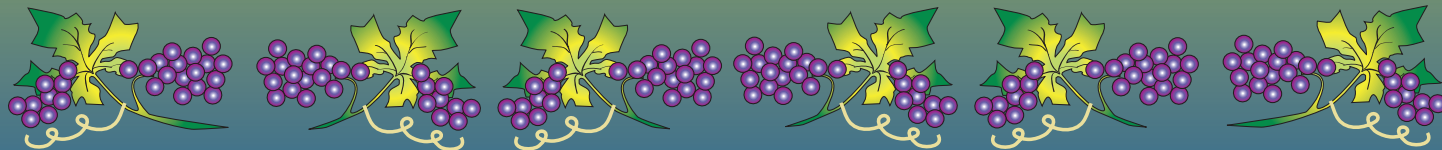


CONSECRATA

A newsletter for member communities, friends and supporters of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious



VOL. 8 NO. 2 SPRING 2015

COLLABORATION IN PLANNING AMONG CMSWR COMMUNITIES: **Key to Open House**

The success of this first Open House event was developed from a strong collaboration among the CMSWR communities, as well as from the desire for the Catholic faithful to learn more about the lives of consecrated men and women.

The CMSWR, with the support of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, launched a nationwide promotion campaign that included online advertising, social media, press releases, and an interactive Open House map that listed all CMSWR convents participating in the initiative. Planning and coordination for this event, the first of its kind, started in September of last year. The Days with Religious committee worked with Media, Development, Publications, and Intercultural Outreach, pooling efforts with the National Office in preparation.

The Days with Religious Committee included sisters from the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration, the School Sisters of Christ the King, the Sisters of Life, the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara.

Each community contributed significant time and talents to ensuring the event's success. They drafted a template providing an idea of what a typical Open House might look like that allowed sisters to have freedom in planning their own event. One community developed additional Open House advertisements and postings that were used across multiple social media platforms, with an element of cartoon humor and wit. The Council was pleased to share resources with other religious communities of men and women, cloistered and active, across the country, through diocesan vicars for religious and in response to individual inquiries.

The labor and time intensive task of mailing out all event materials in time to promote the event took shape at the National Office. Mother Ephesus, SSVM commented on her experience: "To be at the national headquarters and see the Open House materials that outreach to Catholic communities nationwide in both English and Spanish was wonderful." Bilingual materials for the Year of Consecrated Life are available at www.cmswr.org.



Sisters, Servants of Mary, open their doors to visitors at their convent in New Orleans.



Sister Miriam greets guests at the convent of the Society of Our Lady of the Trinity in Corpus Christi, TX.



Service Days with Religious this summer will be happening across the country.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, SV

+

Dear Friends,

“Welcome home!” What power these words contain. What is it about the word “home” that invites our hearts to rest, to pause and to feel all the burdens of the day slip from our minds? Why is it that after many years, we still catch ourselves calling the place of our childhood years, “home?” Perhaps it is that somehow we know that in *this* place we are known, we are loved, and we need not appear to be anyone other than who we are. Here we can simply be. Indeed, here we are “at home.”

This experience of being at home is what so many seek from the Church. A place where they can come with all of their needs and burdens, with all that weighs so heavily upon their hearts, where they can find rest; and ultimately, where they can find the true joy of being loved.

The vast crowds who responded to the invitation to the *Open House Day with Religious* on February 8th from more than 150 convents and motherhouses across the nation are a testament to such seeking. Why did these people come, some in the midst of blizzards? What were they looking for? I can assure you it was not merely the free cookies and hot chocolate. Nor was it simply out of a desire

to see behind the walls of the neighborhood convent they may have wondered about for years. No, they came as we all do, seeking an experience of peace, and whether or not they could articulate it, they hoped to be welcomed by “family.” So when one woman left our Motherhouse that day with the tears running down her face, saying, “You have no idea what this did for my soul,” I too was moved with awe at the God who never ceases to call us home.



In this issue of *CONSECRATA* you will read of a number of the apostolic works of our member communities. May the stories of the homes the Sisters create for those they serve touch your hearts. And in the recounting of these stories, may you too hear the Lord saying from within His Church, “Welcome home my beloved child. I have been longing to see you.”

Blessed, blessed Summer days.

Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, SV
Chairperson

CMSWR Board of Directors 2014 – 2015

Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, SV ~ Chairperson
Sister Anne Theresa Walsh, ASCJ ~ Assistant
Chairperson

Mother Marie Julie Saegaert, SCMC ~ Secretary

Sister Mary Angela Highfield, OP ~ Treasurer

Mother Maria Regina Pacis Caceres, SSVM

Mother Mary of the Sacred Heart Gaes, SSVM

Mother Jane Mary Firestone, RSM

Mother Adela Galindo, SCTJM

Sister M. Angela Mellady, OSF

Sister Cecilia Ann Rezac, MS

Sister Miriam Seiferman, FSE

Mother Carole Troskowski, PVM

Sister Clare Matthiass, CFR

Mother Mary Clare Roufs, ACJ

Mother Joan Paul Tobin, CK



Executive Committee and National Office Staff

His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali,
Archbishop Emeritus of Philadelphia
~ CMSWR Episcopal Liaison

Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, SV ~ Chairperson

Sister Anne Theresa Walsh, ASCJ ~ Assistant Chairperson

Mother Marie Julie Saegaert, SCMC ~ Secretary

Sister Mary Angela Highfield, OP ~ Treasurer

Sister Marie Bernadette Thompson, OP ~ Council Coordinator

Jenny Poudrier ~ Secretary, Financial Administrator

Mary Katherine Richardson ~ Director of Communications

A WORD OF HIS LOVE TO OTHERS

Sister Dorcee Clarey, SGL

“We believe that God has called us to be a word of His love to others, to be a sign of the strong, personal love He has for each of His people in order that men and women may know and experience that our God is a God of love.

In giving ourselves to the Lord, we want to be given to all His people across denominational barriers. We want to love others as the Lord Himself loves them and with the love that His Spirit has poured into our hearts.”

(Constitutions of the Servants of God's Love)

As one response to this call, our community decided to establish a small home for the elderly poor, those who have little or no family or money and who no longer can live on their own, where residents would live at no cost to them.

Our Sisters and 40 volunteers from the area, including two live-in volunteers, would staff the home 24/7/365. Thus, Emmanuel House was born.



More than ten years later, Sister Fran DePuydt SGL, describes: “We operate two ranch-style homes. One house has four residents, the other has three. All seven women live at Emmanuel House free of charge. We provide

everything they need: food, clothing, shelter, and medicine.” Sister Mary Zielinski SGL, says: “Loving and teaching others to love selflessly has profound life-changing effects on both the elderly residents and the caregivers. We have seen our residents open up to the love God has for them as He loves through us. We have seen spiritual and emotional healing and their physical conditions improve under this selfless loving care. We have been privileged to accompany residents on their journey home to heaven. One resident was baptized just a few months before she died.”

Sister Laura cares for Laura, one of our residents.

TO WAKE UP THE WORLD

A Symposium on Religious Life

Open to all religious, priests, and laity

Friday, November 13, 2015 – Saturday, November 14, 2015

Drury Plaza Hotel at the Arch in St. Louis, Missouri



The Symposium on Religious Life, “To Wake Up the World,” will be a national event where scholars and religious come together to discuss the beauty of religious life, a life of prophetic witness. The event begins Friday evening with a keynote address by Archbishop Augustine DiNoia, OP, Adjunct Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. On Saturday, the Symposium will feature a variety of exceptional speakers focusing on the many aspects of religious life including Sister Mary Prudence Allen, RSM, Sister Sara Butler, MSBT, Rev. Christopher Collins, SJ, Helen Alvare, Sister Mary Nika Schaumber, RSM, Rev. David Meconi, SJ, and Sister Mary Timothea Elliot, RSM. These religious leaders will focus on theological perspectives, structures of religious life, and teachings of the Church on religious life.

For more information or to register, please visit www.cmswr.org.



Handing on the Fruit of Contemplation: Joy!

Sister Marie Therese Nguyen, OP

The Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province is a teaching religious community in the heart of Texas. The sisters teach at all grade levels from preschool through college and serve as catechists in the parish's faith formation program. Inspired by our Holy Founder and Father, Saint Dominic, the Dominican Sisters of Houston value the acquisition of veritas (truth) and hand onto others the fruits of our contemplation and study: *Contemplata Aliis Tradere*.

The Dominican Sisters in Houston are most grateful to our Holy Father Pope Francis for the Year of Consecrated Life. It is a novel opportunity for us daily to renew our commitment to God and His Church. We began this year of grace with a Eucharistic Celebration presided by His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. In addition to participating in the nationwide Days with Religious, we are currently engaged in a monthly renewal program. Articles and documents revolving around the theme of "Rejoicing in the Consecrated Life" are sent to the sisters for independent

reading, study, and reflection. Periodically the sisters will gather for group discussion and a group study program. Such a forum allows the sisters to share with conviction how they are "Encountering Christ, Our True Joy." Furthermore, sisters in formation are visiting parishes and parochial schools to share their vocation stories and "Wake up the [children's] World." In order to buzz the alarm in tens of thousands of others' homes, offices, vehicles, iPhones, etc., the sisters have accepted invitations from both local radio networks, Saigon Radio (900AM) and Guadalupe Radio (1430AM), to broadcast live the JOYS of FOLLOWING CHRIST.

ABOVE: Dominicans Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province participate in the annual Archdiocese of Galveston Houston *Steps for Students*, a 5K Run/Walk to raise awareness and support for Catholic Education.

CHRIST'S COMPASSIONATE CARE:

Morning, Noon, and Night

Mother Mark Louis Anne Randall, O.Carm., Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm

Our charism intertwines the prayerful spirit of Carmel with our sole ministry, which is the care of the aged and infirm in institutions which we sponsor, co-sponsor, or at which we serve. Our Foundress, Venerable Mary Angeline Teresa, exhorted us to be “kinder than kindness,” treat our elderly residents as though they were our own parents, and by our example inspire the lay staff with whom we work to give the same type of loving care. Her vision was to identify the spiritual, personal, and social needs of the elderly; to initiate programs and services for them; to clasp the hand of an elderly person and give meaning to the autumn of life; and to form a religious congregation preparing the way for others who would be dedicated to the care and service of the aged.



Resident Bertha Strasser and Sister M. Brendan Sean, O.Carm. celebrate the death anniversary of community's foundress.

The charism of the Carmelite Sisters includes our core values of hospitality, quality of life, wholistic caring, shared commitment, social justice, sanctity of life, Christian witness, Roman Catholic doctrine, redemptive suffering, and pastoral care. In other words, as women of the Church, with the help of a dedicated lay staff, we seek to make our homes places of love, warmth, dignity, and joy, where residents' needs are met in a coordinated manner and the sanctity of life is upheld. In the ideal, ours is a personal caring, with as much resident contact as possible and with a welcoming hospitality and support of residents and their families, especially in the last hours of a resident's life. We seek to live out our slogan: “The difference is love.”

The fuel Sisters need for this ministry comes from the solitude of prayer and contemplation that is Carmel and the bonds of fellowship in community. With this strength we seek to live out Mother Angeline's words “Our apostolate is not only to staff and operate up-to-date homes for the aged, but as religious, it is to bring Christ to every old person under our care. Bringing Christ means giving them His compassion, His interest, His loving care, His warmth, morning, noon, and night.”

CMSWR INVITES YOU TO FOLLOW US!

facebook.com/CMSWR



twitter.com/WomenReligious



instagram.com/womenreligious



plus.google.com/+CmswrOrg



pinterest.com/cmswr



DAYS WITH RELIGIOUS A HUGE



Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles share with guests at Sacred Heart Retreat House in Alhambra, California.

Did you go? Did you hear? The first of three key events for the Year of Consecrated Life, the “Days with Religious Open House,” was held in February 2015 across the nation. CMSWR communities all around the United States opened their convent doors to welcome the Catholic faithful and to answer questions about consecrated life. Many convents had snow piled outside, but the doors were open and families walked in to learn about life behind the convent walls. Many communities had between 50-100 visitors, with one convent welcoming 450! Whatever the size, everyone experienced excitement and joy.

Visitors came for tours, to pray with the sisters, and to sample wonderful homemade cookies and goodies sisters prepared. At the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles convent in Wheatridge, CO a young adult visitor, Danielle Jones, commented, “Amazing! It was nice to see the simplicity of your life. The convent itself spoke a lot about the Carmelites. The experience was also in keeping with the solitude and silence and your whole charism.” Sister Emma Luz, OCD elaborated, “It sparked an enthusiasm and a greater interest. The day elicited questions from people wanting to understand our way of life in greater depth.”

As part of the Open House, communities held various events to share their ministries with the public. The Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity held numerous events on different days to accommodate their parishioners and ministries in seven different states where they have convents: Arizona, Hawaii, Ohio, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. The promotion and success of the event was seen across CMSWR and individual community social media platforms. Sister Marian James, SOLT helped use her Twitter feed to promote the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity convent



Sister Virginia Herbert at one of the convents Sacred Heart in St. L.

Sister Verone Leeman, OSF, prepares snacks for visitors at the convent of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity on Kauai, Hawaii.

IOUS OPEN HOUSE EVENT E SUCCESS



Guests sign in at the motherhouse of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist in Meriden, Connecticut.



Sister Christina leads her first group from chapel on a tour of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor priory in Cantonsville, Maryland.



Terbers prepares for the event at the Apostles of the St. Louis, Missouri.



Sister Mary Bernard shares the history of the Little Sisters of the Poor at their home in Washington, DC.

OSF
itors at the
can Sisters of
wail.

locations in Washington and Texas. Several communities promoted the event to followers on Facebook. The Council was pleased to promote the Days with Religious alongside national religious conferences, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and a network of many diocesan and national Catholic media outlets, many of whom attended various events.

Event coordinator Sister Maria Gemma Salyer, OSF commented, "Once someone is given a glimpse into a mystery, that hidden truth is not forgotten. Religious sisters and brothers, priests, married couples, families, and single men and women all gathered under the same roof, recognizing the beauty of each vocation and sharing their love for our Lord and the Joy of Gospel living! What a graced moment!"

Summer Service Days with Religious are now being planned for 2015.

DRAWING STRENGTH FROM CHRIST TO LIVE COMMUNION

Sister Rita Butler, DSMP

St. Louis Guanella expressed to his Daughters his firm conviction: “The center of all devotions is Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He is the Sun which illuminates and warms, He is the fire of the charity of God.” Just as a plant receives its energy and nourishment from the sun, so we are enabled through our prayer and adoration before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to reveal the provident love of the Father through works of mercy.

We are called to reveal God’s love to those with whom we minister. Through our gentle words and caring actions they begin to believe in a God who cares for them and provides for their needs. Whether we are teaching a young woman with developmental disabilities to brush her teeth independently, praying with an elderly man as he passes from this world to the next, giving a bowl of soup to a homeless teen, or teaching children to tell time, we are called to do so with the heart of Christ and the tender solicitude of Mary, Mother of Divine Providence.

None of our ministries are possible without the guiding principle of allowing Christ to be the one who enlightens and vivifies us. During this Year of Consecrated Life, we invite not only the residents of our house or those with whom we work, but also members of the surrounding community, to pray with us at a designated time each month before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Our Founder urged us to spend time in adoration with those whom we serve in order to draw down grace and heavenly blessing.

As Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, our sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ allows us to live His prayer at the Last Supper: “As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (Jn. 17:21).



Sister Brenda McHugh, DSMP, prays with young girls before the Blessed Sacrament.

Step by Step He Leads Me

Sister M. Stephania Newell, FSGM

“Many people today are puzzled and ask: What is the point of the consecrated life? ... Is the consecrated life not a kind of “waste” of human energies which might be used more efficiently for a greater good, for the benefit of humanity and the Church?” (*Vita Consecrata* 104) With these words, St. John Paul II, addresses the question that society asks regarding the commitment of religious life. He responds through one of his most referenced Gospel passages: the dialogue between Jesus and the rich young man. He encourages the faithful by stating: “...the consecrated life is a gift which God offers in order that everyone can recognize the ‘one thing necessary’ (cf. Lk 10:42). To bear witness to Christ by one’s life, works and words is the particular mission of the consecrated life in the Church and in the world.” (VC 109)



Throughout my life, God continues to amaze me with His grace, His guidance, and, often, His surprises. Through my religious congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George, my own family, and work experiences before the convent, God has prepared me, step by step, for new tasks and adventures. In November of 2013, my General Superior asked me to consider beginning a new mission in Santa Clara, Cuba. Never in my life had I dreamed or desired a *missionary* vocation. But through much prayer and preparation, I have come to see this as God’s plan and another step and means to bring His merciful love to the poor, sick, and spiritually needy.

Reflecting on this call to be a missionary, it came to me in prayer one day that, just as the Sisters of Sacred Heart Orphanage in Vietnam introduced my adopted father and me to the Faith in a country where the Faith was suffering, God was now asking me to bring the Faith to the people in another foreign country. The pictures of the Sisters at the orphanage radiated the joy and love of commitment to Christ, His Church, and those entrusted to them. Now, I am asked to do the same. I did not answer His Call to the religious life to do my own will, but of Him who beckoned me. “*A todo puedo hacerle frente, gracias a Cristo que me fortalece*” – “I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4: 13). I know that as long as I keep my focus on Him and His Will, I find “*solo una cosa es necesaria*,” – “the one thing necessary.”

YES TO LOVE

Sisters of Life

We stand on the Yes of so many others.

We stand on the ‘yes’ of so many others. It’s easy to forget this, to not notice the gifts that come to us through choices made by our parents, grandparents and ancestors, both biological and spiritual, so long ago. But if we’re attentive, there are moments when we see it. Suddenly, surprisingly, we see it, and time seems to stand still. In that moment touching eternity, we remember how close we all are, that indeed we are loved, and that love never dies. Those who came before us were asked, as we are, to say yes to love in the midst of the unexpected and messy realities

of life – the mix of joys and sufferings and the inevitable weaknesses and sins that plague us all. And they said yes – to God, to life, to truth, to faith, to forgiveness, to each other, without any knowledge of who would benefit from their yes beyond their immediate circle.

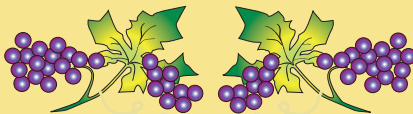
Love matters. And any yes to authentic love, any fidelity to the promptings of love, bears fruit that lasts. We stand on the yes of so many others. And we, too, are invited – urged! – to let our own lives, whatever our vocation, become a yes that will resonate throughout the Body of Christ for generations to come. Every yes we make to

BELOW: Sister Giovanna Mariae, S.V., Sister Mariam Caritas, S.V., Sister John Mary, S.V., and Sister Marita, S.V. professed perpetual vows on August 6, 2013.



God, each act of service we give another person, each humble request for forgiveness, each stand we take for the true, the good, the beautiful – for that which lasts – throws a lifeline of courage, strength, and possibility into the future to one we may not yet know but will one day meet.

Reprinted from the Fall 2013 edition of Imprint, the magazine of the Sisters of Life



I wish you to live with joy in gratitude for this ministry, with the certainty that there is nothing more beautiful in life than to belong forever and with all one’s heart to God, and to give one’s life for the service of brothers.

Pope Francis’ Address to Formators of Consecrated Men and Women, April 11, 2015



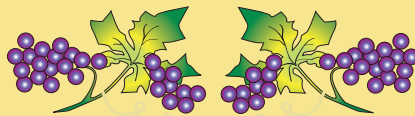
CONSIDER A GIFT FOR A GREAT CAUSE

Your contributions help to support the vision and values of the CMSWR. In this Spring edition of Consecrata the focus is Communion. The member communities of the CMSWR desire to promote the spirituality of communion through the enrichment of the beauty, unity, and goodness of the charism of each member community.

Your support today will allow us to:

- Facilitate communication among our member communities, our Bishops, and the universal Church, fostering an environment of rich and life-giving solidarity with the magisterium;
- Form young Sisters to participate in Christ's mission of mercy and reconciliation, love and hope;
- Expand our outreach to families and young people through the events for the Year of Consecrated Life and by engaging involvement with social media;
- Educate our Sisters in the richness of the Church's teachings at the Domus Sanctae Mariae Guadalupe, the CMSWR's House of Studies in Rome, where many communities can join together in the heart of the Church.

We invite you to consider a gift to the CMSWR annual fund through the use of the enclosed envelope or on our website, www.cmswr.org.



You are above all witnesses of the following of Christ in your own charism. And this can be done if every day one rediscovers with joy that one is a disciple of Jesus. From here also stems the need to always take care of your own personal formation, beginning with a strong friendship with the only Teacher.

Pope Francis' Address to Formators of Consecrated Men and Women, April 11, 2015



CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE

Gratefully Remembering the Past • Living the Present Passionately • Embracing the Future with Hope

SAVE THE DATES

"Days with Religious" still to come:

- Summer 2015: Day of Service with Religious
- September 13, 2015: Day of Prayer with Religious

Course: Spouses of Christ, Daughters of the Church, July 6-17, 2015

Esposas di Cristo: Hijas de la Iglesia
Session I July 6-11 ~ Session II July 11-17
Pax Christi Liturgical Retreat Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

For Love Alone - new film on religious life

August 15, 2015, international release
See local pre-screenings near you this summer.
Visit <http://cmswr.org/ForLoveAlone> for dates and locations.

8th World Meeting of Families: September 22-27, 2015

Sisters will participate in various ways in support of families as volunteers, translators, panelists, and will be present at community and CMSWR booths in the "Marketplace" Philadelphia.

CMSWR Symposium on Religious Life: "To Wake Up the World"

Drury Plaza Hotel at the Arch in St. Louis

- November 13, 2015: National Assembly for CMSWR members
- November 14, 2015: Symposium sessions for all religious, clergy, laity, vocation directors, women discerning religious life
- November 15, 2015: Formation Workshop for member communities



P.O. Box 4467

Washington, DC 20017

Tel: 202.832.2575

Fax: 202.832.6325

E-mail: info@cmswr.org

Website: www.cmswr.org

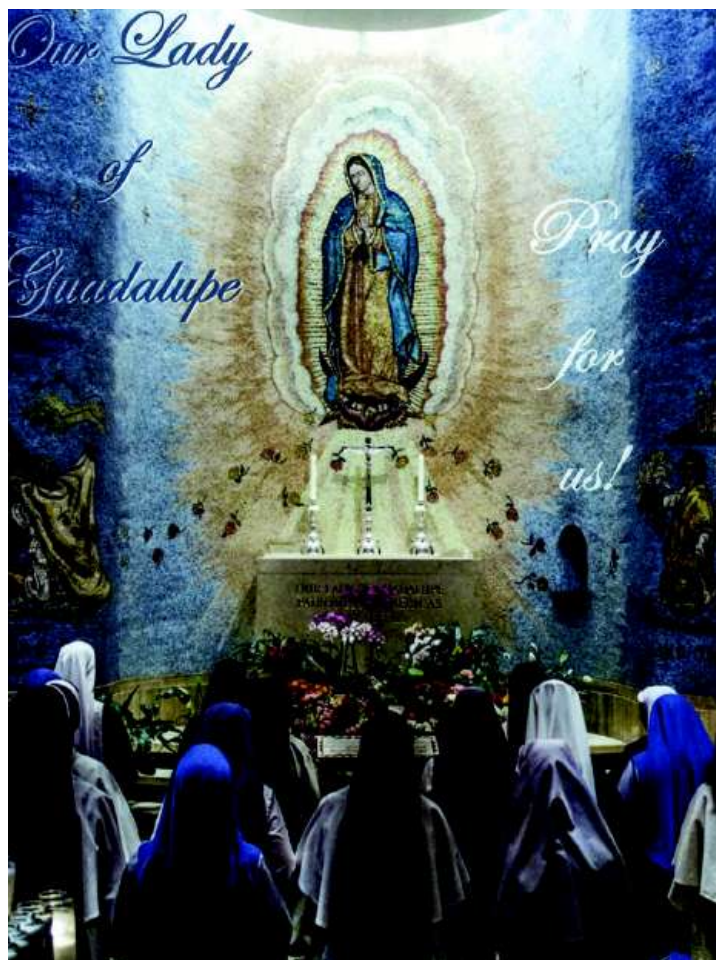
Non Profit Org

US Postage

PAID

Columbia, MD

Permit 71



ESPOSAS DE CRISTO, HIJAS DE LA IGLESIA

July 6-17, 2015

**at Pax Christi Liturgical Retreat Center
Corpus Christi, Texas**

Registration now open! The Summer Course “Spouses of Christ, Daughters of the Church” invites Spanish-speaking women religious to celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life by exploring together the lives, times, and key texts of the Early Church. Join us in taking up anew the call of the Second Vatican Council to religious “to strive during the whole course of [our] lives to perfect the culture [we] have received in matters spiritual and in arts and sciences (PC 18).”

July 6-11 Session I: Pre-Nicene Fathers

July 11 Cultural outing to missions of San Antonio

July 11-17 Session II: Post-Nicene Fathers

\$325 for 2-week experience; commuter and individual session rates available.

For more information:

cmswr.org/enespanol/esposas-de-cristo-curso