



# CONSECRATA

VOL. 5 NO. 2

FALL 2012

COUNCIL OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

## UNITED TOGETHER IN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

By Mother Mary of the Sacred Heart, SSVM

As the Year of Faith unfolds, the members of the CMSWR and their communities unite with the faithful throughout the world in a firm desire both to know and to love Christ and to make Him known and loved. Pope Benedict XVI has often urged the faithful to recognize how deeply our secular world has lost its sense of God, while calling us to study the truth of our own faith ever more intensely. During his General Audience on November 14, Pope Benedict stated:

*"Yet today, in our secularized world, faith often seems difficult to justify; we are faced with a "practical" atheism, a tendency to think and live "as if God did not exist"...As believers, we need to offer convincing reasons for our faith and hope."*



Religious are not exempt from experiencing the worldly voices of our modern times competing with the voice of God. For this reason, the importance of studying the foundational truths of faith and of educating ourselves with the wealth of new ecclesial documents must be a priority. In the New Evangelization, we are called to protect and increase our own faith as well as to be prepared "to offer convincing reasons for our faith and hope." Women religious are especially called to be leaven in the springtime of the Church by their fidelity to a strong sacramental life, participation in daily communion, frequent confession, and study. In today's world, the daily practices of prayer and study give women religious the great responsibility to share the fruits of their contemplation with all the faithful. According to each Congregation's proper charism in the Church, women religious are called to bring forward the New Evangelization through their ministries of education, catechetical programs, hospital work, retreats, adult formation, local Bible studies, written publications, volunteer opportunities, outreach to the poor, and liturgical celebrations, to name just a few. This is indeed a joyous time to really know, live and share our faith to all those God entrusts to us.

## *A message from Sister Regina Marie, OCD*

As we look back upon another year, our hearts are filled with **GRATITUDE**. God is faithful. We have seen His faithfulness in *you*, our dear friends, and we are grateful to the core. Each day the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious remembers *you* in fervent prayer: *your* intentions have become our very own.

As we look forward to the coming year, we are filled with **HOPE**. This Year of Faith has untold graces in store for each one of us . . . treasures and blessings simply waiting to be received. During this Year of Faith, in a singular way our attention turns to Jesus Christ. Everything begins with Him and everything ends with Him. Is there anything more important than to grow in our knowledge of who Jesus is, how much He loves us, and what He teaches us about the right path for us to live?

Every single thing a Religious Sister does has this aim: to love Jesus, to worship Him, to make Him known and loved by others. **He** is *why* we take vows, *why* we teach, *why* we take care of the sick, the elderly and dying, *why* we nurture life in all its stages and conditions. **He** is *why* we *give* our life and our love.

Together, let's ask Our Lady to bring about a renewal of our love for Jesus through the New Evangelization. No one knew better than she did the wondrous news that One who holds all creation together in Himself is here among us --- as our Brother, our Friend, our Spouse — our Redeemer. Every word of Mary's was a word of the New Evangelization. It could not be otherwise.

Let it be so for us.

Gratefully in Christ,

*Sister Regina Marie Gorman, OCD*

Sister Regina Marie Gorman, OCD  
Chairperson of the CMSWR



### **CMSWR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF**

**His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop Emeritus of Philadelphia**

~ CMSWR Episcopal Liaison

**Sister Regina Marie Gorman, OCD ~ Chairperson**

**Mother Ann Marie Karlovic, OP ~ Assistant Chairperson**

**Mother M. Regina Pacis Coury, FSGM ~ Secretary**

**Sr. Jacquelyn Darner, MS ~ Treasurer**

**Sister M. Stephania Newell, FSGM ~ Council Coordinator**

**Mikki Colmes ~ Administrative Assistant**



## STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE ~ THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS

The Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious met together for their National Assembly from September 20-23, 2012 at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois. This Assembly marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the creation of the CMSWR. Over one hundred twenty major superiors from member communities gathered to create together a vision for the future. Cardinal Justin Rigali opened the Assembly with Holy Mass on Thursday evening, Sr. Regina Marie Gorman, OCD, chair of the CMSWR, opened the meeting with a reflection on Mary, Patroness of the CMSWR, as model and mentor in nourishing the seeds of our faith, and Archbishop William E. Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore, gave the inspirational keynote address focusing on being *United in the New Evangelization*. The Strategic Planning process of the assembly was a vibrant exchange of thoughts and ideas that was not only inspiring but productive as we established committees and priorities for the next twenty years. The Assembly was a wonderful time to look back with gratitude on the past twenty years and to look ahead with hope to all that God will offer to us. We look forward to October 20-23 2013, when we will gather again for the next National Assembly of the CMSWR.





## CELEBRATING OUR 15 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE DOMUS SANCTAE MARIAE GUADALUPE HOUSE OF STUDIES

“♪ Auguri a te...” - or, “♪ Happy Birthday to you...”! This year, the *Domus Guadalupe* is celebrating her ‘fifteenth birthday!’ This all began in 1997 when Cardinal Angelo Sodano, at that time, the Secretary of State, shared the vision of Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, for establishing a House of Studies for Women Religious. Within a week of that meeting with the Executive Committee of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, the *Domus Sanctae Mariae Guadalupe* had begun to be a reality.

The planning and remodeling of a building began immediately, and four Sisters arrived from the United States in September 1998 to “pioneer” the opening of the first American House of Studies for Women Religious in Rome. Our House of Studies was officially inaugurated on Sunday, April 25, 1999, with a festive Holy Mass of Thanksgiving. In his homily on that



Sister Marianne, Sister Monica  
Mary, and Sister Priscila

memorable day, Cardinal Sodano said, *“The Good Shepherd manifests, once again, His care for the Church as He confirms the good work begun in this House of Studies. ... May this House of Studies, here in the heart of the Eternal City, offer all the Religious who come here the opportunity to be better prepared to bring Christ to the world and to explain to those who try to understand why we believe and are consecrated. ... Religious Life, dear Sisters, is not essentially what you do - but who you are. A more profound understanding of the truths of the faith should guide you both to a deeper awareness of the presence of God and a more complete response.”*

In a very real way, the *Domus Sanctae Mariae Guadalupe* enfleshes the spiritual vision of the CMSWR ... a vision of having Sisters from its membership, living and studying in the heart of Mother Church, to come to ‘know’ ... to ‘experience’ ... the Church with a certitude far more profound and dynamic than what we can imagine ...

and, most importantly, to be in close proximity to the Vicar of Christ helping to form them as strong Ecclesial Women at the service of the Church.

It was also envisioned that, by the Sisters living and studying together at the CMSWR House of Studies in Rome, lasting friendships, a genuine communion, and a strong collaboration would develop and grow. This growth would not be merely on a short term basis, but rather, on a generational basis, among their Religious Communities back home - thus, helping to promote mutual understanding, respect, and love for one another’s gifts to the Church, with the ultimate goal of enriching and fortifying Religious Life and the Church in the United States of America.



Sister Pauline Therese lighting  
the candles on the Altar



The current *Domus Sancta Maria  
Guadalupe* community



This 2012-2013 academic year, there are eight living at the Domus Guadalupe. The Community of Sisters well-represents the CMSWR: two Carmelites Sisters from Alhambra, CA; two Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George from Pringsewu, Indonesia; from the Archdiocese of New York, there is a Consecrated Virgin; two Missionaries of Charity of Mary Immaculate Community in Mexico City, and one Sister from the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Unfortunately, our two dear Pax Christi Sisters from Corpus Christi, Texas were unable to return during the summer because of Immigration Issues.



Sister Marina is our  
'Marian, the Librarian'



Sister Claudia

The Sisters and Jenna attend a variety of the local Pontifical Universities here in Rome. As most classes at the universities are only offered in the Italian language, some of the Sisters have attended intensive language programs and immersion experiences here in Italy. The Domus has also begun to establish a well-endowed library for the students, thanks to the Papal Foundation for grant-funding. In addition to the students, two other Sisters work daily in the Secretariat of State Office of the Vatican, and one Sister serves as the Administrator and Directress within the Domus, and the Legal Representative with the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic

Life and the Italian Immigration Office in Rome.

While living in the "Eternal City," the Sisters and Jenna are invited to a variety of educational, social, and spiritual opportunities throughout the year, particularly, visiting the shrines and holy places in Rome. Our greatest privilege though is the multiple occasions afforded us to participate in the special Masses at St. Peter's Basilica with Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI!

Our lovely Chapel is at the heart of our life shared together! We are grateful for the generosity of the Priests from the North American College who offer Holy Mass early in the morning during the school year, as well as the time and services provided by the young Deacons who minister at our Eucharistic Holy Hour twice a week.



Sister Hortencia

The members of our local Community pray together, share meals together, study, and work industriously - joining in communal

responsibilities and enjoying one another's company in our "Convent Home - away from home!" Without a doubt, the close ties and exchange of camaraderie, 'friendship in the Lord', and 'bonds of loyalty' that are inter-woven at the Domus will continue through a lifetime, connected by way of membership in the CMSWR. Indeed, we are blessed. In turn, we share the gratitude of our hearts with you!



Jenna at our Easter celebration

Our House of Studies is supported through the generosity of the faithful in the Church and through grants. Your donation to assist the continuation of this opportunity for our membership is *greatly appreciated*. Each month, the CMSWR have a Holy Mass offered for all our benefactors, families, and friends. May God reward you for your prayers, sacrifices, and generosity.



## SUMMER EVANGELIZATION

BY SISTER M. KAROLYN, FSGM

There's nothing like a campfire on a cool summer night accompanied with s'mores, songs, skits and...Sisters? While young people around the country headed off for the great outdoors and activities like swimming, boating, hiking and sports, which are to be expected at summer camp, a good number experienced it in a whole different way as they encountered Christ in the beauty of creation and the witness of the Consecrated Life.

Dioceses that do not have a great number of Religious in residence often take the opportunity in the summer months to invite different religious communities to be a light to their young people and open up their eyes and hearts to the possibility that they too could be called to this life. The coordinator of the Diocese of Rapid City's "Totus Tuus Vocation Camp," Susan Safford, told us in our pre-camp briefing that "all of the games, hikes, crafts, campfires, and craziness are really just an excuse for the girls to be with you."

Part of the New Evangelization is providing the right moments for "heart to speak to heart." Once the moment is provided, questions of the faith, vocation, the meaning of life, and the number of

pockets in a habit tend to pour forth readily. Immersion in beauty naturally opens hearts to truth and goodness. As we hiked, enjoyed campfires, and ate meals together, we were able to engage the young people in casual conversation, answering the many questions on their minds and allowing them to share their hopes, fears, dreams and reflections.

Some campers are amazed to find out that we are



'normal' and like to play as hard as we pray and do all these things in a habit! While we gave talks and instructed participants in prayer, we primarily served as witnesses as we built relationships and encouraged our young friends to strive for holiness in their everyday lives. We were privileged to be co-workers with so many who worked hard to provide the times and places for the young Church to get away from the normal and the noise with which they are constantly bombarded and to seek "that which is above."

## BRINGING CHRIST AND OUR FAITH INTO THE CLASSROOM

BY SISTER M. ANNA JOSEPH, OSF

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Young children readily believe in all sorts of things they cannot see – everything from the tooth fairy to the monster under the bed. It is such eager young minds that approach the classroom with wonder and curiosity. Teachers, along with parents, have the privileged task of cultivating these open minds. In the Catholic school, their thoughts are introduced to heavenly realities.



As religious, we bring the beauty and truth of the Catholic faith to our students, no matter what the grade or subject. The Church teaches that religious are an *eschatological* sign, revealing the eternal vocation of every person. Whether we have the joy and privilege of preparing a child for one of the sacraments or of teaching the more mundane task of diagramming sentences, we point students to heavenly realities by our very presence. We therefore have a greater responsibility to conform ourselves to the one Teacher, Jesus Christ.

With Christ the Teacher as our model, we seek to reach students from a broad range of backgrounds and communicate to them the love of God the Father, the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the life of the Holy Spirit.

Yet, the Catholic teacher does not simply look to Christ as a model. He is the one Teacher: "it is Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God, who is taught - everything else is taught with reference to Him - and it is Christ alone who teaches" (*Catechesi Tradendae* 6). The teacher must therefore allow Christ to be at work within her. For the religious Sister, the bride of Christ, this message resonates more deeply.

If, as a bride of Christ, my Spouse lives in me and I in Him, then my students should be convicted that a reality exists beyond that which they see. Of course, I too must remember that there is a reality beyond my classroom. No matter what kind of day I have with my students, I must be convicted that they have had an encounter with Jesus Christ. "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed" (John 20:29).



## JOYFULLY FOLLOWING THE LORD'S WILL IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARY ~ THE CHARISM OF THE MARIAN SISTERS OF THE DIOCESE OF LINCOLN BY SISTER VERONICA, MS

As the Marian Sisters of the Diocese of Lincoln seek "To do God's will joyfully in imitation of Mary and St. Francis" they too can say like St. Therese, "Yes, I have found my place in the Church and it is You, O my God, who have given me this place." (*Story of a Soul* p. 194) The Marian Sisters' charism developed slowly over the first fifty years of the new religious community which soon recognized that it was founded to do whatever the need of the Church was at that time.

When Sister Marta Silna and Sister Theresa Gottvaldova, two members of the Mercy Sisters of St. Francis in Brno, Czechoslovakia, escaped from the Communist regime in 1950, they had no intention of founding a new community. They were registered nurses who served the sick and the needy in hospitals and now were seeking citizenship in a politically free country where they could continue to serve as Mercy Sisters of St. Francis.

As Divine Providence would have it, Bishop Louis B. Kucera, Bishop of Lincoln, Nebraska, needed sisters to staff St. Thomas Orphanage. Sister Marta and Sister Theresa embraced this work with their whole heart, doing whatever needed to be done for the good of the children. As they labored with love for these homeless children, young women soon asked to join them. With permission of their mother superior in Czechoslovakia, they began a new community.

Soon the young community was asked to staff a Catholic Lincoln grade school until another religious community would have sisters to send. Again, Sister Marta and Sister Theresa happily sent three sisters to do whatever needed to be done. The Sisters taught there for three years.

When Bishop James V. Casey succeeded Bishop Kucera, he changed the name of the community to the Marian Sisters, giving them Mary as their special patroness.

The Bishop asked them to begin a catechetical center in the western part of the state which would give religious education to 800 children in twelve different parishes each week. The Community embraced this new apostolate, sending four sisters with catechetical training. Soon after, Bishop Casey opened Villa Marie, a school for children with special needs, and asked the sisters to staff it. Again the community responded by providing four teachers and housemothers.

When the need for solid diocesan Catholic secondary schools was recognized, the Community again answered the call by sending Sisters to three diocesan Catholic high schools. When other religious communities who had staffed the Catholic elementary schools began to withdraw their Sisters because of decreasing membership, the Marian Sisters responded to the need.

In reviewing their history, the guidance of the Holy Spirit was evident. The Sisters recognized this spirit of doing in the diocese whatever needed to be done under the protection of their two great patrons, Mary and St. Francis. They formulated this spirit into the following statement as their charism: ***Doing God's will joyfully in imitation of Mary and St. Francis.***

The Community reflects the espousal relationship of Mary Spouse of the Holy Spirit, a title first used by St. Francis, by seeking a closer union with Christ who is the Bridegroom of the Church. Each sister strives to imitate Mary's simplicity and joy as reflected in the simplicity and joy of St. Francis and concretized in the Franciscan rule. With their help, the sisters strive daily to do God's will joyfully in whatever work needs to be done to further the Kingdom of His Son through serving Him in the local Church.



Our two Foundresses







**COUNCIL OF  
MAJOR SUPERIORS  
OF WOMEN  
RELIGIOUS**

1211 Lawrence Street, NE  
P.O. Box 4467  
Washington, DC 20017

Tel: 202.832.2575

Fax: 202.832.6325

E-mail: [cmswr@ix.netcom.com](mailto:cmswr@ix.netcom.com)

[ccoordinator@cmswr.org](mailto:ccoordinator@cmswr.org)

Website: [www.cmswr.org](http://www.cmswr.org)

*CMSWR will be a  
wellspring of hope and  
a trusted resource for  
the ongoing  
revitalization of  
religious life and the  
new evangelization.*

*“In this Year of Faith,  
may we open our  
minds more fully to the  
light of God’s truth,  
which reveals the  
grandeur of our  
human dignity and  
vocation.”*

*Pope Benedict XVI  
General Audience  
(21 November 2012)*

Non Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Washington, DC  
Permit # 959

**SAVE THE DATES!**

**Formators Workshop 2013:** It is  
**Wednesday and Thursday  
March 20-21 2013.** Travel days are  
March 19 and March 21. This will be  
held at the **Drury Inn in St. Louis,  
MO.** More information will be  
coming soon.

**2013 National Assembly:** October  
10-13, 2013 at the Shrine of Our Lady  
of the Snows. More information to  
follow in the Spring.

We are updating our mailing lists.  
Please contact us if you have a change  
of address or if you know of someone  
who would enjoy receiving our  
publication at  
[ccoordinator@cmswr.org](mailto:ccoordinator@cmswr.org).

*As we begin this coming Advent  
and Christmas season, we offer  
prayers and gratitude for all our  
benefactors and friends who have  
supported us these last 20 years.  
May God continue to bless and  
reward you for your continued  
prayers and generosity for the  
Council of Major Superiors of  
Women Religious and all the  
members of our Institutes.*