



HE LEADS I FOLLOW

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

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Sisters Honor Year for Priests with Prayer

By Sister Mary Vianney

The news that Pope Benedict XVI declared June 19, 2009—June 19, 2010 to be a Year for Priests fell upon jubilant ears within the halls of Saint Francis Convent.

Reverence for the priesthood has been an integral part of the Franciscan charism from the outset of the Order. This reverence was exemplified in St. Francis himself, who declared: “if I saw an angel and a priest, I would bow first to the priest and then to the angel.”

On August 4, the official opening of the Year for Priests in the Diocese of Ft. Wayne/ South Bend, many of the Sisters attended Mass and adoration at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Ft. Wayne, where a number of priests gathered to open the year.

During the celebration, Bishop John D’Arcy explained that the year is not for the glorification of priests but for their *sanctification*.

In addition to daily communal prayer for priests, the Sisters have opened the convent doors for members of the laity and clergy to participate in holy Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, and adoration every first Thursday of the month in the main chapel of the motherhouse.

Because the Sisters are indebted to the dedication of so many of the Church’s clergy, they also established a petition book that rests on the altar of the Sacred Heart next to a vigil candle. Numerous names have been added to it as a daily reminder of the Sisters’ commitment to pray for those priests who have gifted them with the sacraments or even those who were taught in our schools by the Sisters. As always, the convent doors are open to any priests wishing to spend some time in prayer.

As the year continues, the Sisters will intensify their prayer for the sanctification of these shepherds of the Church.



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Ft. Wayne/ South Bend Seminarians, Terrence and Matthew Coonan, were ordained to the transitional diaconate on April 25. Sister Gianna Marie, Sister M. Jennifer, Sister Mary Vianney, Sister Margaret Mary, and Sister M. Anna Joseph pose for a picture with them after the event.

From the Desk of the Provincial

Dear Friends,

Peace and all good! It is a great joy to introduce you to our newsletter, "He Leads I Follow."

This title was the motto of our foundress, Mother Maria Theresia Bonzel. In March we received word that Pope Benedict XVI authorized a proclamation noting the heroic virtue of our beloved foundress and officially declared her "Venerable".

We are so grateful for this recognition and continue to pray for her beatification, which we hope will soon follow.

It is with profound gratitude and respect that we dedicate the first issue of our newsletter to priests in recognition of this "Year for Priests" inaugurated by Pope Benedict XVI.

Reverence for the priesthood has always been a significant aspect of the Franciscan charism. We would like to thank all priests for their 'yes' to God's call and their selfless service to the Church.

We thank them for the many ways they have ministered to us individually and as a community and in particular for bringing us the Eucharist.

Please keep us in your prayers and we assure you of our prayers for you, especially during our hours of Eucharistic Adoration.

In Christ,

Sister M. Angela

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"We want to pray for this good priest,
that God may lead him to great sanctity,
along a path pleasing to God."

Mother Maria Theresia Bonzel Letter 1 - 10a

DID YOU KNOW . . .



This monstrance, used by
Venerable Mother Maria
Theresia Bonzel over one
hundred years ago, is still
used at our motherhouse
chapel in Olpe, Germany.



IN-FORMATION

Highlights from the Sisters in Initial Formation

Listening to the Lord’s Call: A Novice Tells Her Story

By Sister Mariana

As I was preparing for Confirmation, I attended a Youth 2000 retreat. By the end of the retreat, the Lord spoke to my heart about looking into religious life. I thought, “You must be kidding, Lord... I’ve never *seen* a sister!”

A few years later, I had the courage to contact communities, one of them being our community. When I visited for the first time, I was so comfortable with the sisters—I could tell they were filled with joy and love for Jesus, with devotion to Eucharistic Adoration.

Father Bill, my mother’s brother, encouraged me to visit several communities. That I did, but I still attended several retreats at our motherhouse and cherished every moment.



Sister Mariana (right) with her mom, Ann (back), Sister Lissetta (left), Miss Diana (front), and her dog, Dotty.

When I went to college, I attempted to ignore the tug at my heart. My boyfriend, nursing school, and sports were my focuses. I attempted to convince myself that I could be happy with a husband, a big family, and a job that I loved. The One who made my heart knew differently.

As a sophomore, the Lord made His will known to me. All I could think to pray was, “what now, Lord?” I started to attend daily Mass, pray the rosary, and go to Eucharistic Adoration in a desperate attempt for His guidance.

He made His will very clear. I knew He was calling me to enter this community. I was sure I wasn’t to delay my gift to Him any longer. I thank God for His fidelity and love ... and the journey has just begun!

Sister Benedicta Speaks at Edith Stein Conference

By Sister M. Benedicta

Saint Edith Stein is the patroness of The Edith Stein Project, a conference at Notre Dame that seeks to promote the dignity of women.

Saint Edith Stein celebrated women’s unique gift as instruments of empathy through her writings and exemplary life.

“It is precisely in the novitiate that I am learning what it means to be a spiritual mother.”

idea, so I helped plan the conference during my junior and senior years.

I had the privilege of attending the conference last year, and this year I was asked to give a talk on spiritual motherhood.

While I am only an infant in religious life, I realized that it is precisely in the novitiate that I am learning what

After attending the conference as a sophomore, I realized that I was not just a generic human being; I have distinct gifts based on my feminine nature. I was very interested in this

it means to be a spiritual mother. By spiritualizing daily life, I can “take pains to do something about others’ pain,” whether the person is present or united to me in the Mystical Body of Christ.



Sister M. Benedicta at the University of Notre Dame Edith Stein Conference.

Living for our Spiritual Fathers

By Sister M. Anna Joseph

When she was fifteen years old, Sister Estelle entered the convent with one thought in mind, namely, to offer up her whole life, especially all her suffering, for her father. When he helped people, he refused to accept money, so they gave him whiskey instead. Over the years, she had watched him become an alcoholic and wanted to give her life to the Lord for his recovery.

For years, Sister Estelle prayed and offered her sufferings with the desire that her father would one day stop drinking and be at peace with God. Sister Estelle's prayers before the Father on behalf of her father were heard. Her father stopped drinking three years before his death. Right before he died, he informed the barber that this haircut would be his last and sent all of his clothes to the cleaners. After going to confession and praying the rosary with his wife, he died in his sleep of an embolism.

After her father's death, Sister Estelle asked the Lord what she should do, as her whole purpose in entering the convent was to give her life for her father. That night she had a dream. She saw a large billboard with the words "Priests, Priests, Priests." This would become her vocation. "So from then on, besides my work, I prayed for priests," said Sister Estelle. When she came to live at the Motherhouse, she enjoyed having even more time to pray for priests. While she prayed for all priests, Sister met many over the years who requested her prayers, confident that the Lord would hear His bride. If Sister Estelle ever heard of a priest who was struggling, she prayed in a special way for his vocation.

"Whatever the seminarian is, if he's good, holy, he'll be the same when he's a priest."





Sister M. Estelle prays before the Blessed Sacrament in the Saint Francis Convent Perpetual Adoration Chapel.

Over the years, anyone who entered Sister Estelle's room would be greeted by a pictorial billboard of priests. Photos of priests and posters of seminarians adorned the walls of her room, reminding Sister of her constant intention.

She noted that in recent years more and more seminarians requested prayers, and she was eager to pray for them as well. "Whatever the seminarian is, if he's good, holy, he'll be the same when he's a priest," she explained. Daily, she came before her Spouse in adoration and offered Him her spiritual sons.

*"Anything that hurts me,
it's all for the priests."*

As her sufferings increased, so did her prayers on behalf of priests. She continued, "anything that hurts me, it's all for the priests." At her entrance into eternal life on April 7, 2010, Sister Estelle presented herself, in life as in death, before Jesus the High Priest, so that His Sacrifice might be perpetuated on the altars throughout the world.

She first offered her life for her father then for the Fathers who provide the Church with Bread

from heaven. She did not see this vocation as belonging only to her, but invited all to make this their intention, saying, "I hope you will pray, too."

Father Neary Pays Tribute to a Spiritual Mother

Sr. Estelle was my first grade teacher at St. Joseph Grade School in LaPorte, Indiana (1969-70). Even then she was hard at work planting seeds for future vocations. Msgr. John C. Witte, our pastor, had a processional cross that was too long. When Msgr. Witte shortened it, Sr. Estelle asked for the piece he sawed off, as she had need of it.

On our birthdays, she would pretend to give us a swat with that piece of wood for each year of life, which weren't many at that stage, and the last extra swat was to become a priest or a nun. We thought it was great fun, but the verbal intention of the last mock swat must have registered with me on some deeper level.

I am aware that several of her first graders became priests and two of her nephews. The day of my ordination in April of 1991, I was pleasantly surprised that she was able to attend, given her ill health at the time. When she

asked and received my blessing, she smiled broadly and said, "Do it again!"



Sister M. Estelle and Father Patrick pose before one of one of her many posters of priests.

I have been blessed all these years by her friendship and prayers. I know that I am a Holy Cross priest because of her example and that of the other Franciscan women religious who taught me at St. Joe's.

I have been blessed to be at Notre Dame these last 15 years, which has afforded me chances to visit regularly with Sr. Estelle. I attended her 50th jubilee celebration when I arrived on campus in 1994, and June 2009, attended her 75th jubilee.

I know that she prayed for me every day and I trust that her prayers have sustained me in my priesthood. We ended each visit by giving each other a blessing.

She never failed to remind me that there is power in these hands of mine. Her faith in the priesthood was deep, and so was her love for me all these many years. Only in heaven will I truly understand what this special friendship has meant in my life!

Fr. Patrick Neary, C.S.C.
Rector/Superior Moreau Seminary



Source and Summit

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

Meditations on the Eucharist by Saint John Vianney

“All the good works in the world are not equal to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass because they are the works of men; but the Mass is the work of God. Martyrdom is nothing in comparison for it is but the sacrifice of man to God; but the Mass is the sacrifice of God for man.”

“When we speak to Jesus with simplicity and with all our heart, He does like a mother who holds her child's head with her hands and covers it with kisses and caresses.”

“When you awake in the night, transport yourself quickly in spirit before the Tabernacle, saying: 'Behold,



Formation Sisters pray before the Blessed Sacrament at the annual Eucharistic Procession held at Notre Dame.

my God, I come to adore You, to praise, thank, and love you and to keep you company with all the Angels.”

“Without the Holy Eucharist there would be no happiness in this world; life

would be insupportable. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive our joy and our happiness. The good God, wishing to give Himself to us in the Sacrament of His Love, gave us a vast and great desire, which He alone can satisfy.”

“A mortal man, a creature, feeds himself, satiates himself, with his God, taking him for his daily bread, his drink... O miracle of miracles!... O love of loves!... O joy of joys!”

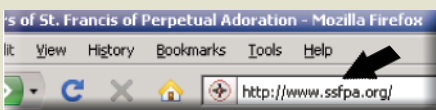
“When we go before the Blessed Sacrament, let us open our heart; our good God will open His. We shall go to Him; He will come to us; the one to ask, the other to receive. It will be like a breath from one to the other.”



“As long as I've been in the Community, nothing has attracted me more than adoration. I love it. I've taken it day and night on my own, not by appointment. I usually had 4:30 in the afternoon because that was a time when many Sisters couldn't take it. Also I had 12:30 a.m. – 1:30 a.m. I've never regretted it. I loved adoration even before I entered the convent. The Lord gifted me with a love for prayer”

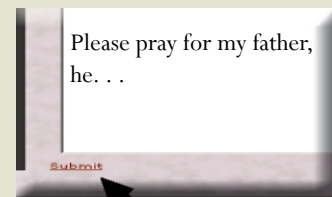
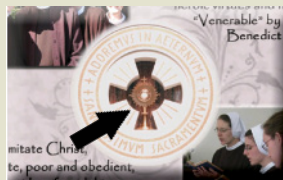
Sister. M. Arilda one day before her death on 1-12-2010

How to Make an Online Prayer Request



1. Log on to www.ssfpa.org

2. Click on the picture of the Eucharist



3. Type your request then click “submit”

Our Life *in Pictures*



Upper Left: The Sisters stop for a picture with Bishop Emeritus John D'Arcy during the 2010 March for Life.

Upper Right: Sister Rose is shown surrounded by her seventh-grade students at St. Casimir School in Hammond, IN.

Left: Sister Julie Marie recently graduated with a Masters in Pastoral Counseling from the University of Saint Francis. She is pictured here with Bishop Kevin Rhoades after the ceremony.

Bottom Left: (left to right) Sister Julitta, Miss Laura, Sister Ann Kathleen and Sister Lois stand by a statue of Venerable Mother Maria Theresia outside of our new St. Elizabeth East Hospital in Lafayette, IN.

Bottom Right: Sister Mary Vianney pauses for a photo with Father Michael Scanlan after the commencement services at Franciscan University of Steubenville where she received a BA in English Education.





Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration

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Return Service Requested

“Through the example of their Holy Father Francis, the Sisters strive to combine the contemplative life with the active through perpetual adoration and the works of mercy.”

Community Vision Statement

Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration

High School Come and See:

June 10-12, 2010

Young Adult Women(ages 18-35):

Call to schedule a visit

