



Rejoice!

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Newsletter

Spring 2012

Dear Family & Friends,

Earlier this month the liturgy placed before us the account of the attack on Israel by the persistent Philistines. Israel, suffering great losses, cries out, "Why has the Lord permitted us to be defeated?" Yet not waiting for, nor wanting a real answer ("humankind cannot bear very much reality") they go off to Shiloh to fetch the Ark of the Covenant. Upon learning that the Ark has come into the camp, the Philistines exclaim: "Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods?" The Philistines fight against the God they admit is fighting for Israel, and Israel is defeated.



Similarly, the world fights against the children of God. Like the children of Israel, will we also be defeated? Like many things, a lot depends on us. Do we see God as a trick pulled out of our bag when we are most desperate, or as Someone who is there when we need Him, but kind of in the way when we don't? Would the Israelites have been defeated had they been in right relationship with God? I don't think so.

The wonderful accounts of the countless saints, as well as our own personal experiences, repeatedly confirm that failure and defeat is not the same thing. G.K. Chesterton reminds us: "Nothing succeeds like Christian failure." The paradox of the Cross is the key to understanding that God's ways are not our ways, and apparent failure may be exactly what the Lord intended. As one wise woman once opined, "Good times don't teach you anything." St. Augustine also taught that man only knows himself in trials. Failure simply means God has a better idea.

Defeat on the other hand inevitably occurs when we obstinately resist God. The Philistines knew this: "Woe is us! Who can fight against God and win?" The Israelites should have known this but instead persisted in resisting God and consequently were defeated by their enemy. And who is their enemy? Truly, the Israelites are their own worst enemy, self-defeating in their attempt to live apart from God, or worse, ignoring God, what Pope Benedict refers to as the most grievous act of thoughtlessness.

All the enticements offered by the world cannot truly satisfy, fulfill or make us happy. We become satiated, stuffed, and ironically left feeling empty and disgusted. The fruits of the Lord, His love and consolation, His strength and wisdom, His peace and joy, not only fully satisfy, but therein we discover that in our contentment we yearn for more, desiring nothing but Him in all His fullness.

"Come to me, all you that yearn for me, and be filled with my fruits; you will remember me as sweeter than honey, better to have than the honey-comb. He who eats of me will hunger still; he who drinks of me will thirst from more. He who obeys me will not be put to shame; he who serves me will never fail." (Sirach 24)

Jesus taught us: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." Only in deep communion with Christ the Teacher will we find the light and strength for the continuous renewal of our lives and for the transmission of the Good News of

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salvation entrusted to the Church by the Son of God, who in the Spirit gives us free access to the Father. (IHM Constitution #64)

All of us have a right and duty as collaborators with the Lord in His work of redemption to seek the Lord in His Word, and to go out and transmit the Word to others. In several recent addresses, Pope Benedict encourages the use of the ancient practice of lectio divina as a method of prayer in answer to the increasing secularization of society and the eclipse of consciousness of God's presence in the world. Lectio Divina is simple, involving only four steps.

- Select and read aloud or silently, a passage of Scripture. Note any word or phrase that attracts or catches your attention. Silence for 1-2 minutes
- Read the same passage again. Return to any word or phrase that attracts. Silence for 5-6 minutes.
- Read again the same passage. Reflect on the question: "What aspect of this passage is particularly relevant to me today?" Silence for 10 minutes.
- Read again the same passage. Reflect on the question: "What are You asking of me right now, through this passage of Scripture?" Silence for 10 minutes.

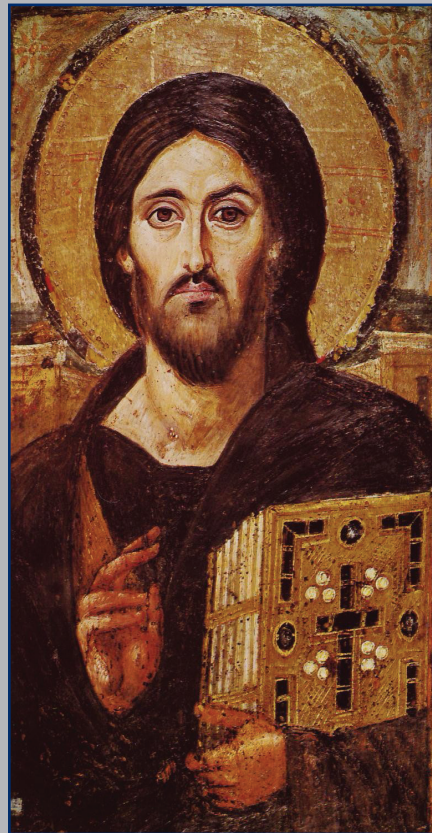
Please note that the timing in each step is not essential; however, slowly drinking in the Word of God takes patience and persistence. While God speaks in every passage of Scripture, some are more conducive for prayer. Here are a few suggestions: Mark 10: 17-31; John 14:1-14; Matthew 14:22-33.

Thank you for all the wonderful things you do for us. Most especially we are grateful for your prayers and many sacrifices in our regard. We pray for you constantly. May Our Lord be your everlasting reward.

In the Heart of Mary,

Mother Mary Magdalene. IHM

Mother Mary Magdalene, IHM



O Source of all Wisdom, Christ the Teacher, You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Be the teacher of our hearts and the teacher in our classrooms. Teach me, all the teaching Sisters, and the students to embrace the truths You have revealed to Your Church, to love God above all and one another as You have loved us. Christ Jesus, Light of the World, friend and teacher most patient, guide our feet according to Your will that we may enjoy forever the life You give in abundance. Amen.

"You have but one teacher" (Matthew 23:8)

Mother Marie Bernadette Mertens, IHM celebrates Silver Jubilee

In January, Mother Marie Bernadette celebrated her Silver Jubilee as a Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Mother Marie Bernadette has served as local superior, general councilor, assistant novice mistress, and eventually novice mistress, teaching many young women the joys and duties of Religious Life, as well as subjects such as Prayer and Spirituality, Mariology, Church History and the Vatican II documents. She served as Mother General of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from 1999 to until the elections in July of 2011. She is now serving again as Vicar General and as novice mistress. Reflecting on her religious life, Mother Marie Bernadette commented, "Though I had no idea of what such an action would bring, I have never regretted entering religious life at such a young age. Surprise after surprise, the good Lord has never outdone me in generosity! He has given Himself completely and unreservedly to me; my only hope is to respond to His love in kind." The celebration with the community, family and friends included a Mass at the Cathedral with Bishop Jackels and concelebrating priests during which Mother Marie Bernadette renewed her vows. The day concluded with a delicious luncheon and a concert from the IHM choir.



Sr. Mary Guadalupe professes vows

Sr. Mary Guadalupe took the next step in her religious life when she professed her first vows on February 25, 2011. In a private communal ceremony held earlier that day, Sr. Mary Guadalupe expressed her desire to profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience as a Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. After a few words by Mother Marie Bernadette on the beauty and meaning of the religious habit, she received her habit, cincture and Rosary of the Seven Dolors, as well as the prayers and congratulations of all the Sisters.

During Mass that evening before a gathering of her Sisters, family and friends, Sister Mary Guadalupe declared her readiness to freely profess her vows and then knelt with her hands in Mother Marie Bernadette's to profess her vows according to the Constitutions of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters.

Sr. Mary Guadalupe then received the three remaining parts of the IHM habit: the religious scapular, a sign of love for Mary and a symbol of her maternal protection; the badge of the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of the Blessed Virgin which is an icon of the IHM charism, reminding her to strive to imitate Mary's virtues; and the black veil which shows the world that she is a Bride of Christ, giving herself to Him undividedly. After being clothed in these articles by Mother Marie Bernadette, the ceremony of the religious profession concluded with the Community singing Totus Tuus, a song of consecration that states: "I am all yours and all I have is yours, my Queen, my Mother."



New Postulant

In August the IHM Community had a great opportunity to celebrate with the entrance of Anne Stuhlsatz as a postulant. Anne hails from St. Mary Parish, Aleppo, KS, just north of Garden Plain. She is the daughter of Perry and Janet Stuhlsatz. The third oldest of ten children, she grew up on a farm just down the road from the Church. She spent long hours of her high school years there, mowing and keeping up the Church grounds. Anne graduated from Garden Plain High School and then attended Pittsburg State University where she first met the IHM's.

She attended Pittsburg State University for four years and graduated with a degree in Biology, Secondary Education. While in college she became involved in the Newman Center and met the Sisters through various vocation visits and retreats. It was then that she began seriously considering a religious vocation. After graduating from the University, Anne taught science for one year in the Wichita School District at Heights High School. Upon completing her first year teaching, Anne resigned from her position and joined the Sister the following August.

Anne has added another joyful presence and cheerful countenance to the novitiate. Her first semester here Anne studied the Creed, Prayer, Church History, and Mariology (she also learned how to do some basic sewing!). She is looking forward to her reception as a novice and is currently considering her options for her religious name.



Two New Novices

The January celebration of Sr. Marie Bernadette's silver jubilee evolved into preparations for the reception into the novitiate of Stacey Rains and Chelsey Weber.

On February 11, 2011, our two postulants officially began their religious life! Stacey became Sister Mary Francis, taking Blessed Francisco of Fatima as her patron, and Chelsey became Sister Rose Marie, in memory and in honor of her deceased birth mother and taking as her patron Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima. Now with their jubilant smiles they also wear a white veil, announcing to all their intention to become consecrated brides of Christ and the medal of the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of Mary, reminding themselves and all who see it that they, and we, are striving to imitate and emulate Our Lady.

The new novices will use the next two years to "consider the meaning of a vocation from God and to this Institute, to become imbued in heart and mind with the spirit of the Institute, especially by studying its proper law, and to test and be tested as to [their] resolve and fitness for the consecrated life in this Institute" (*IHM Constitutions #88*).



FAR LEFT: Sister Mary Francis
LEFT: Sister Rose Marie
BELOW: The new novices with Sister Marie Bernadette, novice mistress



IHM's Elect New General Superior

On July 21, 2011, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary elected Mother Mary Magdalene O'Halloran as their new General Superior.

Every six years the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary hold what is known as a General Chapter. This communal meeting entails a variety of discussions, communal decision making, projections, etc. It is also the forum for the elections of their administrative offices.

Mother Mary Magdalene is the daughter of deceased parents Alice and Jim O'Halloran of Blessed Sacrament Parish. Having graduated from Kapaun Mt. Carmel, Mother Mary Magdalene began her college education at the Wichita State University, eventually transferring to St. Mary of the Plains College. After entering the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and completing

her initial formation she earned her BA in Religious Studies and began teaching at Bishop Carroll Catholic High School. In her 25 years of teaching she was at Bishop Carroll from 1986 to 2000 and again from 2007 to 2011, teaching six years at Trinity in Hutchinson from 2000 to 2006. For her own personal formation and to assist her in her teachings, Mother pursued her theological education and obtained a Master's Degree in Theology and Pastoral Ministry from Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH.

*BELOW: Mother Mary Magdalene signing the decisions of the General Chapter
BOTTOM: Sister Marie Bernadette, Sister Cecilia Marie, Mother Mary Magdalene, Sister Mary Ann*



Sister Mary Ann attends workshop

Sister Mary Ann attended an icon writing workshop/retreat directed by Elizabeth Zeller at St. Teresa's Parish in Hutchinson, December 1-4. She went with empty hands, which were filled and guided by the human instructor. However, the presence of the Master Artist was evident as Sister Mary Ann wrote her first icon.



Did You Know?

The Novitiate is...

The novitiate is a time of formation, prayer, and study, through which the young Sisters grow in their knowledge of the Lord and of self. Sister Mary Francis, Sister Rose Marie and Anne take part in the community's life of prayer and learn to meet Jesus in the Word and to practice the presence of God throughout the day by keeping silence and learning to be recollected. The novitiate takes classes taught by the Sisters; this past semester the novices had classes on the IHM Constitutions, Church History, Prayer and Spirituality, and Logic.

Although it is an intense time of discernment, formation is also lighthearted. Holiday decorating, including pumpkin carving at a near professional level (!), basketball, and walks and bike rides throughout the neighborhood are common pastimes. The Sisters also garden, visit the elderly, cook and learn skills that would make a jack-of-all-trades proud!

BELOW: Anne and the novices sort through Christmas decorations



Our Local Communities

Immaculate Heart of Mary Motherhouse and Novitiate:

Sister Marie Therese
Anne Stuhlsatz
Sister Marie Bernadette
Mother Mary Magdalene
Sister Mary Francis
Sister Mary Guadalupe
Sister Mary Agnes
Sister Rose Marie



Our Lady of Sorrows Convent, Holy Cross Parish, Hutchinson

Sister Mary Guadalupe
(she's back in the Motherhouse)
Sister Veronica Marie
Sister Maria Jacinta
Sister Mary Ann



St. Joseph Convent, St. Joseph Parish

Sister John Marie
Sister Joseph Mary
Sister Mary Margaret
Sister Mary Dolores
Sister Mary Elizabeth



Immaculate Conception Convent

Sister Mary Catherine
Sister Mary Clare
Sister Cecilia Marie
Sister Mary Grace
Sister Mary Faustina



Our Christmas Table!



Did You Know?

Vocation work is alive and lively!

Last Spring was full of monthly visits to Benedictine College and to three wonderful Newman Centers at various universities: Fort Hays State University, Pittsburg State University, and Wichita State University. The young people at all these schools are full of faith and fervor!

We were blessed to provide spiritual direction to 17 young women at Benedictine and in a more informal manner meet with college women at the other schools. In addition, we led a Women's Book Study at PSU, a Pizza and Prayer Ladies' Group at FHSU and enjoyed participating in the WSU Book Study led by the college students. Of course, there was time for other activities such as ping pong and card games.

The chaplains welcome the Sisters wholeheartedly and do so much good to foster faith, joy, and camaraderie among the youth in their care.

In addition, we hosted a women's retreat at WSU in April, a Come and See Weekend in February, and ongoing evening visits with women exploring the call to religious life.

In the Fall, visits continued, though more infrequently, since SMT went back to full time teaching. That did not prevent a wonderful Christ the King party with the PSU ladies in November. The next night the Sisters gave a talk on discernment followed by ice cream.

The college students are always welcoming to the Sisters and are eager to

grow in their faith. Both young men and women are seeking to do God's will and are open to the religious life.

In addition to the college students, we've had high school students visit as well. The evenings hold lots of laughter and fun. Let us continue to pray that God will send out harvesters for the harvest is ready!



ABOVE: Father Adam Keiter joins Sister Mary Agnes and Sister Marie Therese and a group of girls. BELOW: Sister Mary Francis, Sister Mary Agnes and Sister Marie Therese join three visiting young women for dinner.



Apostolate Work

The news in the Catholic Church today is Pope Benedict XVI's revitalization of the Venerable Pope John Paul II's call for the *New Evangelization*.

Evangelization is the act of introducing others to Jesus; the new evangelization then, is essentially, the same; however, Pope Benedict says there must be a "renewed evangelization in countries with deep Christian roots which are now experiencing a sense of the 'eclipse of God' and becoming increasingly secularized." He says we must re-evangelize where the Gospel was announced centuries ago, but where its presence in peoples' daily lives seem to be all but lost. Interestingly, he speaks mainly of Europe and North America.

The current, desperate need for the new evangelization resides in the reality that many Catholics do not know what the Church actually teaches. Our apostolate of spreading His "message of salvation through the various works of education" (*IHM Constitutions #5*), of offering ourselves to serve the Church in its mission of transmitting Christ's message of salvation" (*IHM Constitutions #66*), of engaging in works of Catholic education "at every level and in any program which provides an opportunity to spread the Gospel message entrusted to the Church" (*IHM Constitutions #67*) gives us the forum to assist the Church in her missionary endeavor, in the new evangelization.



TOP: Sister Mary Margaret with her kindergarten class, St. Margaret Mary Parish
ABOVE LEFT: Sister John Marie with her first grade class at St. Margaret Mary Parish
ABOVE RIGHT: Sister Mary Grace helping with second grade at St. Francis of Assisi Parish
LEFT: Sister Mary Clare and Sister Mary Dolores with some middle schoolers at St. Peter the Apostle Parish
BELOW: Sister Marie Therese with one of her classes at Bishop Carroll Catholic High School



Apostolate Work



TOP RIGHT: Sister Mary Faustina helping a student in the library at Bishop Carroll
 TOP LEFT: Sister Maria Jacinta at Trinity in Hutchinson
 LEFT: Sister Mary Agnes at Bishop Carroll
 BELOW: Sister Cecilia Marie on the left with her class and Sister Mary Elizabeth on the right with hers
 BOTTOM ROW: Sister Mary Ann and Sister Veronica Marie with their classes at Trinity



and More Apostolate Work

Parish Schools of Religion (PSR) and RCIA, etc.

In addition to our classroom teaching the Sisters are going “into the whole world and proclaim[ing] the gospel to every creature” (MK 16:15). These missionary endeavors include:

- Sister Mary Catherine and Sister Mary Faustina are helping with PSR at St. Anne’s Parish.
- Sister Joseph Mary is teaching PSR at St. Margaret Mary Parish.
- Sister Mary Catherine, Sister Mary Ann, Sister Cecilia Marie and Sister Joseph Mary have all helped with RCIA at St. Anne’s and St. Joseph’s.
- Sister Cecilia Marie, Sister Mary Margaret, Sister Maria Jacinta, Sister Mary Catherine, Sister Mary Ann, Sister Joseph Mary, and Sister Mary Elizabeth all taught at the Regan Catechetical Institute which is organized and sponsored by the Diocese of Wichita for the catechetical instruction of the diocesan teachers.
- Sister Mary Catherine perseveringly continues writing the history of our Wichita community.
- Sister Mary Grace has given multiple talks to Scouts
- Sister Maria Jacinta spoke on vocations to the Totus Tuus Lock-in attendees.
- The IHM Auxiliary continues meeting monthly with different Sisters presenting on various topics.



TOP: Sister Mary Faustina teaching PSR at St. Anne Parish

MIDDLE: Sister Mary Catherine continues to write our history

BOTTOM: Sister Mary Catherine teaching PSR at St. Anne Parish

In Honor of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

IHM's to present series on Marian Consecration

What is "True Devotion" to the Blessed Virgin Mary? Is it necessary for salvation? What are the marks of authentic devotion and its principle practices? St. Louis de Montfort teaches that true devotees of Our Lady

"have great confidence in the goodness and power of the Blessed Virgin, their dear Mother, and incessantly implore her help. They take her for their pole-star to lead them safely into harbor. They open their hearts to her and tell her their troubles and their needs. They rely on her mercy and kindness to obtain forgiveness for their sins through her intercession and to experience her motherly comfort in their troubles and anxieties. They even cast themselves into her virginal bosom, hide and lose themselves there in a wonderful manner. There they are filled with pure love, they are purified from the least stain of sin, and they find Jesus in all his fullness. For He reigns in Mary as if on the most glorious of thrones."

Beginning on January 15, 2012, Sr. Mary Ann will give a series of presentations over St. Louis de Montfort's foundational work on Marian devotion, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*. Books will be provided so that participants may be prepared for the presentation and be able to join in discussing the teaching

of St. Louis de Montfort. The presentations will be monthly from January to May.

In May, the participants will be introduced to Montfort's, *Preparation for Total Consecration*. On June 16, the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, all will be invited to make their consecration to Mary following the celebration of Holy Mass.

The talks will be held at St. Joseph Parish, in the parish center, from 2:00 – 3:30 pm on Sunday afternoons. Books and materials will be provided.

Mark on your calendar for the following dates:

- January 15, 2012
- February 19, 2012
- March 11, 2012
- April 15, 2012
- May 6, 2012

IHM Novena, 2011

One of our summer highlights is the public novena to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Each year we have nine evenings of presentations by the Sisters on a thematic topics – this past summer the theme was "Saints devoted to the Immaculate Heart of Mary" – refreshments and a Eucharistic Holy Hour with the recitation of the novena prayer. 2011 saw an addition to the program. Thanks to the very generous gift of Mrs. Helen Bergkamp of a beautiful, hand-carved Fatima Immaculate Heart statue, the Sisters and all of those attending the novena were able to process from the parish center to the Church with the statue, singing to Our Lady. Everyone enjoyed the new, inspirational transition from the presentations and refreshment to the Holy Hour.



SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY OF WICHITA

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Thank You!

IHM wishes to express our gratitude
to all of our benefactors!
Your on-going, constant solicitude and
attentiveness to our needs,
both expressed and unexpressed,
is greatly appreciated.

You have been willing to assist in every special project
and have supplied for so many of our present and future
needs.

The Sisters have gratefully entrusted you to Mary's
Immaculate Heart, knowing that she in her maternal love
will care for you, placing you and your intentions before
the throne of her Divine Son.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Boede
Mr. Frank Blanding
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Weide
Mr. and Mrs. Byron Bergkamp, Sr.
Mr. Corbin Poh
Mr. Alex Bergkamp
Mr. Greg Mertens
Mr. Ben English
Mr. Dave Wasinger
and all of those who
wish to remain
unnamed.

God bless you all!