

# The Lamp



United States Association of  
Consecrated Virgins

April 2006

He is Risen! Alleluia!

Volume 11, Issue 3

## From Archbishop Burke . . .

**April 15, 2006 – Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord**

Dear Members of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins,

Peace and joy to you in this most blessed Season of Our Lord's Resurrection!

Throughout the days of the Paschal Triduum, we celebrate the greatest mystery of our faith. The very Son of God, born true man of the Blessed Virgin Mary, suffers the brutality of His Passion, shares the human heritage of death, and then, beyond all hope, rises victorious over sin, suffering and everlasting death. These blessed days bring us the awe and deep joy of the realities of our faith.

Through your consecration to Our Lord, through the daily gift of your virginity to God, you are united to Him in a most particular way. You are His bride. You witness to the patience of His Passion, and your lives foretell the fulfillment of our Christian hope. As the prudent and faithful virgins in the Gospel, you await with serenity and joy the coming of the Bridegroom. By your prayer and work in the world, you help to prepare a people well disposed to receive His grace.

Be assured of my prayers for you throughout the Easter Season. I ask you, in a particular way, to remember me in your good prayers.

Invoking God's blessing upon you and your consecration, I remain

Yours devotedly in Christ,

(Most Rev.) Raymond L. Burke  
Archbishop of Saint Louis  
Episcopal Moderator

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- Loretta shares a story from France about a Virgin who was consecrated in 1924
- Upcoming Council election offices
- Planning meetings for the USACV & Rome Pilgrimage

## SOMETHING ANCIENT SOMETHING NEW

In the Ancient Church, our virginal sisters in the consecration waited upon their Spouse, learning to live the way of the cross and the way of resurrection. They learned through our Blessed Mother, Queen of Virgins, as she embraced the love of the eternal Father in her own being. Her blessed life was lived in the fulfillment of her virginal “fiat” as we today live our “propositum”, giving to Him the totality of our self in love.

What makes us virgins is *how* we wait and *what* we await is the fullness of our spousal relationship with Him both in this world and in eternity. To be and to act for Him is to “prefer nothing to the love of Christ” (St. Benedict of Nursia, Rite for Monasteries). Our Blessed Mother was present during his life, his passion, his death, and his resurrection, always waiting for him. She preferred nothing, absolutely nothing, to the love of the Son. The virgins of the Ancient Church preferred nothing, absolutely nothing, to the love of their Spouse. We must pray without ceasing to keep the gift we have received, and to prefer nothing, absolutely nothing, to his love as a Beloved Spouse.

Are we ready, our lamps trimmed, letting nothing or no one distract us from the Bridegroom’s coming? The mystic is the prudent virgin who waits, her eyes fixed upon the Spouse whose coming, like all his visitations, is indeed that of a bridegroom and is experienced as such by the virgin become bride, as Saint Theresa of Avila taught us.

How we can wait? Let us remain ready to contemplate his face in the midst of our daily duties as we live in this world. Let us wait for him and in so doing witness to his eternal spousal love for the holy Church. Let us contemplate his face in the mirror of his love for us and through the radiance of his resurrected body.

Saint Clare of Assisi once wrote to Saint Agnes of Prague that we can find the way into the Bridal Chamber - to the place of waiting for that soundless step that arrives without walking. Her expression about the waiting relationship may sound paradoxical, but it is not; in this embrace is union and virginity, in this touch is chastity sealed. His left arm circles her waist, his right circles her head with a crown, golden for holiness. Saint Clare said he teaches us with his

embrace to discover his love in the mirror of his crucified body and his resurrected face.

This Saint Virgin of Assisi guides us to discover his loving face: “Gaze into that mirror each day until you see your own face within it. Contemplation in which Jesus’ face becomes your own adorns your whole body with flowers and garments that are all the virtues: at the border of the mirror are the swaddling clothes of poverty; at the surface is the laborer’s tunic of humility; in the depth of the mirror is the nakedness of Love hanging from the wood of the cross.

Love, hanging from the cross, has become the mirror of those who long to mount the cross with him. These cry out, ‘draw me after you, I will run and not tire until you bring me into the wine-cellar, until your left hand is under my head and your right hand embraces me happily and you kiss me with the happiest kisses of your mouth.’” As Saint Theresa of Avila taught us : The kisses of his mouth are experiences of deep and vivid peace of the soul where “his love touches as the water from a torrent.”

*-Magalis Aguilera and Judith Stegman*

### *The President's journal*



*How honored and astounded I was to receive your gifts of prayer and sacrifice on the occasion of my fiftieth birthday! Truly these have been an ongoing joy and treasure for me as I read your greetings and am strengthened by your intangible gifts. Thank you so much.*

*Throughout this newsletter you'll see indications of the presence of our Divine and Risen Spouse. I was especially*

*blessed to represent the USACV recently at a meeting of the United States Conference of Vicars for Religious in Rome, to meet on our behalf with personnel from the Congregation for Consecrated Life, and to attend, with Barbara Swieciak, and international planning meeting for “Rome 2008”. More will follow on some of these meetings, but suffice it for now to give thanks to God for His enduring love. – Judith Stegman*

## Council News

### Fall 2006 Elections

Elections will be held in Fall 2006 for the following positions:

- 1) President (2007-2009)
- 2) General Council Member (2007-2009)

More details about candidacy and elections will be forthcoming in the next newsletter.

### 2006 Council Meeting with Archbishop Burke

Please keep this April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting in your prayers.

### May 2006

#### Pastoral Planning Meetings "Sharing Our Good News"

Please also keep this two-day meeting in your prayers as a group of consecrated virgins will gather in Lansing to draft a pastoral plan for the Association. We'll depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we work together to put structure to the many ideas that have come forward regarding the work we are invited to carry out in the areas of study, education, communication, communion, and participation in the new evangelization.

### USACV Council and Officers

Judith M. Stegman, President, 2004-2006; Diocese of Lansing  
Magalis Aguilera, 2004-2006 (appointed Vice-President to December 31, 2006); Archdiocese of Miami  
Louise Pare, Treasurer, 2005-2007; Diocese of Lansing  
Shalina Stillely, 2005-2007; Diocese of Milwaukee \* (Please note correction from last newsletter.)  
Aliceanne Sawyer, 2006-2008 (appointed Secretary to December 31, 2006); Diocese of Trenton \* (Please note correction from last newsletter.)

## 2006 Convocation of Consecrated Virgins in the United States

**Theme:** "Prefer nothing, absolutely nothing to the love of Christ" – a look at the mission of consecrated virgins in today's Church and society.

Watch for more information and registration forms to follow soon. All consecrated virgins are warmly invited to attend, as well as candidates for the Consecration who have attended an Information Conference.

The 2006 Convocation is scheduled for Wednesday August 9 to Sunday August 13, 2006 at Our Lady of the Snows shrine in Belleville, Illinois (near St. Louis). Please let Judith Stegman or a Council member know if you would be interested in helping with the convocation.

We look forward to a prayerful and spiritually fruitful gathering.

### Materials available

Just a reminder! Available on our website, [www.consecratedvirgins.org](http://www.consecratedvirgins.org), are order forms for audio recordings of our 2005 Convocation and Information Conference talks and the DVD "Consecrated Virgins in Today's Church".

### 2006 Information Conference

The 2006 national Information Conference is scheduled for August 2 to August 4, 2006 at the Cenacle in downtown Chicago, Illinois. Theresa Marshall will generously coordinate the conference for us. Please see the enclosed flyer for details and consider posting it or passing it along to friends who may be interested. Archbishop Burke will again personally present "The Essentials of Consecrated Virginité," and those gathered will have opportunity to share prayer and discussion about the vocation.



### Vita Consecrata Institute

Co-sponsored by the Institute on Religious Life, Christendom College will host the Vita Consecrata Institute this summer. The VCI is an intense program of theological studies and spiritual renewal for religious, priests, seminarians, and other consecrated persons. It runs for four weeks (June 19 – July 14) with two, two-week sessions. For more information, please visit [www.religiouslife.org](http://www.religiouslife.org).

# The Meaning of a Virgin's Consecration

By Diane Christine Farr

The Church teaches that we should have a proper understanding and appreciation for the sacrament of marriage in the plan of God. This is equally true in considering the dignity and exquisite beauty of virginity consecrated to Christ. It is important to remember that it is the divine action of the Holy Spirit who reveals this beauty to the virgin thus called by God. She sees virginity as a heavenly bouquet with an eternal splendor, a tender embrace with a Divine sweetness.

The Blessed Virgin Mary being the perfect image of the Church is the Bride, the Beloved of the Trinity. She is the enclosed garden of Immaculate virginity where God reigns supreme.

St. Therese tells us, "Each one naturally loves his native land, and since the native land of Jesus is the Virgin of virgins, and since Jesus was born by His will of a Lily, He loves to find Himself in virgin hearts."

The consecrated virgin is called to enter deeply into this life of perfect purity and virginal love lived by Our Lady. She joyfully strives to imitate her mother in every virtue. It is the Queen of virgins who will adorn the bride of Christ for her Spouse, revealing to her the sublime joy of holy virginity.

In speaking of the Blessed Virgin St. Leander of Seville said, "Blessed that fertility which in bearing filled the world and won heaven as its reward, yet did not lose the veil of virginity."

This thought is echoed in the Eucharistic prayer for Christmas. "In union with the whole Church we celebrate that day

when Mary without loss of her virginity gave the world its Savior." How beautifully the consecrated virgin sees the gift of her own virginity in this same context. As it was with Our Lady, her virginity will become fruitful in the garden of the Church as she joyously manifests the love of her Divine Spouse to waiting hearts.

St. Faustina calls virginity a flower taken from the Divine Heart. It is the kiss of Jesus that imparts the treasure of virginity. The Bridegroom gives something of His own beauty in bestowing this gift. It can only be received by a heart full of humility and simplicity. The virgin preserves within her heart as well as her body the lily of virginal integrity. The Divine Gardener has planted this lily that He may lovingly gather it for Himself. When she weds the Word Incarnate the bride does not suffer its loss. For it is within her virginity that she finds present the one she loves with all of her heart. This is why the beautiful symbols of virginity; the white dress, the veil; and lilies take on a special significance in the consecration of virgins. The grace of holy virginity transforms the virgin's whole being and becomes an important part of her sanctification. She knows that Christ has purchased her purity with his own blood and gained for her the light to receive this precious grace.

Blessed Abbot Marmion said, "The consecrated chalice may be employed only to contain the Precious Blood. The consecrated virgin exists only for her Divine Bridegroom and has no right to employ her person or her faculties except for Him., all is consecrated reserved to Him."

The consecrated virgin must come to know the Heart of her Spouse through constant prayer and interior formation. The bride must live in intimate communion with this Heart, forgetting herself and allowing Jesus to live and act in her. She will grow in love through generously giving of herself and participation in the cross. Sometimes she will find herself united with our Lady under the cross as she shares in the sufferings of others. She draws her life and her strength from the Eucharist.

The perpetual nature of her virginal state is a sign to the whole Church of the joy of the resurrection that awaits us in the Kingdom of Heaven. Already in this life she is set apart as a sacred offering of angelic purity and perfect praise. She is always a bride with a selfless maternal heart.

This vocation speaks to the supremacy of the love of God in all of our lives. The beauty of this wedding in which virginity is consecrated to Christ may be summed up in these words of St. Leander, "You have in Him a Bridegroom to love fair in beauty above the sons of man." This is how I understand the grace of my own consecration. Virginity is the fragrance of Christ, our most beautiful flower.

I will close this reflection with a quote from *The Way of Divine Love*. "Virgin souls are the dwellings of Love where the Immaculate Lamb takes His rest. Among these souls some are even admired by the angels and saints. On them the Heavenly Spouse fixes His most pure gaze and imbues them with sweet fragrance from His Heart."

## *Greeting from Miriam in Poland*

*Dear Sisters in Our Lord,*

*He is truly risen Alleluia! May this great and profound Mystery of Faith affirm us in Hope and Charity and in the recognition that He accompanies us on our road to Emmaus, eager to share Himself and His Presence...I wish you His Joy and His Peace. Miriam*

## Consecration News from around the world!

*From Cathy Maley, Archdiocese of Saint Louis, consecrated April 1, 2006, by the Most Reverend Raymond L. Burke*

"What has been in my heart since I was 15 years old was finally realized on April 1st with an exquisite liturgy truly befitting the majesty of God and I am still reflecting upon the beauty of this Rite. It still seems a bit surreal and I am awestruck by the Divine Bridegroom who has embraced such a lowly creature as myself.

The following day the St. Louis Post-Dispatch ran the story with photos. One student I taught last year emailed me to say, "I hope you know how much Soldan High School is cheering for you! So congrats. You seem to be in a select group of women who are devoted to what they do." I was struck by this because our public high school kids are so preoccupied with sex which only proves how hungry the young are for the radical witness of Christian chastity and of those who forsake all to follow the Lamb. Still other individuals have been calling to say, "That Mass was as beautiful as any Papal Mass!"

I was honored to have Mary Ann Srbljan, Barbara Swieczak, Carol Lankford, Theresa Howard, Magalis Aguilera and Judith Stegman and Sr. Eva-Maria Ackerman, FSGM director of the Office of Consecrated Life present to share this beautiful gift of the Lord's love for his

bride. I express my heartfelt gratitude to Archbishop Burke for his support and his selfless generosity on behalf of this vocation. I am deeply grateful for all the expressions of prayer and kindness that so many of you sent. God bless you all!" - Cathy Maley, SFO

**Many thanks to Loretta Matulich who has graciously continued to stay in contact with so many other Consecrated Virgins in other countries so we can share in the joy of their consecrations and sisterhood in this vocation.**

*Europe:*

*France*

*In Archdiocese of Milan:*

Maria Enrica Galinberti, Grazia Santa, Olga Rotella, Oriana Lomazzi, Patrizia Rota. Consecrated on September 10, 2005, by Cardinal Dionigi Tettamanzi in the basilica of Saint Ambrose in Milan.

*In Diocese of Albano:*

Maria Massimiani and Adua Grassi, consecrated on September 18, 2005, by Most Rev. Marcello Semeraro in the cathedral of San Pancrazio.

*In the Diocese of Brindisi:*

Maria Giuseppa Bafaro, Anna Maria de Matteis, Stefania Elefante, Ana Rita La-

mendola, Patrizia Marrazzo, Maria Grazia Zecca. Consecrated on December 30, 2005, by the Most Rev. Rocca Talucci in the cathedral basilica of Brindisi.

*Poland*

Diocese Krakow: 8 December 2005 - consecration of 10 virgins in the Church of Mercy of God in Lą-giewniky.

Diocese Lodz: 1 January 2006 - first consecration in the Diocese of Lodz - 2 virgins were consecrated by archbishop Wladyslaw Ziolek in the Jezuit Church in Lodz..

*United States*

Congratulations to our newly consecrated sisters:

Susan Munroe \*(Note corrected spelling from last newsletter), February 2, 2006, Archdiocese of New York, Bishop Walsh. Susan writes "Having the Church invoke the Holy Spirit upon you is a very powerful thing. Wow!"

Theresa Catteruccia, February 11, 2006, Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana

Teresa Gross, February 12, 2006, diocese of Bismarck (North Dakota), Bishop Zipfel

Cathy Maley, April 1, 2006, Archdiocese of St. Louis, Archbishop Raymond L. Burke

## Meet Anne Laflaive, Consecrated Virgin 1924 *Loretta Matulich writes:*

How would you feel if just three years after you received the Consecration to a Life of Virginity that tremendous spiritual treasure were no longer available to other women living in the world?

That is exactly the situation in which Anne Laflaive found herself in 1927. What could she do about this situation? What did she do?

She realized that her life's mission was to do her best to see that this ancient sacramental was once again restored to virgins living in the secular world. How did she do this? Did she live to see that day in 1970 when this mission was fulfilled?

Click on to the summary of her biography on our website: [www.consecratedvirgins.org/laflaive.pdf](http://www.consecratedvirgins.org/laflaive.pdf) Or,

go to our website on the Vocational Resources page and you will find the summary on the bottom of the "Other Resources" section. There you will find a brief sketch of her life's journey which led to her acquaintance with recent Popes, to Rome as a courier from the French hierarchy, and to the awakening of the lay movements in France during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *continued on page 6*

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*Anne Laflaive continued*

Many thanks to author Jacqueline Roux, consecrated virgin in France, for permitting us to upload this summary onto our website. To purchase the original biography in French, please note the following documentation:

Roux, Jacqueline.

*AnneLeflaive: Une vie pour la renaissance d'une vocation oubliée*

Francois-Xavier de Guibert, 3,  
rueJean-Francois-Gerbillon, 75006  
Paris. 2004

ISBN : 286839-810-3

**2008 International Pilgrimage of Consecrated Virgins  
(Rome)**

The Holy Spirit surely filled the upper room of a parish hall in Antony, France, on March 25 to March 26 as a small international group of consecrated virgins met to make initial plans for an international pilgrimage to Rome for consecrated virgins in 2008. A few of our readers will recall the 1995 international pilgrimage to Rome, on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the promulgation of the Rite for the Consecration of a Virgin Living in the World. The 2008 pilgrimage now seems like a reality rather than a dream. Many thanks to Yolande Salmon for agreeing to coordinate this undertaking.

The weekend meetings included prayer, reflection, sisterly friendship, discussion, questions and certain decisions about the pilgrimage. More details will follow over these next months, but please know that your prayers for this first meeting were indispensable, as will be your prayers for the ongoing planning. Gathered in March were virgins from France, Italy, Portugal, Vietnam, and North America (Barbara Swieczak and Judith Stegman). Working together is a great privilege and joy.

The date is not yet set for 2008, but we will announce it as soon as possible. Some matters of interest:

- The Pilgrimage is being organized by an international committee of consecrated virgins, coordinated by Yolande Salmon.
- Archbishop Burke, Episcopal Moderator of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins, has agreed to communicate on behalf of the international planning committee with the Sacred Congregation for Consecrated Life at the Vatican.
- Translations will be in French, English, German, Spanish, and Italian.
- Each country will have a consecrated virgin serve as the link with the international preparation committee.
- As much as possible, each country will arrange for translations of its own preparatory materials, to better assure accuracy and to control costs.
- It is planned that each country will again report on the state of the Order of Virgins in their country, as occurred in 1995. Questionnaires will be forthcoming to begin this process.

More information will be coming – please let Judith Stegman know if you are interested in assisting with registrations for consecrated virgins from the United States, with coordinating travel arrangements, or with other aspects of the pilgrimage.