



Rejoice!

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Newsletter

Spring 2022



Dear Family and Friends,

"Behold this Heart which has so loved men that It spared nothing, even going so far as to exhaust and consume Itself, to prove to them Its love." – Words spoken by Jesus to St. Margaret Mary

Why do we have such a difficult time believing in God's infinite love for ourselves, personally, and my brothers and sisters, collectively? I might be able to understand why God loves my best friend, my mom or dad, but me? What does He love about me? We might think that God's love for us is something impersonal, or automatic, or even pretended. Does He really love us? How do I know for sure?

Man has grappled with this question since the beginning when satan, whom Christ calls a liar and a murderer from the beginning, posed the question: Did God really tell you...? Can you really trust God? God knows well.... despite what He might have told you. In other words, satan sowed doubt, confusion, and disbelief in the minds of Adam and Eve, and his lies continue to plague the minds of man, still.

You can't love what you don't know, and satan does his darndest to obstruct the truth and sow confusion in the hearts of man in a futile attempt to keep hidden God's love for man. But God proved His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. St. Thomas Aquinas explains that Christ suffered in such a horrific way to prove His love for us and to stir us to love Him in return. Jesus, in telling the parable of the Prodigal Son describes His Father's love in vivid and touching details, details which the only Begotten Son, alone, would know and wants us to know also.

God's love is manifest most fully through the gift of His Son who, by taking on flesh, redeemed and sanctified man, reconciling us to the Father. But St. Paul goes on to say that: "He who did not spare His own Son but handed Him over for us all, how will He not also give us everything else along with Him?" Everything else! Is there more? The marvels of creation could be enough to know how God loves to delight His children and reveal His infinite love for us. But God's love is not only infinite, it is eternal. God's love is now and forever. He has destined each of us to be partakers of His divine nature, to be like God for ever, for we will "see Him as He is". We are destined for a life of communion with the Trinity and the fulfillment of our deepest human longings. (CCC. 1024)

We need not wait to know and experience God's love for us. By virtue of our Baptism, eternal life with God has begun. We have been claimed by Christ, and made "sons with the Son", marked by the Holy Spirit with the seal of eternal life. We belong to Him and find our home with Him now and forever.

God is love and we come to know His love through the gift of His Son. God's love is pure gift which can only be repaid by our own gift of love. "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4: 7-8). The beautiful and hopefully not forgotten prayer, The Act of Love, expresses the essence of the Love of God for us and our love for Him. What better way to make little acts of love than by repeating this prayer often, and living it, by loving our neighbor for love of God.

In the Heart of Our Mother,

Mother Mary Magdalene, IHM

Mother Mary Magdalene O'Halloran, IHM
General Superior

Act of Love:

*O my God,
I love Thee
above all things
with my whole
heart and soul,
because Thou
art all good and
worthy of all
love.
I love my
neighbor as
myself for love
of Thee.
I forgive all
who have
injured me, and
I ask pardon for
all whom I have
injured.
Amen.*

IHM's Celebrate Perpetual Profession

On March 19, 2022, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph Spouse of Mary, Sister Maria Kolbe Schaeffer and Sister Mary Francesca professed their perpetual vows of chastity, poverty and obedience as Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Following are excerpts from the homily of the Most Reverend, Carl A. Kemme, Bishop of Wichita:

Sister Maria Kolbe and Sister Mary Francesca are being wed to their beloved Spouse, to none other than Christ himself. As a bride of Christ, they are laying down their lives for him and He for them, joined now in a perpetual bond that can never be broken, symbolizing the unending bond of Christ to humanity. From this day forward, they will call Jesus their Bridegroom and strive to be faithful to Him in all things, knowing that His fidelity is perfect and unalterable.

For their commitment they will be given joys untold and blessings beyond our ability to measure.

Sisters, today you will be given a ring which you will wear until the day of your entrance into eternal life. This ring has no end and so too your vows and your commitment. Spouses wear these rings as a sign of the decision they have made to love until the very end. The same must be true of you. As you wear these rings, day in and day out, and as the years mark themselves one by one, let the ring be a powerful symbol of this day when you gave it all for Christ, who has given His all for you.

Finally, why do the likes of us, sinful as we are, do all of this, by entering into lifelong vocations for which we are naturally so unqualified and unworthy...? The answer comes to us today in the very ritual and it is a part of this ceremony that I personally love, almost the most. After the Sisters personally and individually make their perpetual vows and then together promise to seek perfect charity in the religious institute they propose to join and imploring the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of Mary, Mother Mary Magdalene says these most telling words: "And I in the name of our Religious Institute, receive your vows with joy. If you observe them faithfully, you are promised eternal life." Eternal life. Imagine that, life without end, life with Mary, with Joseph, with all the angels and saints, with all those who have fulfilled their vocations before God; life with Jesus, a beloved spouse and friend. Life without war, disease, conflict and strife, life with a joy nothing on this side of heaven comes even close to! It seems to me, that and that alone makes it all worthy and worthwhile.



The newly perpetually professed kneel before Bishop Kemme as he prays the prayer of Solemn Consecration over them.



IHM's Celebrate Perpetual Profession

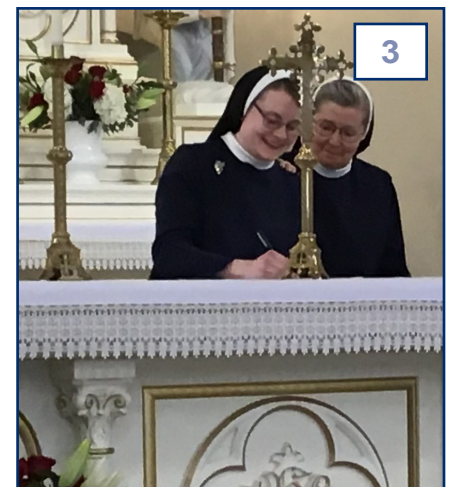


1: The Sisters gather prior to Sister Maria Kolbe's and Sister Mary Francesca's perpetual profession. Pictured, from left to right, are Sister Mary Guadalupe, Zoe, Sister Mary Jane Frances, and Sister John Marie.

2: After the Gospel is proclaimed and after Bishop Kemme's homily, the Sister Maria Kolbe and Sister Mary Francesca kneel before Mother Mary Magdalene and profess their perpetual vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Sister Marie Bernadette and Sister Cecilia Marie stand behind Mother Mary Magdalene as witnesses.

3: Sister Maria Kolbe signs her vows on the altar of sacrifice as Sister Mary Francesca awaits her turn to do the same. The document of profession remains on the altar during the remainder of the Mass indicating the Sisters' self-gift in imitation of Jesus' sacrifice.

4: Sister Maria Kolbe and Sister Mary Francesca receive their rings as a sign of their perpetual espousal to Christ their Bridegroom!



IHM's Celebrate Perpetual Profession



Sister Maria Kolbe and Sister Mary Francesca with Bishop Kemme following the Mass of their Perpetual Profession.

Sister Maria Kolbe Schaeffer, IHM

Sister Maria Kolbe Schaeffer was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin as the third child of Joseph and Carolyn Schaeffer. She was baptized in St. Casimir Parish in Saginaw, Michigan and grew up in De Pere, Wisconsin, where she attended public school. Sister received her First Holy Communion and Confirmation at Old St. Joseph Church, St. Norbert College Parish in De Pere.

Attending Steubenville youth conferences, helping with Teens Encounter Christ retreats, praying consistently, reading Scripture, and frequenting the Sacraments awakened in her the awareness of religious life and helped her respond affirmatively to the call to be all His. After graduating high school, Sister participated in a discernment program at *Mater Redemptoris* House of Formation in La Crosse, Wisconsin for a school year.

After she finished the discernment program, she accompanied a friend on a road trip that crossed Kansas where the two stayed with the IHM Sisters. In God's providence, this meeting helped Sister realize that God was calling her to the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

She entered the IHM community on February 2, 2016. After her initial formation, Sister Maria Kolbe professed First Vows on October 27, 2018. The following semester she began attending college. She is currently studying Secondary Education Spanish at Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas.



Sister Maria Kolbe with her brother Luke, her parents Carolyn and Joe Schaeffer, and her brother Josh.

IHM's Celebrate Perpetual Profession

Sister Mary Francesca Winters, IHM

Sr. Mary Francesca was raised in Plainville, KS as a member of Sacred Heart Parish. Little did she know that the sacraments and formation she received there would prepare her for her vocation as a religious Sister. It is fair to say that the Sacred Heart of Jesus led her to the Immaculate Heart of Mary!

After graduating from Plainville High school, she attended college at Fort Hays State University. Inspired by the joyful witness of the students she encountered at the Comeau Catholic Campus Center nearby, Sr. Mary Francesca grew in her love for the Eucharist and for our Blessed Mother. She began to discern her vocation (and not just her career), and speaking to the IHMs who visited the Campus Center also helped her open up to the idea of a religious vocation.

As she continued to pray, she felt that the Lord was inviting her to belong totally to Him. When she was convinced of His call, she searched for the right community to join and was happily surprised to find that the Lord's perfect choice was none other than the IHMs! She entered the community in preparation for the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows on September 15th, 2016. After completing her novitiate, she professed her first vows in June of 2019 and returned to college to complete a secondary education degree. She is currently attending Pittsburg State University and looks forward to continuing her formation as she prepares for the active apostolate of teaching.



Sister Mary Francesca with her family. From left to right, back row: Kyle Frasier (brother-in-law), Tom Winters (father), Dani Hartung (sister), Ivan Hartung (brother-in-law); front row: Darlene Cole (maternal grandmother), Bailey Frasier (sister), Sr. Mary Francesca, Tammy Winters (mother)



Meet Our Postulants!

Zoe Lamborn

Kapaun-Mt. Carmel graduate

Eileen Hund

Paxico, KS

Annette Sponsel

St. Peter Parish, Schulte, KS

Relics of IHM Martyrs Come to Wichita!

Carmen, Rosa, and Magdalena Fradera were born in Riudarenes, Gerona, Spain. Young and docile to the Lord's call, one after another they entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. They lived, however, in a tumultuous time, the time of the Spanish Civil War, and there was full-blown persecution of the Church. Throughout Spain, religious were required to disperse, forced to return to their paternal homes.

During this most confusing of periods in Spanish History, it was a time of relentless martyrdom of bishops, priests, religious, and lay catechists. Sources tell us that the number of martyrs totaled almost 7,000: 4,184 diocesan priests: twelve bishops, one apostolic administrator and about thirty seminarians; 2,365 Brothers and 238 Sisters. Of these 1,000 have already been beatified or canonized and 2,000 are in process.

In the early morning hours of September 27, 1936, they were arrested. Having been informed of the impending arrest, they unlawfully donned their religious habits. As they were being taken from their parents, filled with the Holy spirit, they told their family, "Do not cry, we are happy to be martyrs." Not for one moment did they hesitate. In a forest about 12 miles from Riudarnes they were tortured and put to death.

Sister Maria Carmen was 41 years old, Sister Maria Rosa was 36 years old, and Sister Maria Magdalena was 34 years old. Their feast day is November 6. Their remains rest in the Motherhouse in Olot next to Venerable Joaquin Masmitja, the Father Founder of the Community.

On October 28, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI beatified 498 Spanish martyrs, three of which were Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary: Sisters Maria Carmen, Maria Rosa, and Maria Magdalena Fradera.

The IHM's were recently gifted two thecas containing first class relics of Blessed Carmen, Rosa and Magdalena! The reliquary will be given pride of place next to the icon of our martyrs.



Remember the Sisters

PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY

BY MRS. BRONWEN LEWIS



Lately, one remembrance of Sister Giovanni (one of the three foundresses of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita) has been stirring in my heart and I would like to share it with you. It all began with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Several years ago, I met a man named Carlo on our trip to San Pedro, California, Sister Giovanni's home parish. He was a man in his late early to mid-sixties, we were at a local event thrown by Mary Star of the Sea Parish, celebrating the 100th birthday of Sister Giovanni. Many of her former students and parish members had fond memories to share of growing up with Sister Giovanni and the other Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. But as Carlo introduced himself to me, I noticed that his eyes were welling up with tears. He looked me right in the eye, and told me the following story:

"The Sisters saved me...and saved my brother too! You see, my brother and I were what they called hooligans back then---our parents both worked all day to put food on the table...so my brother and I were left to our own devices after school. We were not particularly diligent students...possibly because we had too much time on our hands. We were struggling. It was Sister Giovanni who asked me to stay after school to work on my schoolwork. Being the keen observer she was, she also invited my brother...to work on his schoolwork as well. We did not know what to think, but when we showed up after school, Sister Giovanni handed my brother and I each a paper sack with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich inside. Truthfully, we were hungry and needed the meal. She told us we needed—I will never forget this—the fortitude of the peanut butter and jelly sandwich to sustain us while we worked on our studies. Every school day ended with this ritual for my brother and me. My brother and I were the recipients of years of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches that became our fortitude while we became better students. Both of us are now both productive citizens and devout Catholics. Many times, I am sure she must have given us her own lunch."

Since Carlo shared that story with me, I have periodically thought about the humble PB&J in a new light, thinking of Sister Giovanni's description of the sandwich's "fortitude." On one hand, you have peanut butter, the foundation or masonry of the sandwich and the glue that holds it together, full of protein that gives energy. The jelly provides a necessary sweetness, a benevolence. As we move toward building the Motherhouse, I have been reflecting on the Sisters' fortitude. There is a foundation of faith and community that holds them together, and also a layer of pure sweetness and charity.

We all need a foundation underneath us, whether they are bricks we lay ourselves or those that others have left us. The Sisters, through their teaching mission, lay a foundation every day among their students, imparting the teachings of the faith with a certain "glueyness" and a lot of good humor and kindness.

I pray that you will find a way to help us lay a strong foundation with prayer, estate planning, monthly giving, or a gift of real estate! Your gift will be like the gift of fortitude that Sister Giovanni imparted to Carlo and his brother so many years ago. Let's be peanut butter and jelly ... for the Sisters ... let's be fortified with Perseverance, Boldness and Joy

Proclaim boldly and joyously your faith, proclaim your PB&J - Perseverance, Boldness and Joy!

THE URGENT NEED FOR THE FIRST SATURDAYS OF REPARATION

The Fatima message is timeless; as long as we live in a fallen, sinful world we need to live and promote the requests of Our Lady of Fatima. Father Robert J. Fox, the famous Fatima priest, relates that every sin, every infidelity, and yes, even our own personal sin, causes suffering in the Church and, most especially, in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The message of Fatima has been summarized as “reparation, reparation, and especially, Eucharistic reparation.”

Making acts of reparation is to put our love into action. Loving Jesus and Mary we want to console them in their suffering, prevent future suffering, and make reparation for the sin causing their suffering. The devotion of the Five First Saturdays aims at making reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Lucia was given the specifics of this when Our Lady and the Child Jesus appeared to her requesting the practice; all four acts of which the devotion consists, sacramental Confession, reception of Holy Communion, praying five decades of the Rosary, and meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary for 15 minutes while keeping Our Lady company, are to be done as acts of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The First Saturday Devotion is not the only way to make reparation to Her Sorrowful Heart – we can do this throughout the month by making sacrifices and praying the daily Rosary, to name a few – but the First Saturday Devotion is the means that Our Lady particularly requested.

Eucharistic reparation is also tantamount. In preparation for Our Lady coming to Fatima in 1917, the Angel of Peace appeared to the three shepherd children. The Angel brought the Eucharist to the children, suspended it in the air and taught them the Prayer of Reparation:

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly and I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges, and indifferences by which He is offended. And by the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg the conversion of poor sinners.

Then, giving the children the Blessed Sacrament, he exhorted them to “repair the crimes and console your God” who is “horribly outraged by ungrateful men.” He was, thus, teaching them and us to offer our Holy Communion in reparation to the God Who is Love. Yes, He is Love, but justice must also be met. Offering our Holy Communion to repair the damage done by sin, the suffering caused by sin, we are attempting to do just that.



Again referring to the teaching of Father Fox, “Reparation with respect to God, means making up with greater love for the failure in love through sin. We deprive God of His Glory (and also His Holy Mother) when we sin. Reparation restores the glory due

THE URGENT NEED FOR THE FIRST SATURDAYS OF REPARATION

God (and His Mother) in His justice. It means restoring, repairing, what was unjustly taken and compensating with generosity for the selfishness that caused the injury. We are enabled to right things through the mercy of God. We are obliged to do so in justice. We thus help all the members of the Mystical Body, the Church.”

May Mary’s own words encourage us to commit to making the Five First Saturdays:

“See, my daughter, My Heart surrounded with thorns with which ingrates pierce me at every moment with blasphemies and ingratitude. You, at least, make sure to console me and announce that all those who for five months, on the first Saturdays, go to confession, receive Communion, say five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for 15 minutes meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the purpose of making reparation to me, I promise to assist them at the hour of death with all the graces necessary for the salvation of their souls.”

The Child Jesus, too, desires that reparation be made for the blasphemies and ingratitude committed against her Immaculate Heart. He said, “Have pity on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother. It is covered with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is no one to remove them with an act of reparation.”

In 1939, Sr. Lucia added: “Whether the world has war or peace depends on the practice of this devotion, along with the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This is why I desire its propagation so ardently, especially because this is also the will of our dear Mother in Heaven.”

Can we not sense the renewed urgency in the request? Does not the insistence of Jesus and Mary speak to our world situation today? Can we not say yes to them and commit to the practice of the Five First Saturdays?



*Jesus told
Sr. Lucia
that “the souls
who make the
First Five
Saturdays
with fervor
and make
reparation to
the Heart of
your Heavenly
Mother please
me . . .”*

The Five First Saturdays Devotion

“Whether the world has war or peace depends on the practice of this devotion, along with the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This is why I desire its propagation so ardently, especially because this is also the will of our dear Mother in Heaven.”

–Sr. Lucy (March 19, 1939)

During her July apparition at Fatima, Our Lady said to Lucia, “I shall come to ask... that on the First Saturday of every month, Communions of reparation be made in atonement for the sins of the world.” Although she made no further mention of this devotion at Fatima, on December 10, 1925, our Blessed Mother again appeared to Lucia at Pontevedra, Spain, where the seer had been sent to the Dorothean Sisters to learn to read and write. It was there Our Lady completed her request for the Five First Saturdays and gave her great promise.

Appearing with the Queen of Heaven in that apparition was the Infant Jesus, Who said to Lucia: “Have pity on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother. It is covered with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment, and there is no one to remove them with an act of reparation.”

Our Lady then spoke: “See, my daughter, my Heart encircled by thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. Do you, at least, strive to console me. Tell them that I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation all those who, in order to make reparation to me, on the First Saturday of five successive months, go to confession, receive Holy Communion, say five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for a quarter of an hour, meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary.”

The elements of this devotion, therefore, consist in the following four points, all of which must be offered in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. One should make this intention before carrying out Our Lady’s requests. A renewal of the actual intention at the time is best; however, if such an intention is made now, it will fulfill the requirements if, for instance, the actual intention is forgotten at the time of confession.

1. **Confession:** This confession can be made before the First Saturday or afterward, provided that Holy Communion be received in the state of grace. In 1926, Christ in a vision explained to Lucia that this confession could be made a week before or even more, and that it should be offered in reparation.
2. **Holy Communion:** Before receiving Holy Communion, it is likewise necessary to offer it in reparation to Our Lady. Our Lord told Lucia in 1930, “This Communion will be accepted on the following Sunday for just reasons, if my priests allow it so.” So if work or school, sickness, or another just reason prevents the Communion on a First Saturday, with this permission it may be received the following Sunday. If Communion is transferred, any or all of the other acts of the devotion may also be performed on Sunday if the person so desires.
3. **Rosary:** The Rosary is a vocal prayer said while meditating upon the mysteries of Our Lord’s life and Passion and Our Lady’s life. To comply with the request of our Blessed Mother, it must be offered in reparation and said properly while meditating.
4. **15-minute meditation:** Also offered in reparation, the meditation may embrace one or more mysteries; it may include all, taken together or separately. This meditation should be the richest of any meditation, because Our Lady promised to be present when she said “...those who keep me company...”

The Five First Saturdays Devotion



To those who faithfully follow Our Lady's requests for the Five First Saturdays, she has made a wonderful promise which she, as Mediatrix of All Graces, will certainly fulfill: "I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation." This means that our Blessed Mother will be present at the hour of death with the actual grace of final perseverance, (which after the gift/grace of Faith), is the most important grace.

After completing the Five First Saturdays, one may continue the devotion simply to console the Immaculate Heart of Our Lady. A tender love of our Blessed Mother will lead one to do all he can to make reparation for the sins which pierce her Immaculate Heart.

Let us remember, too, that although Our Lady made this promise to those who would observe five such First Saturdays in succession, in her July apparition she asked simply that Communions of reparation be made on every First Saturday to atone for the sins of the world.

*Thank you for all the prayers!
Keep reciting those Memorares!*

5,035,676

*Memorares
for Our Lady
to Date*

SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY OF WICHITA

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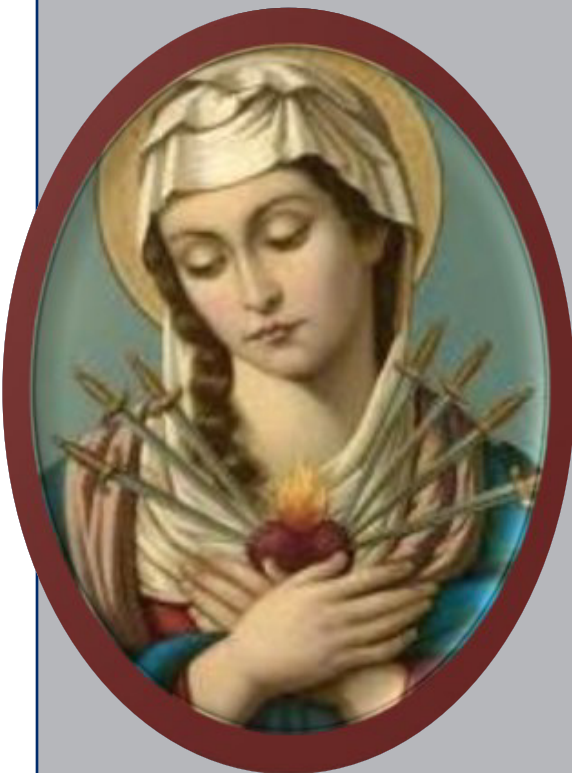
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