

Volume 10, Issue 1
Winter 2017
A newsletter of the Sister
Servants of the Most
Sacred Heart of Jesus

The Vine

*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



Blessed Klara Szczesna

Born - July 18, 1863 (Cieszki, Poland)
Died - February 7, 1916 (Kraków, Poland)
Beatified - September 27, 2016 (Kraków, Poland)

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



Letter from Mother Klara, SSCJ

Provincial Superior

Glory be to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



God's ways are amazing. Thirty years ago, when I entered our Congregation in Krakow, Poland, and began the religious life, I never thought of leaving my beloved country. And here I am, on American soil, the country I learned to love and have adopted as my own.

Twelve years ago, when I came to the United States, an alien to American culture, not able to speak or understand the English language, I never thought of working among American people. Several months later, sent to Swedesburg, PA, I started to work as Director of Religious Education, with people who became not only my dearest friends, but also my family.

Eight years later, when I started to work in child care in Wilmington, DE as an early education teacher, with beautiful two-year old African American children, I never thought of moving to another place. Appointed provincial superior, I moved to Cresson, PA, and now I am learning how to serve my Sisters.

God's grace and Will leads me through life. His love changes the unexpected into the possible, and fear into joy. I pray that each of us would be able to look with thanksgiving and admiration at our life, to see how amazing are God's ways.

May the New-born King of Peace fill you with His grace and the spirit of gratitude.

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ

Sister Klara Slonina
Provincial Superior

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From the Meditations of Bl. Klara Szczęсна

Jesus is himself the strongest motive for us to love our neighbor, for he himself loves him. Jesus demands that we love our neighbor; he resides within our neighbor, so that we could love him there. If the Manger, Calvary and the Altar speak so clearly to you of Jesus' love for you, do they not also speak about his love for others? O how you would love your neighbor if you could seek his value in the Heart of the suffering God! With what different eyes you would see this person - for you so unpleasant and unfriendly, if only you could see the immeasurable love for this person from him who is holiness and justice itself; if you could see the sweet mercy Jesus has for this person whom you regard as unworthy, would you then have but a little mercy for such a one? If only you could know that in somehow hurting this person you are wounding the apple of the Savior's eye! The love of God and the love of neighbor are one. They cannot be separated.

*Sr. Margaret Mary Hill
kisses Baby Jesus
in the beginning of our
customary procession
on Christmas Eve.*



Prayer to obtain graces through the intercession of Blessed Klara Szczęсна

Almighty God, source of life and holiness, I thank you for the graces bestowed on Blessed Klara Szczęсна, who trusted You completely and dedicated her life for the glory of the Most Sacred Heart of your Son. In Christ, hidden in the Most Blessed Sacrament, she found the strength and light to discern the intentions of His Heart and to be of sacrificial service to her neighbor, giving an example of faithful love and humility. Teach me to imitate her in her love for the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and her zeal for spreading the Kingdom of His love, and, through her intercession, hear my prayer and grant me the grace of which I ask of you. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Blessed Klara Szczęсна, pray for us!



WHO IS BLESSED KLARA SZCZĘSNA?

Ludwika Szczęsna was born on July 18, 1863 in Cieszki in the Diocese of Płock, Poland, the fourth of six children born to Antony and Franciszka Szczęsny. Her mother died when Ludwika was only 12 years old. Already at a young age, Ludwika decided to give her life totally to God.



Beatification of Bl. Klara Szczęsna at St. John Paul II Shrine, Krakow, Poland

Under pressure by her father to enter into an arranged marriage, Ludwika Szczęsna left her family home secretly and went to the large city of Mława. In 1886, she entered an underground religious Congregation known as the Servants of Jesus, since at that time religious orders in her region were forbidden under Russian suppression. Founded in Warsaw by Bl. Honorat Koźmiński, OFM Cap, the religious Congregation's apostolic mission was to work especially among servants. In 1893, when Father Joseph Sebastian Pelczar needed Sisters to work with servants in Kraków, the superiors of the Servants of Jesus sent Ludwika, who was known to always fulfill her obligations with great zeal and love.

Always open to the needs of others and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Ludwika shared the concerns with

St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar about the lot of the servants, the poor and the sick. From this charitable apostolic initiative, came the new religious Congregation of the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, of which Ludwika (now — Mother Klara) became the Co-foundress, first member and superior. God's inspiration to her as well as the directives She received from the Founder of the Congregation, found permanent expression in the spirituality and apostolic mission of the Sacred Heart Sisters. Mother Klara died on February 7,



Beatification of Bl. Klara Szczęsna, St. John Paul II Shrine, Krakow, Poland

1916 at the Sisters' Motherhouse in Krakow, Poland. She was beatified on September 27, 2015 at the Shrine of John Paul II in Krakow, Poland, by Angelo Cardinal Amato, Prefect for the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, with Metropolitan Archbp. of Krakow, Stanislaw Cardinal Dziwisz concelebrating with numerous bishops and priests.

Blessed Klara Szczęsna was a visible sign of Divine Love. Her personal motto and program of life were the words, **All for the Heart of Jesus!**



Our Sisters at Bl. Klara's Beatification

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Polish Christmas Customs, celebrated in all the houses of our Congregation



Christmas Wafer - Oplatek

Sharing of the oplatek (pronounced opwatek) is the most ancient and beloved of all Polish Christmas traditions. Oplatek is a thin wafer

made of flour and water, similar in taste to the hosts that are used for communion during Mass. The Christmas wafer is shared before Wigilia, the Christmas Eve supper. The head of the household usually starts by breaking the wafer with his wife and then continues to share it with everyone at the Wigilia table. Wishes for peace and prosperity are exchanged and even the pets and farm animals are given a piece of oplatek on Christmas Eve. Legend has it that if animals eat oplatek on Christmas Eve, they will be able to speak in human voices at midnight, but only those who are pure of spirit will be able to hear them. This tradition dates back many centuries when a thin, flat bread called podplomyk was baked over an open flame and then shared with the family gathered around the fire on Christmas Eve. Patterns would be cut onto the bread to make breaking easier. This is why oplatki today still have patterns on them, usually of Nativity scenes

Christmas Eve Dinner - Wigilia

Christmas Eve is the most holy and meaningful day of the year in Poland. It is a day of wait-



ing for and celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. Wigilia comes from the Latin word "vigilare" which means to wait. Early in the day, the women of the family start preparing the meal, which traditionally consists of twelve meatless dishes, and includes many kinds of fish, beet or mushroom soup, various dishes made from cabbage, mushrooms, or potatoes, pierogi, followed by dried fruit compote and pastries for dessert.. Hay is usually placed on the tablecloth, recalling Christ's humble birth in a stable. An extra place setting is added in memory of those who are not able to join the family for Wigilia. When the first star, gwiazdka, appears in the night sky, the meal can finally begin. A prayer is said first and then the family members share the oplatek and exchange wishes, before sitting down to the meal everyone has been waiting for all year long. After Wigilia, the family

gathers under the tree, choinka, to exchange gifts and sing carols. Shortly before midnight, the family gets ready to go to Midnight Mass called pasterka which means Shepherds' Mass. When Jesus was born, only humble shepherds came to adore him and to spread the good news.

Christmas Tree - Choinka

Christmas in Poland has a different timeframe than an American Christmas. The four weeks before Christmas are not spent on decorating, shopping, and parties, but on the spiritual preparation for the Birth of Christ. Advent is a quiet time, spent in anticipation of the holidays and the miracle of Christmas.

The tree is decorated on December 24, and it will stay up at least through the Twelve Days of Christmas, which end on the Feast of the Three Kings on January 6th, and sometimes it stays up even until February 2nd, which is Candlemas Day and the official end of the Christmas season in the liturgical calendar. So while the Christmas tree comes later into a Polish home, it also stays much longer than it does in an American home. Christmas parties and Christmas pageants are held all through January, so everyone does get to enjoy their choinka - only that it happens after Christmas rather than before.



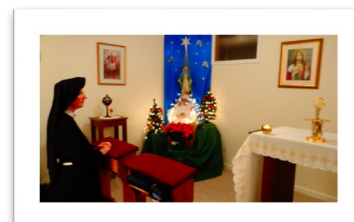
Nativity Scene - Szopka

Nativity scenes, popular at Christmas in all Christian countries, originated with St. Francis of Assisi in the 13th century and spread to Poland quickly afterwards.

During the Middle Ages, a live nativity scene, enacted by young men, called jasełka, developed in Poland. Some actors told the Christmas story with the help of wooden and cloth puppets. The tradition continues through today, as young men and women go from house to house in the days

after Christmas, carrying a nativity scene called a szopka, and reenacting the Christmas story and singing Christmas carols. In homes and churches, the movable puppets were replaced over time by smaller wooden figurines that were hand-carved

and beautifully decorated. The figures included not only the Holy Family, stable animals, shepherds, and angels, but also kings, politicians, farmers and workers.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



From the Writings of our Founder
ST. JOSEPH SEBASTIAN PELCZAR
(1842-1924)

THE LOVE OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS IN HIS INCARNATION AND BIRTH

The first aim of the devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is to know the love of the Lord Jesus more deeply. From this deeper knowledge should flow our feelings and acts of the will, that is, our worship of this Heart, our thanksgiving and apology, love and self-offering for the sake of His intentions. By reading the Sacred Scriptures and meditating upon the life, deeds and words of the Son of God, we come to recognize the love of the Lord Jesus.

Such a love revealed itself, above all, in His Incarnation and birth. As St. Joseph Sebastian writes:

“The Incarnation of the Eternal Word is a mystery of incomparable humility and ineffable love ... The very God unites human nature with Divinity; the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin; the Eternal is born in time; and the Infinite reveals Himself as an infant ... The reason for such unfathomable humility is God’s incomprehensible love - and why incomprehensible – because it is infinite.

The desire of the Most Holy Trinity to draw closer to His creature by means of the Incarnation of the Word, unveils an immeasurable abyss of self-emptying and love. Behold, who is God and who are we! And yet the Son of God receives our nature and unites Himself with His creation.

The manner of this union reveals to us a new abyss of love. The Son of God could have come to earth clothed with majesty, with maturity of age and a glorified body; yet He came in humility, poverty and suffering. He came as an infant ... He came as the child of the Virgin Mother, not only to become our brother in the flesh, but also to share with us the heart of His Mother... He came out of love for one and all...

From the depths of the manger, as from a first pulpit He cries out: “Come to Me, all you who are looking for truth and light, and I will enlighten you.”

Whoever approaches Him with faith and inclines his ear in meditation, is the one who will hear that interior call: “Behold, O man, and see. I, the Son of God, became a man, that you would know how good

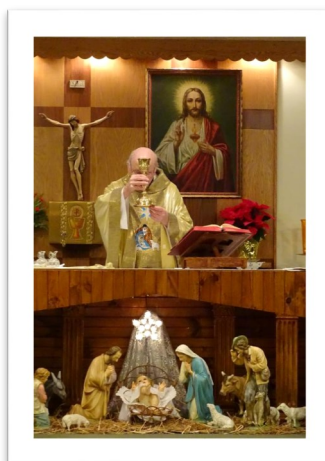
the Heavenly Father is; that you would return to Him through Me.”

“By His Incarnation, the Son of God became the true Emmanuel – God living with His people, for He lived with them throughout His entire earthly life and now lives in so many tabernacles.

He became our Redeemer, Savior and Mediator. He came to be our priest, our sacrifice and our life...By His Incarnation, Jesus Christ offers to His Heavenly Father through His humanity an act of the most precious homage, on behalf of all rational creatures and the whole world.

From His Heart there flows an eternal hymn of glory, worship and love; only one act like this of the Incarnate Word could render greater, immeasurable glory to the Blessed Trinity than all homage offered from an infinite number of worlds possessing even millions of Angels within them...

The Eternal Word exalted human nature above the choirs of Angels – even unto the very Majesty of God, for as the soul of Jesus Christ belongs to God, His Body is the Body of God and His Heart is the Heart of God. It is not surprising then that the Angels sing to Him in Bethlehem and serve Him in the desert, that men fall to their knees before Him and that His Body and His Heart receive the praise befitting God Himself.”



**The Three
Monuments of Love:
The Manger
The Cross
The Eucharist**

*(St. Joseph Sebastian
Pelczar)*

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

NEWS FROM THE USA PROVINCE OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS



Visitation of General Superior from Krakow, Poland, Mother Olga Podsadnia accompanied by her Assistant, Sr. Serafia Pajerska.



Mother General Olga observes our Sisters' missionary work in Jamaica, West Indies. (on left and below)

Sr. Mary Barbara Hoyt gives a warm greeting to Mother General



(Below) Gathering as a family at St. Joseph Convent, Munster Twp, Portage, PA



Sr. Gabriella Strachowska (on left) and Sr. Mary Daniel Jackson (below) with Mother General at our convent in Wilmington, DE.



Mother Amabilis shares in the joy of being with Mother General Olga at our Province house in Cresson, PA.

After 12 years of service at Sacred Heart Parish in Swedesburg, PA (above), devotion to Bl. Klara and a request for her relics, leads us to transfer from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to the Diocese of Harrisburg at Middletown, PA (below).

At our Sisters' John Paul II Manor Personal Care Home in Cresson, PA.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

CHRISTMAS NOVENA

*Prayed in our Provinciate Chapel for your intentions
from December 16 to December 24*

Divine Infant, after the wonders of Your birth in Bethlehem, You wished to extend Your infinite mercy to the whole world by calling the Wise Men to Your crib, which was in this way changed into a royal throne. You graciously received those holy men who were obedient to the divine call and hastened to Your feet. They recognized and worshipped You as Prince of Peace, the Redeemer of mankind, and the very Son of God. Show us also Your goodness and almighty power. Enlighten our minds, strengthen our wills, and inflame our hearts to know You, to serve You, and to love You in this life, that we may merit to find our joy in You eternally in the life to come.

Jesus, most powerful Child, I implore You to help me:

(State your intention here...)

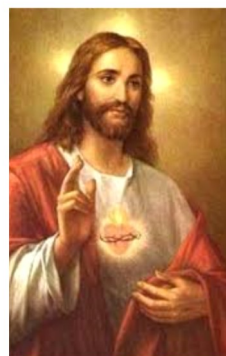
Divine Child, great omnipotent God, I implore, through Your most Holy Mother's intercession, and through the boundless mercy of God, your Father, a favorable answer to my prayer during this Novena.

Grant me the grace of possessing You eternally with Mary and Joseph and of adoring You with Your holy Angels and Saints.

V./ The Word was made Flesh.

R./ And dwelt among us.

Let us pray. O God, who Only Begotten Son has appeared in the substance of our flesh, grant, we beseech You, that through Him – Whom we acknowledge to be like us in outward appearance – we may be renewed in our inward selves. Who lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen



**IS GOD CALLING YOU
TO BECOME
A SISTER SERVANT
OF THE
MOST SACRED HEART
OF JESUS?**

OUR CONGREGATION IS:

- PONTIFICAL
- FRANCISCAN
- CONTEMPLATIVE - ACTIVE
- DEVOTED TO THE SACRED HEART
- FOUNDED BY ST. JOSEPH SEBASTIAN PELCZAR AND BL. KLARA SZCZĘSNA IN 1894 IN KRAKOW, POLAND

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Are you 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:

814-886-7961

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

THANK YOU to our *Special Angels of Assistance!*



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PHARMACY**

**Jack, Jenny and Paul Calandra
Paul and Marcella Cooney**

Cresson, Portage, Ebensburg & Nanty Glo

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*We deeply appreciate your help!***

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AL SEPTEMBER 8, 2017**

Left to right:
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Sr. Klara, Provincial Superior
Jay Pheasant, Altoona
Steve Perove, Altoona
Matthew Iezzi, Latrobe



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