

The Lamp



United States Association of Consecrated Virgins

July 6, 2007
St. Maria Goretti, Virgin and Martyr

Volume 12, Issue 4

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

July 6, 2007 St. Maria Goretti, Virgin and Martyr

Dear sisters in Christ,

Happy feast day of Saint Maria Goretti. May Saint Maria Goretti's example and intercession be a source of great blessing for you in the daily living of your vocation to consecrated virginity lived in the world.

In the third part of his Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*, "On the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission," our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI reflects on the Holy Eucharist as a sacrament to be lived. He comments, in a special way, on the importance of the Holy Eucharist for those called to the consecrated life, "who find in the celebration of the Eucharist and in Eucharistic adoration the strength necessary for the radical following of Christ" (n. 81).

Pope Benedict XVI notes, in particular, the intrinsic relationship between the Holy Eucharist and consecrated virginity, "inasmuch as the latter is an expression of the Church's exclusive devotion to Christ, Whom she accepts as her Bridegroom with a radical and fruitful fidelity" (n. 81). His words remind us of the powerful sign of your vocation for all who are baptized in Christ and, thereby, are called to live for Christ alone in pure and selfless love. Your consecration leads all disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ to the fountain of their life and mission in the glorious pierced Heart of Jesus, in the Body and Blood of Christ offered up for them in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

Our Holy Father lists three ways in which consecrated virginity relates essentially to the Holy Eucharist. First of all, the consecrated virgin finds in the Holy Eucharist "inspiration and nourishment for [her] complete dedication to Christ." Second, the consecrated virgin "draws" from the Holy Eucharist "encouragement and strength to be a sign, in our own times too, of God's gracious and fruitful love for humanity." Third, the consecrated virgin, by the witness of her consecrated life, becomes "an objective sign and foreshadowing of the 'wedding-feast of the Lamb' (*Rev 19:7-9*) which is the goal of all salvation history" and which is anticipated in every celebration of the Holy Eucharist (n. 81). In the life of the consecrated virgin, every Christian views the ultimate context and meaning of his or her daily living.

May the reflection of Pope Benedict XVI on the relationship of your vocation to the Holy Eucharist inspire in you a new knowledge and love of our Eucharistic Lord, your Bridegroom. Let us all pray that the daily living of your vocation will draw many to our Eucharistic Lord, so that they may live for Him alone and, one day, enjoy with Him the eternal joy and peace of Heaven.

Be assured of my sentiments of profound esteem and of my prayers for God's blessing upon you and your consecration.

Asking a continued remembrance in your prayers, I am

Yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

Raymond L. Burke

Most Rev. Raymond L. Burke Archbishop of Saint Louis
Episcopal Moderator of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins

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Something Ancient . . . Something New . . .

Magalis Aguilera and Judith Stegman

“...For stern as death is love... Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away.” (Song of Songs 8:6,7) In the garden of Gethsemane, our Divine Lord confirmed the mystical meaning of these words as he gave himself up to death for love of us. And earlier that same evening, He presented the new commandment, showing in himself the full measure of the love to which we are called as He washed the feet of his friends and then gave us his very self in the Holy Eucharist, “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” (Jn 13:34)

In the early Church the commandment of love was the stronghold of those who were baptized Christians, and particularly for those in the Order of Virgins. “During the first three centuries, the virgins lived in the world, remained with their families and shared the ordinary life. They were known for their joy, their austerity and life of prayer and for acts of charity with the poor and the sick”. (Cfr. Vizmanos, Francisco S.J, (1949) *The Christian Virgins in the Primitive Church*). Their spirituality as consecrated virgins stemmed from a contemplative, mystical, and ecclesial spirituality which opened itself to God for its inspiration to action, assisting the Church in carrying out its deeds of charity. (Cfr. Pichard, Dominique, 1975. *Actualization of the Ritual of Consecration of Virgins*, Franciscan’s Booklet for Renewal, # 8).

The consecrated virgin gives the integrity of her being in love to her Divine Spouse and she gives the whole of her activity as witness of her Bridegroom’s love for His Church. Blessed Kateri transcended the world around her by offering the gift she had, the integrity of her virginity, for the conversion of her people to Christianity.

The consecrated virgin is called to walk a way of love with her Spouse, discovering how He leads her in the way of purification, the way of illumination, and the way of union with Him for eternity. This way of love was exemplified by Saint Rose of Lima who wrote that “without the cross they can find no road to climb to heaven”. (From the writings of St. Rose of Lima, Virgin).

The consecrated virgin is given the title of “bride of Christ,” the same title shared by the Church itself. As one mystically espoused to Christ, she is dedicated to service of the Church. “Never forget that you are given over entirely to the service of the Church and of all your brothers and sisters. You are apostles in the Church and in the World.” (Homily of the Rite of Consecration)

Let us close by including in its entirety paragraph 81 of the post-synodal apostolic exhortation "Sacramentum Caritatis" of our Holy Father Benedict XVI, which Archbishop Burke has cited in his opening letter to us:

The Eucharist and the consecrated life

81. The relationship of the Eucharist to the various ecclesial vocations is seen in a particularly vivid way in "the prophetic witness of consecrated men and women, who find in the celebration of the Eucharist and in eucharistic adoration the strength necessary for the radical following of Christ, obedient, poor and chaste." (225) Though they provide many services in the area of human formation and care for the poor, education and health care, consecrated men and women know that the principal purpose of their lives is "the contemplation of things divine and constant union with God in prayer." (226) The essential contribution that the Church expects from consecrated persons is much more in the order of being than of doing. Here I wish to reaffirm the importance of the witness of virginity, precisely in relation to the mystery of the Eucharist. In addition to its connection to priestly celibacy, the eucharistic mystery also has an intrinsic relationship to consecrated virginity, inasmuch as the latter is an expression of the Church's exclusive devotion to Christ, whom she accepts as her Bridegroom with a radical and fruitful fidelity. (227) In the Eucharist, consecrated virginity finds inspiration and nourishment for its complete dedication to Christ. From the Eucharist, moreover, it draws encouragement and strength to be a sign, in our own times too, of God's gracious and fruitful love for humanity. Finally, by its specific witness, consecrated life becomes an objective sign and foreshadowing of the "wedding- feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7-9) which is the goal of all salvation history. In this sense, it points to that eschatological horizon against which the choices and life decisions of every man and woman should be situated.

(225) *Propositio* 39. Cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (25 March 1996), 95: AAS 88 (1996), 470-471.

(226) Code of Canon Law, can. 663 § 1.

(227) Cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (25 March 1996), 34: AAS 88 (1996), 407-408.

Council News

Current council members and officers are:

Judith M. Stegman, President, 2007 – 2009; Diocese of Lansing

Magalis Aguilera, ; 2007 – 2009 (appointed **Vice-President** thru 2009); Archdiocese of Miami

Louise Pare, Treasurer, 2005 – 2007; Diocese of Lansing

Shalina Stilley, 2005 – 2007; Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Aliceanne Sawyer, 2006 – 2008 (appointed **Secretary** thru 2008); Diocese of Trenton.

Team Updates

Shalina Stilley has agreed to lead our new **Membership Team**, and she'll be contacting people soon about collaborating with her as team members. The mission of this new team will be to foster membership in the USACV, especially among consecrated virgins in the U.S. Their work will include such things as inviting newly consecrated virgins to join the association, handling annual registration renewals, assuring that USACV membership records are current, and preparing a Welcome Packet for new association members. Thank you, Shalina, for agreeing to work on this task of love!

Mary Kay Lacke reports progress with the **Formation Resource Development Team** as they continue to discern specific needs and plan. At some time, their work will include a re-vamping of the Information Packet. Until then, the entire packet continues to be available for download from our website www.consecratedvirgins.org.

Convocation and Information Conference updates

Registrations for the 2007 conferences were due July 1, 2007, but there may still be room in each if you respond within the next few days. We look forward to the gatherings with one another and with those inquiring about the vocation of consecrated virginity lived in the world.

Plans for 2008 include the international conference in May and the information conference August 6 to 8, 2008. No national convocation will be held in 2008.

We plan to begin a pattern of holding the national convocations in late June, beginning in 2009. If you are interested in working on a team for that convocation, please contact Judith Stegman. Plans are for the information conference to continue to be held in early August in the Chicago area.

Upcoming events:

Convocations of the United States Consecrated Virgins

August 8 to 12, 2007 Our Lady of Snows, Belleville, IL

(Registrations still accepted)

2008: no U.S. convocation (due to International Pilgrimage to Rome)

June 24 to 28, 2009 Saint Louis area

National Information Conferences

August 1 to 3, 2007;

August 6 to 8, 2008; All to be held near Chicago

August 5 to 7, 2009;

International Pilgrimage of Consecrated Virgins

Rome in 2008, May 14 to 20

(see update article on page 4)



Rome 2008 Update

Consecrated Virgins Living in the World: "A Gift for the Church and in the Church"

Rome 2008 International Congress-Pilgrimage - update from Isabel Bettwy

The international congress-pilgrimage is scheduled for May 14 through May 20 in Rome. We have preliminary quotes from our agent and are currently in the process of putting together the final brochures and registration forms. These will be available at our August convocation, if not before.

In order to provide an opportunity to attend a Wednesday Papal Audience, we are scheduling our departure from the United States on Monday, May 12, 2008, with arrival in Rome on Tuesday, May 13. We plan to attend the papal audience Wednesday morning, May 14. Registration for the international congress-pilgrimage will be held that afternoon, followed by the opening sessions that evening. Our arrival Tuesday morning will give us time to relax and, perhaps, do a little sight-seeing. Because the congress-pilgrimage does not end until midday on Tuesday, May 20, departure for those who do not participate in the After-Pilgrimage will be the morning of May 21.

We are also planning an optional "After-Pilgrimage" to selected sights in Italy, including Collavaleza (Shrine of Merciful Love), Assisi, Sienna, Loreto, Lanciano and San Giovanni Rotondo, from May 20 to May 27. We will provide you with a brochure for the After-Pilgrimage.

If you have never been to Rome, the International Congress-Pilgrimage is a wonderful opportunity to see the Eternal City and to bask in the heart of our Catholic Faith - all this, as well as the opportunity to meet and pray with sisters in our vocation from around the world. The After-Pilgrimage gives you an opportunity to see special places that are famous for their Catholic heritage and which are favorite pilgrimage sites.

May is in the high travel season, and costs are relatively expensive, especially in Rome. If you have any idea of participating in the International Congress-Pilgrimage, it is not too early to start to save for the trip. Preliminary estimates include: Roundtrip airfare (New York - Rome) \$890, Airport Taxes \$220, Conference Registration \$205, Hotel and Meals \$1070, After-Pilgrimage \$1505. Look soon for the brochure which will detail both the International Congress-Pilgrimage and the After-Pilgrimage.

If you have questions, please E-mail Isabel at: imabettwy@aol.com or call her at 740-282-1683 in the evening.

Consecrations

Other Countries:

- Correction: **Christelle Seguenot** was consecrated October 1, 2006 in the Archdiocese of Sens-Auxerre in France (not Canada)
- France: **Sandrine Martin**, Diocese of Evry-Corbeil, May 1, 2007
- Netherlands: **Elisabeth Boddens Hosang**, Diocese of Rotterdam, February 5, 2005

United States:

- **Twanna Bolling**, June 2, 2007, Archdiocese of Chicago, Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
- **Vickie Hamilton**, June 15, 2007, Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan
- **Florence Sundberg**, June 15, 2007, Archdiocese of Hartford, Archbishop Henry Mansell



Twanna Bolling with Cardinal George

Elections Fall 2007

Two Council positions, Treasurer and At-Large Representative, will open January 1, 2008. 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 26, 2007. Details of the election process will be announced in the next newsletter.

Position Terms, Descriptions and Responsibilities

Treasurer

Term: January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010.

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, 2008 to December 31, 2010

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 April Council meeting in St. Louis with Archbishop Burke.

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!

from the President's journal . . .

In his Pentecost column, Archbishop Burke reminded us that our vocation of consecrated virginity is divinely-given. Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a consecrated virgin has heard God's call to respond to his love as a bride of his only-begotten Son, and has been given the strength to respond daily with her whole heart. It has been my personal great joy to get to know a number of our recently consecrated sisters, and to observe first-hand the intimate touch of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Since our last newsletter, I was blessed to attend the consecrations of Twanna Bolling and Florence Sundberg. Different locations, different faith communities, different Bishops, different backgrounds and occupations and personalities – but so obviously one call that has reached each of their hearts and persuaded them to answer that call and unite themselves with Christ, irrevocably. That virginal love is so beautifully expressed by Diane Farr in her poem in this newsletter and I hope you will be refreshed by reading it. Although the cost is high, I do hope that many of us will be able to participate in the Rome 2008 international congress-pilgrimage, and have opportunity to meet one another as well as consecrated virgins from other parts of the world. If cost is an obstacle for you, please be in touch with me personally for information on limited assistance that might be available.

- Judith Stegman

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Composition by Diana Farr

Jesus Our Divine Gardener

I am a gardener and a harpist. Recently I was inspired by an idea for a new musical composition. The botanical name for Carnations and garden pinks is dianthus which means divine flower. Carnations also symbolize the Virgin Mary's pure love of God and the Incarnation.

As Consecrated Virgins we are captivated by the beauty and majesty of Jesus, our true divine flower. The longing of our hearts can only be satisfied by a spousal love that is infinite. A unique aspect of our call is that it is in and through our virginity that we experience the pure embrace of our Heavenly Spouse.

We as consecrated virgins give ourselves totally to Christ, and He in turn imports an everlasting beauty on our whole being. We will explore this further in future articles. The result of my inspiration is portrayed in my following composition that I have set to music on my harp.



O Divine Flower

**O Divine Flower,
My life, my joy and my bliss
You have drawn me in love to yourself Jesus.
As I contemplate, I gaze on the wounds of your love.
For it is by these that you have made me your bride.**

**O Divine Flower,
Coming forth from the virgin's womb.
From a lily most pure arose the splendor of all virginal
hearts.
As I contemplate I see how lovely is she.
This paradise of beauty where the King was pleased to walk.**

**O Divine Flower,
Filling the garden of my heart
With the sweet fragrance of your presence so dear to me.
As I contemplate, I gaze on the beauty of this flower.
My love whom I have wed is the fairest of the sons of men.**

**O Divine Flower
Springing from the tree of life
O life of the soul You who would blossom in every heart.
As I contemplate I see the goodness of your heart,
And I long to be transfigured in the wonder of your love.**

Diane C. Farr