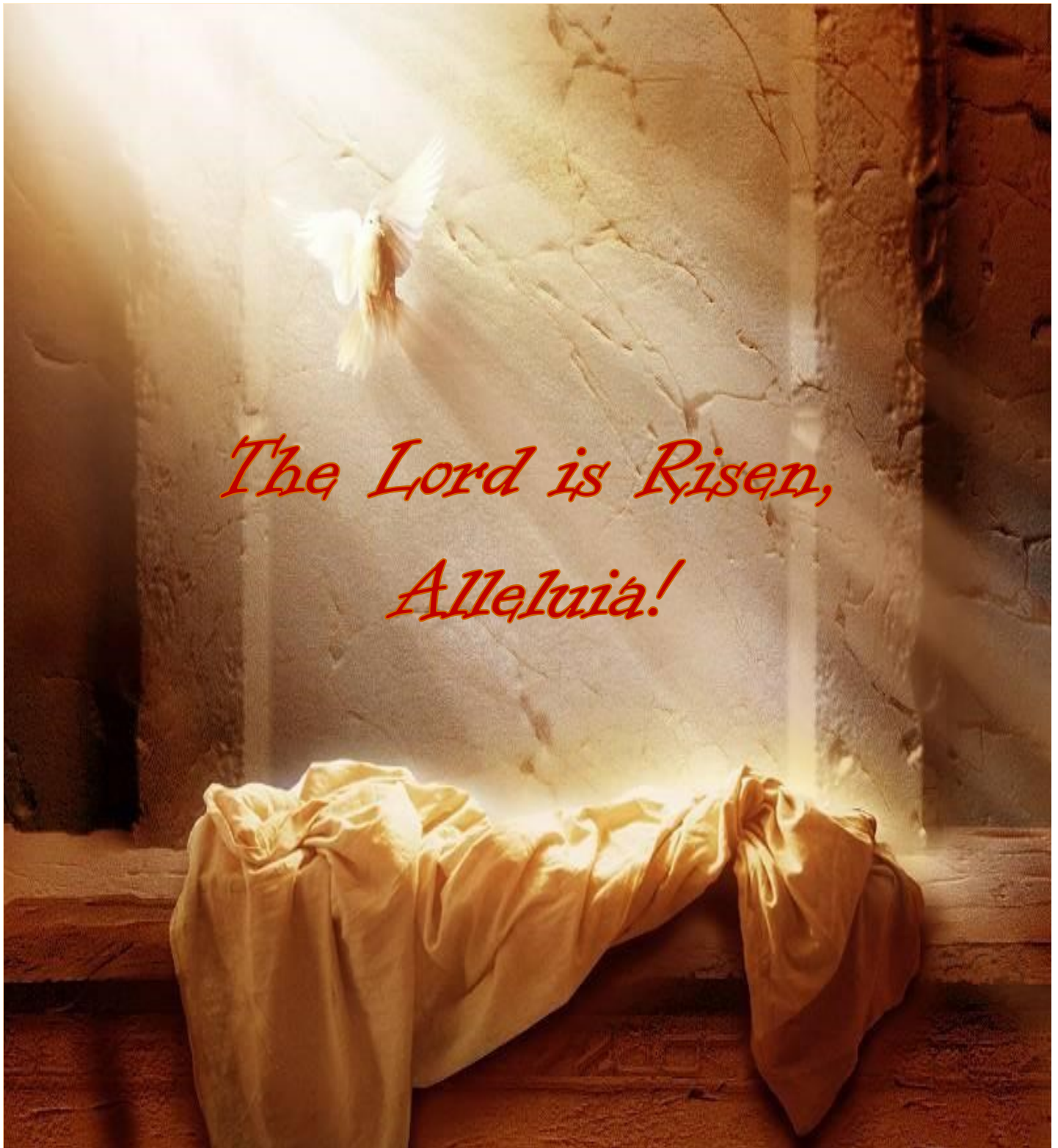


Volume 14 / Issue 1
Easter/Spring 2019
*A newsletter of the Sister
Servants of the Most
Sacred Heart of Jesus*

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. Jn 15:5*

Glory be to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



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



I have often seen sprayed on walls the words of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche: "God is dead." Well, although this statement may be true in that God became man to die on the cross for us, the statement is missing the second part which is its conclusion: He died, but He also rose and will never die again.

Half-truths are very dangerous, for they can lead us into darkness, depression or even despair. Amid the attacks against the Catholic Church is the great temptation to find a hiding place, to cover our face and ears with shame, and pretend that we don't care. But there too is a missing part, for although the Church consists of both saints and sinners, the gates of the nether world will not prevail against it.

Every Sunday we confess: "I believe in one, holy and apostolic Church." We are already the victors! Jesus Christ, by His Passion and death, conquered the darkness. We are the children of light. Let us lift up our heads and proudly say: "I am Catholic, and I am proud of it!"

I am a sinner, living in the midst of sinners, but my destiny is heaven with my God, who paid for my sins with His own blood. Although some of the shepherds turned into wolves, there are many good and holy shepherds, leading us to green pastures and living waters. We still have shepherds after the Heart of Jesus Christ, *Who died, Who is risen, and Who will come again.*

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ

Sister Klara Slonina, SSCJ
Provincial Superior



ONE
HOLY
CATHOLIC
APOSTOLIC
CHURCH

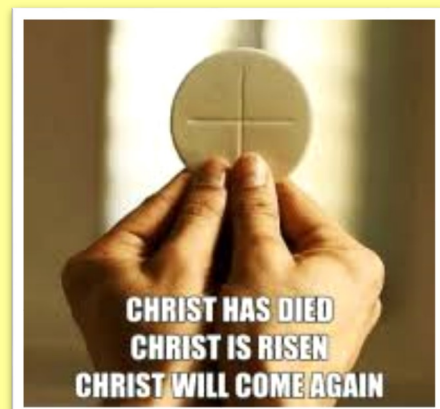
FROM THE MEDITATIONS OF BL. KLARA SZCZESNA

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. When the zealous sons of Zebedee would call down fire from heaven upon the houses of sinners, the most merciful Lord said to them: You do not know what spirit you are; the Son of God did not come to lose souls but to save.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



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

THE IMITATION OF SAINT JOSEPH IN THE INTERIOR LIFE

Imagine that you see Saint Joseph in the home at Nazareth, at the stable in Bethlehem and in exile in Egypt.

Consider that the entire life of Saint Joseph was interior and hidden in God; so little known to the world that but a few holy writers mention him in some few places; and of his death give no information. This was a life of prayer, quiet work, and constant sacrifice, and at the same time, a life shining with the splendor of all virtues.

Ponder only that by having married the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph renounced the dignity of fatherhood -- so dear to the Israelites, and voluntarily lived in lifelong virginity so that he could belong totally to God. This was a life of mortification and chastity.

Saint Joseph was such a great lover of God, but was afflicted by much suffering which he endured with a wonderful fortitude. This was a life of love for the cross and submission to the will of God. Do you have similar virtues?

If you want to know the faith of Saint Joseph, observe in the stable of Bethlehem his worshipping of the Incarnate Word, venerating in him his Lord and God.

If you want to know Saint Joseph's love for Jesus and Mary, behold how he devoted every moment of his life to them.

If you want to know Saint Joseph's obedience, look at how he rose at night at the angel's voice and, giving no care to hunger, hardships or cold, went to Egypt where he led a hard life until the next command of God. Do you have similar virtues?

Consider that God demanded much of Saint Joseph, but he also generously rewarded him on earth and highly exalted him.

For his purity, God made Saint Joseph the spouse, companion and guardian of the Blessed Mother of God.

For his self-denial, he gave him the sweet consolation that with his own eyes he could gaze upon the Savior of the world and take him up in his arms.

For his obedience, he elevated St. Joseph to such an ineffable dignity that he made him guardian and foster father of his Son, Jesus.

For his love for Jesus and Mary, he endowed St. Joseph with the great grace that after his holy life he died peacefully in their arms.

And God demands much from you, but he will favor you generously on this earth, and will exalt you, if you will but imitate Saint Joseph in his virtues. Do you sincerely desire this?

Consider that yours is a duty to so live in Jesus, according to Jesus, and for Jesus that you could at least repeat the words of St. Paul, yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me (Gal 2:20). Only this does God want, and to this end he gives his graces.

As once at Bethlehem so also now, Jesus still walks with Mary and Joseph -- that is, with the treasures of his Heart -- from home to home, from soul to soul, knocking, and asking to take him in: 'Open to me, my soul, my sister and my bride (cf. Song of Songs 5:2): open to let me live in you, and bestow on you my light and my love. Behold, I have circled the whole world and knocked at many souls, but they have mercilessly pushed me away; you then, at least, open, and give me shelter within you.' If the soul opens at once and invites the Lord Jesus in by faithfully keeping his commandments, or if a religious, by fidelity also to the vows, the Lord Jesus showers his graces upon this soul, and sanctifies the soul's inner and exterior life. Have you never rejected Jesus and do you strive to sanctify your inner and exterior life?

It is necessary to do so, since the degree of our exterior life depends upon our interior, that is, upon our virtues and motives, as the prophet has said, All the glory of the king's daughter [namely, the soul] is within (cf. Vulgate Ps 44:14). The wisdom, greatness and happiness of the soul come from this inner life. And there is nothing strange in this, for such is the life with Jesus and in Jesus; and Jesus is real wisdom, true good, eternal consolation -- Jesus is heaven itself. Whoever has found Jesus, Blessed Henry Suso rightly says, has found the source of joy and happiness. Have you never experienced this?

If you desire that the Lord Jesus would live in you and you live in Jesus, strive to grow constantly in love; therefore guard not only against mortal sins, but also against voluntary venial ones; purify your soul of vices, weaknesses and harmful attachments or desires. Do everything out of pure and supernatural motives, so that the Lord Jesus may himself work in you and through you, and you may resemble his Heart in everything. Do you promise this?

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



The Charism of Our Religious Family Expressed In Deeds At Our John Paul II Manor, Cresson, Pennsylvania

By Sr. Maria Anna Mellody, SSCJ

Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Over all these virtues put on love which binds the rest together and makes them perfect (Col. 3:12-14).

This quote from Colossians summarizes beautifully the environment experienced at John Paul II Manor, a home located in the heart of our Province in the United States.

Sr. Francis Clare Flahive, SSCJ, has worked at John Paul II Manor since October 2005



Because you are God's chosen ones. . . that is, because, with the eyes of faith, one can see the treasure of Christ in each and every person. As the Sisters express in the John Paul II Manor website "With that same love and dedication with which the Sisters served Pope John Paul II at the Vatican, the Sisters seek to bring to everyone everywhere the love of God's Heart especially to the residents of John Paul II Manor."

St. John Paul II often said, "Do not be afraid." He called everyone to generosity, love and service for others, and this, done in union with Christ, always allowing Christ to lead us. St. John Paul the Great is a spiritual Father to the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in so many ways. His love and care for our community has helped us to live our charism to contemplate the mystery of the Sacred Heart and spread Christ's love in all we do.

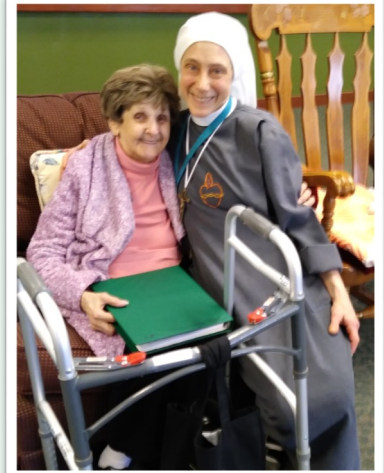
Speaking with one of the three retired priests who reside at our Manor, Father shared how he has experienced at the Manor how the Sisters create an inspiring atmosphere of prayerfulness and loving, sacrificial service.

During the past five years, Father has consistently been presented with a Christ-like accommodating charity much like John Paul II lived and taught. He sees the Sisters in the Manor as present to serve not to be served, sincerely striving to make his life at the Manor as pleasant as possible.



Sr. Mary Elizabeth Guidry, SSCJ, has lived and helped in the Manor since 2016

It has been said that the Sisters have cultivated a family atmosphere, weaving everything together. The staff, residents and Sisters develop a true, loving bond. All are working as one, to create a place where love, friendship and service to others, along with compassion and generosity, serve to impress upon all that they are at home within their own loving household.



Sr. Mary Joan Greenberg, SSCJ, a registered nurse and local superior, with a resident

"Clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience (Col. 3:13). A Sacred Heart Sister serving at the manor explained: "At the John Paul II Manor we are able to not only live this call to charity that exemplifies the love central to our charism, but we have succeeded in creating a place where love can flourish in all present."

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



According to one of the Sisters at the Manor, "Volunteers and visitors who participate in various activities at the Manor say that they see happiness, kindness and service with a true loving unity. The residents know they are loved. The staff and Sisters all sincerely love each other. There is a true ability to respect and support one another "

One resident said she finds the Manor extremely loving. Speaking also of the availability of daily Mass and prayer with the Sisters, this resident thought of this as a miracle of grace. She thinks that in finding John Paul II Manor, she has found a hidden treasure. She daily attends all available prayers, and spends each possible moment in the chapel when exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is also available. She loves it at the John Paul II Manor.

There is daily morning Mass at the John Paul II Manor celebrated by the priest residents and attended by the Sisters and most of the residents. Daily afternoon rosary and Evening Prayer offer the residents a share in the daily prayers of the Sisters. Each Sunday, the residents are able to take part in adoration with of the Blessed Sacrament.

Sr. Mary Barbara enhances the loving atmosphere by leading a Sing-a-Long each week, often with piano. This includes time to share and listen to stories as well as to sing the old favorites just for fun of it.

*Sr. Mary
Barbara
Hoyt,
SSCJ,
during her
weekly
"Sing-a-
Long"
sessions*



Sr. Augustine Marie, a licensed physical therapist, is able to provide exercise activities for the residents several times a week. Many residents enjoy this group exercise time, as Sister combines her skill as a therapist with humor and kindness.



*Sr. Augustine Marie Molnar, SSCJ,
leading the residents in exercises*

A resident has written the following description that beautifully describes the effect that living at the Manor can have on someone:

"The Sacred Heart keeps us happy in our Sanctuary of Divine Love at John Paul II Manor. And now it is our turn to give thanks to the Most Loving Heart of Jesus for our beloved priests, faithful Sisters and all groups, residents and volunteers and John Paul II Manor. Jesus is happy when we are happy so let us keep on smiling."



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

What Is It Like Working in a Personal Care Home?

By Linda Long

John Paul II Manor in Cresson, PA, is run by the Sisters Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. I have worked at the Manor as an Administrative Assistant to the Administrator, Sr. Mary Andrew, for the past three and a half years. I have been a secretary/office manager for over 37 years in the federal government, local government, and in the private sector.



*Mrs. Linda Long
working
with
Sr. Mary Andrew,
SSCJ*

Working at John Paul II Manor **is by far the most rewarding job I have ever had.**

When people think of personal care homes, negative images often come to mind. People envision elderly residents sitting alone in their rooms, or parked in wheelchairs in long, dimly lit hallways, filled with strange smells. Well, I am here to tell you that this isn't the case at John Paul II Manor. Sr. Mary Andrew and her staff have gone to great lengths to make John Paul II Manor "home", where residents and their families feel comfortable, safe and loved in a peaceful environment.

Some of the benefits I enjoy as an employee of the Manor are:

1) Developing long—lasting relationship with our residents. Unlike hospitals or rehabilitation centers, where a patient's stay is typically short, we provide residents with care for many months and often many years. I get to bond with residents and their family members.

2) Learning from our older residents. These delightful people have led full lives and have a lot to share. How could you not be thankful to the generation who paved the way before us? Without their dedication and talents, our world would not be as advanced as it is today. I have learned so much simply by listening to our residents. These individuals have lived through events such as World Wars and the Great Depression. During trying times they found true love, raised families, and worked hard at their jobs. They figured out how to stick together with their spouses when times got tough—very rare in today's society.

3) Performing small favors for Manor residents such as helping them write a letter, button a blouse, or zip up a coat—small things that they seem to greatly appreciate.

4) Becoming a member of the care team that collectively supports each of our residents. My co-workers are the best! The people working at John Paul II Manor are caring, loving and patient people. Everyone works together to provide the best care possible for each resident. We enjoy getting to know each resident and becoming part of their extended family.

Working in a personal care home is not for everyone. Patience, compassion and a desire to bring love, dignity, security and companionship to the elder population is necessary for this profession. That being said, I feel blessed to have the opportunity to close out my working career in a environment where I get to form a special bond with John Paul II Manor residents, and to work as a part of a great team led by Sr. Mary Andrew. I am rewarded with a great variety of experiences on a daily basis.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

In the Footsteps of the Saints

By Sr. Mary Joseph Calore, SSCJ

The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that we should not neglect hospitality, “for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels” (13:2). It has even happened that saints have passed by us unaware. Such has surely been the experience of our Sisters throughout these past 125 years of our Congregation’s existence.

In the infancy of our religious family, we were founded and formed by remarkable souls: our Founders St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar and Blessed Klara Szczesna. Their love and zeal in cooperating with the will of God, spurred them on to fulfill the destiny entrusted to them for the glory of the Divine Heart. They would be followed by many hidden, saintly Sisters of our Congregation, whose holiness was known only to heaven, for “All the glory of the king's daughter is within” (Ps 45:13 Vulgate).

In recent times in the history of our Congregation, the paths of three more famous saints have crossed ours, and are remembered fondly among our Sisters. I am speaking, of course, of St. John Paul II, St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe and St. Maria Faustina Kowalska.



Sisters of our Congregation first served with Saint John Paul II as his secretaries and domestic staff in the Krakow Curia, where he was then known as the Archbishop of Krakow, Karol Jozef Wojtyla. When elected to the papacy in 1978 as Pope John Paul II, the pope requested that some of our Sisters come to the Vatican to serve in his papal household and closest staff. This group of Sisters, known affectionately in our Congregation as “the Papal Five” together with the Sisters who would later join them, distinguished themselves by a life of hiddenness, absolute discretion, hard work and sacrifice, as the Pope they served was as indefatigable as he was holy. Only God knows what these Sisters experienced in the way of grace and hardship until they gathered about Pope John Paul II at his deathbed. Our Congregation’s close proximity to St. John Paul II throughout his episcopacy and his papacy, have given him the revered place as a second father to our Congregation, for which our Sisters will always be most grateful to God. We rejoice that the hard, hidden and humble work of these our Sisters, helped this remarkable pontiff to accomplish his extraordinary mission in the Church and in the world.



Our Sisters have a convent in Zakopane, Poland, in the Tatry Mountains which in the 1930’s became a refuge for rehabilitation for another notable figure, a Conventual Franciscan priest suffering from tuberculosis of which the mountain air was then the only viable treatment for the dread disease. The Apostle of Mary

Immaculate and future martyr of Auschwitz, St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, would periodically stay in the guest room of our Zakopane convent with its screened in porch, to find relief from his pulmonary distress.



Our Sisters staffing a tuberculosis sanatorium in the Krakow suburb of Pradnik in that same decade could hardly have imagined that one of their humble patients would one day be renowned throughout the world as the Apostle of Divine Mercy, St. Maria Faustina Kowalska of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy.

Saint Faustina was in our Sisters’ care in Pradnik on several occasions, and she made several references to our Sisters in her Diary. One is particularly beautiful, when, in 1938, facing another hospitalization, Sr. Faustina dreaded living in a ward of a hospital and had a long talk with our Lord about what she called her “troubles, fears and apprehensions.” Here is her account of how our Lord responded and used our Sisters to bring her comfort:

“Jesus lovingly listened to me and then said,

Be at peace, My child, I am with you. Go in great peace. All is ready; I have ordered, in My own special way, a private room to be prepared for you.

Reassured and overwhelmed with gratitude, I went to bed. On the following day, Sister Felicia took me there. I left in great peace and a calm spirit. When we arrived, they told us there was a private room for Sister Faustina. When we entered the room, we were surprised that everything had been prepared so beautifully: all was clean and neat, covered with tablecloths and bedecked with flowers; a pretty Easter Lamb had been placed on the night table by the Sisters. At once, three Sacred Heart Sisters who work at the sanatorium, my old acquaintances, came and greeted me warmly. Sister Felicia was surprised at all this. We bid a warm farewell to each other, and she left. When I was alone, with just the Lord Jesus and myself, I thanked Him for this great grace” (Diary, 1674, 1675).

St. Maria Faustina was privileged to reveal to the world the wonders of the Mercy of God and she was given the task to convey the message of God’s mercy through the image and Chaplet of Divine Mercy, which we are enclosing for you in this newsletter. Our Sisters will be united with you in prayer, remembering you and your intentions in the Novena before the Feast of Divine Mercy/

All these saints shared a common call to extend by word, pen and example, the Kingdom of love and mercy of the Divine Heart. This, their mission, now falls to us. Therefore, let us go forth to work to this end, knowing that a great band of angels and saints accompanies us!

(Quotations taken from *The Diary of St. Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul* (c) 1987 Marians of the Immaculate Conception, Stockbridge, MA 01263. Used with permission of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M.)

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



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The Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, founded in Krakow, Poland in 1894 by St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar and Blessed Klara Szczesna are devoted to extending the Kingdom of Love of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus by prayer, community life and apostolic work in the areas of

teaching * catechesis * nursing * personal care
parish music ministry * retreats * youth ministry
and missionary work.

Internationally, the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus serve in the following countries

- ♦ Poland
- ♦ Ukraine
- ♦ Italy
- ♦ France
- ♦ Bolivia
- ♦ Argentina
- ♦ Jamaica
- ♦ United States.

The United States Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is represented in the Dioceses of Altoona-Johnstown, Harrisburg, and Grand Rapids and in Man-deville, Jamaica, West Indies.

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John Paul II Manor in Cresson, PA

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