

Volume 11, Issue 1
Spring /Easter 2018
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



We proclaim your death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection,
until you come again.

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



One of the most important lesson of faith and trust, I received over 15 years ago. I was standing at a bus stop, among many people, tired after a long day at school. My bus came to a stop, the doors opened, and the passengers began to leave. Then, in the crowd, I saw a little girl, about 4 or 5 years of age. She was busy putting a piece of chewing gum into her mouth. Without taking her eyes from the gum, she raised her hands up, moving toward the bus steps. I froze, sure that she would fall. But suddenly a man's hands appeared, took the little's hands and lifted her up, to safety. The girl didn't have to look up. She knew—her dad was there for her. Always. This scene remains very clearly in my memory; I see myself in the place of that girl, and God the Father's hands ready to pick me up. So why do I panic or doubt? He is here. Always.

Different arms were lifted to the Father, different hands: Jesus' hands on the cross. Scourged, crowned with the thorns, abandoned by friends, He raised His pierced hands to heaven. He cried: "My God, why did you forsaken me?", but His hands were searching up. And God the Father's hands stretched down from heaven to receive His Son's Spirit. He was there for His Son. Always.

When I think of the loving hands of a man—a father, and those of God—the Father, an image of one more pair of hands come to me: the hands of a priest. In his incredible vocation he unites in his person the image of both the human father and the Heavenly Father. Lifting up the Body of Jesus Christ during the Consecration. Lifting me up during the sacrament of reconciliation.

As we celebrate the memorial of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection, I kneel and kiss the priestly hands, full of mystery. May our thankful prayers accompany our priests not only on the Holy Thursday, but every day. And may we rejoice in an increasing number of young men, answering a call to the priesthood.

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ

Sister Klara Slonina, SSCJ
Provincial Superior

*"O Jesus, through your holy wounds, I ask you, whenever my sinful hands are lifted up to the heavens, let them be heard by you."
St. J. S. Pelczar*

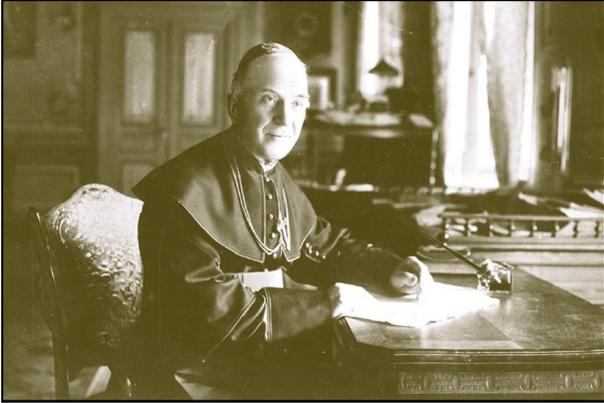


From the Meditations of Bl. Klara Szczesna

Jesus has said, "Blessed are the meek," which is to say, 'Blessed are the gentle.' The characteristics of Jesus are gentleness and sweetness. They are the rays of his divine happiness. Jesus was meek, sweet and good; he promises that the meek will inherit the earth and calls the peacemakers his sons. He reforms the Old Covenant by introducing to it gentleness and kindness. Truly I say to you: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, forgive not seven but seventy-seven times. If someone strikes you on one cheek turn the other one as well. In order not to blind the soul by his greatness, sweetly he then cries out: Come to me all who are suffering and burdened, come all to me and you will find rest. I have mercy on you. I have come to you, I have assumed your body and carried your crimes so as to reconcile you with the Father and to teach you the secret of happiness, namely this, Learn from me for I am meek and humble of Heart. Behold the spirit of Jesus.



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 SUFFERINGS AND DEATH

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

even 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 yet 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). 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).

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Polish Lent and Easter Traditions

Polish Lenten and Easter traditions are as old and beautiful as the Polish Christmas traditions, and they require just as much elaborate preparation. These traditions celebrate not only the central mystery of the Catholic faith, the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but also the coming of spring and the long-awaited rebirth and renewal of nature after the long, dark months of winter. The Polish name for Easter is **Wielkanoc**, which means Great Night—the night from Holy Saturday to Easter Sunday—when the miracle of the Resurrection that took place.

Lent or *Wielki Post*, the six-week period of religious preparation for Easter, a time of fasting and prayer. Stations of the Cross and *Gorzkie Zale* are two religious traditions observed during Lent. *Gorzkie Zale*, or Bitter Sorrows, are beautiful hymns or lamentations sung on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons in Lent. These are ancient chants, retracing the Passion and Crucifixion, and their soulful notes ring out of all churches in cities and villages in Poland.



"Ecce Homo",
painted by
St. Albert Chmielowski



health and prosperity to the household during the coming year.

Holy Week or *Wielki Tydzien*, includes spiritual and other preparations for Easter. Homes are cleaned, curtains washed, and the baking and cooking begins. In older times, ham and sausages were made and smoked at home, and bread and other pastries were baked from



Babka



Mazurek



Sernik

scratch. The baking tradition continues today and tall airy *babkas*, colorful shortbread cakes called *mazurki*, and rich creamy cheesecakes or *serniki* are lovingly prepared. Each housewife wants to have a large selection of homemade pastries to place on her Easter table.

On **Holy Thursday** or *Wielki Czwartek*, people go to church for a service that commemorates the Last Supper and the institution of the Priesthood.

On **Good Friday** or *Wielki Piatek*, after 3 p.m., which is the time when Jesus died on the cross, each church sets up a tomb where the Holy Eucharist is placed as well as a statue of Jesus taken down from



One of many "tombs of Jesus" in Poland

the cross. Parishioners stand guard at the tomb all night as people come and pray. Many people go from church to church to pray at the tombs, called *groby*. No baking is allowed on Holy Friday, but people do spend time coloring Easter eggs and preparing baskets to be blessed in church on Holy Saturday.

People all over Poland walk with their Easter baskets in hand to church on **Holy Saturday** or *Wielka Sobota*, where a priest blesses them with holy water. The most colorful additions to Polish Easter baskets are the



Pisanki



Food Blessing

Easter eggs, called *pisanki*. In addition to the eggs, a **Polish Easter basket** includes sausage or ham, bread, butter, salt, and horseradish. Each of the foods which traditionally makes up the Easter basket has a deep and symbolic meaning:

The lamb represents Christ;

The eggs symbolize life, spring, and the Resurrection;

Bread represents Christ, the bread of life;

The sausage or ham represent abundance and God's generosity;

The horseradish represents the bitter passion of Christ;

Salt symbolizes prosperity;

Butter represents good will;

The decorations of green sprigs, pussy willows, or daffodils represent joy;

White linen represents the Christ the Light and the purity of heart.



Easter Basket



The Resurekcja

The Resurekcja is the joyous Easter morning Mass at daybreak when church bells ring out and explosions resound to commemorate Christ rising from the dead. Before the Mass begins at dawn, a festive procession with the Blessed Sacrament carried beneath a canopy, encircles the church three times, in memory of

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Jesus staying three days in the tomb. As church bells ring out, handbells are vigorously shaken by altar boys, the air is filled with incense, the girls put cast petals before the Most Blessed Sacrament, and the faithful raise their voices heavenward in a triumphant rendering of age-old Easter hymns. After the Blessed Sacrament is carried throughout the streets around the church and adoration is complete, the Easter Mass begins.

On Easter Sunday morning, a beautifully set table is prepared and covered with pisanki, ham, sausage, cold meats, salads and relishes, including cwikla, made with grated beets and horseradish, bread, babki, mazurki, and other pastries, and, in



Easter Breakfast Table

the center, a lamb made of butter or sugar, commemorating the resurrected Christ. Easter breakfast is called Swieconka, which means blessed food, since many of the items served on Easter Sunday had been blessed in church on Holy Saturday. The Easter Breakfast starts after Rezurekcja, with the sharing of a blessed egg-everyone takes a piece of the egg from the head of the household as they exchange best wishes with one another.

Easter Monday is a holiday in Poland. Wet Easter Monday (Lany poniedziałek / śmigus-dyngus) was traditionally the day boys tried to drench girls with squirt guns or buckets of water.

The girls had their chance for revenge the following day. Now the Monday is usually celebrated by everyone drenching or sprinkling each other.



Smigus-Dyngus—Wet Monday

According to Rev. Krysa, Dyngus Day is a commemoration of the birth of Christianity in Poland (966 A.D.) in which Holy Baptism was administered to Prince Mieszko on Easter Monday, uniting all of Poland under the banner of Christianity. The Dyngus custom is also reminiscent of the mass Baptisms that took place in the Lithuania after the marriage of Polish Queen Jadwiga and Lithuanian Duke Jagiello.

Happy Easter!
Wesołego Alleluja!

My Lord and Creator, Your goodness encourages me to converse with You. Your mercy abolishes the chasm which separates the Creator from the creature.

To converse with You, O Lord, is the delight of my heart.

In You I find everything that my heart could desire.

Here You light illumines my mind, enabling it to know You more and more deeply.

Here streams of graces flow down upon my heart.

Here my soul draws eternal life.

O my Lord and Creator, You alone, beyond all these gifts, give Your own self to me and unite Yourself intimately with Your miserable creature.

St. Faustina Kowalska



The Sacred Heart Sisters praying in the St. Joseph Convent chapel, in Munster, PA.

Every day we spend time with Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, bringing Him our love, thanksgiving and adoration. We pray in all the intentions recommended to us; in a special way, with thankful hearts, we intercede for our dear Friends and benefactors.

“We do not pretend that life is all beauty. We are aware of darkness and sin, of poverty and pain. But we know Jesus has conquered sin and passed through his own pain to the glory of the Resurrection. And we live in the light of his Paschal Mystery – the mystery of his Death and Resurrection.

We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!”

St. John Paul II



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

**Have you ever been in Jamaica?
Your pictures probably look like paradise:**



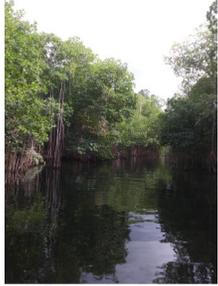
Y Falls



*Sr. Mary Andrew
with Jamaican children*

I had the experience of a lifetime, when I was given the privilege of going to Jamaica with Mother Provincial Klara. About a month before we left for Jamaica, I did not know what to expect, but seeing Jamaica was beyond my expectations—both the good and the bad.

After landing in Montego Bay, the first thing that struck me as we were going to the convent in Maggotty, was the poor infrastructure of the country. The streets were in terrible condition, with many potholes and tight winding roads. The trip to the convent took a little over two hours. But this did not prepare me for the wonderful work that our Sisters and Father Marek Bzinkowski had accomplished in the years that they worked in Maggotty.



Crocodile River



Bamboo Valley



Banana trees



The beach



Floral & Coconut trees



But here is the Jamaica visitors never see....



*Holy Spirit Church,
Maggotty*



Doctor's Residence Maggotty

The convent, rectory, Holy Spirit Church, community center, a sausage factory, medical clinic, doctors house and a soon to be food and clothing bank were located in the niche of the mountains of the Maggotty—and what a beautiful sight it was! To realize that this was once uninhabitable "bush land" was amazing!



*The Community
Center (left)
Holy Spirit
Clinic (right) in
Maggotty.*



The one thing I will remember is the medical clinic that is ran by the four Sacred Heart Sisters, stationed there in Maggotty. It was remarkable to visit the clinic on the second day were there. The Sisters start their day very early, and don't get home until late in the evening, on most nights.



Sr. Rita with the sick

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

On the way to the clinic, in the distance, I could hear singing of religious songs, and I thought to myself, “Who is singing?” when I got to the clinic, I realized it was the people who wanted to be seen at the clinic that day. There were about 80 to 100 people, singing religious songs and praying, which was led by Stanley, a protestant preacher, who volunteers every day to lead the signing and praying for the people who show for treatment.

The people who are to be seen, are dressed in their Sunday best clothes. They were sick, and you could see that some of them required some serious medical help from Dr. Jeff Kroll (from Texas, US), who volunteers at our clinic for about 6 months a year. It was then that I realized there were no cars out front. The people were either driven by a taxi or walked long distances for care in our clinic. The Sisters devote their whole day to taking care of the sick people who come to them. They not only take care of their medical needs, but of all their needs, spiritual, physical and needs like food and clothing.. It was remarkable to watch them to work with the doctor and people. what is also interesting about the clinic ii they have a variety of doctors: gynecologist, cardiologist, dentist, physical therapists, and eye doctors who devote their time to taking care of the people who so desperately need it during the year.

I am very proud of the Sisters’ work in Jamaica, and how they care for the people they serve. The Sisters love their work there, and they do it joyfully, with no complaints about the heat or the poor conditions. They are always looking for ways to help the next person who shows up in the clinic or knocks at the door. And they do this work joyfully, with a smile. God bless these Sisters.

As I was flying home, I thought of how much blessing it was for me to go and experience Jamaica. I realize now, that what our Sisters do there is a blessing not only for the people of Maggotty, Jamaica, but for us also.

Sr. Mary Andrew, SSCJ



*(On the left)
Sr. Scholastyka
during a home
visit.
(On the right)
A sewing class at
Sisters’ convent.*



Waiting to see a doctor



A volunteer Doctor—dentist



Sr. Emila at the clinic



*Sisters of the Sacred Heart
praying at the Holy Spirit Church,
Maggotty Jamaica*

Glory Be to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

February 7, 2018

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Maggotty, Jamaica! We wish everyone a blessed and prosperous new year of 2018. Our hearts are filled with gratitude as we begin another year in our mission at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Maggotty, St. Elizabeth. This year marks 14 years that we have been serving the very poor in Jamaica.

We are very grateful to all who have been a part of this mission work – by their prayers, sacrifices, gifts and donations, as well as volunteer trips to spend time with us, assisting in our clinic and various projects. It is because of the generosity of our friends and benefactors that we are able to continue the services we try to give to the Jamaican people in Maggotty and the surrounding districts. How can we show our gratitude? Our weekly Mass on Wednesdays is offered for all who help us by any means. We are praying for all of you, and the local people from our church remember you in prayer, too. Only God can give back to you over and above what has been given to us. Please be assured of our prayers and know that you have a special place in our hearts. God bless you!

Sincerely in Jesus,

Sr. Clare Marie Carriger, SSCJ

Local Superior

*Sr. Clare Marie working at
the after school program*

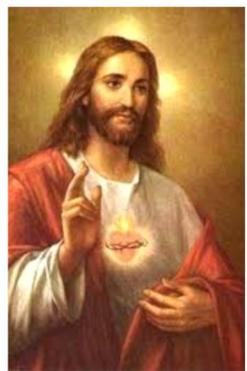


Thanks to the generosity of so many people, we were able to move from the old “clinic” (a metal container, on left) to the new one, built from scratch (on right).

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

*“The world needs God's madmen
who will go through the earth,
like Christ or Maximilian Kolbe,
who will have the courage to love
and will not turn back from any sacrifice.”*

Bl. Klara Szczesna



Is God calling you?

Do you want to leave everything behind, and offer yourself totally to Him? Are you brave enough to love and suffer, to fall and get up, to smile and cry, and pray? Do you want to join us, the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and proclaim the Kingdom of Jesus' Love everywhere? If your answer is yes!

come visit us, experience the spirit of silence, prayer and sisterly life in community.

Our Congregation is:

- Pontifical
- Franciscan
- Contemplative-Active
- Devoted to the Sacred Heart
- Founded by St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar and Bl Klara Szczesna in 1894 in Krakow, Poland



To contact us:

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Sacred Heart Province

866 Cambria Street

Cresson, Pennsylvania 16630

Phone: (814) 886 4223

Email: secretarysscjusa@yahoo.com

Website: www.sacredheartsisters.org

Facebook & Twitter (#sscjusa)

Our Federal ID Number is: 20-812762

SAVE THE DATE!

THE SACRED HEART SISTERS' 2018
GOLF TOURNAMENT

“THE INVITATIONAL”

WILL BE HELD ON

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2018

AT CRESSON, PENNSYLVANIA'S
BEAUTIFUL SUMMIT COUNTRY CLUB.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CONTACT SR. MARY ANDREW

AT 814-886-7961

SEE YOU THERE!



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

www.johnpaul2manor.org