



HE LEADS I FOLLOW

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

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Sisters Live the March for Life All Year

By Sister M. Jennifer, Sister M. Petra, and Sister M. Benedicta

During January our thoughts turn toward the March for Life in Washington, D.C. Some of our Sisters joined over 400,000 pro-lifers in this pro-life rally. Other Sisters participated in local March for Life rallies. Still others attended the Vigil Mass and Holy Hours at the University of St. Francis, St. Matthew's Cathedral, Franciscan University of Steubenville, or the University of Notre Dame.

Our Sisters shared about the March for Life in Washington, D.C. It may seem like a protest march, and it is, but it's really more a celebration of life.

You see lots of youth, families with babies and children, religious, priests, and bishops. People are praying as they are walking, and they are also enjoying being with so many other people who are united in the desire to bring back to our nation the culture of life.

The sheer number of people is amazing. It is beautiful to see and meet so many young people from all over the United States who are all there for the same purpose. For many of them, the culture today is different from the culture of their parents' generation in terms of the free choice mentality. Many

youth see the meaning, beauty, and dignity of life, and seek the Truth who we consider to be Christ.

The March for Life is non-denominational, yet it has a very Catholic feel. There are youth rallies and Mass prior to the March, and there is much praying and talking. Once Mass begins, the atmosphere is very reverent and prayerful.

After the main rally, at which congressmen and other pro-life supporters speak, the March itself takes the crowd on a route to the Supreme Court, where prayers and hymns continue, and friends greet each other.

We, the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration, continue to live the March for Life throughout the year. We show our support in union with the Pro-Life

March by participating in local Right to Life activities and 40 Days for Life.

Our health system founded and operates St. Monica Home for pregnant adolescents. We also support Hannah's House, a maternity home in Mishawaka. Daily our prayers are offered for respect for life from conception to natural death.

Our dear Mother Maria Theresia wrote: "Take care and thank God for the precious span of life." (Letter I-60)



Life at all stages: Sister M. Marita gives a ride to Devika, Sister Marie's three-year-old niece.

From the Desk of the Provincial

Dear Friends,

We have concluded the celebration of “the feast of all feasts” as St. Francis referred to the Nativity of Our Savior. This was also a very special time for our foundress, Mother Maria Theresia. The tradition continues here at Mount Alverno. The Sisters spend time preparing both outside and within for the joyous feast of the Incarnation. One of the highlights during Christmas week is a schedule which includes Morning Prayer an hour later than usual! It initially seems so empty once the external decorations come down. But within our hearts we treasure this mystery of our God who became man for our sake as we strive to bear witness in our world to His truth, love, and peace.

Several of our Sisters are bearing witness in our world by participating in diocesan and national events in preparation for the thirty-eighth anniversary of Roe vs. Wade. Several will participate in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. while others will take part in prayer services and marches closer to home. As Pope John Paul II stated in *Evangelium Vitae*, “Only respect for life can be the foundation and guarantee of the most precious and essential goods of society, such as democracy and peace.”

The first Franciscan value for our health system (Franciscan Alliance) is Respect for Life, and the first for our education apostolate is to Reverence the Unique Dignity of Each Person. We pray that we remain faithful to these values and that united with our co-workers we will witness our commitment to a respect for all life from conception to natural death at all levels wherever we serve.

In gratitude to God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon our community during 2010, I pray for His continued guidance in 2011 and for blessings of peace and joy for you and your loved ones.

Peace and all good!

Sister M. Angela

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“Let us, dear Sisters, regulate our lives in such a way that we may confidently, even joyfully look toward our last hour. Our Lord desires to have us with Himself. At the Last Supper He said: “I will come again and take you with Me, that where I am, you also may be.” So let us keep our eternal goal constantly before our eyes. With the dove, let us hide in His wounds until we may rest there in peace and eternity.”

Venerable Mother Maria Theresia
Letter IV-124, 125

DID YOU KNOW . . .

On February 5, 1905 Mother Maria Theresia received Holy Viaticum at 10:30 p.m. Our dying Mother whispered, “Patience! Patience! My dear Savior, come soon.” These were her last words. Mother Maria Theresia died on February 6, 1905 at 1:30 a.m. Bishop Lorenz Jaeger, Archbishop of Paderborn, wrote: “At her death, [she] was generally considered a saint.”

Episcopal Newsletter of the Archdiocese
of Paderborn, Sept. 18, 1961



“Unless a Grain of Wheat”: Sister M. Veronica’s Call Story

By Sister M. Veronica

My first experience of the Lord calling me to religious life occurred when I was eleven years old, growing up in Hammond, Indiana. I remember talking to God while playing on a swing set in a nearby park. I promised Him that I would serve Him as a Sister when I was older. I often reflected on this event while growing up.

My grandmother’s witness and love of the Church also made a powerful impression on me. In my twenties and thirties I grew in faith and came closer to the Lord while searching out His plan for my life. I started to visit our congregation in 2001 while working at St. Margaret Hospital in Hammond, Indiana.

In 2003 the Lord led me to work for several years at a Franciscan mission called Port Ministries directed by Father Gus Milon, a priest of



Sister M. Veronica (right) poses for a picture with Sister M. James Agnes (left) during recreation at Our Lady of Angels.

the Order of Friars Minor (OFM).

This mission, where I had volunteered for several years, aided the poor and homeless on the south side of Chicago. While working there, God’s call to religious life came out strongly. Meanwhile, I continued to struggle with discerning His will for me. The

spirituality and Eucharistic devotion of the OFMs positively influenced me.

Despite the many spiritual struggles and battles, I finally entered our congregation in September, 2005. During my postulancy the Lord gave this scripture to me while I was praying the Stations of the Cross: “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (John 12:24). Day by day I’m learning to die to my self-will and to allow the Lord Jesus to work more fully through me.

I’m in my second year of temporary vows, serving as a staff nurse at St. Elizabeth Hospital, Lafayette, at both the Central and East campuses. I am the Sacristan for the hospital chapel and minister as Spiritual Assistant to the Secular Franciscan Order in Lafayette, Indiana.

Young Adult Women Gather to “Come and See” the Convent



Sister M. Benedicta (right) shows “Come and See” participants Katherine Walburn (left) and Jennie Risz (back) how to clean the furniture with a toothbrush!



The “Come and See” participants stop for a photo with the novices and postulants. They visited the motherhouse for four days in January.



Scrub, scrub, scrub! Jennie (left) and Sister M. Petra (right) wash down the tables before the next meal.

Jesus Christ is Born for Us

By Sister M. Jennifer

God in hidden majesty comes to us; we have come to adore Him.

Christmas was totally awesome for St. Francis. He was utterly in love with Jesus, God-with-us. Pope Benedict XVI explained: "With St. Francis and his nativity, the defenseless love of God was shown, His humility and goodness, which in the incarnation of the Word is manifested to man so as to teach a new way to live and to love... Thanks to St. Francis, the Christian people have been able to perceive that at Christmas, God truly has become Emmanuel, God-with-us, from whom no barrier or distance can separate us. In this Child, God has come so near to each one of us, so close, that we can address Him with confidence and maintain with Him a trusting relationship of deep affection, as we do with a newborn."

It overwhelmed St. Francis that God in hidden majesty came down to earth for His people. Pope Benedict stated: "In the stable at Bethlehem He allowed Himself to be worshipped under the humble outward appearances of a newborn baby, by Mary, by

Joseph and by the shepherds; in the consecrated Host we adore Him sacramentally present in His body, blood, soul and Godhead, and He offers Himself to us as the food of eternal life. The Mass then becomes a truly loving encounter with the One who gave Himself wholly for us."

Mother Maria Theresia considered Christmas "the loveliest of feasts". She wrote, "May the Heavenly Child, as He takes up His abode in us, fill us with His love. Whenever we linger at the Crib, there contemplating eternal Wisdom hidden in the form of a child, let us learn simplicity and poverty. We must do our share. As children of Saint Francis we must walk in simplicity and humble obedience."

The Magi came, paid homage, and went home. Outwardly, their journey was now over. But at this point a new journey began for them, an inner pilgrimage which changed their whole lives.

So, too, a new year of grace has begun for us. May we grow in age, grace and wisdom, as did our Divine Lord.



First-year novice, Sister Theresa Marie, places the Infant Jesus in the creche during Midnight Mass.



Glory to God in the Highest

CHRISTMAS IN THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY PROVINCE



Some of the novices and postulants sing "Silent Night" in German with Sister M. Alfreda at Our Lady of Angels Convent.



Sister M. Jennifer (left) and Sister M. Elise (right) enjoy a carriage ride on their way to the Christmas party at University of St. Francis' newly renovated Brookside.



Several Sisters carol for the children in Sister M. Paula's first-grade classroom at St. Mary School in Griffith, IN.



Sister M. Marlene places an ornament on a tree that graced the halls of St. Francis Hospital in Beech Grove, IN.





Source and Summit

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

Prayer of Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina after Communion

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have You present so that I do not forget You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me Lord, because I am weak, and I need Your strength, so that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me Lord, for You are my life, and without You, I am without fervor.

Stay with me Lord, for You are my light, and without You, I am in darkness.

Stay with me Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me Lord, so that I hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me Lord, for I desire to love You very much, and always be in Your company.

Stay with me Lord, if You wish me to be faithful to You.

Stay with me Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I want it to be a place of consolation for You, a nest of Love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late, and the day is coming to a close, and life passes, death, judgment, eternity approach. It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way and for

that, I need You. It is getting late and death approaches. I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows. O how I need You, my Jesus, in this night of exile.

Stay with me tonight, Jesus, in life with all its dangers, I need You.



Let me recognize You as Your disciples did at the breaking of bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the light which disperses the darkness, the force which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to remain united to You, if not by Communion, at least by grace and love.

Stay with me Jesus, I do not ask for divine consolation because I do not merit it, but the gift of Your presence, oh yes, I ask this of You.

Stay with me Lord, for it is You alone I look for, Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit, because I love You and ask no other reward but to love You more and more.

With a firm love, I will love You with all my heart while on earth and continue to love You perfectly during all eternity. Amen.



“Adoration is not only the time I spend alone in the Presence of my Eucharistic Lord, it’s also an attitude that I try to carry with me throughout the day as I find Him in my Sisters, my students, colleagues and co-workers... everyone with whom I come in contact. That special time with Him alone, however, is the foundation of my day; that is the time when I bring myself and everyone to Him, placing us all in His Hands in surrender.”

Sister M. Anita

Our Life *in Pictures*



Sister M. Cheryl visits with a mother and baby who were residents at our St. Monica Home for expectant adolescents.



Sister M. Carol (left), Sister Julie Marie, and Sister M. Anita (right) join the students and professors of the University of Saint Francis as they depart for the March for Life in Washington, D.C.



(From left to right) Sister Margaret Mary, Sister Mariana and postulants Alexa and Jordan marched for life with the students of Holy Cross College, South Bend.



(Far right front to back) Sister Maria Gemma and Sister Mary Joseph at the March for Life with their students from Central Catholic High School, Lafayette, IN.



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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 TO ATTEND WORLD YOUTH DAY IN MADRID - 2011

"Rooted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith" (Col. 2:7)



Sister M. Jennifer (front left), Sister Margaret Mary (middle) and Sister Dianne Marie (right) surrounded by other CMSWR communities and several youth at World Youth Day - Cologne.

The Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR) plans to send sixty-five young Sisters to join our Holy Father at World Youth Day in Spain. The presence of the Sisters as vibrant witnesses to help the youth strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ is very important. Five of our Sisters are privileged to accompany this group.

The cost per Sister is estimated to be approximately \$3,000. If you are able to assist in helping to defray the cost for the Sisters we would be most grateful.

Please make checks payable to the "CMSWR" and mail to:
CMSWR - World Youth Day
P.O. Box 766
Mishawaka, IN 46546