



Rejoice!

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Newsletter

Fall 2023



Dear Family and Friends,

New. Different. Beginning. Change. First.

These words describe some of my experiences since June of this year. Mother Mary Magdalene had finished her two terms as General Superior. According to our Constitutions, another Sister would need to be elected in this role. Led by the Holy Spirit, I was elected by the Perpetually Professed Sisters as the new General Superior of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Since that day, I have been warmly greeted as “Mother”, encouraged in my new role, and have received promises of prayer. Thank you very much for your kind and encouraging words. They are very much appreciated as I begin this very different role in our Community.

Out of the many questions I have been asked over these last few months, one in particular stands out: “Are you nervous?” This was a question that no one else had asked in such a direct manner. I paused and then said, “No.” You would think becoming the General Superior of a Religious Institute could make one nervous. But I recognized that I was not. Since a one-word answer was probably not a sufficient response, I paused again. Why was I not nervous? I have a great confidence in God’s Divine Providence. I knew that it was the Lord’s Divine Will that I was elected. I could see how He had gently and lovingly prepared me to take on this role. I was confident that He would continue to be with me, to lead, guide, strengthen, console and encourage me in the years ahead. I was also confident of my Sisters’ encouragement, patience and support as I enter into this role as “Mother”. I shared some of these thoughts with my listener that day, but have also continued to dwell on them and share them with others.

I am sure that many of you have also experienced new, different, change, beginnings and firsts. It can be unsettling, difficult, hard. But, taken with confidence and a sense of humor, it can also result in a new energy, a new direction, an opportunity for positive changes. I am almost at the point where I know that someone is trying to get my attention when I hear “Mother”. I am learning where things are kept, how to do new tasks, meeting lots of new people, taking on new responsibilities, and am comfortable enough to say “Let me get back to you” when faced with the unfamiliar. In those times when the challenges or the newness becomes overwhelming, I have to remind myself that this Community is not mine, but that we are Mary’s daughters, brides of the Divine and Incarnate Son of God, and beloved children of the Father. In silence and prayer, I strive to create an openness to the Lord so that the Holy Spirit can fill me with His peace and joy, gently guiding me according to God’s Divine Providence. May Mary, Our Mother, continue to intercede for you, especially in your own experience of new, different, or change. May the Lord fill your heart with the peace that only He can give as you embrace His Divine Will, confident of His loving Divine Providence for your life.

Rejoice!

Mother Cecilia Marie, IHM

Mother Cecilia Marie Hammersley, IHM
General Superior

*Trust the past to God’s mercy,
the present to God’s love,
and the future to God’s providence.*

– St. Augustine

New General Administration for the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita



No campaign posters, no policy debates, no party affiliates. The election of a religious community's general administration is far different from any political endeavor. In fact, for the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the day before elections is spent in complete silence and the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, allowing for deeper prayer. Though the Sisters prepare for the elections months ahead of time, this final day of recollection helps them to better listen to God's voice because it is He who selects who will govern the community, not the other way around.

On June 22, 2023, Bishop Carl Kemme presided as the Sisters elected Mother Cecilia Marie Hammersley, IHM, as their new General Superior. She was preceded in office by Sister Mary Magdalene O'Halloran, IHM, who served two terms as Superior starting in 2011. Following the election of the Mother Cecilia Marie, each professed Sister renewed her vows in Mother's hands to indicate assent to the transfer of God's authority over the Institute. Next, the Sisters elected members for the other offices of administration: Sister Marie Bernadette Mertens, IHM (Vicar and General Secretary), Sister Mary Magdalene O'Halloran, IHM (Second Counselor), Sister Mary Agnes Wasinger, IHM (Third Counselor), and Sister Mary Faustina Bean, IHM (General Treasurer).

Mother Cecilia Marie grew up in Wichita as a member of St. Francis of Assisi parish. After graduating from Bishop Carroll Catholic High School, she attended Emporia State University where she earned a degree in education. While teaching at St. Mary's Colgan High School in Pittsburg for several years, she discerned a call to the religious life and joined the IHM community in August of 1996. After professing her vows in December of 1998, she resumed teaching, but this time religion. Over the last 25 years, she has taught at Bishop Carroll, Kapaun Mount Carmel, and Trinity Catholic (Hutchinson). Now that she has been elected Superior, she resides at the Motherhouse in Colwich where she carries out various tasks and responsibilities, the most important of which is helping the Sisters to seek holiness by encouraging them to embrace God's will, remain faithful to their Constitutions, and grow in unity as a religious family. This is no small task, but God supplies His servants with abundant graces to fulfill their duties with His very own charity and joy. The Sisters appreciate your prayers for Mother Cecilia Marie and for all of the members of their community as they continue to strive to make Jesus known and loved through the Heart of Mary.



The General Administration of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary elected this past summer are, from left to right, Sister Mary Faustina, General Treasurer; Sister Marie Bernadette, Vicar General and General Secretary; Mother Cecilia Marie, General Superior; Sister Mary Magdalene, General Counselor; and Sister Mary Agnes, General Counselor.

Meet the Postulants

MELISSA CONWAY was born in Garden City, Kansas, and raised in Holcomb, Kansas. Her home parish is St. Dominic, Garden City, in the Diocese of Dodge City. She is the youngest of four children and has a twin sister. She attended Garden City Community College and Benedictine College, earning bachelor degrees in English and Secondary Education. Melissa has taught for a total of nine years, seven of which have been in middle school English. Most recently, Melissa taught at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School and was a parishioner at Magdalen Catholic Church in Wichita. Melissa became a postulant with the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in August. She was attracted to the Sisters because of their beautiful desire to seek union with God, their love of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and their zeal for Catholic education.

LILLY TIMMERMEYER is the daughter of Robert and Kathleen Timmermeyer. She grew up at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Wichita and attended Bishop Carroll Catholic High School. After graduating from Benedictine College, she taught Middle School Religion at St. Thomas Aquinas Wichita for seven years. She became a postulant with the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita this past August.



The postulant class of 2023: Melissa Conway, Lilly Timmermeyer, Natalie Schubert, and Meg Arnold with Sister Mary Lucia, assistant novice mistress.

MEG ARNOLD is from Kearney, Nebraska. She lived there her whole life and her mother's family has lived there four generations. She has two younger sisters, one who lives in Utah and the youngest is in Nebraska. She enjoys reading, cross-stitching, and drinking coffee. Over the years, she has worked at a few daycares and preschools and really enjoys how simply kids see the world. She is a convert to the Catholic Church and was confirmed in 2021. She met the Sisters on a retreat at the Newman Center and was struck by how friendly they were and how comfortable she felt around them. She visited the Sisters in January of this year and entered in August.

NATALIE SCHUBERT is from Claremore, OK, and grew up going to St. Cecilia's Catholic Church. Her parents are Jason and Sarah, and she is the youngest of three: her sister is Rebecca (with husband, Dhante) and her brother is William. She studied English and Secondary Education for two years at Oklahoma State University before entering the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita. Her faith life took off and became personal for her during college because of the community, FOCUS missionaries, and priests at St. John's Catholic Student Center. She began discerning with the IHMs in April 2022 and entered in August 2023.

A New Journey into Hays, Kansas

BY SISTER JOHN MARIE, IHM

*“Come.” ... “Follow Me.” ... “Go forth to a land I will show you.” ... “I am sending you.”
... “I will be with you.” Over and over in salvation history, God extends open-ended
invitations. He calls, accompanies, and commissions—without giving all the details up front.
As He did with the patriarchs and apostles, so He does to the present day.*

Sometimes the Bible reports the questions or protests of those whom God calls. Without explaining everything away, our Lord reassures them and renews his invitation to take a step forward in faith. So too with us: He calls us to trust, to cooperate without demanding to know all the details. “Do not be afraid.” ... “I am with you.” ... “I will help you.”

Recently four I.H.M. Sisters followed such a call to embark on a new adventure into the Salina diocese. Bishop Jerry Vincke of the Salina diocese has been asking for our Sisters for years, as his predecessors did before him. In God’s providence, this year the time came when we could say “Yes.” Several I.H.M. Sisters have family roots in western Kansas. We are happy to serve the Church in our neighboring diocese, which nurtured the seeds of these Sisters’ vocations.

Western Kansas has a lot of flat farmland; here and there Kansas also has hilly areas and parks with trees. Sometimes life is like walking in an open field on a Kansas farm where we can see the horizon in all directions. Other times life is like walking on a hilly, wooded path where we can see a little way behind and a little way ahead. In an open field there may seem to be more security because we can see more. However, a wooded, winding path contains the exhilaration of finding new surprises around each bend—and when we can’t see too far ahead it’s easier to focus on the gifts of the present moment.

The four Sisters missioned in Hays, Kansas, this year had ideas about what their new adventure would be like. Some predictions were right: the people are very welcoming and grateful to have Sisters teaching in two local schools again. Other elements awaited the Sisters’ discovery: although the dioceses of Wichita and Salina are “neighbors” in Kansas, they have unique cultures and qualities. The Sisters have found it a graced experience to observe and appreciate different gifts in each location, living out our I.H.M. motto in imitation of Our Lady: “I take what is set before me.”

Our Lady provides a beautiful example in her response to God’s call: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to thy word.” Mary always let herself be led, repeating her “Fiat” in each new circumstance, responding to the graces of the present moment. Let us echo her unconditional “Fiat” and follow her advice with loving trust: “Do whatever He tells you.”



*TOP: The outside
of Holy Family
Convent in
Hays, KS.*



*BOTTOM:
The Chapel in
Holy Family
Convent.*

Thy Kingdom Come

BY SISTER MARY FRANCESCA, IHM

On the last Sunday of the liturgical year, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Christ, King of the Universe. This feast was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925 following the publication of his encyclical Quas Primas. As is often the case, this feast was instituted in response to a direct need in the world, a need that we still recognize today: for Christ to reign in the hearts of men and societies that are increasingly fragmented and disfigured by their willful separation from Him.

While this feast was originally celebrated on the Sunday before All Saints' Day, Pope Paul VI moved it to the Sunday before Advent to remind us of Christ's second coming, the time in which all of creation will be made subject to His supreme authority. For the Christian, the Parousia is not a day of fear but a day of fulfillment, one anticipated with steady readiness, as echoed in the words of Saint Teresa of Calcutta: "Pray lovingly like children, with an earnest desire to love much and make loved the love that is not loved." We are like the servants mentioned in Matthew's Gospel who go out into the streets to invite guests to fill the King's banquet hall. We have enjoyed a foretaste of His delights, and we cannot rest until others know of His bounty and freely commit to His divine pleasure.

One of these faithful servants of the King was Italian-born St. Frances Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917) whose feast day falls on November 13th. Though her poor health prevented her from being admitted into a religious institute, she was directed to start her own congregation, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, which she founded in 1880. Nine short years later after establishing many hospitals, schools, and orphanages, Mother Cabrini was urged by Pope Leo XIII to set out for America to evangelize the Italian immigrants. While she faced many obstacles, she allowed Christ to rule her life, confident that He would always illumine the next step to take. For instance, one of the first pieces of property Mother Cabrini purchased in America was on land without water. Undaunted, Mother Cabrini led the Sisters in a novena to Our Lady. On the fifth day of the novena, Mother Cabrini directed her Sisters to dig at a particular spot of the land. Miraculously, water sprang up from beneath the soil, and the Sisters built a shrine to Our Lady in thanksgiving.

Throughout Mother Cabrini's short life, she established 67 hospitals, schools, and orphanages across Italy, France, and the Americas. Her missionary heart is evident in her words: "I will go anywhere or do anything in order to communicate the love of Jesus to those who do not know Him or have forgotten Him." It's amazing to consider how many countless souls Mother Cabrini touched because of her willingness to let our Lord govern her life; it is even more amazing to consider that she could've reached this astonishing multitude even if her life was spent confined to a sickbed. The efficaciousness of our mission lies not in our gritty willpower nor in our human ingenuity, but rather, in our loving conformity to God's will.

May Mother Cabrini's example enliven our desire to allow Christ to reign as King in our hearts, our homes, and our country. May her intercession bolster our trust in God's plan—following Him without conditions or hesitation, waiting upon Him in hope, completing every action with love.



Sister Maria Cabrini holds a statue and a second class relic of her patroness, Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini.

Celebrating 25 Years of Profession

On Saturday, September 30, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita celebrated the silver jubilees of Mother Cecilia Marie Hammersley, IHM, and Sister Marie Therese Callea, IHM. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Carl Kemme at Sacred Heart in Colwich. During the homily, Bishop Kemme invited the congregation to reflect upon Pope St. John Paul II's "Law of Gift." St. John Paul writes, "Man cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself." These are bold words for today's self-serving culture, but they are an apt description of the two jubilarians who celebrate 25 years of fidelity to the Lord. For the consecrated religious, this anniversary is marked with joy and gratitude, for she knows that her perseverance is a testament to God's powerful and gratuitous gift of grace. It is also the fruit of prayer—the individual prayer of the Sister, her participation in her religious community's daily rhythm of prayer, and the collective prayer of the Church on her behalf. After Mother Cecilia Marie and Sister Marie Therese each renewed their vows, they were each presented with a papal blessing and a small crucifix, beautiful reminders of their identity as daughters of the Church and brides of Christ. Following the Mass, the Sisters and their guests gathered in the social hall for a luncheon where laughter and fond memories continued to flow. With each jubilee, the Sisters are invited to ponder yet again the mystery of their vocation: a fiat given in response to the Lord's gift of Love, a fiat repeated daily, a fiat that only deepens with time, anticipating eternity.



Mother Cecilia Marie, Sister Marie Therese, and The Most Reverend Carl A. Kemme, with smiles reflecting the joy of following Christ, after the liturgical celebration of the Sisters' Silver Jubilee Celebration.



Saint Cecilia
Virgin and Martyr

I will sing forever of your love,

O Lord

Psalm 89:2

*Mother Cecilia Marie
Hammersley, IHM*

First Profession

December 19, 1998



December 19, 2023

Silver Jubilee of Profession

Celebrating 25 Years of Profession



25 Years as a Bride of Christ *By Sister Marie Therese, IHM*

It is with great joy and gratitude that I reflect on my Silver Jubilee and the past 25 years of my religious life. I stand in awe of all the blessings that God has showered upon me!

I've learned a lot as a Sister living the three evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience, but the most important lesson that I've learned is that I am a beloved child of God, infinitely loved and tenderly understood. This truth, once believed, opens wide the door to live in the freedom of the sons of God, a freedom that brings confidence and joy. This may seem overly simplified, but it has been for me a great source of peace and consolation, strength and energy and the guiding principle for all else that I encounter in my beautiful life as a bride of Christ.

A wise priest once told me that religion is relationship. This relationship OF LOVE must be first with God and then, as a natural consequence, with others, starting with my Sisters. I feel blessed to be able to live out this reality in the convent, (supported by my Sisters for whom I am most grateful as well), which offers me so many opportunities to grow this relationship. Since prayer is essential to this relationship, this union with God, I am extremely grateful and blessed to live a daily horarium filled with many times for prayer: Holy Mass, Holy Hour, meditation, rosary, frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and Liturgy of the Hours.

This prayer fosters my relationship with God who wants to reveal Himself and share His wisdom with me so I can live peacefully and virtuously. Additionally, He reminds me that when I fail in this endeavor, He still loves, I am still His beloved daughter and He will help me to start fresh every day, even many times during the day. That same wise priest that I referred to also told me that any honesty (fear, resentment, anger, confusion, self-accusation, joys, etc.) shared with Jesus leads to deeper intimacy with Him. This life of union leads one, compels one to give of themselves to others and to seek to draw others to experience this great truth and freedom of being a beloved child of God: "See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God: and so we are. Beloved, we are God's children now." 1 John 3:1

How can I not proclaim the greatness of the Lord and rejoice in my rich life as a Sister where I have learned and have lived the beautiful reality that we are infinitely, tenderly, compassionately understood and delighted in by our Heavenly and Merciful Father through Jesus our Savior and Friend in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love.

*"See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of God;
and so we are. Beloved, we are God's
children now." 1 John 3:1*

*Sister Marie Therese
Callea, IHM*

*First Profession
February 15, 1998*



*February 15, 2023
Silver Jubilee of Profession*

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

6,008,512

*Memorares
for Our Lady
to Date*

Living Devotion to Mary

About three weeks after the postulants entered, the entire novitiate – postulants and novices – with Sister Maire Bernadette and Sister Mary Lucia, embarked upon a Marian journey throughout the Diocese of Wichita. The pilgrimage was designed to take place over a five-day period starting on the Feast of Mary’s Birthday (September 8) and ending on the Memorial of the Holy Name of Mary (September 12). The goal was to visit each Church in the diocese dedicated to her, praying there some devotion to Our Lady.

Our itinerary was simple; on the Feast of the Nativity of Mary we would visit St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Aleppo, Our Lady of Guadalupe in South Hutchinson, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Newton, St. Mary’s in Newton, St. Mary’s in Derby. On Sunday, September 10, we headed east: St. Mary’s in Oxford, KS; St. Mary’s in Moline, Mary, Mother of God in Oswego, and ended the day with our Sisters in Pittsburg, visiting their parish Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Pittsburg. The pilgrimage concluded on the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, September 12. We stayed local visiting our cathedral, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, then Our Lady of Perpetual Help and finally the St. Francis Hospital Chapel dedicated to the Mother of Sorrows. The only other Church in the diocese dedicated to Our Lady, Mary, Queen of Angels, in Fort Scott is still closed due to the fire in August of 2022.

The postulants had just begun their first set of convent classes, one of which is always Mariology. Devotion to her does not consist of merely knowing the doctrines and dogmas of Our Lady, that is, the content of the class, but in knowing them, living them. The hope of the pilgrimage was that it would assist the postulants and novices (and to be honest, their formators as well) grow in this all-important devotion.

Having a lively devotion to Our Lady is more than just helpful, it is absolutely necessary! Jesus Himself revealed His will that we have devotion to His Mother when He gave her to us as our own Mother from the Cross, instructing St. John, our representative, “Behold your Mother.” It is part of who we are as followers of Christ. He deigned to come to us through her, it is only fitting that we return to Him through her as well. She is the surest and shortest way to Christ for she teaches us what it means to be ready and available to do whatever Jesus asks of us and what it means to live for and with Him. Understanding her role in salvation history illuminates all the truths of the Catholic Faith, for everything about her points us to Christ as well. True devotion to Mary refers us to Jesus and His Holy Church; true devotion to Mary never ends with Mary.

We cannot better the divine decision to link Mary to the salvation of the world! It was the wondrous decision of Our Lord to do so, for our advantage. She helps us in innumerable ways, first through her intercessory power which is second to none. She also nurtures within us our own sanctification, showing us how to imitate Jesus and bringing us into intimate communion with Him. Now in heaven, reigning as Queen at the right hand of Jesus Our King, she is not only our advocate and protectress she also shows us what God desires for us: to be with Him in heaven for all eternity.



TOP: St. Mary, Aleppo

BOTTOM: Our Lady of Guadalupe, South Hutchinson



Living Devotion to Mary



*CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: St. Mary, Derby; St. Mary, Oxford; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Wichita; Our Lady of Lourdes, Pittsburg
NEXT PAGE: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Wichita*

Living Devotion to Mary

Following are some thoughts regarding their experiences of the pilgrimage from the postulants and novices.



SISTER EDITH MARIE: *Oh, how I love novitiate trips! They are a beautiful time for fun, comradery, and shared memories. On this most recent trip as we visited all of the Marian Churches in our Diocese, I was struck anew by the witness we give by simply being. Whether it was waiting in line at the gas station, attending Mass and taking up two whole pews, or eating our picnic lunch outside a locked church – people see us and think of Jesus. And that is a pretty amazing thought.*

SR. EMILLA MARIE: *Marian Pilgrimages; faith, family, and fun. Traveling around, growing closer to our Blessed Lord and my Sisters! These memories are the ones that will last a life time and always bring a smile. Each Church we visited had something other than the name in common; Jesus. Each Church had its own beauty. In some Churches I was enamored by the paintings and architecture, while in others, it was the simplicity which spoke to my simple country faith. Of course, I have a special place in my heart for our very own Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception where my patron lies in the presence of our Eucharistic Lord. Every Church we visited reverberated the phrase, “To Jesus through Mary.” This is the life we each are asked to live, that like a Church, Jesus is the center.*

SISTER MARY GEMMA: *Our novitiate pilgrimage to all the Marian Churches of our diocese was prayerful and enjoyable experience. We had a great time together from praying the Rosary and Memorare Novenas in the churches, admiring the ones of great beauty and peering into the windows of the locked ones, seeing our sisters in our local house and the school in Pittsburg, to singing and laughing in the car. We were all going to Mary together so that Mary could lead us to Jesus, especially in the Blessed Sacrament.*

SISTER MARY LOUISE: *A pilgrimage was one of the best ways to celebrate Mary’s birthday (and the days following)! Our journey around the diocese was full of many blessings and I was excited to see so many Churches for the first time. Along the way we saw little “winks” from my patron, Saint Louis de Montfort, reminding us that Mary always leads to Jesus. Whether it was a short stop or a long reroute, I enjoyed praying, traveling, and making memories with my Sisters.*

LILLY: *It was such a blessing to pray at all of our diocesan churches dedicated to Our Lady. Having grown up in the diocese, I enjoyed getting to visit some parishes I had never been to before. While on the pilgrimage, I was struck by how central Mary is in our diocese. She is present in the very heart, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, and from there flows out to all points of our diocese. I take great comfort knowing that she is interceding for us and leading us all closer to her Son.*

MEG: *The pilgrimage was a great opportunity for us to get to know each other! I loved visiting all the churches dedicated to Our Lady. I didn’t know very many Marian hymns before entering, but the sisters taught me many on the pilgrimage.*

MELISSA: *It was an unforgettable experience to visit our Lord at so many churches across the diocese. I loved being with Jesus and entrusting myself to Him in a whole new way. During this journey, I was also struck by God’s providential love that has given us such a compassionate Mother. I was particularly reminded of the graces and protection God offers through Mother Mary when we arrived at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Hutchison with its large outside mosaic of our Lady. The Our Lady of Guadalupe apparition holds a very dear place in my heart, and I immediately started singing “Amparadme y guiadme a la patria celestial!” In this church, the stained-glass windows and murals also reminded me of the varied ways God has guided our nation. In this church, and in all the churches we visited, I felt Mary’s heart continuing to reach out to our diocese, our nation, and the world saying the words she spoke to Saint Juan Diego: “Am I not here, I who am your mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection?” How incredible it is to have Mary watching over her very dear children! How inexpressible it is to be in her arms and enveloped in her mantle! Dearest Mother, continue to protect us and guide us to Jesus and to our heavenly home!*

NATALIE: *How good is God for making so many forms of beauty for us! So many ways to experience, to be ravished by His beauty! Beauty is traversing across a state I’ve only lived in for four weeks with absolutely no idea where I am. Beauty is old wooden pews and creaky floors. It is sleek walls and new-building smell. Beauty is scenes of our Lord, His Mother, and the Saints depicted in shards of stained glass and painted on neck-cranning ceilings. It is hospitality: a priest turning on the air conditioner in the sanctuary when we stop in for a holy hour, a doctor taking us through a staff-only entrance and leading us to the hospital chapel, our Sisters in Pittsburg waiting up with dinner ready for our late-evening arrival. Beauty is peeping through the windows of a locked Church and seeing the glow of the sanctuary light. Beauty is singing together in the car, singing at a gas station, singing in a parking garage stairwell, singing... well, just about everywhere. Beauty is glancing over at my Sisters as we all pray silently to the same Father.*

Remember the Sisters

POSTULANTS, PERSEVERANCE ... AND PROJECTING

BY MRS. BRONWEN LEWIS

The world is a better place because of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita. We are so blessed to have these Sisters teaching the truth of the Magisterium of the Catholic faith in our schools to the young, and to moms and dads, grandparents, aunts, and uncles ... to all of us really ... with their processions, novenas, parish retreats, days of recollection and Marian devotions.

One of the many blessings about being a friend of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita is getting to know them. Each Sister is a jewel in the crown of the Church. All of her prayers, sacrifices and penances are inspired by great trust in God's providence. Each Sister has left the world behind ... they have given up all material goods and possessions. Each Sister looks forward with confident hope and trust ... exactly as did the first Christians ... to the day when their Bridegroom will come. It's a common greeting at Advent, when we say, *Maranatha – come Lord Jesus!*

But until that time comes, there is important work to be done...and that is the successful building and completion of the Motherhouse for the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita. I know for certain there are an abundance of worthy causes, but I would ask that you consider and take to prayer the needs of the Sisters, and act. Even if now "is not the right time for you," I ask that you consider a planned gift for the future of the Sisters. There are so many wonderful ways in which to give: cash, stock, securities, monthly giving, quarterly giving, real property, real estate, IRA rollovers, and donor advised funds, one of the more popular charitable giving products developed in recent years - ask the custodian of your donor advised fund to make disbursements to the Sisters.

Bishop Gerber once said: "Next to life the gift of Faith is the most cherished gift we have received from God. There is no more effective way than Catholic schools

to teach what the Church teaches and to ordain the whole person to a living Faith in Jesus Christ. Catholic schools provide a better education than most public schools and as good as the best private schools. Independent studies show time after time that students from Catholic schools outperform their public-school counterparts in reading, mathematics, and science. This comparison should motivate both systems to be the best they can be. No matter how accomplished the public school system, it cannot by its very nature establish an environment of Faith that not only teaches the content of the Catholic creed but ordains the whole person to God. Such enviable results are not accidental. It takes parents committed to the Faith, faculty dedicated to excellence, and clergy with unambiguous support and the whole Catholic people willing to sacrifice."

An integral part of the "faculty" that Bishop Gerber spoke of are the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita. It might be beneficial for you to recall the story of the founding of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary 175 years ago. They were founded by the Venerable Father Joaquin Masmitja in response to what he perceived as a crisis amongst the youth in Spain who at the time were not receiving a proper grounding in faith and family. In response to this crisis, he founded the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to teach the faith to these misguided youths ... to teach the truth of the magisterium of the Catholic faith and to form them in the image and likeness of Jesus. In doing so, the Sisters helped create strong families, families who, in turn, became the backbone of society, and passed their strong faith to their children and grandchildren in return. From these roots, our Sisters in Wichita have grown. Today they follow the same mission to teach the truth and beauty of our Catholic faith. Indeed, they are an integral part of the "faculty" spoken about by Bishop Gerber.

The need for the Motherhouse is on the horizon...the living quarters of the House of Formation are bursting. Ten years ago, the Sisters made a radical decision to purchase 80 acres as their Motherhouse property, and to build only what was necessary for the time. You responded, the Holy Spirit responded. Vocations came, and continue to come, as these young women discern their vocations to the religious life. As you plan your charitable giving, as you review your estate plans, as you look toward your future, think of these young women. Help plan for this future generation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita by including them in your prayers and in your charitable giving.

The Sisters are so grateful for the support they receive, as they trust in God's providence. They are excellent stewards of your gifts entrusted to them. All gifts to the Sisters help provide the means for their day-to-day needs - 108 meals per day, formation, education, health care, maintenance, utilities, gasoline, etc. - and provide savings for the Motherhouse. Just as the Sisters saved to purchase their 80-acre property and saved towards the building of their House of Formation, they are saving and will continue to set aside funds, for the Motherhouse building. Every gift makes a difference. Your gift makes all the difference.

I thought of Sister Giovanni's famous closing remarks to her students at the end of each class, "Let's be saints together!" Sister Giovanni taught for over 60 years and she is still teaching us with these endearing words.

Let us give thanks to God for our Catholic faith, for the Holy Church, and for the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita...let's be saints together!

SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY OF WICHITA

**3550 N 167TH STREET W
COLWICH, KS 67030**

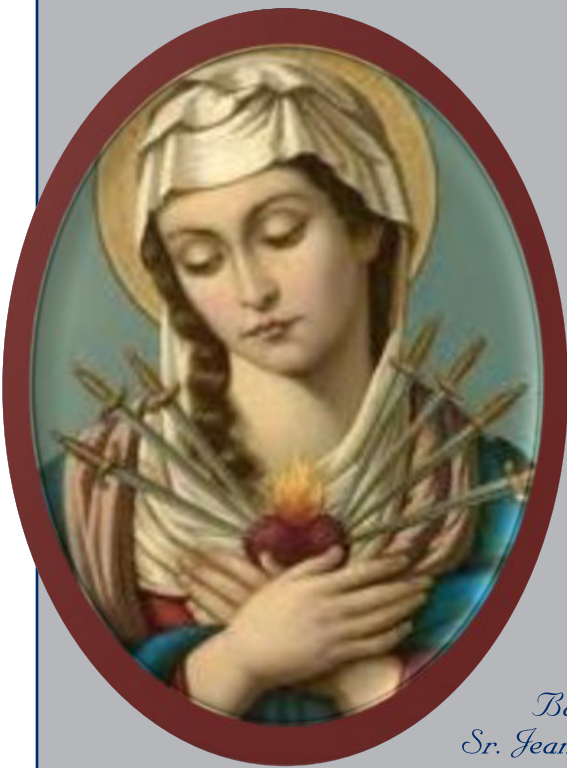
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