

# CONSECRATA

*A publication of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious*

Spring 2023



*Lord, send forth your Spirit,  
and renew the face of the earth.*

Dear Friends,

Greetings in Our Lord Jesus Christ!

These spring and summer months, so beautiful and brimming with new life, are filled with the glory of God! We have celebrated the 50 days of the Easter season, which concluded with the holy drama of the Ascension of Our Lord and the magnificent gift of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In John's Gospel, Jesus promises that He will send the Holy Spirit to his disciples after He returns to the Father. It is a promise that is filled with hope because it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who will lead the disciples into all truth.

This same promise belongs to each and every one of us. Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will never forsake us or leave us orphans (John 14:15-31). In a world where some of the most basic truths are now challenged, it is comforting to remember that the Holy Spirit will never leave or forsake His Church. God is always working for the good of those who love Him, and in all circumstances, He will make a way. In faith and hope, we can trust that the Holy Spirit continues to renew and sanctify God's people.



With trust in God's mercy, we pray that the Holy Spirit will continue renewing religious life in the United States and throughout the world by reminding us of this perennial truth: religious consecration is a call to be transfigured to Christ through the total offering of oneself to God. This offering of self is possible only through the promptings and work of the Holy Spirit.

It is my privilege and joy to see how the Holy Spirit is at work in CMSWR. In this issue of *Consecrata*, we would like to share with you how our members are helping to renew and revitalize the Church at home and abroad.

Please know of our prayers and gratitude, and may you be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit!

In Christ,

*Mother Anna Grace Neenan, O.P.*

Mother Anna Grace Neenan, O.P.  
Chairperson

*Pictured are Board Members at the CMSWR offices in Washington D.C.*

# THE CMSWR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mother Anna Grace Neenan, O.P.  
Chairperson  
*Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia*



Sister Anne Catherine  
Burleigh, O.P.  
Assistant Chairperson  
*Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia*



Mother Margaret Mary  
Waldron, C.K.  
Secretary  
*School Sisters of Christ the King*



Sister Judith Ann Duvall, O.S.F.  
Treasurer  
*Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis*



Sister Natalie Binversie, O.S.F.  
*Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity*



Mother Revelación  
Castañeda, S.S.V.M.  
*Servants of the Lord and  
the Virgin of Matará*



Sister John Mary de Souza, S.V.  
*Sisters of Life*



Mother Maria Catherine  
Iannotti, P.V.M.I.  
*Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate*



Sister Mary Aloysius Kim, S.O.L.T.  
*Society of Our Lady of  
the Most Holy Trinity*



Mother Gloria Therese  
Laven, O.C.D.  
*Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred  
Heart of Los Angeles*



Mother Miriam Seiferman, F.S.E.  
*Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist*



Mother Ann Marie Zierke, M.S.  
*Marian Sisters of  
the Diocese of Lincoln*

## ADVISORS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mother Louise Marie  
Flanigan, S.s.E.W.  
*Sister Servants of the Eternal Word*



Mother Teresa Christe  
Johnson, M.S.S.R.  
*Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa*



Mother Clare Matthiass, C.F.R.  
*Community of Franciscan  
Sisters of the Renewal*



# CMSWR LEADERSHIP VISITS THE ETERNAL CITY

Approved and established by the Holy See, CMSWR acts as an official liaison between its members and the hierarchy of the Church. To strengthen the bonds between CMSWR and Church leadership, CMSWR visits with officials in the Holy See each year to give them an update on CMSWR and religious life in the United States. This year, Board Members met with Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M., and other officials at the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. They also met with Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization; Archbishop Augustine Di Noia, O.P., Adjunct Secretary of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith; Archbishop Robert Prevost, O.S.A., Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops; Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life; and officials from the English Section of the Secretariat of State.

The Board Members also visited with Sister Raffaella Petrini, F.S.E., the Secretary General of the Governorate of Vatican City State, who arranged a special tour of the Vatican Gardens following the meeting. Sister Raffaella is a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, a CMSWR member community,

Pictured below are Board Members at the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith and with Cardinal Tagle at the Dicastery for Evangelization and Sister Raffaella with a CMSWR Vocation Directory.

*Pictured below are Board Members at the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, Sister Raffaella with a CMSWR Vocation Directory, and Cardinal Tagle.*



## *Honoring CMSWR's First Chairperson*

*During the spring meetings of the Board of Directors, CMSWR honored Sister Vincent Marie Finnegan, O.C.D. of the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles. Sister Vincent Marie was the first Chairperson of CMSWR. For more than 30 years, she has faithfully served CMSWR. We are indebted to her leadership and fidelity.*

*God bless you, Sister Vincent Marie!*



*Pictured above are the founding Board Members of CMSWR from left to right: Sister Mary Bernard Nettle, I.S.P., Sister Vincent Marie Finnegan, O.C.D., Sister Christine Born, O.P., and Mother Mary Quentin Sheridan, R.S.M. Pictured below are Sister Mary Bendyna, O.P., CMSWR Executive Director, Sister Vincent Marie, O.C.D., and Sister Mary Aloysius Kim, CMSWR Board Member.*



# FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

## *Reflection on the Domus Winter Pilgrimage*



**SISTER MARY FAUSTINA WESELY, C.K.**

*School Sisters of Christ the King*

The Domus Winter Pilgrimage was truly a life-changing and unforgettable experience. Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, Mary, and the Apostles in both the Holy Land and in Rome and venerating the holy sites while recalling the events that took place there have made the Scriptures and Church history come alive for me.

This pilgrimage has changed the way I pray and teach. Now, I can place myself in the scene recalled in Scripture, using all my senses. It will also affect how I teach my students and prepare them for Confirmation. I can share my personal experience and stories about the places where the Holy Spirit was particularly active such as in the Upper Room and at the River Jordan where Jesus was baptized. I can also share about the early martyrs and the catacombs in Rome. Following Saint Peter and Saint Paul to Rome after the Holy Land was a perfect follow-up.

Sister M. Regina Pacis, F.S.G.M. was an amazing host and guide, sharing valuable information about the history of Rome and the early Church. Her planning and God's impeccable timing provided the opportunity to pay our last respects to Pope Benedict XVI and attend his funeral, which was another incredible blessing.

The timing of this program over Christmas break was perfect. The weather was wonderful compared to Nebraska in the winter. Traveling as Mary and Joseph did from Nazareth to Bethlehem just in time to celebrate our Savior's birth on Christmas day was incredibly moving. I am confident that the graces I have received will bear fruit for the rest of my life!

*On the Domus Winter Pilgrimage, sisters spend one week in the Holy Land and two weeks in Rome. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for sisters to draw near to their Bridegroom by celebrating Christmas Mass in Bethlehem and later by visiting the Mount of Olives and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The sisters continue to celebrate the Christmas season by visiting the holy sites in Rome, with a trip to Assisi. Pictured are Sister Kelly Francis Oslin, C.F.R. on the Sea of Galilee, a Lover of the Holy Cross sister praying at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, pilgrims where Saint Stephen was martyred, and the School Sisters of Christ the King saying hello to a camel near the Mount of Temptation.*





# LESSONS FROM THE HEART OF THE CHURCH

## *Reflection on the Santa Croce Program*



**SISTER MARY MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACE PATTERSON, S.O.L.T.**

*Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity*

The first time I walked into Saint Peter's Square, I raised my arms and joyfully exclaimed, "Father, I'm home." I was grateful to have visited Rome before, but it had been almost 20 years since my last visit. It truly felt like I was coming home to the heart of the Church. I am thankful to have participated in the recent Santa Croce Program, with in-person classes held in Rome in September 2022 and February 2023. It was a blessing on many levels, but my first joy was my homecoming visit to Vatican City.

Living at the Domus Sanctae Mariae Guadalupe was a great experience to connect with sisters of other communities, including Sister M. Regina Pacis, F.S.G.M. and the other sisters residing there. I enjoyed mealtimes and visits with them, learning about the charisms of their communities and their way of life. It was enlightening to hear the experiences of the sisters who live in Rome and work at the Vatican since they had a particular insight into the inner workings of the Church.

Santa Croce Program classes offered an overall view of important aspects of consecrated life. I think it is safe to say there was something for everyone! I was edified by the priests who were so humble and desired holiness. It was a gift to hear more about Opus Dei and visit the tomb of Saint Josemaría Escrivá.

When you walk through the streets of Rome and see an open door of a Church, you walk in! It was a joy to discover and pray at the relics and tombs of many saints, including Saint Agnes, Saint Benedict Joseph Labré, Saint Philip Neri, and more! It was a privilege to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life at Saint Mary Major with thousands of other religious.

*Designed and facilitated by CMSWR, the Santa Croce Program gives current or future superiors and formators of CMSWR communities the opportunity to study in Rome at the Pontifical University of Santa Croce for two weeks in the fall and another two weeks in the spring. They continue their studies at home during the interim. While living in Rome, sisters reside at the Domus and participate in pilgrimages organized by CMSWR to experience the rich history and beauty of the Catholic faith. Pictured are participants visiting the Basilica of Saint Mary and the Martyrs (above) and Saint Paul Outside the Walls (below).*



*The Santa Croce Program, the Formators Workshop, and the Domus Winter Program are supported by a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. CMSWR thanks the Hilton Foundation for its generous support.*





# FORMING WOMEN FOR RELIGIOUS LIFE

## *Reflection on the Formators Workshop*



**SISTER MERCEDES TORRES, O.P.**

*Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist*



The Formators Workshop has been a gift to me in my vocations work. This opportunity to share and discuss the realities we all encounter in accompanying young women today is of inestimable value. The talks and panels build upon my own experiences and fuel fruitful, thought-provoking conversations, with no shortage of fun and laughter. Throughout the week we are built up and fed by the liturgy and sacraments, conferences, conversation, and building relationships that extend beyond the workshop. This is also a great gift—sharing and appreciating the joy of religious life today!



We know the need for the witness of this particular consecration in the Church and in the world, but the witness we share with each other is also powerful. The Holy Spirit is animating beauty and joy in consecrated life with many charisms to serve and be His love to all. This makes vocation work all the more exciting—knowing and encountering the great love He has for each of His brides and the women He is calling.

*One hundred sisters from forty-five communities gathered at Malvern Retreat House for the annual CMSWR Formators Workshop. The Workshop offers valuable insights for vocation directresses and formation directresses, those sisters responsible for guiding young women during the initial years of their religious life. This time together provides a forum for sisters to share their experiences, pose questions, and offer advice. Pictured are the Missionaries of Charity, Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa, panelists from the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia, Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, and Sister Servants of the Eternal Word, and a group photo.*





# HEALING FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

## *Reflection on a CMSWR Regional Workshop*



**SISTER MARY JACINTA GORDON, C.K.**

*School Sisters of Christ the King*

I had just enough time for a rosary walk before all the action would begin to unfold for our CMSWR regional workshop. Amid the Hail Marys, I stopped walking to take in the beauty of the hilltop view of St. Joseph, Missouri. At that moment a young man emerged from his truck and started a conversation with me.

It wasn't long before he confessed, "I drink too much." He then shared his story of family strife. Yet, he didn't merely tell his story. In a way, he told my story and the story of humanity, the story in which brokenness, resentment, and powerlessness are potential turnings points of healing, forgiveness, and redemption.

This encounter changed the way I experienced the CMSWR regional workshop titled *Healing and Forgiveness in Community*. By hearing this young man's story, I realized that our CMSWR gathering was for him. Yes, the sisters attending the workshop received abundant blessings through the anointed words of Father John Burns and Sister Miriam James Heidland, S.O.L.T., through fellowship with other sisters, and through times of prayer. Yet, the fruits of that day were not merely for us but for all the places of the world where people are in most need of God's merciful love.

*Throughout the year, CMSWR communities offer regional workshops for sisters to learn and collaborate with each other. These workshops focus on various themes or topics relevant to religious life today. Pictured are sisters from various communities in the Midwest.*







*Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious*

415 Michigan Ave., NE  
Suite 420  
Washington, DC 20017

Address Service Requested

Tel: 202.832.2575  
Fax: 202.832.6325

E-mail: [info@cmswr.org](mailto:info@cmswr.org)  
**Website: [www.cmswr.org](http://www.cmswr.org)**

*Please consider making a gift to  
CMSWR, which will help us support  
over 115 communities of sisters.*



NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
CAPITOL HEIGHTS, MD  
PERMIT #4168



**In this issue of *Consecrata*, see how sisters are building up  
the Church at home and abroad for generations to come.**