



Rejoice!

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2008

Dear Family and Friends,

As spring is easing into summer we don't know if we are slowing down from school or speeding up for summer activities! The school year has come to a quick conclusion and our Sisters continue to spread the good news of the kingdom in various ways. Before talking about our summer activities, we have many things from the past few months to highlight for you.

One of the highlights has to be the Holy Father's visit to the United States. So many of his talks spoke directly to our hearts, especially his talk to the Religious of the United States and his talk to Catholic educators. We were also all ears when Pope Benedict XVI spoke on vocation promotion. You will find gems of quotations from him throughout the newsletter.



As Catholic educators, we strive to fulfill what our Lord has commanded: to make known the Good News. This year marks a monumental time as four of our Sisters prepared for the IHM apostolate by completing their student teaching. This fall they will be embarking on their first year of teaching, striving to follow what is set down in IHM Constitutions: "It is thus the Sisters' mission to teach: to be a voice for the Church in spreading the true message of Christ which finds its unity in the trinity of Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium" (#69).

To continue the charism of our community, we need strong, dedicated and persevering young women. Throughout the year, we offer discernment retreats to different groups of girls. Many young women have visited and are seeking to know God's will. Please continue to pray that many will be open to following God's call to give themselves as consecrated religious.

Even though the school year has come to a close, our Sisters continue to teach by giving talks, especially as part of our annual IHM novena, and instructing young children during Vacation Bible School. They also become students again by taking classes for re-certification and working on graduate studies. Each Sister sees the summer as an opportunity for renewal in our IHM charism: "By prayer and study each Sister seeks to deepen and to enrich her power to bear witness to the truths of the Catholic Faith through informed and zealous teaching and the directing of retreats, and to the call to holiness by reflecting Christ through the radiation of his virtues" (IHM Constitutions #72).

Three special blessings highlighted the start of our summer. Sr. Mary Clare Johnson completed the process of transferring from the IHM California Institute and professed her perpetual vows with the IHM's of Wichita. Sr. John Marie Zwenger and Sr. Mary Agnes Wasinger also made perpetual profession. Profession is such a grace-filled opportunity for our community. Not only does the Sister make her profession and each Sister, in a sense, renews her own consecration but we are able to share this great mystery with others.

May this summer continue to be filled with many blessings for you and all your loved ones and may we continue to rejoice in all that He has done for us.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Mother Marie Bernadette, IHM

Mother Marie Bernadette, IHM
General Superior

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY 2008

SISTER MARY ANN AND SISTER MARY CLARE JOIN THE PAPAL VISIT

"I am happy to celebrate this Mass with you, who have been chosen by the Lord, who have answered his call, and who devote your lives to the pursuit of holiness, the spread of the Gospel and the building up of the Church in faith, hope and love." (April 19, 2008) Not only was Pope Benedict addressing this statement to all the Religious in the United States, but specifically to those who were present for the Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral. While we were attending Mass that Saturday morning here in Kansas, Sr. Mary Ann and Sr. Mary Clare were representing the religious of the Diocese of Wichita in New York.

After moving their way through the security measures, the Sisters found themselves at their reserved pew – second from the back. At first it was disappointing to know that the sanctuary was so far away – but that disappointment turned to joy when the Sisters realized that they would have unobstructed views of the Holy Father as he arrived at St. Patrick's as well as during the processional and recessional. "He was only a few feet away from us three times! What a gentle, loving presence he had" said Sr. Mary Ann. Sr. Mary Clare added, "We were able to see the entire arrival -- when he got out of the car, the kissing of the crucifix and blessing with holy water. Then he walked right by us in order to vest for Mass. It was very exciting!"

The Sisters at home in Wichita rejoiced that their Sisters were present to witness to our love and fidelity to the Holy Father. Later that day the Sisters were able to watch a video tape of the Mass – and joyfully exclaimed, "There they are!" when the Sisters were spotted. Later

that night two tired, yet full of joy, Sisters arrived back in Wichita, ready to share their experiences of meeting the Holy Father, or, as St. Catherine of Siena would say, "my sweet Christ on earth."



TOP: Sr. Mary Ann and Sr. Mary Clare in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York. **ABOVE:** One of their unobstructed views of the Holy Father.

Center Aisle Pew 106

Christ Our Hope: The Apostolic Journey to the United States 2008

THE PASTORAL VISIT TO NEW YORK

HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI

*Cathedral of Saint Patrick
New York City
April 19th, 2008*

*Guests must be seated by
7:50 am*

A large graphic for the Mass. On the left, Pope Benedict XVI is shown from the chest up, wearing white vestments and a red sash, with his hands raised in a gesture of blessing. Behind him is a large, ornate yellow canopy. To the right of the Pope is a tall, golden Gothic-style cathedral spire. The background is a light, textured surface. A barcode is located on the far right side of the graphic.

GRADUATION 2008

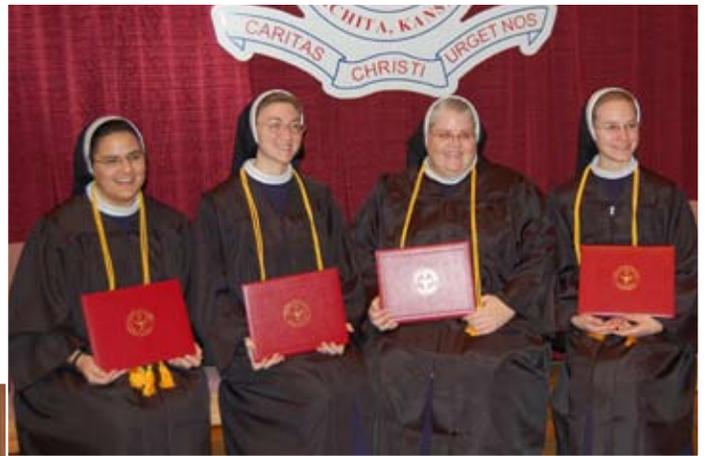
FOUR OF OUR SISTERS GRADUATE WITH HONORS

When speaking with the Catholic educators on his visit to the US, Pope Benedict addressed these words to the Religious: “Do not abandon the school apostolate; indeed, renew your commitment to schools especially those in poorer areas. In places where there are many hollow promises which lure young people away from the path of truth and genuine freedom, the consecrated person’s witness to the evangelical counsels is an irreplaceable gift.” (4-17-2008)

In order to enter into the apostolate of Catholic education, our Sisters, after their first profession, return to college to obtain their degrees in education. Since our Sisters often come to us with various levels and amounts of college work completed, the time involved to finish their degrees varies from Sister to Sister. This December we rejoiced to have four of our Sisters graduate from Newman University with their BA in education. Sr. Mary Grace and Sr. John Marie completed their elementary education degree, while Sr. Mary Dolores and Sr. Mary Agnes finished their secondary education degree. Not only did the Sisters simply graduate – but all graduated with honors!

This spring the Sisters spent time working with our Sisters in the classroom, learning methods of catechesis and integration of the apostolate with the demands of prayer and community life. We rejoice that next school year we will have 13 IHM sisters in 3 high schools and 3 grade schools in the Diocese of Wichita.

This summer four of our sisters will be taking their written and oral comprehensive exams in order to complete their Masters Degree in Religious Studies. Please pray with us that the Holy Spirit enlighten their minds during this time of intense studying.



Sr. Mary Grace, Sr. John Marie, Sr. Mary Agnes and Sr. Mary Dolores end their serious study with a little fun!

Vocation to Religious Life

ASSISTING YOUNG WOMEN IN DISCERNMENT

“I encourage the Religious present to bring renewed enthusiasm to the promotion of vocations. Know that your witness to the ideal of consecration and mission among the young is a source of great inspiration in faith for them and their families”. (Pope Benedict XVI, April 17, 2008)

The work of assisting young women in their discernment of God’s call is a great joy. Since we know that we will only be happiest and holiest if we follow God’s will for our life, helping others open their hearts to listen to His still, small voice is a part of how we can help build up the Kingdom of God.

Is God still calling young women to religious life? Yes! But why are

their fewer young women answering the call? The answers are many, but one may be that, with the presence of fewer Sisters, many young women may not even think about discerning whether God is calling them to be a Bride of Christ. Others may begin thinking about becoming a Sister, but if they receive little or no encouragement, these thoughts soon fade away.

Many Sisters, in telling their vocation story, will mention those people who encouraged them to think about becoming a Sister. In fact, it is often through family and friends that she loves and trusts that the Lord presents the invitation to follow Him along this path of holiness. The Lord speaks to us in many and varied ways and will often use oth-

ers to reveal His will for our lives.

Maybe you know someone who you think might be called to Religious life. Invite them to think about it. Tell them, “I think you have the qualities that would make a good Sister. Have you ever thought about it?” You might think of one joyful, generous and prayerful young woman to whom you can give our brochure, our website address, or this newsletter as a means of encouragement. You may be nourishing a seed that the Lord planted in their heart to follow his call to become a Bride of Christ.

IHM PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

**O Eucharistic Heart
of Jesus, You have
promised to answer
the prayers of those
who ask with faith
and perseverance
and so we continue
to beg you for
strong, dedicated
and persevering
young women for
the IHM community.**



LEFT: *Sr. Maria Jacinta speaking with the IHM Auxiliary regarding vocation promotion.*

BELOW: *Sr. Mary Magdalene encourages the young to consider religious life.*



Vocation Retreat

DISCERNING THE CALL TO RELIGIOUS LIFE

On his recent visit to the United States, Pope Benedict had this to say to young men and women: "Do not be shy to speak with Religious Brothers, Sisters or Priests about the charism and spirituality of their Congregation....Have courage! You too can make your life a gift of self for the love of the Lord Jesus and, in him, of every member of the human family." (April 19, 2008)

Young women have been doing just

Him to speak to their hearts.

Saturday and Sunday begin with prayer—Liturgy of the Hours, Mass and communal prayers. After a tasty breakfast, the day moves into times for talks and discussions, work, recreation, meals and more time for personal and communal prayer. Opportunities to talk with the Sisters about their questions and concerns give the Sisters a chance to share with them their own jour-

ney in answering the Lord's call. As our visitors leave Sunday afternoon, we hope they take with them a greater understanding of the joy and beauty of religious life.

We invite anyone who is interesting in learning more about Religious Life to spend an evening or weekend with us. Please call, write or e-mail us!



LEFT: *Sr. Mary Ann shows three retreatants our library.*

BELOW: *Sr. Mary Magdalene leads a discussion on religious life.*

BOTTOM: *Sr. Maria Jacinta presents the Church's teaching on religious life to a group of high school students*



this at our various discernment retreats and weekends. Throughout the spring semester we have had the opportunity of sharing our charism and spirituality with those who are interested in discerning a call to religious life, or simply coming to know a little bit more about what it means to be a Sister. Discernment weekends are opportunities to learn about and live a little of religious life.

Friday night activities include tours of the convent, an explanation of the Liturgy of the Hours (which is prayed throughout the weekend) and a communal holy hour leading into nocturnal adoration. Our visitors are encouraged to spend time with our Lord in prayer, allowing



LEADING OTHERS IN SPIRITUAL DEVOTIONS

Prayer is an important part of our Sister's daily schedule. We recognize that we would not be able to do the work the Lord asks of us if we were not united with Him in prayer. In his preparatory message for his visit to the United States, Pope Benedict says this about prayer: "I am convinced that without the power of prayer, without that intimate union with the Lord, our human endeavors would achieve very little."(2008)

Part of our charism is helping others to grow in their own spiritual journey. We have been blessed with opportunities to help them in this endeavor. We continue our practice of offering the First Saturday devotions at St. Joseph parish in Wichita (contact the Sisters for details). A novena to St. Joseph prior to his feast day in March culminated in a celebration of song and a talk on St. Joseph, with the entire parish invited. Refreshments were served as well. On Holy Saturday we held vigil from 12-3pm with Our Lady of Sorrows, reflecting on her participation in her Son's Passion interspersed with readings, songs and praying of the Rosary of the Seven Dolors. Our IHM Auxiliary members were able to enjoy Advent and Lenten days of recollection this year, with talks, readings and time for personal and communal prayer.

This May we hosted our 9th annual public Novena to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Each evening consisted of a devotional talk on Our Lady's Immaculate Heart, refreshments, and ending with the praying of the Novena to the Immaculate Heart during a Eucharistic Holy Hour. Topics of the talks included: What does the "Immaculate Heart of Mary" mean, Reparation and the First Five Saturdays, the Immaculate Heart and the Eucharist and Total Consecration and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In multiple ways the Sisters have been able to encourage countless numbers of people of all ages to draw closer to the Lord: grade school and high school classes, Little Flower groups, CYO and PSR programs, home schooling groups, Confirmation candidates, high school and college retreats, RCIA and adult education programs – all opportunities to witness to the love of Jesus. As Pope Benedict said to the men and women religious, "let us thank the Lord for allowing us to know him in the communion of the Church, to cooperate in building up his Mystical Body, and in bringing his saving word as good news to the men and women of our time....let us go forth as heralds of hope in the midst of this city, and all those places where God's grace has placed us." (April 19, 2008)



TOP AND ABOVE: *The Sisters and congregation participating in the Holy Saturday vigil with Our Lady of Sorrows.*

BELOW: *A Eucharistic Holy Hour during the Novena to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.*



AIDING IN THE WITNESS OF GOD'S LOVE



ABOVE: A full house for the IHM novena talk.

BELOW: Sr. John Marie lights the candles opening one of the evenings of the IHM Novena.

Bottom: The Sisters gather around Our Sorrowful Mother to close the vigil on Holy Saturday.



NOVENA TO ST. JOSEPH

O Glorious St. Joseph, faithful follower of Jesus Christ, to thee do we raise our hearts and hands to implore thy powerful intercession in obtaining from the benign Heart of Jesus all the helps and graces necessary for our spiritual and temporal welfare, particularly the grace of a happy death, and the special favor we now implore:

(State your petition)

O Guardian of the Word Incarnate, we have confidence that thy prayers on our behalf will be graciously heard before the throne of God. Amen.

(Then say the following seven times in honor of the seven sorrows and joys of St. Joseph.)

V. O Glorious St. Joseph! Through thy love for Jesus Christ and for the glory of His Name,

R. *Hear our prayers and obtain our petitions.*

V. Jesus, Mary and Joseph,

R. *Assist us!*

SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

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Thank you!



In early May the Sisters sent out the call for assistance. There were many tasks around the convents that the Sisters simply were not able to do because of lack of strength, tools, knowledge and/or ability. May 10 was set as our “man-ly work day”. After the Saturday morning Mass, our working men were treated to a homemade breakfast of scones and rolls, then off to various tasks, such as fixing broken furniture and doors, installing shelves, repairing outdoor gates and fences, cleaning out gutters and window wells (including a tree that had established residence in one of the window wells), opening stuck windows, and assembling a metal storage shed. Some strong junior boys from Bishop Carroll Catholic High School supplied the needed muscle to carry air conditioners, appliances and other items to be installed, disposed or stored. By lunch, the majority of the tasks were completed – and by the end of a very long day, the storage shed was standing, with the help of the Sisters who held the walls against the strong driving wind so the roof could be attached. A big thank-you to all who participated in our “man-ly work day”!