

Volume 18, Issue 2
Summer / Fall 2020
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

*For the greater glory of the Most
Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I Sister [...] desiring to offer
myself totally to God
and to imitate Jesus Christ
faithfully,
before the Sisters assembled here,
into your hands, Mother [...]
I vow to God ... chastity,
poverty and obedience,
according to the Constitutions of
the Congregation of the Servants
of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

*With all my heart, I give myself
to our religious family,
so that under the inspiration
of the Holy Spirit,
the intercession of the
Immaculate Virgin Mary,
our Father Saint Francis and our
Father Saint Joseph Sebastian,
I may attain perfect charity
in the service of God
and the Church.*

*(Form of Vows in the Congregation
of the Servants of the
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus)*





Letter from Mother Klara, SSCJ Provincial Superior

Glory be to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



Myrtle is believed to be a true symbol of remembrance, joy, and love, which is one of the primary reasons why ancient Greeks and Romans have always considered this plant to be associated with love and virginity. It is no surprise then that the delicate flowers and leaves of this plant are being featured in bridal wreaths and wedding bouquets.

Recently, we put a myrtle wreath (or crown) on the heads of two of our Sisters. Mother Amabilis, loving and loved, passed away on July 16, and her head, resting in the casket, was adorned with myrtle. On August 2, our Sr. Angela Marie took her final vows, and on her head also was a myrtle crown. For Sr. Angela Marie, myrtle was a sign of her virginity and love for Christ. For Mother Amabilis it had one more meaning – a sign of victory.

St. Paul wrote: *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”* (2Tm 4:7-8)

The myrtle crown in the beginning of the race, and at the end... until the Lord will replace myrtle with the “crown of righteousness”.

Grateful for the gift of a chaste love I pray for our Sr. Angela Marie, that after a life of the “good fight” she can rest, like Mother Amabilis, adorned with the myrtle crown of victory.

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ

Provincial Superior

Memories of Bl. Klara Szczesna (1863—1916) by Her Spiritual Daughters



In 1907, the first General Chapter of the Congregation convened and unanimously elected Mother Klara as Superior General. She was again elected during the second general chapter in 1913, but would not complete this term because of her death.

During her time as Superior General, Mother Klara visited the Sacred Heart Sisters' convents frequently and helped the Sisters with various difficulties. Under her care, the number of Sisters and convents continued to increase; weeks before her death, there were 156 Sisters—outside the Motherhouse—working in 15 convents and 4 army field hospitals. Mother Klara remained open to the needs of the Church, the needs of society, and the suggestions of Father Founder, resulting in constant growth in the variety of services provided. In addition to the original missions of the community, the following apostolates were added: nursing in hospitals, managing kindergartens, giving sewing courses, conducting household and agricultural schools for girls, and catechizing in villages where there were no priests. Of note in the Congregation's history is the time the Sisters spent nursing the wounded and sick soldiers in field hospitals during World War I. Thus, Mother Klara needed to have a clear understanding of each Sister's professional preparation, intellectual ability, and spiritual-religious demeanor for the apostolic works to be as successful as they were.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



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

**THE HOMILY DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF
THE FOUNDING OF THE CONGREGATION AND
THE DEDICATION OF THE CHAPEL**

APRIL 15, 1894

Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, your particular assignment must be to spread the devotion to the Divine Heart. More than two hundred years ago the Lord Jesus revealed the mystery of this Heart to Blessed Margaret Mary and, through her, to the world. Therefore, let it be your concern, Servants of the Heart of Jesus, to return limitless love for his immeasurable love; to make expiation to the Lord for the insults he receives from so many of the blind and ungrateful; moreover, spread so far as you are able, the honor and love of the Heart of Jesus.

One of the most fervent desires of this Heart is that God's most Blessed Mother would be honored and loved by all. First, because the Lord himself loves her with an unspeakable love, and secondly, because he made her the Mother of all people, so that she, with her tenderness, would draw to herself even those who run from the cross, and would lead them to the Divine Heart. Servants of this Heart, honor this Mother, love this Mother, listen to and invoke this Mother, furthermore, enkindle honor and love for her in the souls of others.

As if this were not enough, another very fervent desire of the Heart of Jesus is the sanctification of souls. For these souls the Savior came to earth; for them he ascended the cross, and from this cross he cried, "I thirst"; for them, he remained in the Mystery of the Altar. Whoever wants to be pleasing to the Lord Jesus should work with him for the sanctification of souls and thus to fulfill the apostolate – if not in the loud then in the quiet – the apostolate of prayer, the apostolate of penance, the apostolate of good example, the apostolate of sacrifice. Let this apostolate, Servants of the Heart of Jesus, be your sign.

Embrace with constant care the shelters for servants and let this care be always performed in the spirit of God. Be for them true mothers; train them in virtues; protect them from evil; teach them different tasks; in a word, bring forth for society exemplary servants; this means those who are truly pious and at the same time diligent, submissive and conscious of their own obligations. But this is not enough.

The Heart of Jesus gives you one more obligation - to attend to the sick. Difficult is the lot of the bedridden due to pain and especially because of long lasting illness. This lot is bad when poverty is joined to sickness, but even worse still when, with the sick body, there is also a sick soul. You, therefore, must bring not only relief for the body - that is, to fulfill all necessary service and works - but you must also take care of their souls, to draw them to God by sweetness, prayer, example and dedication. In this dedication, do not disregard the bed of the poor or withdraw before any illness, even if it be hideous or contagious. You may say that I demand from you too great a sacrifice. Yet I can say: It is not I who demand, but the Lord himself who desires this; this Lord who became mercy for the poor; Bread of life for the hungry; source of graces for the thirsty; physician and medicine for the sick. When among his apostolic work, St. Francis Xavier shed streams of sweat, he used to say to himself, smiling: "Let your sweat flow for the Lord. Someday he will wipe your forehead and give you the promised reward." Similarly for you, dear Daughters in Christ, he will not refuse the reward if only you will be dedicating yourself to the sick out of holy love for him.

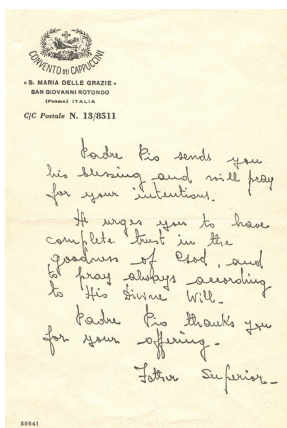
Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



Nurturing the Lord's Garden : Mother Amabilis Debicka, SSCJ (1926-2020)

When Mother Amabilis Debicka arrived in the United States from Poland in 1961, the future of the American foundation of the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus was uncertain for nearly a decade. The Polish Sisters did not know the language and culture, and there were no candidates joining. Mother seriously considered returning to Poland.

Seeking counsel, she wrote to a Capuchin stigmatic priest from San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy named Padre Pio. The Franciscan's response was a decisive moment for the American foundation as Mother took his response as a sign of the will of God to remain here in America. Padre Pio had responded through his superior with these words: "Padre Pio sends you his blessing and will pray for your institutions. He urges you to have confident trust in the goodness of God, and to pray always according to the Divine Will." With confident trust, Mother would pray and live this will of God for the rest of her life, until July 16, 2020, when she was called home to the Lord after a life filled with prayer and work for God.



Letter from St. Padre Pio



M. Amabilis with her family

Urszula's youth had been marked by the love of her close Polish family and the terrible separation during the war years. Young Urszula was abducted from recess in her eighth grade by the Nazis, and was sent to forced labor in Germany. She could make her own the plaintive verses of the Psalms: "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, remembering Zion...there our captors asked us for the words of a songBut how could we sing a song of the LORD in a

foreign land? (Psalms 137, 1, 3-4)"

Eventually sold to a cruel SS officer and his wife who wanted to adopt her, her exile from her homeland and family was a true martyrdom. Shortly before the war ended, the daring Urszula decided to escape. She would put herself at risk, but put a still greater trust in God, as she followed an inner inspiration that compelled her forward. Gathering her faith and her courage, with a Polish companion, she set forth walking. And Urszula walked. She walked deliberately. Fearlessly. She was ingenious, pretending to be casually window-shopping. To any onlooker, she simply appeared to be some fine German young lady out for a leisurely stroll with her servant. But Ursula was actually fleeing the country. Fleeing for her very life.



M. Amabilis with her Mom.

Her steps carried her back to Poland and onward toward her destiny. The privations had weakened her and she acquired tuberculosis. It was under

treatment in a sanitarium for the disease, that a nurse suggested to Urszula that she consider entering the Congregation of Sacred Heart Sisters in Krakow. She did, in fact, follow that advice, and a great mission for God ensued.



Sister Amabilis received formation, made her vows and became an organist in Poland. She was quite happy and busy in the daily rounds of playing organ and singing Masses and funerals. But God had other plans in mind for this religious.

Her superiors quickly recognized in Sister Amabilis the qualities of nature and grace that would serve well a newly opened foundation in the United States. So, in 1961, a sacrifice was asked of Sister Amabilis Debicka: to leave her homeland and people once again, this time to go to Erie, Pennsylvania in America. There on American soil she would undertake to fulfill the Congregation's mission to extend the Kingdom of Love of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.



Mother's American ID card

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

It was a painful departure, and Mother again went into exile, but this time with the firmness of obedience to the will of God revealed through her superiors. Thus commenced a lifetime of service in America. The Lord



Kindergarten in Portage, Pennsylvania



M. Amabilis with children (left) and young people (right).



would eventually direct the Sisters to settle more permanently in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Pennsylvania. There, Mother Amabilis became everything to the fledgling American



M. Amabilis, all her life, faithful to prayer.

them receive the sunshine and the rain. How like her formation of Sisters in America. Mother Amabilis labored diligently in the garden of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, until on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, this ardent religious was called home to Jesus, her beloved “who browses among the lilies” (Song of Songs, 2, 16). May the Divine Bridegroom richly reward his Spouse, Mother Amabilis Debicka with eternal rest and the fullness of



Construction work.

foundation: first vocation promoter, first local superior, first formator, and, in 1986, first Provincial Superior in America, an office she held for a decade. She accepted the first American candidates, formed and educated

them, sent them out on mission and buried two of those she received.

Mother worked hard in the apostolate as a kindergarten teacher, organist and sodality director. Besides prayer and apostolic work, formation classes and the myriad of demands of charity, Mother also kept the books for the Sisters, handled financial records and transactions, and still found time and energy to raise funds and send aid and supplies to her beloved Poland.



M. Amabilis with the first American novices.

Her novices recall her hard work cultivating rose gardens on the Sisters' grounds. Mother nurtured them as she did the spiritual and apostolic lives of her Sisters. She needed to prune them, direct them, and let



joy and peace! Her Sisters will continue what she has begun on American soil, to the greater glory of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, to whom be glory both now and forever! Amen.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

The Little Flowers of Mother Amabilis



From the Province Chronicle, Saturday, March 19, 2016:

We are living with a saint in our midst with Mother Amabilis. I just led her out of the chapel, as she said to me, "Oh, Jozefka, I am so happy I have God, I have God!" I replied, "And God has you, Mother." We are indeed blessed to have such a Sister here in Cresson!



One time we got a call from our Sisters traveling in the entourage of St. John Paul II that they were in America and had just met our president. The president's reputation was notorious, but no one suspected that Mother knew that, until she facetiously replied to our Sr. Tobiana Sobodka, "I hope you had your holy water when you met him!"



Mother loved our habit, so when a Polish priest was picking up one of our newly arrived Sisters from Poland at the airport in New York, he made up a tall tale and teased Mother, "She's here without a habit" Suddenly we all heard Mother say to the jokester priest, "Well, if she doesn't have a habit, let she stay there!"



When our chapel in Cresson was being built, expenses began to exceed Mother's savings, and as Christmas was approaching, Mother worried that she had to discontinue the project since she did not have enough money to pay the workmen, and they had families. Mother prayed, the Sisters prayed. And one evening the doorbell rang. It was an elderly woman Mother had visited and brought soup to in her home over a bowling alley. Mother was speechless when the woman and her companions placed a check in Mother's hand to the exact amount needed to finish the chapel! The woman's son was an architect in Pittsburgh and she and the other women had wanted to show their gratitude to Mother for all the kindness she bestowed on them.



*M. Amabilis,
loving, loved,
and already
missed.*

I once heard the story that a very unique retreatmaster began to give the annual 8-day silent retreat to our Sisters. After an initial conference in which he expounded on how we Sisters would sit on the floor like the disciples at Christ's feet, and, with none of this silence, we would dialogue and have a totally different retreat experience, Mother realized in her wisdom that she would be picking up the spiritual pieces of the retreat for months to come. At the priest's next conference, therefore, Mother went up and handed Father the envelope with his stipend, "Thank you, Father, for good retreat." "But I'm not done yet." "Thank you, Father, God bless you. Have safe trip home!" And with that he left, and Mother proceeded with the remainder of the retreat with taped conferences.

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Glory be to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus!

How can I make a return to the Lord for all He has given to me? (Ps. 116:12)

*By Sr. Angela Marie Igou, SSCJ
August 2, 2020*



It is with great joy and thanksgiving to God that I profess my final vows as a Sister in the Congregation of Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. From my earliest years I have wanted to be a Sister or “a nun”, to belong wholly to Jesus. I am grateful to my parents for nurturing this vocation, to many priests who encouraged me to listen to God’s gentle call, and to all my religious

sisters who have taught me through their examples to give and to love generously. These first eight years of my journey in religious life have truly been filled with many graces. So many have prayed for me throughout this time, and it is surely only by the grace of God and many prayers that I have come to this day.

Through the intercession of the Immaculate Mother Mary, I bind myself to Our Lord in the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience and in these vows I am one with Him. On this day God has surpassed my childhood dreams, with the “surpassing knowledge of Christ”, and of Him crucified. Jesus’ Passion and death is the model of this radical gift of self.

Pope Saint John Paul II states in *Vita Consecrata*



that consecrated life “is at the very heart of the Church” fulfilling her mission and manifesting her nature as Bride striving

“towards union with her one Spouse” Jesus Christ. To build on the observation made by St Therese of Lisieux: her mission in contemplative religious life would be



“love in the heart of the Church”; as a contemplative-active Sister Servant of the Sacred Heart, I wish to be the blood that carries that love from the Heart of Christ to the world, a force that circulates blood from the heart throughout the Body of Christ and returns to His

Heart to renew its purpose. I desire to give Him my heart, to make my heart a little spark of the flame of His Love so that I may spread its Love and glory throughout the whole Church and world.

I hope to be an authentic witness to the people around me. Clothed in the habit, I will walk as a contradiction to man’s fallen image of happiness and fulfillment. By union with my Spouse, my Lord Jesus Christ, I desire to infuse the world with the fragrance of my beloved Bridegroom’s Love. I will toil in the fields of those who have sweat it out before me, reaping another’s harvest. (Jn 4:38) I wish not to look back, but rather to push ahead, despite my weakness. (Lk 9:62, Phil 3:13)

May I always be grateful for this great gift of religious life and union with Christ and may my mouth proclaim God’s praise echoing Mary’s magnificat: and forever *proclaim the greatness of the Lord!*



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

This year, due to the pandemic's social distancing, our annual Golf Tournament, The Invitational, had to be cancelled. Despite this turn of events, our intrepid golf committee was undaunted, and have been collecting donations just the same. If you would like to be a part of this initiative, kindly send your donation marked "Golf Donation" to Sr. Mary Andrew at 866 Cambria Street, Cresson, PA 16630. Thanks to one and all!

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: sscjusaprovince@gmail.com
Website: www.sacredheartsisters.org
Facebook: Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Facebook Group: SSCJUSA Vocations
Twitter: @sscjusa
Instagram: [sscjusaprovince](https://www.instagram.com/sscjusaprovince)
Blog: <https://sscjusaprovinceblog.wordpress.com>

Our Federal ID Number is: 20-812762

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 Mandeville, Jamaica, West Indies.

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

