

The Vine

Volume 5, Issue 1
Spring, 2011

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)

Glory be to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Dear Friends in Christ,

On May 1st, also this year, *Mercy Sunday*, many pilgrims will travel to Rome for the much-anticipated celebration of the beatification of our beloved late Holy Father, John Paul II, the pope whose pontificate marked a long period of time in the history of the Church and world and influenced so many of us.



These memories remain deeply in our minds and hearts and we always want to remember his words, his eyes, his permeating presence and live according to his example and teaching. We have a great saint given to us but much more, a great friend and father! May he intercede for us from the Father's house as we continue our journey of faith, especially during the coming Lenten Season.

Santo Subito! – the call we heard at St. Peter's square on the day of his funeral six years ago is now answered and we are blessed in having his heavenly intercession as we treasure such a great example of love and dedication.

I count it as a very special privilege and joy to have had the opportunity to meet this Holy Father, as did many of our Sisters, particularly those who daily attended to his needs in the papal household.



The time of Lent is the focus of this issue of *The Vine* in which, for your prayerful consideration, we are including a meditation on our Lord's sufferings and death; a vocation story; and the different undertakings in which our Sisters are involved to bring greater glory to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. May God bless us and show us His mercy,

Sincerely in Christ,

M. Ryszarda Wittbrodt, SSCJ

Crux Sacra sit mihi Lux

Mother Ryszarda Wittbrodt, SSCJ
Provincial Superior

Do Whatever He Tells You

By Sister Mary Barbara Hoyt, SSCJ

The Blessed Mother was most instrumental in my answer of Jesus' call to "Come, follow Me" and be My spouse! Just as at the Wedding at Cana our Blessed Mother came to the assistance of the wedding couple, telling the waiters, "Do whatever He tells you," so also, in the details of my espousal to Christ, our Blessed Mother came to my side with her help.

I was taught by religious Sisters of the Holy Child in grade school and high school, and these were wonderful years. For a year after graduation, I attended the Jesuit Marquette University, after which I began to work as a clerk typist at Abbott Laboratory, North Chicago, IL, in the Patent Dept. My mother also worked there as a reference librarian and we drove to and from work together. Those were good years too – about 5 ½ years. Then our good Lord called my mother home to her heavenly reward!

This was a hard time, for Dad especially. He had a consulting job in the Northeast and would come home to Waukegan, IL on weekends. Since Dad worked in the Northeast and we lived in the Midwest, my father thought it would be good if we both moved Northeast. We eventually went to live with my great aunt in Altoona, PA at the big homestead of my grandmother where Dad had grown up. Those were happy years, too. I went to a vocational-technical school and became a licensed practical nurse and worked at Garvey Manor Nursing home in Hollidaysburg, PA. I then went on to Mercy Hospital School of Nursing for a year and a half to become a registered nurse, but it was very gently pointed out to me that I should either quit now with a good report card or go on and perhaps fail. As gently as the instructor advised me, I cried because I really wanted to be a registered nurse.

During my growing up years, my grandmother had bought me a nurse's uniform and cap and when the theme song for the TV show "Lassie" came on, I went to my room and put that nurse's cap on my head, and was I so happy! Despite these dreams, however, I quit nursing school and went back to work at Garvey Manor as an LPN.

(Editor's Note: One of Sr. Mary Barbara's good friends shared with us the details of trying numerous times with grapefruits and oranges to help her practice with the syringe, but could never convince her to put a needle into a human arm. Thus, although her grades were excellent, the ever kind Sr. Mary Barbara, as we all know her to be, did not go on for her RN degree.)

(Continued on p. 6)



To contact us:

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OF THE MOST SACRED
HEART OF JESUS**

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**LENTEN
LAMENTATIONS**

(Gorzkie żale)

are held on the

SUNDAYS OF LENT

at our Province Chapel,
866 Cambria Street, Cresson,
Pennsylvania

beginning at 7:00PM
(with Rosary at 6:30).

All are most welcome to attend
this beautiful Devotion
which our Sisters
sing in English in honor of
the Passion of Our Lord.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

This year on February 12, 2011 we are celebrating our Second

ANNUAL GALA DINNER

and this, thanks to the wonderful response of our benefactors and Dinner Committee members who have supported us with their time and generous donations to make this event a great success. More to follow on this event in our next issue.



COME & SEE WEEKEND HELD IN JANUARY

From January 14-16, seven young women discerning their vocation in life gathered at our novitiate/retreat house to pray, share and reflect upon God's love for us, His desire for us and our response.

On left: *Retreatants visit our Cresson Provincialate*

Our Sisters gave presentations on such themes as: retreat & discernment; religious life as oblation; encounter with God and self-gift; response to the love of God; gift and dignity as women; as well as devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Fr. Jim Mormon, TOR celebrated Holy Mass and provided opportunity for Eucharistic adoration, individual conferences and confession.



Vocation Director, Sr. Mary Joseph Calore, addresses retreatants at our Novitiate House in Munster Twp, PA



To Remember Winter!

Participants were also able to hear the vocation stories of some of our Sisters. We hope, God willing, that for many of those who attended the "Come and See", it will become eventually a

"Come and Stay!"



**THE LOVE OF THE
MOST SACRED HEART
OF JESUS
IN HIS SUFFERINGS
AND DEATH**

BASED UPON THE WRITINGS OF
SAINT JOSEPH SEBASTIAN PELCZAR

The Passion of Christ is the eternal monument of the love of God, and it inspires our love toward God in return. We should meditate upon it with a living faith and love, and with the feeling of true contrition and expiation for our sins. St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar writes: “The Cross is the pulpit of the Divine Master and the Book from which people learn the ways of God and the Christian virtues.” God could have left people to their sins and rejection, deprived of the life of grace and condemned to eternal death. Indeed the people for whom the Son of God offered Himself were not faithful and grateful friends but many were even enemies to Him, bold rebels and at once ungrateful wretches who reject His truth, trample His law, despise His grace and run blindly into an abyss of ruin. Yet God not only forgave them and restored them to His friendship— but He also made them His brothers. In this way where sin abounded, now grace even more abounds.

The love of Christ is likewise manifested in His choosing the Cross as the instrument of His death whereby we could know the love of God that empties itself to the depths for us and the Divine wisdom that uses what is shameful and weak to defeat Satan and conquer the rebellious world; and by which we might perceive the justice of God that requires even the sacrifice of the Cross for its satisfaction. Jesus desires that we might recognize on one hand the holiness of God and on the other,

the gravity of sin —so heavy that for its remission the Son of God poured out His very Blood, so that from now on we would have no reason for excuse but would be somehow obliged ever to love God who desired to redeem us through His cross.

The Cross is the altar on which the High Priest fulfilled the Sacrifice for the salvation of humanity. The Cross is also the key, by which the Savior unlocks the heavens and the seat from which He speaks. It is also the sword by which Jesus conquered Satan and the world.



The Lord Jesus could have redeemed us with a lesser suffering but still having infinite value, for example with but one of His tears. However, He took upon Himself all pains and humiliations and these He suffered not merely a few days but throughout His entire life. He suffered — in poverty; in the loss of His good name; in His body and soul. He suffered from various people —Jews and Gentiles. He even suffered on account of His Mother in seeing her beneath His Cross; on account of His Heavenly

Father, in His crying out from the Cross: *My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?* (Mk 15:34). The Lord Jesus suffered without any consolation, without relief and yet with the greatest thirst and with the greatest love.

Could the Lord have done anything more for us? Was His love not extravagant? He has given us all things: His sufferings, blood and merits. He has given us His Mother and His very self. Indeed, He calls the whole world to deliberate: Judge between me, and the vineyard that is the human soul: What more was there that I could have done for my vineyard that I have not done? (cf. Is 5:3-4).

Mosaic: “Simon of Cyrene is compelled to bear Jesus’ Cross”
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Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

We All Do It...

By Robert J. Allen

With the beginning of each new year, many people like to take inventory of what they have and what they will need that year.

Older generations are most concerned about health issues, the cost related and how they can manage their budget. Younger people are more concerned about how they can have more – generally just more. Now this is a very personal assessment of how we like to place groups of people in neat boxes for identification...and here is another stereotype – “we all do it.”

The lesson to be learned is that we are more

like one another than different. Will Rogers summed it up when he said: “We are all ignorant, but in different things.”

January, which comes from one of the Greek gods and has the meaning of “looking forward” — perhaps is where we all should start.

God sent His Son not to judge us but to serve and we should look forward to serving Him and one another.

How better can we plan to do this but in our charity toward others? Again, we will not be judged by what we have, but by what we gave away. Look at St. Matthew’s Gospel, Chapter 25: “I was hungry, I was naked, I was sick, I was a

stranger, I was in prison...” and how we deal with others is how we will be dealt with. You, and certainly I, will probably never do missionary work or even visit a prison; but when we support the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, we are living the gospel message through the spirit of the Sister’s ministries.

Look ahead, go ahead and budget 10% of your income for charity – whatever you give will be given back to you and God can never be outdone, in fact we are told His generosity is 100-fold.

If you really mean to have a good new year, be a good steward of God’s many gifts to you.

We congratulate Sister Katie Ostrom,

who on February 2, 2011 was received to postulancy in our Congregation, which is the next step in her formation. We ask that the Sacred Heart of Jesus bless her in her dedication and formation.



L-R Mother Provincial Ryszarda, Sr. Katie, Mother Vicaress Amabilis, Sr. Mary Joseph., Mistress of Postulants

Seeking residential, personal care for your loved one? Please consider our **John Paul II Manor** in Cresson, PA where our Sisters offer 24-hour care in a loving and secure environment. For information, please contact:

Sr. Mary Andrew 814-886-7961

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

(cont. from p 2)

Not long after Dad and I had arrived in Altoona, my great aunt invited me to accompany her to the church for confession where I met the late Bishop James Hogan of Altoona-Johnstown who would become my confessor and spiritual director for many years and who gave me much help and counsel. And here is where the Blessed Mother comes in. One day there was a knock at the door and it was two members of the Legion of Mary whom Bishop Hogan had asked to come and invite me to their meeting. I went, and eventually became an active member of the Legion. Years later, I mentioned to Dad that perhaps he might also like to join, which he did.

Over the years, I would talk with Bishop Hogan about religious life. In the meantime, Dad's aunt died, so there was just me and Dad living at the homestead. I wanted to do God's will but was it a call to be a religious Sister or not? For one thing, I couldn't leave Dad to live alone. Now, what to do? Well, our

Blessed Mother worked things out.

One evening, at a Legion of Mary meeting, Dad met a lovely lady named Rose who was also a member. Dad loved to fly a small Cessna plane and often-times on a Saturday he would invite Rose to go with him. Their friendship grew and one evening as I was washing dishes, Dad came into the kitchen and asked if I would mind if he and Rose got married. I said in so many words, "Dad, that would be fine," and so on one flight, Dad proposed marriage to Rose and she accepted. Eleven years after my mother had died, Dad and Rose were married and I was the maid of honor for their wedding. One of the wedding hymns was "Mother, at your feet is kneeling."

I stayed with Dad and Rose, like our Blessed Mother, for about three months. During this time, I talked with my confessor about religious life. Jesus was knocking on the door of my heart and the Blessed Mother was opening the

door. Bishop Hogan suggested I go and see the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Cresson, PA. "They are solid nuns," he said.

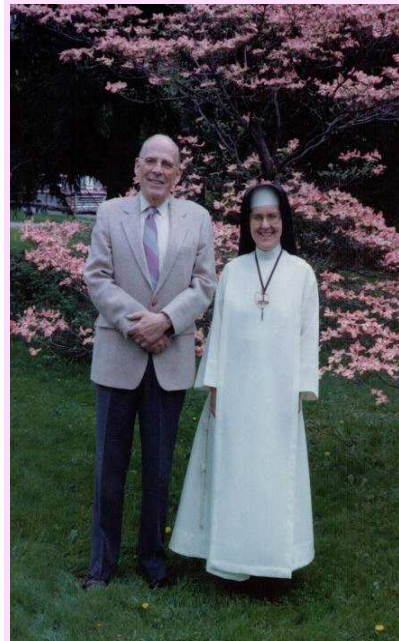
"Do whatever He tells you." Our Blessed Mother led me to another loving and wonderful Mother, Mother Amabilis. We talked and Mother invited me to attend a Final Profession and a First Profession of Religious Vows in June. Plans were made and on September 7th (one day before Our Blessed Mother's birthday) I entered the Postu-

lancy of the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, eventually taking "Mary" as part of my religious name.

Truly, I have been very blessed by God to have had four loving Mothers in my life on my path to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: Our Blessed Mother, Mom, Rose and Mother Amabilis!

Many years later, I am now working in our personal care home "John Paul II Manor", wearing not a white uniform and cap, but the white habit and veil of our Sisters who serve the sick. Such is the sign of my consecration to Christ as His spouse, by which I am trying with the grace of God and the Blessed Mother's help to spread the love of the Sacred Heart to all, doing

"Whatever He tells me."



It not only takes much time but also a good sewing machine to sew many habits for the Sisters. Our seamstress works tirelessly to provide for our needs, but she could really use a different sewing machine! Our old one has certainly "seen its day" of seams and stitches, and gives us trouble, frequently needing repairs.



If there is a sewing machine that you do not use and you would like to consider donating it, we would greatly appreciate it. *Thank you!*

Sacred Heart Sisters
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