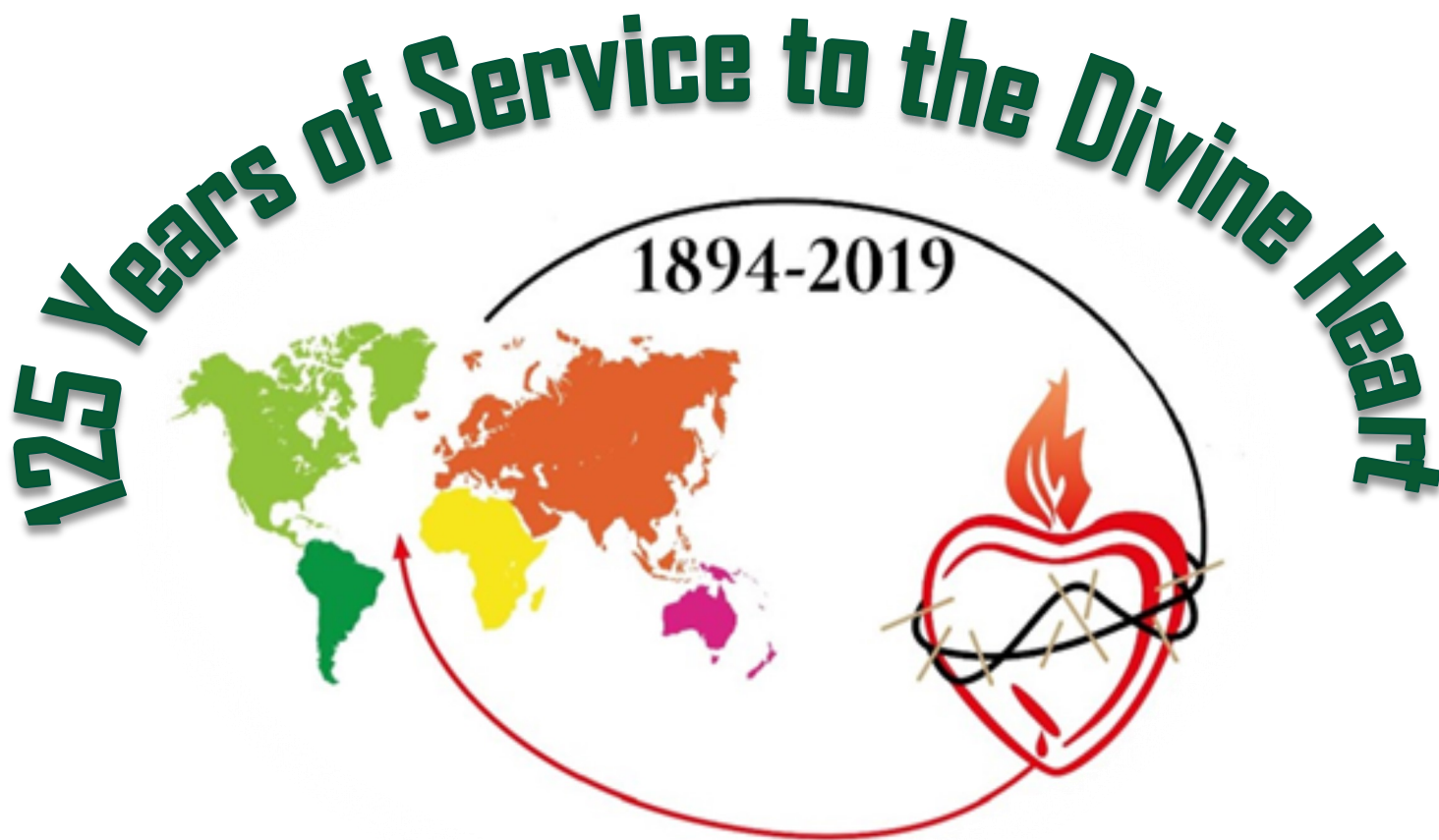


Volume 16, Issue 3
Christmas / Winter 2019
A newsletter of the Sister
Servants of the Most
Sacred Heart of Jesus

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



FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS

**THE CONGREGATION OF SISTER SERVANTS
OF THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS
OBSERVES 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDING
1894-2019**

**SACRED HEART PROVINCE IN THE USA
OBSERVES 60TH YEAR ON AMERICAN SOIL
1959-2019**

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

From Bl. Klara Szczesna
(1863—1916)



Bl. Klara (Louise Szczesna's) spiritual life demonstrated perfect harmony. Everything was simple, consistent, and in agreement with the theological definition of the purpose and spirituality of the Congregation, as defined in the Constitutions. Mother Klara's secret to greatness lay in that combination of simplicity and harmony. Furthermore, her personal spirituality became the basis for the Congregation's spirituality. Thus, the Sacred Heart Sister's spirit has always been measured according to the standard of Mother Klara.

Specifically, Louise Szczesna was raised in an atmosphere of Marian piety. Mary's unconditional reply to God's call served as the particular ideal of her vocation. The presence of the Blessed Mother accompanied her from childhood. Our Lady guarded her virginity, which she had offered to God. Louise imitated Mary, her Guide, by following Christ unhesitatingly with humility, poverty, and complete obedience to God's plan. Mary's attitude of service appealed to Louise when she began religious life. Whether as a Handmaid of Jesus or a Sister Servant of the Most Sacred Heart, Louise always imitated the Handmaid of the Lord from Nazareth. Through the external circumstances of her life, Mary, the Mother of God, led her to contemplate the mystery of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Congregation that was consecrated to Him.

Sometimes I have heard or read:

"I have 1500 friends on Facebook!"

"I have only 350..."

Well, I don't use Facebook.

Does it mean I have no friends? Of course not. I do have friends. Not hundreds of them, just a handful, but they are real people I met in person, spent time with, and could rely on. They stood for me in times of trouble, and I was there for them in their sorrows. They know me, and they still love me. But even friends can disappoint or hurt us. They are weak, sinful human beings, exactly like I am. Fortunately, there are friends, who are always faithful and loving, and present: the Saints.

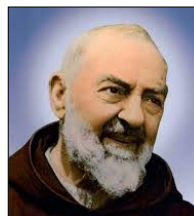
During a retreat a priest asked: "Who is your favorite Saint?" One of the Sisters sighed: "We are going to spend a lot of time here..." I laughed when I heard this story, and it still puts a smile on my face. Yes, the list of my favorite Saints is very long. And, as with my earthly friends, I don't have to be in constant contact with them. It is enough to know that they love and care: St. Joseph, whom from the beginning of my service as a superior, I called my "Business Manager"; St. Clare, so in love with Jesus; Bl. Klara, loving her Sisters and not expecting anything in return; St. Margaret Mary, and St. Elizabeth. And many, many others.

We need friends. Let us remember that we are surrounded by them, not only earthly ones, but also heavenly. And let us smile: thousands of the Saints want to "befriend" us, for all eternity.

All Saints of God, pray for us.

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



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

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION: LIFE WITH AND IN CHRIST

1. Before attempting to plumb the depths of Christian Perfection, kneel before Our Lady, the “Morning Star” and with heartfelt fervor ask for her aid, and through her intercession also the help of the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit as your Teacher and the Mother of God as your guide, you will quickly understand the Way of Perfection and with great ease start on your journey.

2. Man, by his nature, joins in himself two worlds. He is a member of the immense human family sharing its privileges and obligations, blessings and deficiencies. Above all, however, he is a creature of God from whom he has received the gift of life and to Whom he should reach out as his ultimate goal.

3. To serve God: This is aim of life, the most important goal, before which everything else appears as dross. Every action which does not reflect man’s ultimate destiny only saps his energy and leaves him unhappy. Mere knowledge without Faith does not answer the fundamental question of Life, and inflates pride. Instead of enlightening, it engulfs man in darker doubts. Every act of love that does not come from and incline to God will fail to satiate the infinite craving for the divine that God placed in the immortal soul.

4. If we could experience all worldly pleasures, pile up all earthly treasures, if we could own all the medals of all the heroes, enjoy the wisdom of all the intellectual giants, if we could boast of enjoying the contentment of a happy family, even of society, and do not serve God, with Jesus Christ, who is our way, truth and life, we have accomplished nothing, and we are not living Christian lives. Life without God is merely an illusion, a dream which turns into a nightmare.

5. The Christian Life is a reflection of Divine Life, because it has as its source Jesus Christ, its inspiration, teacher, and model; the Holy Spirit as its developer and director; and the Catholic Church as its unerring

guide—all this for one purpose: union with God, that is, life through God, with God, and in God.

6. Whoever wishes to live a supernatural life here on earth and achieve eternal salvation in heaven must make use of the redeeming graces of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Not only must he accept the truths of Faith, the promises of Hope, but also the necessity of being united to God by Charity. In this way divine love takes root in the heart and God condescends to abide there.

7. The Christian, elevated to the supernatural state, aided by the Holy Spirit, together with human effort, must shape and develop the interior and exterior life in accordance with the will of God, as revealed by Christ and proposed by the Catholic Church. Thus, the soul resembles Christ in thought, word, deed, sentiment, and even in suffering. This is the foundation of the Christian life.

8. The essence of the Christian life is love. It unites the soul to God who is “Perfect Love”. The more intense the love, the more developed is the Christian life.

9. The interior life, the Christian life, is developed day after day; it is the growth of the life of Jesus in the soul and the growth of the soul in Jesus. This requires a life of recollection, prayer, self-denial and mortification. In short, it means a life of sacrifice and total dedication to God. This produces a way of life on the supernatural level, whereby, through the help of the Holy Spirit, Jesus freely acts in the soul. And so the soul is ever on the alert to avoid sin, follow graces, reject evil inclinations, control self indulgence and bear cheerfully one’s daily cross; in short, gradually to die to one’s self, ever mindful of Jesus Christ.

10. Just as in developing one’s physical and mental energies there are three stages—infancy, childhood, and adolescence; so too in the spiritual life there are three stages, titled by the theologians the purgative, illuminative and unitive Ways.

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

“Forever I will sing the mercies of the Lord.”

(Ps. 89:1)

SISTER MARY JOAN GREENBERG, SSCJ



How can I begin to recount what God has done for me? I shall sing my love and gratitude for eternity; I will begin that joyful song here!

I was born in Queens, New York, daughter of Margot and Martin Greenberg. My mother is a holocaust survivor, forced to flee from her native Darmstadt, Germany at age four due to Nazi persecution. My father grew up in Brooklyn. Both my parents are Jewish, my mother observant; my father not at all religious. This is ironic, as my father has always been extremely close to me,

the image upon which my conception of God was first founded.

As far back as I can remember, my life has been filled with love and music. Loving and being loved has always been a gift with which I have been blessed from my earliest days. I have also been singing – literally from the cradle. At 7 months of age I had to have surgery. My mother tells me I came out of anesthesia singing. If, when the time comes, I have any choice in the matter, I'd like to come out this world that way, too!

Childhood was a happy time for me. My sister, Diana, 3 ½ years younger than I, was my closest playmate. I attended a private high school, which I loved. It was not a Christian school, but its strong emphasis on the arts and literature, exposed me to many great Christian works. It was there I met Jesus. I could say that my evangelists were Mozart and Palestrina, Fra Angelico, Dante and Dostoevsky. As I became immersed in their works, I began to see who Jesus is, and He began to attract me. They say God attracts different souls by His different attributes. Some are touched by His goodness, some by His truth, etc. For me, it was His beauty that compelled – the beauty of love. As I learned of the love that bore the Cross for me, as I sang of it, read of it, I found myself in love for the first time in my life. I knew I had to embrace the religion of this love, this Jesus.

Never interested in doing things by halves, I figured that I had to take this thing as far as I could, and give myself to Him as totally as possible. Knowing nothing of religious life, I still knew I had to be a Sister, a bride of Jesus. Before my Baptism, I wrote 5 different orders I found in Catholic periodical (I read anything Catholic I could get my hands on.) The Lord had mercy on my ignorance and let me to the Sacred Heart Sisters. I was received very soon after my Baptism.



After making my vows, I studied nursing, then worked at what was then Mercy Hospital in Altoona, Pennsylvania, after which I was transferred to our personal care home in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. While in Johnstown, my old passion for music resurfaced. I began singing in Church, studying voice and finding immense delight in using the gift of song to love and adore the Lord.

At the time of writing this, I am endeavoring to *harmonize* (pun intended) the various aspects of my vocation: to love, to sing and to minister to the poor, sick and elderly.

Love is repaid by love alone. While I can never hope even to come close to loving God as He has loved me, I pray that I may delight Him by loving Him with every fiber of my being – with every note I sing.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Sister Theresa Marie Kukla SSCJ

Monday, July 17, 1944 — Thursday, August 22, 2019



Sister Theresa Marie Kukla, SSCJ, a perpetually professed Sister of the Congregation of Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, entered into eternal life on Thursday morning, August 22, 2019, the feast of the Queenship of Mary, at Family Hospice in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, following a brief illness.

Born Patricia Kukla in Lilly, PA on July 17, 1944, Sister Theresa Marie was the daughter of the late Stanley and Mary (Slebodnick) Kukla.

She leaves behind her fellow religious Sisters who loved her dearly, as well as her beloved siblings, Helen Campbell; Stanley (Barbara) Kukla Jr; Virginia "Jeannie" (Michael) Maness; and Priscilla Caron; as well as her nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by a brother, Joseph.

Sr. Theresa Marie entered the Congregation of Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on September 15, 1970, professing her first vows on June 29, 1973 and professing her perpetual vows on June 29, 1978. She observed the Silver Jubilee of her religious profession on December 27, 1998 at Sacred Heart Province in Cresson, Pennsylvania. She was among the first Americans to enter the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, where she later served as the second provincial superior of the American Province and was a longtime Mistress of Novices and local superior. Since August 1, 2017, she resided at St. Joseph Convent, in Munster Township, Portage, PA where she devotedly cared for Mother Amabilis Debicka.



Sister Theresa Marie obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from St. Francis University, Loretto, PA and a Masters degree in Religious Education from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome.

Throughout her religious life, she served the glory of the Most Sacred Heart with love and zeal in the areas of education and catechesis, youth ministry and administration within the Dioceses of Altoona-Johnstown, Greensburg and Wheeling-Charleston. At the time of her death, Sister Theresa Marie was assigned as Director of Religious Education at Our Lady of the Alleghenies Parish in Lilly, PA.

Vigil Rites for Sister Theresa Marie were held on Tuesday, August 27, 2019, at St. Francis Xavier Church, 211 Powell Avenue, Cresson, PA, beginning with the Rite of Reception at 5:00 PM, with the Reverend Leo F. Arnone, officiating. Viewing hours followed on Tuesday evening from 6:00 to 8:00 PM, in the church, and on Wednesday morning, August 28, 2019 from 9:00 to 10:00AM,



The Funeral Mass took place on August 28, 2019 at 10:00AM at St. Francis Xavier Church, with Reverend Leo F. Arnone, Pastor, as celebrant, and Monsignor John R. Sasway, pastor emeritus where Sister was working, as the homilist.

Sr. Theresa Marie's body was taken to St. Francis Xavier Cemetery, Cresson, where she was laid to rest alongside her fellow departed Sisters.

Following her burial, a luncheon was held at the parish hall of St. Francis Xavier Parish.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

The Invitational Twelfth Annual Golf Tournament

September 13, 2019

Benefits the mission & works of the Sister Servants
of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF OUR TWELFTH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT 2019: JIM OSTINOWSKY'S TEAM



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 Mandeville, Jamaica, West Indies.

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