



HE LEADS I FOLLOW

Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration • Immaculate Heart of Mary Province

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FALL 2011

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Our Sisters and Families: United in the Eucharist

Excitement buzzes through the air, an unusual occurrence in the typically tranquil motherhouse chapel. As the organ swells for the opening hymn, the novices professing first vows process down the aisle with mother and father on either side.

Her parents give her to community, and the novice enters the sanctuary, where she freely professes, "... With all my heart I entrust myself to this religious family..." For both parents and child, these words reveal that their family has grown.

The newly professed receives over one hundred Sisters, and the parents receive so many daughters! (Didn't Someone tell us that he who leaves parents or children for the sake of kingdom would receive a hundredfold (Lk. 18:29-30)?

Venerable Mother Maria Theresia fostered a love for our families, in particular our parents, from the earliest days of the congregation. She recognized the great gift and sacrifice of parents in giving a daughter to the community and desired to return this gift.

In some instances, Sisters helped to care for

sick parents or siblings, a tradition that remains to this day. At other times, the Sister recognizes that she may best unite herself to her family through our charism of Perpetual Adoration.

In our adoration chapel and in our mission convents, we pray for a mother undergoing surgery, a grandfather near death, the safe delivery of a new niece, or a brother defending our country.

Family visits provide an opportunity for a Sister's family to get to know the other Sisters at her convent as well. Sisters enjoy witnessing the growth of younger siblings or nieces and nephews and catching up with parents or other family members. For a new Sister, these visits offer the opportunity for her family to become acquainted with the community as familial bonds develop. As the decades pass, these bonds grow stronger.

The relationships among our Sisters and our families stand as mere shadows of the unity we experience through the Eucharist, a unity which will endure into eternity.



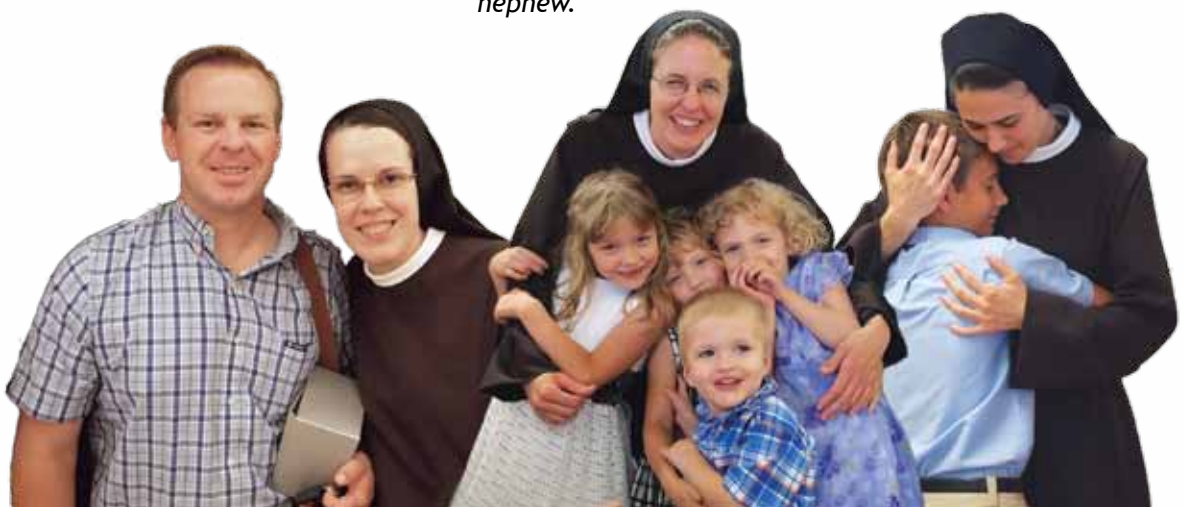
1515 W. Dragoon Trail
P.O. Box 766
Mishawaka, IN 46546
574-259-5427

www.ssfpa.org

Sister M. Cecelia Clare poses with her brother, Patrick, the day after her first profession.

Sister Petra shares a jovial moment with her nieces and nephew.

Sister M. Benedicta shares a tender moment with her brother, Andrew.



From the Desk of the Provincial

“With all my heart I entrust myself to this religious family, that strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and all the saints, and with the support of my Sisters, I will fulfill my consecration in the service of God and the Church.”

This is taken from the formula for our Profession of Vows. In this issue we share with you the call of twelve young women at various stages of their journey of giving themselves totally to Jesus as a Sister of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration. We are most grateful to their families for all they have provided for them and for their continued love and support.

We are grateful to our Sisters, who by their joyful witness, loving support, and prayers encourage them to a life of total consecration. We are grateful to these women for their courageous ‘yes’ to a vocation to the religious life. They enter from a culture that has many distractions and grows more and more secular. But as stated in our vow formula, we are not alone. We are strengthened by the Holy Spirit and supported by our Sisters.

Most importantly, we are grateful to God for the gift of our own vocations, for the many Sisters who have gone before us and for the vocations of those you will meet in this issue. Please join us in our daily prayers for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

To these young people I share the words of Pope Benedict, “Jesus invites his disciples to a total gift of their life. The saints accepted this exacting invitation, and with humble docility followed the crucified and risen Christ. Their perfection, in the logic of faith at times humanly incomprehensible, consists in no longer putting oneself at the center, but in choosing to go against the current –living according to the Gospel. On the example of so many disciples of Christ, you also, my friends, accept with joy the invitation to follow! Do not be afraid if the Lord calls you to the religious life. He is able to give profound joy to one who responds with courage!”

May the Lord bless you with His peace!

Sister M. Angela



“May I wish much happiness to the new Sisters. May they sanctify themselves more and more, embrace with love and joy the great treasure of holy poverty and accomplish many great things for the honor of God.”

*Venerable Mother Maria Theresia
Letter I- 24a*

DID YOU KNOW . . .



The artwork of our Sister M. Rufinia (1885 - 1959) is being displayed at the Art Museum of Greater Lafayette. In an exhibit titled “Inspiring Generations: Sister Rufinia and Her Students”, a collection of 50 works of Sister Rufinia will be shown from September 30 through January 7, 2012.



New Novices Receive the Holy Habit and Religious Name

On August 10, the Sisters welcomed four new Sisters into the ranks of novices. During a simple ceremony, our postulants, Heidi Herber, Alexa Richey, Jordan Henneberry, and Jessica Richardson, donned a new habit and white veil and were given a religious name.

The new novices were also entrusted into the capable hands of Sister Anna Marie, novitiate directress. During this year, they will study the rule and constitution of the community and learn to live as members of the congregation in preparation for their first profession of vows. Their focus will be to grow in the spiritual life and delve into the profound meaning of their consecration.

The practice of changing a person's name when he or she enters into the religious vocation dates as far back as Abram, whose name God changed to Abraham to signify the vocation he was given. In our community, a postulant writes a letter of intent to enter into the novitiate in which she gives three suggestions for possible names. The provincial superior and her council then pray and discuss whether the postulant is being called to our particular congregation and then choose a name for the young lady. In most

cases, the name is chosen from her list of suggestions, though it is also possible for them to choose an entirely different name altogether.

Although the new novice does not hear her full name until the day of her investiture, one part of her name is very well known to her. Because of the undaunting devotion to Saint Joseph of Venerable Mother Maria Theresia, the beloved foundress of our congregation, each Sister in the community is also given the title "of Saint Joseph."

During the beginning years after the founding of our community, while the sisters suffered from a lack of funds, it was well known that Mother Maria Theresia would often apply to Saint Joseph for financial assistance. One day, as a bill for a particularly expensive building project was about to be overdue, Mother prayed to the

good Saint, promising to name every one of her daughters after him if he would supply the funds. Soon, there was a knock at the door and the Sister portress came to announce to Mother that someone had just donated the exact amount of money needed to pay for the project. The rest, as they say, is history.



Sr. Mary Grace (front) smiles for the camera after officially assuming her habit for the first time. In the back, Sister M. Lois adjusts Sr. Maria Faustina's collar.



Heidi Herber

*Sister Maria Faustina
of St. Joseph*



Alexa Richey

*Sister Mary Grace
of St. Joseph*



Jordan Henneberry

*Sister M. Ignatia
of St. Joseph*



Jessica Richardson

*Sister M. Lucia
of St. Joseph*

Profession of Vows

PERPETUAL PROFESSION: a Reflection

In his 1996 apostolic exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, Blessed Pope John Paul II makes the astute observation, “After the enthusiasm of the first meeting with Christ, there comes the constant struggle of everyday life, a struggle which turns a vocation into a tale of friendship with the Lord (*Vita Consecrata* 64).

These words resonated frequently within my thoughts and prayers during the months of preparation for the day of my perpetual vows on August 11, 2011. They were even more vivid when, at long last, the day finally arrived when my Sisters welcomed me as a perpetual member of the community and inheritor of an admirable legacy of love for the Lord and service to the Church.

I can honestly say that the blessings of this vocation have been known to me throughout my eight short years of religious life, but never more so than on that day. As our beloved Pope John Paul II intimates, the vocation of a religious is not confined to a fleeting emotional moment. It is a tale like all tales told on rainy nights by the bedside of sleepy children wishing for dreams of fairy princesses, dragons, and conquering heroes.

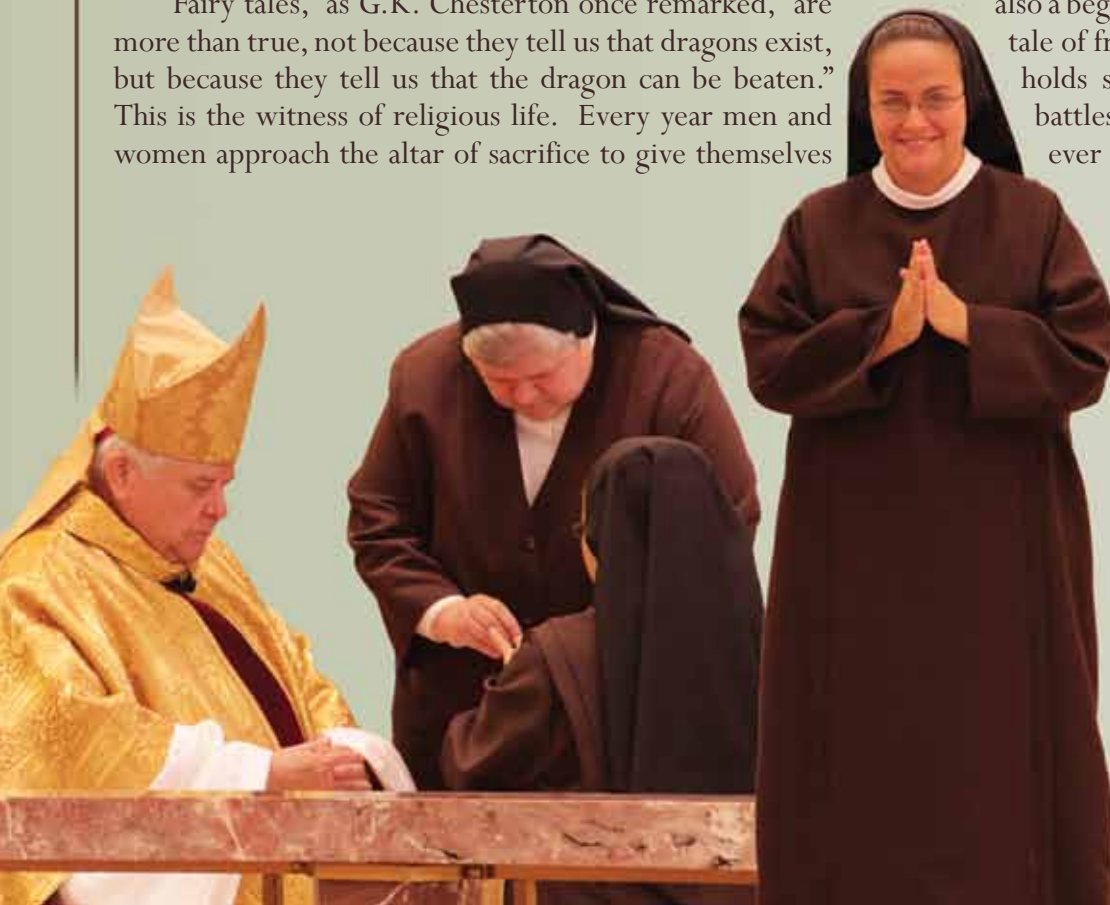
“Fairy tales,” as G.K. Chesterton once remarked, “are more than true, not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that the dragon can be beaten.” This is the witness of religious life. Every year men and women approach the altar of sacrifice to give themselves

to God, not because they are perfect or immaculately conceived, but precisely because they are sinners in need of a St. George to vanquish their dragons. Indeed, the life of a religious is a tale of faith, loyalty, and perseverance, even in the face of that most fearsome of dragons – one’s own iniquity and fragility.

The Hero of the tale is Jesus, who draws the heart of a young man or woman with that first enthusiasm that makes so many young people charming proclaimers of the Gospel. Yet no one who has spent time with consecrated persons can deny that this tale of friendship is infinitely more eloquent in the eyes of the elderly religious who has accompanied the Hero to the ends of the earth.

During his homily at the profession Mass, Bishop Emeritus John M. D’Arcy spoke eloquently on that beautiful love story in the Song of Songs about Solomon and his bride. What’s fascinating about this Old Testament tale is that it doesn’t end until the Book of Revelation, wherein the Lamb of God is at last united to his bride, the Church, in the heavenly Jerusalem.

As I approached the altar to profess my vows, I was aware that this final step in initial religious formation is also a beginning. I too am called to undertake this tale of friendship with the Lord, this tale which holds so many promises of love, adventure, battles, and the hope of an eternal “happily ever after”.



Left to Right:

After it is blessed by Bishop Emeritus John M. D’Arcy, Sister M. Angela places a ring on Sister Mary Vianney’s finger. This simple band is a symbol of her perpetual consecration to Christ.

Sister Mary Vianney smiles during the vow ceremony after being declared a full member of the congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration.

FIRST PROFESSION

Clockwise:

Sister M. Petra kneels before our provincial superior, Sister M. Angela as she professes her vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Sister M. Cecelia Clare places a candle on the altar as a sign of the deepening of her baptismal consecration.

Sister M. Cecelia Clare, Sister M. Benedicta, and Sister M. Petra stand before the congregation after professing their vows and receiving a black veil.



RENEWAL OF VOWS

Clockwise:

Sister M. Lissetta kneels before our provincial superior as she renews her vows.

Sister M. Lissetta and Sister M. Veronica pause for a picture after their renewal Mass.

Sister M. Veronica renews her vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience for two years.





Source and Summit

*Combining the Contemplative Life with the Active
in Perpetual Adoration and Works of Mercy*

Sisters Welcome Postulants, Shaina Winger and Ellia Sliwiak



"In Eucharistic Adoration I have an intimate encounter with God. This time spent with Him strengthens the love I have for Him and gives me graces which bless every moment of my day."

Postulant, Shaina Winger



"To me Eucharistic Adoration is coming before Jesus and saying, 'Here I am, Lord, as I am.' He is before me in all humility and I am before Him in all humility. This is a time when I can speak with the Lord about all of my hopes and desires, while also giving Him thanks for all of the beautiful gifts He has already given me. Then, most importantly, it is a time when I can learn how to better listen to Him and see how I can better love Him in return."

Postulant, Ellia Sliwiak

"It is not by accident that consecrated life is born from hearing the word of God and embracing the Gospel as its rule of life."

*Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI
Address to young women religious WYD - Madrid*



New postulants, Shaina (left) and Ellia (right) listen to the words of Sister M. Angela, provincial superior, during their entrance ceremony.



Ellia and Shaina with the novices and postulants at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois.

Our Life in Pictures



Sister Aloysius and several Catholic Schools students pray a pro-life rosary at St. Margaret Hospital in Dyer, IN.



(Left to Right) Sr. Gianna Marie, Sr. Benedicta, and Sr. Rose with students at St. John the Evangelist School in St. John, IN. The Sisters have returned to St. John after an eleven-year absence.



Sisters attend the University of Saint Francis' opening Mass and convocation, at which Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades presided.



(Left to Right) Sr. Maria Gemma, Sr. Anna Joseph, Sr. Lissetta, and Sr. Mary Vianney after the Holy Father's audience with young religious in El Escorial, Spain. These four Sisters accompanied about 60 Sisters from the CMSWR to World Youth Day in Madrid.



Sister Delrose carries a load of sticks during the Sisters' "Day in the Woods" cleanup project.



Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration

1515 W. Dragoon Trail

P.O. Box 766

Mishawaka, IN 46546-0766

Return Service Requested

Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, participate in the mission of the Roman Catholic Church by living the Gospel after the example of Saint Francis and our foundress, Mother Maria Theresia Bonzel. We strive to combine the contemplative life with the active through perpetual adoration and the works of mercy in education, healthcare, and other ecclesial ministries.

Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration

"I WOULD HAVE THEE TO KNOW THAT THE THINGS WHICH MAKE A SOUL GOOD AND BLESSED ARE HOLY CONTRITION, HOLY HUMILITY, HOLY CHARITY, HOLY DEVOTION, AND HOLY JOY."

FROM THE FIORETTI OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

YOUNG ADULT COME AND SEE: JANUARY 4-7

YOUNG ADULT DISCERNMENT RETREAT: FEBRUARY 24-26

HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT: MARCH 10-11

WYD - MADRID 2011