

HE LEADS



IFOLLOW

Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration

Immaculate Heart of Mary Province

With Courage And Trust, A Fervent Thanks Be To God.

After the beatification of Mother Maria Theresia Bonzel in 2013, February 9th was declared her feast day. Each year this feast reminds us of our foundress, of her trust in Divine Providence and the courage with which she established and led our Congregation in its early years. In one of her letters, she wrote, “May God grant you the grace to look back over the year with joyful heart, and to the future with courage and holy trust, no matter what the coming year may bring – joy or suffering, health or illness, life or death. In advance and from the depth of my heart a fervent thanks be to God for everything” (Letters I-26). We give thanks to God for our foundress and for each of our Sisters, remembering in a particular way all who have come before us. We also thank God in advance for one blessing we look forward to this year, a second edition of the biography of Blessed Maria Theresia, *He Leads, I Follow*.



At Blessed Maria Theresia's shrine in the motherhouse chapel, Sr. Mary Joseph Watkins reflects, "Her openness to what God has in store for her has always been an inspiration to me. I continually ask for that grace."

The celebration of our foundress' feast day is an occasion to give glory to God and to seek her intercession before His throne, especially for all of the intentions in our adoration chapel. With courage and trust, we place ourselves, the Church, and the world in the Father's Hands. To share prayer requests, visit our website, ssfpa.org.

WINTER 2018

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Dear Friends,

To have our foundress, Blessed Maria Theresia Bonzel, beatified and venerated within our lifetime has been such a blessing for each of us. Mother Maria Theresia lived her life trusting in Divine Providence and had a profound gratitude to God for all. "In advance and from the depth of my heart a fervent thanks be to God for everything," is an excerpt taken from a letter she wrote to a Sister in America a few years after the first Sisters arrived in Lafayette, IN. As I reflected on her words I thought of Fr. Solanus Casey, OFM Cap. Several of our Sisters had the privilege of attending his beatification in Detroit on November 18, 2017. For several years, Fr. Solanus lived in Huntington, IN, which isn't far from our Motherhouse. He was ordained a priest about six months before the death of Blessed Maria Theresia. "Thanks be to God" was a constant prayer of Blessed Solanus, and "Thank God ahead of time" was his spiritual counsel to those who sought his advice. So even though they never met, I think they were certainly kindred spirits.

Mother Maria Theresia founded our Congregation with a primary charism of Eucharistic Adoration. Eucharist means "to give thanks." Cardinal Cordes summarized her life during his homily at the Beatification as follows; "It is only her spirituality which makes this woman understandable for the faithful. A quotation from the files of the Beatification formulates it completely; 'She had grown under the soft light of the Eucharistic Sun. In her struggles she always went to the hidden God to find light, courage and strength. That was how the longing came to dedicate her whole life to Eucharistic Adoration... and her love for humanity grew out of the Sacrament of the Altar.'"

May each of us live Eucharistic lives, thanking God for all His blessings and thanking Him ahead of time for all that His will ordains for us.

Blessed Maria Theresia, Pray for Us!

Sister M. Angela



"One simple heartfelt 'Thanks be to God' in times of sorrow is more pleasing to God than a thousand in times of happiness."

*With Mother M. Theresia Bonzel
through the Year of the Lord*

DID YOU KNOW . . .

Our Sisters have been "on mission" from the beginning. In this 1952 photo, postulants and novices make stuffed animals and other crafts for the missions. In addition to serving in international missions in the Philippines and Honduras over the years, we recognize that God is always calling us "on mission" and refer to our convents away from the motherhouse as "mission convents."



IN-FORMATION

Highlights from the Sisters in Initial Formation

Not Fear, But Joy: Sister Ignatia's Journey To Religious Life.

My vocation as a religious sister is completely a gift. My parents were my first models of faith, and it was because of them that I even felt comfortable thinking about religious life in the first place. Around 4th grade I thought of being a religious sister; I had witnessed the example of Mother Teresa and thought that I wanted to do something radical with my life like she did. Throughout middle school and high school I had opportunities to deepen my faith life. Each time I felt a stronger connection to the Church and that dedicating my life to the faith was worth it, even though I didn't know exactly how that was going to look.

However, it wasn't until I went to college that I even met religious sisters. Attending a Catholic university, I found great friends who were eager to grow in their faith, and I even met a young woman my age who was discerning religious life. I had not thought about religious life since I was young, and it was a little shocking to me to meet someone my age who was sure that God was calling her to this life.

During my first semester I started practicing for the basketball team and a Sister from our Community was helping out as a pastoral assistant. She would spend time with us during practice and shoot around a little in



Sister M. Ignatia Henneberry with her family

the gym. This made a big impression on me, because a way of life that I thought at first was scary and perhaps a hindrance to who I was, was actually a life filled with joy and a way for someone to be more of who she was. My next semester, I shared a desk with a Sister in my psychological statistics class. We sat and commiserated over long equations and less-than-perfect test scores. She showed me again that I didn't have to be perfect or someone I wasn't; I could just be myself. During my sophomore year I began spending more time with the Sisters.

During this period of time I was drawn more to prayer and made more frequent visits to the perpetual adoration chapel that we had on campus. The first time I visited our Sisters' Motherhouse, I remember feeling such a sense of home that

I knew I wanted to go back. Once the Holy Spirit put on my heart the thought of entering religious life that next year, I had not fear, but joy. I didn't have to figure out my life, God had put it in my heart to live my life with Him and for Him in a special way.

Formed Deeper in Christ, Deeper in Mission.



Several Sisters participated in the 2018 Student Leadership Summit hosted by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) in Chicago, IL in January. Joining 8,000 participants, mainly college students, provided an excellent formation opportunity for the Sisters. Ongoing formation is an integral part of the time of temporary vows. They also encountered many friends, old and new, and shared stories of vocations and our community, spreading much joy along the way!

Christmas In Our Convents



Top, Sr. M. Marlene Shapley, Sr. Mary Joseph Watkins, and Sr. M. Aline Shultz put the finishing touches on their Christmas tree at St. Mary Convent in Griffith, IN.

Right, Sr. Mary Grace Richey and her students at St. Agnes School in Chicago Heights are ready for Christmas Break!





Clockwise from left, Sr. M. Veronica Lopez puts the finishing touches on a Christmas tree sponsored by Franciscan Health Indianapolis for the Indiana Historical Society's annual Festival of Trees.

Sr. M. Madonna Rougeau and Sr. M. Rosalita Wetli enjoy a game of bingo at Our Lady of Angels Convent in Mishawaka, IN.

Sr. M. James Kuzell receives Christmas gift shop items from Sr. M. Timothy Caywood and Sr. M. Madeleine Schumacker. Many Sisters work on crafts throughout the year, and all proceeds help to serve the poor.

Top, Sr. M. Petra Nielsen teaches auction winners how to make a Christmas stollen at St. Boniface in Lafayette, IN

Bottom, Sr. M. Anita Holzmer joins participants from the Living Nativity, students, and members of the community in the annual Lighting of the Lake at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, IN.

Right, Sr. Maria Faustina Herber pauses for a photo with Mary and Baby Jesus at the annual Living Nativity at Franciscan Health Indianapolis.





SOURCE AND SUMMIT

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

Our Christmas: Becoming Tabernacles Like Our Lady.

The connection between Christmas and the Eucharist is deep for Francis and Clare. In his first Admonition, Francis says, “daily He humbles Himself as when from His ‘royal throne’ He came into the womb of the Virgin; daily He Himself comes to us with like humility; daily He descends from the bosom of His Father upon the altar in the hands of the priest...” These words demonstrate that every day it

is Christmas. The manger became an altar. But every day the altar becomes the manger of Bethlehem. St. Francis had a new title for Mary when he said, “Hail Tabernacle.” The womb of the Virgin is the first tabernacle for the presence of Jesus is there. [When] we approach the altar to celebrate the Eucharist, our altar becomes a manger. And something even greater happens – when we receive Jesus in His body and blood, we become like Mary. We become tabernacles. This is our Christmas.

*From the Homily of Fr. Georges Massinelli, OFM,
at Midnight Mass 2017, St. Francis Convent.*

Just Keep Me Faithful: Sister M. Louise Reflects on Eucharistic Adoration.

It’s in realizing He’s there that I gain more trust in Him. Jesus is there; He is right there listening to me. He helps me just sitting with Him. Before, when you’re busy teaching school, it’s hard taking adoration when you come home from school and you’re really tired. But now I’m lost if I don’t take it at least once a day.

I pray with the Sisters when I’m in the adoration chapel during Vespers. The singing is so beautiful and I like having adoration at that hour because it sounds so pretty. It gives you sort of a lift and it makes me grateful that I’m called to be a religious because I get to be with Jesus and I get to hear those angels’ voices. It’s like I’m in paradise!

I think our chapel is the most beautiful adoration chapel in the world. I love that big Host up there. I was sitting there looking at that big Host, and I remembered when I was a little aspirant kneeling there. Here I’m lookin’ at Jesus and thinking, “You’re still here!” Then I figured it out:



it was 65 years ago I was an aspirant! I looked at him and said, “Just keep me faithful!”



Our Life In Pictures



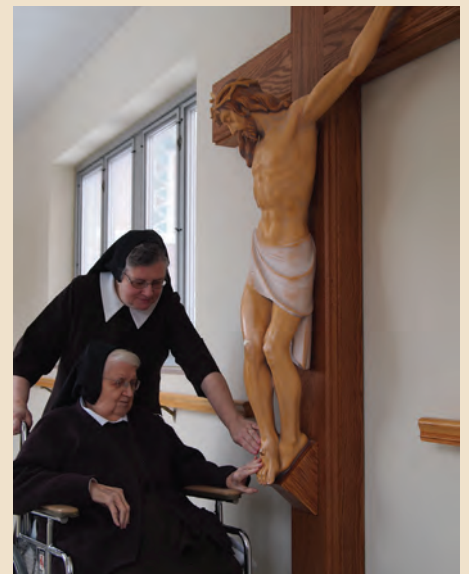
Sr. M. Regina DeVreese, Sr. M. Helen Minich, and Sr. M. Dianne Zimmer were among several Sisters who journeyed to Detroit, MI to participate in the beatification of Blessed Solanus Casey in November 2017.



Sisters traveled with various groups to participate in the March for Life in Washington, D.C. Pictured here are Sr. Mary Bosco Davis, Sr. M. Mercy Briola, Sr. Maria Gemma Salyer, Sr. M. Lissetta Gettinger, and Sr. M. Ignatia Henneberry.



Franciscan Health Hammond celebrates its 120th anniversary this year. Many Sisters participated in a Mass celebrated by Bishop Donald Hying.



Thanks be to God for the daily fidelity of each of our Sisters! Sr. Julie Marie Oxley pauses with Sr. M. Caroline Knapik at the feet of Jesus on their daily route to the adoration chapel.



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.

Discernment Retreats

YOUNG WOMEN
ages 17-30

JULY 6-8
NOVEMBER 2-4

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