

The Vine

Volume 3, Issue 2
Summer 2009

A newsletter of the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

(John 15:5)

The Sisters' Life and Work at the Sacred Heart Province House in Cresson, PA

“The ‘big white house on the hill’ – is it a convent?” Oh yes, and so much more.

To the local residents of Cresson, Pennsylvania, the Sacred Heart Sisters' convent, located on Cambria Street (between Arch Street and Webster Hill) is commonly referred to as “the old Mellon house” or “the big white house on the hill.” Nestled among trees and foliage and set back from its surrounding streets, the building may well escape the notice of the passerby. Still, however hidden, this unassuming structure in which our Sisters have resided for the past 38 years, is a local convent as well as the administration house governing the Sisters of the Sacred Heart who serve in North America.

As ours is an international Congregation having its motherhouse in the distant Eastern European city of Krakow, Poland, the Sisters' need for local direction and guidance is met through the establishment of jurisdictional territories known as provinces, each governed by a

provincial superior. So it is that in the United States, that big white house on the hill in Cresson serves as the “command center” of what has become Sacred Heart Province.

We hope that the following introduction to the Sisters living at Sacred Heart Province house will give you a glimpse into their hidden yet very important role in the life of our religious Congregation in the United States and Jamaica.

Mother Ryszarda Wittbrodt, SSCJ, serves as the Provincial Superior of our American Province. A native of Puck, [pronounced Putsk], Poland, Mother Ryszarda, with the help of her Assistants, governs, unifies and guides



all the Sisters of the Province so that we can live our religious life faithfully and fulfill our mission to extend the Kingdom of the Sacred Heart everywhere. In her office, Mother Provincial also ensures that the material needs of

our Sisters are being met in our different locations.

Hers is the arduous task of overseeing the various programs directly responsible to the Provincial administration such as: vocation promotion initiatives; programs of preparation for candidates in formation; ongoing spiritual development for professed Sisters; the education and professional training of professed Sisters and the financial development initiatives so vital to our life and mission here in the U.S. and in our Jamaican mission.

With the help of her staff, Mother Provincial attends to the correspondence she receives each week via post and electronic mail – communicating with our Mother General and her administration in Poland, being available to the needs of the local superiors and Sisters, and responding to requests and inquiries of Dioceses and individuals alike.



From left: Sr. Marietta Theresa, Sr. Maria (standing), M. Amabilis, Sr. Maximila Maria, M. Ryszarda, Sr. Theresa Marie, Sr. Mary Elizabeth

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Letter from Mother Ryszarda Wittbrodt, SSCJ Provincial Superior

In this issue of *The Vine*, you will have a glimpse into the life of our Province house community here in Cresson, Pennsylvania. Much of the administration work and running of this household is “hidden with Christ in God” but is so vital to the life of our Sisters in America. We also want to share with you some of the exciting events that are being planned—all for the greater glory of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus!

In June, our Sisters will offer a Triduum in Honor of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus from June 16-18, 2009 at our Province Chapel in Cresson, PA, to prepare for the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 19th. The homilist for our Sacred Heart Triduum this year is Reverend Father Louis J. Kolenkiewicz, Parochial Administrator of Our Lady of Peace Parish in Milmont

Park, PA in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. A longtime friend of the Sisters of our American Province, it is a joy to welcome Fr. Kolenkiewicz for this event. The Triduum also coincides with the silver jubilee of religious profession of our provincial secretary, Sr. Mary Elizabeth Guidry to be celebrated by the Most Reverend Joseph V. Adamec, Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown.

In August, our Sisters will observe their annual retreat, directed this year by Reverend Father Dennis J. Carbonaro, Pastor of Our Lady of Consolation Parish in Tacony, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Please pray for all our Sisters during this special time of grace. At the close of this retreat, on August 15th, our junior professed Sister, Sr. Maximilia Maria Trudeau will profess her perpetual vows. What a time of joy for our Province!

As always, we sincerely thank you for your continued prayers and assure you

that we are truly grateful for all your support. Not only do we remember you in our prayers each day and in the monthly Mass for benefactors held at our Province



chapel on the last Tuesday of each month, but our Sisters especially offer their prayers, Mass and Rosary intentions for you and your loved ones’ each Tuesday.

Truly we are united in a mutual thanksgiving, as St. Paul exhorts all of us “whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col 3:17).

In the Divine Heart of Jesus,

Sr. Ryszarda Wittbrodt, SSCJ

Provincial Superior

THE SISTERS’ DAILY SCHEDULE INCLUDES...

Morning:

Morning Prayer and half hour of meditation
Followed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
Liturgy of the Hours – chanted in common in English throughout the day (Morning Prayer, Daytime Prayer, Office of Readings)
Apostolic or Household duties in the morning and continued in the afternoon

Afternoon:

The Angelus three times a day
Visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament (after midday meal and evening meal)
The Holy Rosary (in common)
Other Community prayers, such as Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament (Holy Hour) and the custom in our Congregation known as the *Sacred Signal*, by whereby our Sisters mark the time that tradition holds our Blessed Lord took up His cross (9:00AM) and the moment when His Most Sacred Heart was pierced after death with the lance (4:00PM). At 9:00AM and 4:00PM therefore, we observe the custom of the Sisters making acts of love during the space of time in which 33 strokes of the bell are rung.

Liturgy of the Hours (Evening Prayer)

The Sisters meet for common meals and recreation

Evening:

Spiritual Reading (for a half hour) in common
Evening Prayers with Compline (Night Prayer).

To contact us:



SISTER SERVANTS
OF THE MOST SACRED HEART
OF JESUS

SACRED HEART PROVINCE
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Cresson, Pennsylvania 16630
Phone: (814) 886-4223
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www.sacredheartsisters.org

The Sisters' Life and Work at the Sacred Heart Province House in Cresson - *Continued from page 1*

Mother Provincial also oversees the Province's translations and printing of promotional materials about our life, works and Founders. In addition to these day to day duties, Mother Provincial organizes both the spiritual events of the Province such as the Sisters' annual retreats and the Sacred Heart Triduum, but also those related to the work of our development director and advisory council, such as our annual golf tournament and dinners.

Mother Vicaress Amabilis Debicka, SSCJ, also a native of Puck, Poland, not only serves as vicaress to the Provincial,

experience. She is a source of joy to all of us and is a living rule for our American province. Above all, Mother Vicaress Amabilis is a consecrated religious embodying so clearly the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Sister Assistant Mary Elizabeth Guidry, SSCJ, assists our provincial as provincial secretary and a provincial councilor. Sister Assistant works daily in our province secretariat especially with our development program correspondence. We rejoice that this June Sister Assistant Mary Elizabeth observes her silver jubilee of religious profession.



Sr. Maximilia Marie Trudeau, SSCJ at St. Francis Xavier Parish office, Cresson, PA

Heart in Portage, PA. In coordinating these programs, Sr. Theresa Marie uses her experience in education and love for children and youth to train and supervise catechists and to oversee the religious education instruction and sacramental preparation at two parishes.

Sr. Marietta Therese Hanley, SSCJ, is a Sister of the local province house community and is engaged also in education as a teacher at All Saints Catholic School in Cresson, PA where she is a religion, math and reading instructor for grades 5-8, homeroom teacher for grade 6, and moderator of the student council. Sister is also the First Communion catechist at St. Aloysius Parish in Cresson, is an organist at our province house and at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Cresson, and coordinates summer camps for youth each year.

Sr. Maximilia Marie Trudeau, SSCJ, is a junior professed Sister of the local province house community preparing to make her perpetual profession of religious vows in August of this year. Sister assists in the sacristy of our Province house, works as a part-time secretary at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Cresson, and serves there as a cantor at Holy Mass. She is a catechist for the 9th grade religious education students of St. Aloysius Parish, Cresson, assists with summer camps for children and participates in vocation retreats as well.



Sr. Marietta Therese Hanley, SSCJ with the students of All Saints Catholic School, Cresson, PA

that is, she is responsible for assuming responsibility for province matters in the provincial's absence, but Mother Vicaress also serves as the financial administrator of the Sacred Heart Province. In this capacity, Mother Vicaress Amabilis maintains the temporalities of the Congregation in America and organizes and prepares the files and reports on the financial state of the Province. Mother Amabilis holds the perpetual title of "Mother" since, as the revered foundress of our American foundation, she holds a venerated place in our hearts and history upon American soil.

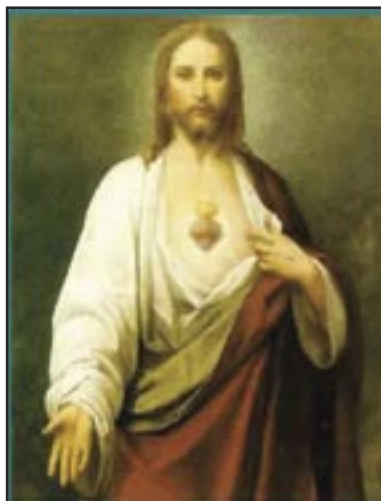
As a past provincial, novice mistress and superior, Mother Vicaress Amabilis brings to our Provincial administration her tremendous wisdom and life-long

Sister Superior Maria Kotch, SSCJ, serves as the local superior for the Sisters residing at our province house and who are engaged in various apostolates in the Cresson area. As their local superior, Sister Superior Maria organizes the common life of her Sisters and provides for their needs. She is also engaged very much in the ministry of service and hospitality at our province house using her exceptional culinary abilities and artistic talent in decorating.

Sister Theresa Marie Kukla, SSCJ, is a member of the local province house community and fulfills her apostolate as Director of Religious Education for the parishes of Our Lady of the Alleghenies, Lilly, PA and Our Lady of the Sacred

**A PRAYER
OF DAILY OFFERING**

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen.



Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Have mercy on us.



We congratulate our new candidate, Sr. Katherine Major who was received to Postulancy on February 2, 2009, and we wish her many blessings and God's joy in her vocation. Thank you Katherine for saying "yes" to the call of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Our prayers are with you.

**Annual Triduum in Honor of the
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**

The Sacred Heart Sisters, Cresson, PA will again prepare for the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus with a Triduum of Prayer to be held from June 16-18, 2009 at our Provincialate Chapel in Cresson, PA.

Each day features 6:45AM Holy Mass, followed by all day Eucharistic adoration and 7:00PM devotions and closing Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. The homilist for this year's Triduum is Reverend Father Louis J. Kolenkiewicz, a longtime friend of our American Province, a priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Parochial Administrator of Our Lady of Peace Parish in Milmont Park, Pennsylvania.

All are welcome to attend and to send in your prayer intentions that will be placed upon the Altar each day during the Triduum.

My intentions to be remembered before the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus:

Please send your intentions to:
Sacred Heart Province, 866 Cambria Street, Cresson, PA 16630.

Nuns on Wheels Program

Would you like to donate a used vehicle...Car, Van, Truck, as is?

While we may need to sell it or trade it, this donation will be a great help to the Sisters and you can claim its value as a charitable gift and tax deduction to the extent the law allows.

**Please Send Us
Your E-Mail Address!**

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus need your e-mail address. Why?

There are many exciting special events and information for you to receive. Because postage is expensive, we would like to inform you of some things via e-mail. Please be assured, we will **NOT** share your e-mail address.

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip

E-mail:

Planned Gifts

By Robert J. Allen

Most professionals will be able to describe ten different planned giving types. We can break it down by type of gifts, donor profile, benefits to donor, and benefits to the charity and donors control. I believe each person should understand these options, but above all PLAN.

With the recent market correction people are more aware that what once was a growing stock portfolio is now somewhat depleted. Every analyst is now telling the individual investor, "Don't be in the market unless you have money to risk." We may just have

become too comfortable with a market that in any five year period since 1929 until 2008 was a growth market.

Planning is everyone's responsibility, but how to plan, what to invest in, when to reinvest, who to trust is not in everyone's providence. There is no secure plan, but then there never was when it comes to money and things. They are all short-lived and although we may gain pleasure from them, they too will pass away.

Planning without prayerful discernment is no plan at all. Your first portion should be to the Lord. He is saying to us several things: give 10% to charity, you keep the 90%, but whatever

Planning without prayerful discernment is no plan at all.

you give, give freely and without recognition, and I will reward you 100 fold. When Christ healed the blind man, or the crippled, or the leper; he urged them to tell no one. When you give, be mindful of this example, but know that your gift is multiplied both here on earth—because of the work of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and in heaven, because Christ told you that you will be rewarded in ways you can never plan for.

Thank you!

We would like to express our thank you to all those who remembered the Sisters on their trip to the store in purchasing needed paper products. Please know how helpful this is for us. We always appreciate your donation of:

- Kleenex
- Paper Towels
- Napkins
- 8 x 11 White Paper
- Address Labels
- #10 Envelopes
- Toilet Paper
- Paper Plates.

Be assured of our prayers that God will reward your kindness.



Please remember us when making or revising your will.

*Our name is:
Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus*

Our federal ID number is: 75-236-912

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Second Annual Golf Tournament



*September 11, 2009
Summit Country Club
Cresson, PA*

Sponsor or play and enjoy a day of golf at the beautiful Summit Country Club while helping the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Sponsorship for 4 with Signage (includes fee, carts, dinner) • **\$500**
Individual: fee, carts and dinner • **\$100**
Be an Angel Donor for • **\$50**

Contact: Sr. Mary Andrew Hooper, SSCJ phone: (814) 421-7479

Under the Protection of Our Lady's Knight

"Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe, Pray for us!" Every day, immediately preceding Holy Mass, the Sacred Heart Sisters who reside in the Provincial House make this invocation to St. Maximilian Kolbe. We ask for his protection and prayers that through his intercession, we may preserve a good religious spirit in our daily community life. Each house in our province is placed under the protection of one of the patron saints of our Congregation. In 1986, when the Convent in Cresson became a province, it had already been decided that St. Maximilian Kolbe would be chosen as the house's special patron. Amazingly, St. Maximilian Kolbe's beatification and canonization coincided perfectly with the time of the establishment of our Cresson Convent, first as the novitiate house and then later, as the Provincial House in the United States.

In 1986, four years after the canonization of St. Maximilian Kolbe, we had enough Sisters and houses in the United States to be established as a province. At the same time, our Sisters were organizing youth groups with a strong Marian character modeled on the "Militia of the Immaculate,"



an organization that St. Maximilian Kolbe had founded in 1917, whose aim was to win the whole world for the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Mother. Taking all this into consideration, it seems that St. Maximilian Kolbe chose us!

St. Maximilian Kolbe teaches us that the best way to serve Jesus and extend the

Kingdom of the Sacred Heart is to do all things through Mary. To do the will of Mary is to do the will of Jesus because Mary's will is in complete conformity to his will. Mary loves Jesus perfectly, thus she desires only what her Son desires. "Love the Immaculata!" St. Maximilian Kolbe would say, "Love the Immaculata!" While many may be

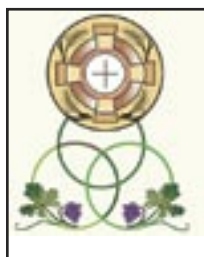
familiar with St. Maximilian Kolbe's heroic death in the Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz, few are aware of his intense love for Our Lady. He was her Knight and he did all things for Jesus through her. He wrote many Marian publications, established Marian cities in Poland and Japan and made many advances in Marian studies. From his earliest years, St. Maximilian knew that he would consecrate his virginity to God and die a martyr's death. How? Through Mary. For him, all things came to him through Mary. It is through Mary, then, that we offer to God our thanksgiving for St. Maximilian's unending solicitude

in caring for us, especially over the past twenty-three years as a province. We pray that through his intercession we may continually grow in our zeal to extend the Kingdom of the Heart of Jesus through a tender and filial devotion to our Immaculate Mother. St. Maximilian Kolbe, "Our Lady's bravest knight", Pray for us!



By Sr. Maximilia Maria Trudeau, SSCJ

Sacrifice of Enduring Love: A Eucharistic Congress to be held Sept. 11-12



All are invited to attend a Eucharistic Congress on September 11-12, 2009 in Washington, DC at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The Congress, entitled *Sacrifice of Enduring Love*, is sponsored by the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR).

There is no charge for admission to the two-day event that will consist of: celebration of the Liturgy, conferences and catechesis, Eucharistic adoration and procession, and other activities focusing on the Eucharist.

Three vocations will be explored in-depth — the Priesthood, Religious Life, and Marriage. Speakers include: Justin Cardinal Rigali, Seán Cardinal O'Malley, Marc Cardinal Ouellet, Archbishop Pietro Sambri, Archbishop Donald Wuerl, Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, Rev.

Eduardo Chávez, Rev. Bernard Murphy, CFR; Rev. David Toups, STD; Mother Ann Marie, OP; Terry Polakovic, Executive Director of ENDOW; Rev. Thomas Rosica of Salt and Light Television; Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus; Kerri Caviezel, Cecilia Sone, and others. In addition to other displays, a piece of the actual tilma of St. Juan Diego will be exhibited. For more information about the Congress, visit www.cmswr.org or write: P.O. Box 4467, Washington, DC 20017.