

Volume 20, Issue 1
Easter/Spring 2021
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



YEAR OF SAINT JOSEPH
December 8, 2020 – December 8, 2021

*With the Apostolic Letter “Patris corde” (“With a Father’s Heart”),
Pope Francis recalls the 150th anniversary of the declaration
of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church.
To mark the occasion, the Holy Father has proclaimed the
“year of Saint Joseph” from 8 December 2020 to 8 December 2021.*

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



The Year 2021 is dedicated by Pope Francis, to St. Joseph. This Saint, silent and by many Christians forgotten, is from the beginning very dear to our Congregation. The first Sacred Heart Sisters used to visit his miraculous painting in the

Bernardine Sisters' Church in Krakow, asking him for help in the difficult problems of their life, and from these first Sisters, the next generations of the Sercanki (as the Sacred Heart Sisters are known in Poland) learn to trust in his patronage. Every day we offer our prayers through his intercession.

My personal relationship with St. Joseph started when I became a local superior to my Sisters. I called him our "Business Manager", referring to his help all the financial and material concerns of the convent. He worked so well, that, as provincial superior, I "nominated" St. Joseph to be our provincial financial Administrator, and his statue was placed in a prominent space in our provincial office, next to the beautiful painting of the Heart of Jesus. But St. Joseph is much more than a refuge for temporal needs. As the Patron of the Universal Church, St. Joseph is our powerful protector against the furious demonic attacks. It is his assistance we invoke at the hour of death. In his company we hope to see God for ever, in heaven. St. Joseph, pray for us.

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ
Provincial Superior



The Miraculous painting in the Bernardine Sisters' Church in Krakow, where many Sacred Heart Sisters learn to love St. Joseph and to trust his protection.

Memories of Bl. Klara Szczesna (1863—1916)

**By Sister Bogumila
Anna Zajchowska**

*Born December 24, 1879
Bajdy, Poland*



I was accepted into the Congregation in 1900. My postulancy I spent in a house of the Congregation, and my novitiate and next years were spent in Krakow at our Motherhouse. In the beginning of 1915, I left for Wadowice, to an army hospital. Later I worked with Sisters in the army hospitals near Bukowina and Brzesc Kujawski.

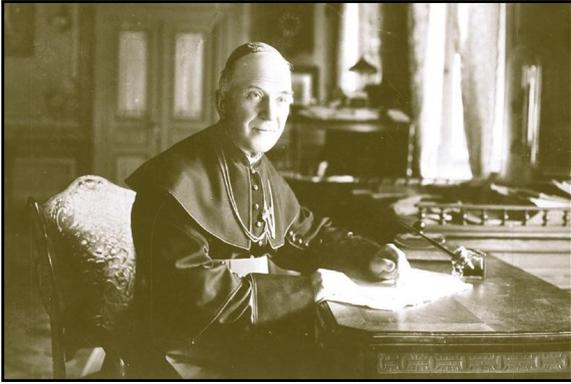
I can say that Mother Klara was as a person chosen by Providence for the position of co-foundress, and later general superior in the Congregation. She had great virtue. Her face was pleasant and attractive. Her manners were composed, tactful and full of religious dignity. She was distinguished by great exactitude and punctuality. She did not like even the smallest delays and defects, such as in keeping the daily schedule and in other circumstances.

She often and for a long time remained before the Most Blessed Sacrament. When her health allowed, she took part in the common prayers and community life of the Congregation. I remember that during Lent, especially during Holy Week, she wanted to fast, but it so exhausted her that she had to reinforce her frail body with more substantial food.

She was often sick; she especially suffered rheumatic heart disease. This suffering often caused her to faint. When she felt better, she said dutiful prayers, but often after this effort she suffered a heart attack. Concerned about her health, the Sisters asked Dr. Maczka if would forbid Mother to pray so long. Dr. Maczka answered: "If she can rule so many women, she will rule herself."

When she gave orders, she asked rather than ordered. She used to say: "Would you be so kind or polite and do this." Her relationship toward the Sisters was maternal but decisive. She liked giving little gifts to the Sisters. She knitted different things from wool, and, like a good mother, would notice the needs in the Sisters' clothes, which she later remedied. She valued the Sisters' work very much.

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



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

AN INVITATION TO THE DIVINE HEART

The voice of God calls joyfully to us: Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest (Mt 11:28) and God invites us even here and now to a profound union with Himself in perfect love. The Lord desires that we would bear all difficulties and sufferings in union with Him throughout our entire life for only then will such burdens become easier. He especially invites those experiencing difficulties –those suffering not only physically but spiritually, and sinners – and who among us can say he is not a sinner? The Heart of the Savior invites each and everyone. He calls all to Himself, for He desires by means of such an encounter to reveal and thereby give Himself to us.

Our assent to this invitation opens before us the vast possibilities of discovering, knowing and experiencing true love and happiness. It also introduces us into the mystery of suffering, something difficult for us to understand and accept. It depends completely upon us whether we will take up His offer.

St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar writes: “Do not excuse yourself on the premise that you are unable to know the truths and ways of God, for the Lord has indeed given you a heart capable of love. In fact, so that your heart would truly love, God discloses His love to it and bestows upon it His grace. Even the simple one is able to love perfectly and in the school of love can become wise in the things of God.”

As St. Margaret Mary has said, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is like an open book from which it is easiest to learn the art of love, particularly when one reads it beneath the Savior’s Cross, in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, or after Holy Communion. Why is it so difficult for many to see that everything a person most needs or most longs is to be found within the

Heart of God? Perhaps it is because we think of this Heart as a mystery far removed from the affairs of everyday human life. While people like to discover and to learn the unknown, to conquer what is difficult, they are still lacking the essential connection between life and faith –that is, faith in God’s love and in entrusting themselves to this love unto the end. And yet there are countless visible and actual proofs of this love of God that He shows in so human a way. God is Love (1 Jn 4:16), the beloved disciple of the Heart of Jesus reminds us. In this name of God is contained His very essence. Whoever is without love does not know God (1 Jn 4:8). We must continually learn this love because such knowledge leads to greater love.

St. Joseph Sebastian places these words upon the lips of Mary as she stands beneath the Cross: “Sons of men, as you have already caused suffering to my Son, quickly, hasten at once and find in His wounds the healing for your own. See His hands extended to you, behold His opened Heart. Come then with your hearts to this Heart – He will forgive you. I am interceding on your behalf, but I am also begging you: Do not crucify my Son again, but instead greatly love Him in union with me.”



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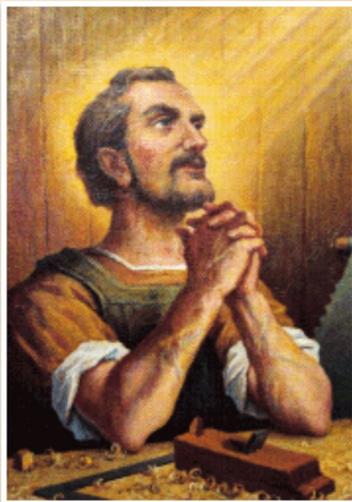
The imitation of Saint Joseph in the interior life

*Meditation by
St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar*

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

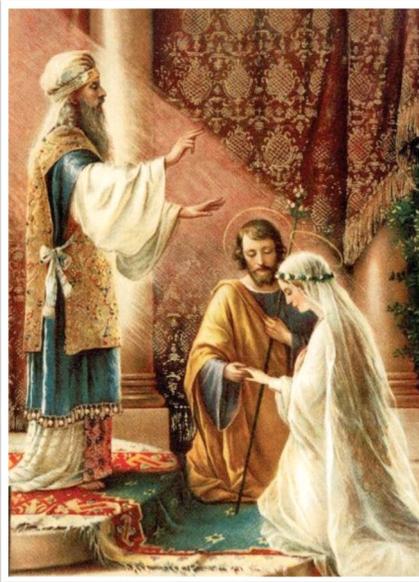


With what virtues did the interior life of Saint Joseph radiate?



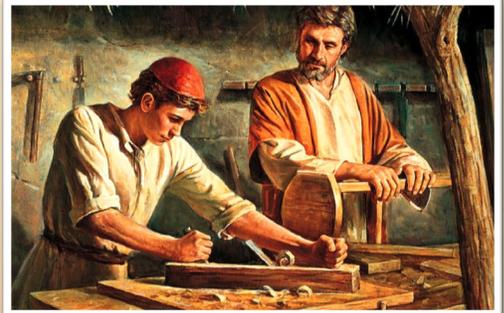
Consider that the entire life of Saint Joseph was interior and hidden in God; so little known to the world that but a few holy writers mention him in some few places; and of his death give no information. This was a life of prayer, quiet work, and constant sacrifice, and at the same time, a life shining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

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



While a descendant of the royal family, he worked every day for a living in the craftsman's workshop - Jesus being all his wealth. Behold his life of self-denial and poverty.

St. Joseph, as the highest of the patriarchs and a witness to the mysteries of God, could convert the world, and yet



he enclosed himself in a small town, being completely devoted to Jesus. This was a life of humility and prayer.

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 St. 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.

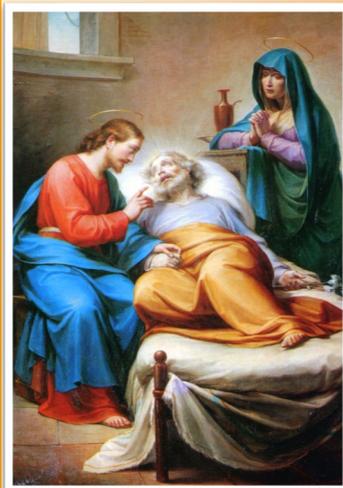
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Consider that God demanded much of Saint Joseph, but he also generously rewarded him on earth and highly exalted him.

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?

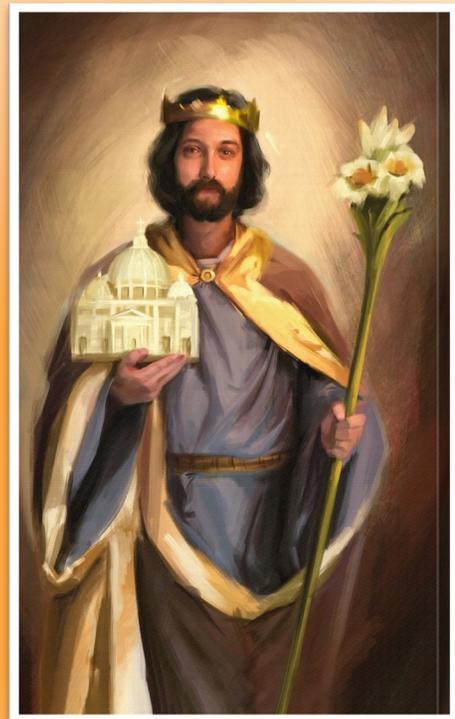
Why and how to strive for an interior life.

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.

Do you strive to sanctify your inner and exterior life?



Saint Joseph, Protector of the Holy Church, pray for us.

**Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.**

**Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.**

(Pope Francis)

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



OUR TRUE & LASTING HOME

By Sr. Mary Joseph Calore, SSCJ

As a college commuting student, I often took public transit across town in the evening. It was a quiet ride, filled with exhausted workers going home after a long day.

As evening was falling on an autumn day, I can remember walking down my street and looking towards the kitchen of my parents' house, drawn to the glowing light pouring from the windows. I was being recalled, in a very real sense, to where I was known and loved, where my people were expecting me with warmth, rest, and a hot meal. Home awaited.

The years passed. I entered the convent and my parents passed away. I sometimes found myself wishing to return to such an evening, approaching my parents' home again.

We all long for home.

We all long for a place where we are completely loved, accepted, and treasured – where people wait for us. Where we belong.



St. Maximilian Kolbe convent, Cresson, PA, our earthly, temporary home, a stop before we enter our eternal home — in the Heart of Jesus, Abode of love.

For many years, I was homesick for such a home, without even realizing it. It would steal over me at pensive moments, usually as dusk was falling.

I needed to find my way home.

I remembered something consoling our Lord had said, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (John 14:23).

God, in His goodness, has prepared for us a home.

As a Sacred Heart Sister, I grew to love the invocation in the Litany to this Divine Heart which says, *Heart of Jesus, abode of justice and love.*

A traveler along the cold, dark and dangerous roads of this world, I am convinced that I have such a home - there is, in fact, an abode where I belong; more than a place, it is a reality that transcends earthly boundaries, an abode of love. Where is this home? In the Heart of God.

The Lord Jesus invites all of us to such a place of intimacy where hearts can be transformed in righteousness, and may experience the love for which we were created. Earthly homes are temporary, but this abode is eternal.

I know only too well how transitory our earthly homes can be. I am native of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, a city nestled along the banks of the mighty Susquehanna River.

In June, 1972, my city took a monumental pounding for days as the torrential rains of Hurricane Agnes hung over the Wyoming Valley. People were sent fleeing the rising, surging waters, until the river's muddy depths finally overflowed its banks, flooding the cities along the way, leaving in its wake a trail of devastation and destruction.

My parents were among the many in higher elevations of the city to open their doors to friends and relatives displaced by the flood waters. Desperate people filled churches and gathered around television sets as national news reported the near apocalyptic devastation hitting the region.



*Devastation of Hurricane Agnes—June, 1972
All Photos Courtesy of Christopher Calore*

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“Oh, Joe, our wedding dishes!” my grandmother blurted out, horrified by the shocking images of their beloved, now flooded Wyoming Valley. “Catherine, we’re lucky to be alive,” my grandfather responded pragmatically. Still, he worried about the state of the family’s home.

After the waters had crested and receded, residents were permitted back into the flood plain of the city. Family members walked through their neighborhood in South Wilkes-Barre, assessing the waters’ toll, viewing scenes that resembled a war zone.



Grandparents’ home — everything destroyed.

Years later, my mother told me that when they entered my grandparents’ home, they saw that everything was destroyed. Everything.

Everything, that is, but a china cabinet still standing in the corner of a room, the very cabinet containing the cherished wedding dishes!

All of them stared incredulously and in awe at this miraculous sight. The plates were unbroken, the cups still hung from their hooks, and an inch of mud was atop the saucers! To their further amazement, there, stuck with floodwater to the glass door of the china cabinet, was a plastic Sacred Heart badge, its origins a mystery.



The wedding dishes, a miraculous sight.

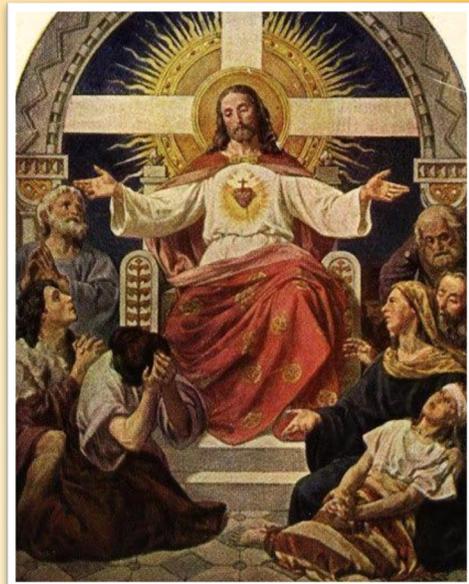
Carefully the dishes and cups were removed and placed in a box. With the removal of the last dish, my mother said, the cabinet collapsed. She would always say it was held up by the Sacred Heart Himself.

I once asked my dear mother why God had spared those dishes. She answered with a profound wisdom and simplicity, “The Sacred Heart of Jesus knows everything about us. He knew those dishes were important to your grandparents, and that is why He saved them. He loves us.”

He loves us. This Heavenly Father who in His goodness has made a home for the poor (cf. Psalm 68) - a provident God who takes care of us in love. Indeed, our earthly homes may be swept away by fire or flood — *here we have no lasting city* (Hebrews 13:14) — and yet the Divine Heart of Jesus our abode of justice and love, is eternally ours. We need never fear. *In Him we live and move and have our being* (Acts 17:28), and in His Heart — in this, our own home, we take refuge!

Invitation

On June 11, 2021, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, our Sisters; USA Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus will be re-consecrated to our Divine Patron. We invite all you, our dear friends, to join with us spiritually in this act of self-offering and consecration. Please watch our Sisters’ website for more information and inspiring spiritual reflections to prepare ourselves for this day. (www.sacredheartsisters.org).



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



Chaplet of Divine Mercy

Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Apostles Creed

On the Rosary Our Father beads:

Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

On the 10 Hail Mary beads:

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Conclude (three times):

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

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 ♦ Sacred Heart ♦ Founded by St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar & Bl. Klara Szczesna in 1894 in Krakow, Poland ♦ Devoted to prayer and apostolic works of teaching, catechesis, nursing, personal care, parish music ministry, retreats, youth ministry and missionary work. ♦ Internationally represented in Poland, Ukraine, Italy, France, Bolivia, Argentina, and Jamaica, and the in United States—in the Dioceses of Altoona-Johnstown, Columbus, Harrisburg, and Grand Rapids.

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Our Federal ID Number is: 20-812762

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