian), and I was pleased that my limited Italian lessons were of some benefit! In his homily, the Holy Father commented on the Church as Bride of Christ, beginning with those words a theme of spousal love that continued through the days.

Following the Consistory, consecrated virgins braved rains to walk to the Pontifical North American College (the NAC), where we enjoyed the gracious welcome of our seminarians studying in Rome, as they hosted a Saturday afternoon reception for Cardinals Burke and Wuerl. D Later in the afternoon, the many again greeted new Cardinal Burke in the Sala Ducale of the Apostolic Palace. Before enjoying Roman meals in small groups on Saturday evening, a few virgins delivered a “Cardinal cake” (baked by one of our German sisters) E to Cardinal Burke’s apartment, along with a generous collection of dollars and Euro’s from consecrated virgins from around the world.
These photos are referenced in Judith Stegman’s article on page 8

continue article and more photos on page 11
Life Corner

By Florence Sundberg

Pope Benedict XVI inaugurates Advent by recalling that an embryo is not an accumulation of biological material but a living being. In the words of His Holiness:

"...Together with the whole Church we wish to celebrate a solemn prayer vigil for unborn life... to live anew the expectation of God who took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary... The mystery of the Incarnation and the beginning of human life are closely connected... Let us be aware of the value of every human person's incomparable dignity and of our great responsibility to all... Love for all tends spontaneously to become preferential attention to the weakest and poorest. This explains the Church's concern for the unborn, the frailest...most threatened. The Church continually reasserts what the Second Vatican Council declared against abortion and against every violation of unborn life that from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care. It is not an accumulation of biological material but rather of a new living being, dynamic and marvelously ordered, a new individual of the human species. This is what Jesus was in Mary's womb; this is what we all were in our mother's womb.

Tertullian wrote: '...the one who will be a man is one already.'" "I make my own" said Pope Benedict, "Pope John Paul II's passionate appeal to the responsibility of each and every individual: '...respect, protect, love and serve every human life! Only in this direction will you find justice, development, true freedom, peace and happiness!'"

For this prayer vigil, on the Eve of the First Sunday of Advent, our Holy Father composed a prayer for life, in part: "Lord Jesus,...reawaken in us respect for every unborn life, make us capable of seeing in the fruit of the maternal womb the miraculous work of the Creator, open our hearts to generously welcoming every child that comes into life. Bless all families, sanctify the union of spouses, render fruitful their love...Together with Mary, Your Mother...in whose womb You took on our human nature, we wait to receive from You...the strength to love and serve life, in anticipation of living forever in You, in communion with the Blessed Trinity."

With appreciation

Special thanks to Twanna Bolling and Louise Paré, as they complete their terms of service as USACV Council Members: to Twanna, for her faithfulness, her smile, her active participation and her prudent counsel. I hope we can look forward to her continued active involvement, particularly in planning Chicago-based events. And to Louise, for her many years of service as our USACV Treasurer and Convocation Coordinator. Louise has always been concerned to see that each person in the association has a voice, and she has generously given unseen hours of time in maintaining the financial records of the USACV. Amidst increased demands of her work and travel schedule, I hope that we will continue to benefit from Louise’s counsel and presence.

More announcements:

Recordings of talks from the 2010 convocation and 2010 Informational Conference are now available for order from Magalis Aguilera. Please contact Magalis or Judith Stegman for an order form.

Along with this issue of The Lamp, 2010 USACV members are also being sent the following: minutes from the 2010 USACV Council Meeting with our Episcopal Moderator, minutes from the annual 2010 USACV Membership lists; and updated member lists. Members should contact Judith Stegman if they have need of copies.

Fall 2010 Elections. Congratulations to Nicole Bettini, elected USACV Treasurer for a three year term beginning January 1, 2011, and to Mary Kay Lacke, elected Council Member at large, also for a three year term beginning in January.
**Consistory Reflections continued**

Sunday morning found us even earlier in line in St. Peter’s Square, waiting for doors to open for the Papal Mass with Conferral of Cardinalitial Ring. The lines weren’t so pleasant Sunday morning, and we were relieved to be inside, prayerfully awaiting Holy Mass. Those of you who viewed the event on television saw much more clearly than we who were there, and yet the experience of being there in person impacted my heart - there within such a large and diverse group of pilgrims, joined together in thanks and intercession for these men, gifts of God to His Church. Sunday evening brought more rain, but it let up just long enough for many of the pilgrims, to find taxi’s and venture to the Palazzo della Cancelleria for a festive cena hosted by Cardinal Burke for pilgrims who traveled in his honor. Consecrated virgins seemed to enjoy the process of finding suitable, modest, formal attire for the evening! **See photos on page 5**

Returning to the NAC early Monday morning, the Feast of Saint Cecilia, we participated in the Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by His Eminence H, and were called on in our own vocations to give ourselves anew, entirely, to our Divine Spouse, without counting the cost – to be intrepid in the face of a culture that insistently challenges our resolve to live as our Church teaches us to live. I think that the words of Cardinal Burke’s homily, published also in this issue of “The Lamp,” will be a source of strength for me for years to come.

A little later Monday morning, a special Papal Audience I was held in Paul VI Hall for all Consistory participants.

Consecrated virgins closed their time together with a sidewalk pranzo at Ristorante La Vittoria on the Via delle Fornaci. **J**

More on page 12
A few consecrated virgins did venture on to visit Santa Cecilia in Trastavere to attend Solemn Vespers on her patronal feastday, the closing day in Rome, November 22, 2010.

**An Advent Song . . .**

**Like The Dawning Of The Morning**

1. Like the dawning of the morning,  
On the mountains golden heights,  
Like the breaking of the moonbeams  
On the gloom of cloudy nights,  
Like a secret told by angels  
Getting known upon the earth,  
Is the Mother's expectation  
Of Messiah's speedy birth.

2. Thou wert happy, blessed Mother,  
With the very bliss of heaven,  
Since the angel's salutation  
In thy raptured ear was given;  
Since the Ave of that midnight  
When thou wert anointed Queen,  
Like a river over-flowing  
Hath the grace within thee been.

3. Thou hast waited, child of David,  
And thy waiting now is o'er.  
Thou hast seen Him, blessed Mother,  
And wilt see him evermore.  
Oh, his human face and features  
They were passing sweet to see;  
Thou beholdest them this moment;  
Mother show them now to me.


**Note:** from the President's journal . . . 
is replaced with Judith's reflection on the Consistory beginning on page 8.