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

New Postulants Reflect on their First Days

What do I do now? That question is usually on my mind. Especially during the first few weeks of postulancy, I was constantly asking that question in a variety of formats. There is a routine in community life, created to ensure everyone does their duty to make the community a better place.

As a postulant, I looked forward to the day when I could say, "I've been at this whole community life for awhile now. I know what comes next."

Consecrated life is living everyday in the presence of Jesus Christ and asking Him, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" From thence comes the feeling of joy in our hearts. It does not come when one finally learns how to hang the humeral veil properly or stock the refrigerator.

It comes when we can rest our heads on our pillows and say, "I tried my hardest to do what Our Lord wanted today." Ultimately, it is in doing His will that our hearts will be at peace.

*Miss Patricia Roeder
St. Mary of the Annunciation
Bristol, IN.*

Happy indeed is she who is given the grace of sharing this holy way of life, clinging to it with every fiber of her being." Saint Clare of Assisi wrote this to Blessed Agnes of Prague nearly 800 years ago, but she often reminds me of this and encourages me to strive to imitate Jesus in His poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Since entrance day enough has happened that I could write a book! Each day here has been a combination of new experiences – all in the loving arms of Jesus and the will of our Father.

Consecrated life is the Lord's gift to me much more than it is my gift to Him. It is His invitation to become like Him, "obedient to death," and to be a sign of His love in our broken world. Becoming one flesh with Him in the Eucharist each day, a consecrated woman carries out her mission to bear fruit for the Lord. In the words of our father Saint Francis, "This is what I wish; this is what I have been looking for; this is what I long to do with all my heart."

*Miss Angela DeVreese
Queen of Peace
Mishawaka, IN.*



The postulants with their pastors, (left) Fr. Bob Van Kempen of St. Mary of the Annunciation in Bristol, IN and (right) Fr. Dan Scheidt of Queen of Peace Parish in Mishawaka, IN.



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From the Desk of the Provincial

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you during this “Year of Faith”, declared by Pope Benedict XVI , which began on Oct. 11, 2012 and will conclude on November 24, 2013. The Year of Faith is intended to renew the Church’s conversion to the Lord Jesus and the rediscovery of faith for each of us so that we will be joy-filled witnesses to the Risen Lord in today’s world, a world that has become more and more secular. In his apostolic letter, “The Door of Faith”, our Holy Father states:

“Faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world. What the world is in particular need of today is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord, and capable of opening the hearts and minds of many to the desire for God and for true life, life without end.”

The Holy Father invites all to live this year as a special “time of grace.” For our Congregation this is particularly meaningful, because we are preparing to celebrate the 150th Jubilee of our founding as Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration. Venerable Mother MariaTheresia Bonzel founded our Congregation in 1863 in Olpe, Germany. What faith she had in fulfilling God’s will in her life, and how we have been blessed by her faith and perseverance! It is through grace and the gift of faith that each sister has consecrated her life to Christ, leaving all things behind so as to live obedience, poverty and chastity in imitation of Jesus.

The year will provide times for prayer and special celebrations which is all important. But our greatest prayer will be one of thanksgiving to God, to Mother Maria Theresia, to our benefactors, and to each of our Sisters who have gone before us to enable us to celebrate this “Year of Grace.” We humbly request your prayers that each of us will be renewed in faith and fidelity to our charism and in our service to the Church. Through God’s grace may we build on the foundation provided for us, that we will be able to entrust the legacy and dream of Mother Maria Theresia to those young women who will continue to respond to God’s call to become a Sister of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration.

May the Lord bless you always!

Sister M. Angela



“Walk in fidelity and guard the grace of vocation. God Himself has called and selected us and we shall be accountable for all He has entrusted to us, especially for the great grace of vocation.”

*Venerable Mother Maria Theresia Bonzel
Letter II-1a*

DID YOU KNOW . . .



In 1962 the Eastern Province (Mishawaka) opened its first foreign mission at Baybay on the island of Leyte in the Philippines. The mission became a region in 1976, and it was established as the Immaculate Conception Province in 1993. This year we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our Sisters in the Philippines.

Pictured above is Mother Philotera Meirose (center) with the first four Missionary Sisters, including Sr. Mary Paul Pfautsch (2nd from right) and Sister Denise Stolinski (2nd from left) who continue to serve in the Philippines.



Highlights from the Sisters in Initial Formation

Receiving the Habit: Sister Mary Anthony Reflects

In becoming a novice I had the honor of receiving several things from Sr. Angela, our Provincial Superior, during my Investiture ceremony. One of which was the name Sister Mary Anthony.

This name has special meaning to me because Mary was given to us as our mother and guides us through our life. I also hope to follow her example of trusting service. St. Anthony inspires me because he wanted to be a martyr but God called him to live for Him; he wanted to live a quiet life but God called him to preach.

His life shows me the value of being humble and recognizing that God may want me to do something radically different from the things I have planned.

Another item I was given was the holy habit, blessed by our chaplain. As the other novices helped me put it on they explained



Sister Mary Anthony enjoys a St. Francis day outing at the South Bend River walk.

the importance of each part of it, and prayed the prayers we say when we put it on. These prayers and the habit itself are a reminder to us that we are dedicating our lives to Christ, our Bridegroom, and He will be with us and give us the grace necessary to follow Him.

I was presented with the Liturgy of the Hours. As religious we pray this in common, bringing our voices together to praise, thank, and beseech God.

It is an honor to know that I am praying not only with my Sisters in community but with the entire Church, and may be praying for those who are not able to raise their voice to God.

Finally I received a crucifix. This crucifix sums up everything I was given; to me it signifies that I have died to this world and become a new person in Christ.

Some of the Many Activities of our Novitiate Sisters



The novices and postulants teach Sister Mary Vianney's sixth grade students about the Liturgy of the Hours and spend some time praying Middy Prayer with them.



Sister M. Lucia, Sister Mary Grace, and Patricia polish a statue of our foundress on the Convent grounds



Young women on the Discernment Retreat weekend, which was led by Fr. Kevin Bauman and hosted by Sister M. Lois, our Vocation Director.



Final Profession 2012

On the Feast of Saint Clare, August 11, 2012, Sister Gianna Marie Webber vowed to God to live forever in obedience, poverty and chastity. Her perpetual profession of vows took place during Holy Mass to show that her sacrifice is joined to the sacrifice of Christ, her Divine Spouse. Bishop Kevin Rhoades celebrated the Mass along with Franciscan and diocesan priests and deacons from the Ft Wayne-South Bend and Gary dioceses.

At the altar, she then signed a copy of the vow formula that she had previously handwritten. All sang the Litany of the

Saints to beg their aid in helping her live what she just professed. During the Rite of Profession, Sister Gianna Marie also knelt before Bishop Rhoades as he blessed a ring that symbolizes her permanent commitment as bride of Christ. After receiving her Divine Spouse in Holy Communion, Bishop Rhoades pronounced over her the Prayer of Consecration "...Strengthened by the vows of her consecration, may she be always one with You in loving fidelity to Christ, her only Bridegroom."

Sister Gianna Marie currently resides in St. John, Indiana, where she serves as principal of St. John the Evangelist School. May her life as a consecrated religious bear much fruit for the Kingdom!



Sister Gianna Marie embraces her mother after the perpetual vows ceremony.

Sister Gianna Marie kneels before Bishop Rhoades as he pronounces the Prayer of Consecration.



First Profession 2012



Sister Maria Kolbe smiles after professing vows for three years.



Sister Maria Kolbe poses with her two nieces and Father Jonathan Meyer from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.



Sister Theresa Marie expresses her joy right after professing her vows.

Renewal of Vows 2012



Sister M. Madeleine, Sister M. Anna Joseph, and Sister Maria Gemma pray before renewing their vows on August 9th.



The Sisters celebrate their renewal of vows with the community chaplain, Father Francis Affelt, OFM and Bishop Emeritus John M. D'Arcy, who led their formation retreat.



Source and Summit

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

Eucharistic Adoration and the Year of Faith



Sister M. Fidelis and a Filipina novice pray before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament in the Perpetual Adoration Chapel at the Immaculate Conception province in Baybay, Leyte, Philippines. This year the Sisters celebrate 50 years since their founding.

From the first day we donned a veil, approaching the altar in white dresses that, in the mind of an eight-year-old, possessed the perfect combination of ruffles and lace, we have professed a solemn word in response to the priest's proclamation of Whom he presents: "Amen." We say this word countless times each day, but as we receive the Eucharist, we are given the opportunity to acknowledge Whom we receive and whom we become.

Faithfulness and trust thus define the relationship into which we entered the day of our First Communion and which we deepen daily. As Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, our relationship with our Eucharistic Spouse is supremely important. Not only do we encounter Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, each time we receive Communion, but we become the Body of Christ. According to St. John Chrysostom, "I receive Him to become Him, to be Eucharist for others." The intimacy of such a relationship is mirrored in the sacrament of matrimony, in which "the two become flesh" (cf. Gen. 2:24).

In this Year of Faith, we are called to renew the covenant with our Eucharistic Spouse, perhaps recovering some of the fervor that accompanied the faithfulness and trust with which we professed our first "Amen" so many years ago. Because the Eucharist is the Sacrament of Unity, this call extends to every member of the Body of Christ. If at times we feel unworthy, we need only ask Jesus in faith to speak in us: "He is the definitive 'Amen' of the Father's love for us. He takes up and completes our 'Amen' to the Father" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1065). The next time we receive the Body of Christ, may we have the faith to become the Body of Christ for the life of the world. Amen!

"Come to Me . . . I am here for you!" What a beautiful invitation my Spouse offers me each time I approach Him in adoration. Who has a more wonderful opportunity to do that than I, as a Sister of Perpetual Adoration? I cherish my time with Him and never depart from His Presence without experiencing deep within me an inner calm, a sense of quietude and peace.

It is while spending quality time with Him that He helps me see more clearly what my own mission is in the Church - - to be a mouthpiece between God and the people of the world with their cares, their needs, and their overwhelming concerns. What a unique privilege!

Sister M. Joseph Ann Vogel, OSF



Our Life in Pictures



Sister M. Kathleen enjoys meeting “Nasa” during a presentation on the training of assistance dogs at Our Lady of Angels Convent.



The Sisters at Franciscan Alliance Corporate Office pray with employees before beginning each work day.



Ten of the Sisters from our province visited the Philippines to celebrate the 50th Jubilee of their founding.



Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades celebrates the Opening Convocation Mass at the University of Saint Francis.



Sister M. Clare greets Phyllis Gachumi, a first-year employee for the Sisters, at the Annual Employee Recognition Dinner.



Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration

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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

Vocation Events - 2013

January 3-5 - Young Adult
"Come and See"

February 22-24 - Discernment Retreat

Call to schedule a visit
574-259-5427

www.ssfpa.org/retreats

