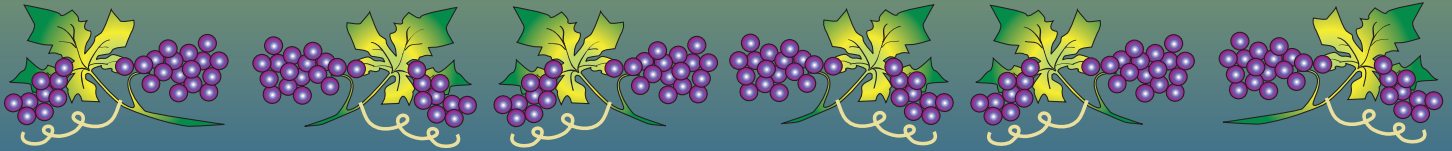


# CONSECRATA

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



SPRING 2020

## “THE EUCHARIST SAVES THE WORLD”<sup>1</sup>

*By Mother Maria Catherine Ianotti, PVMI*

With the suspension of the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, the hunger for receiving Jesus in the Eucharist is drawing more and more people to reflect on their faith in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It is also drawing forth the zeal and creativity of our faith-filled priests to discover ways to draw their people closer to the Eucharistic Heart of Christ during this crisis.

In recent years the Church has been facing a real crisis of faith: relativism, indifference, and the scandals that have rocked the Church have alienated many of our brothers and sisters in the faith. What is the answer to this crisis? I believe that, coupled with a more comprehensive catechesis on the Mass and Eucharistic devotion by Bishops, priests, religious and Catholic educators, a return to the Eucharistic devotions that have, in the past, been the mainstay of the devotional life of every parish: Parish Missions, Eucharistic Processions, Forty Hours Devotion and Eucharistic Congresses is absolutely necessary!

Eucharistic Congresses were begun through the incentive of a laywoman, Emilie Tamisier, “who under the inspiration of St. Peter Julian Eymard, organized the first Eucharist Congress.”<sup>2</sup> Held in 1881, its theme was: “The Eucharist saves the world.” “It was believed that a renewal of faith in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist would provide the remedy for ignorance and religious indifference.”<sup>3</sup>

In more recent times, Pope St. John Paul the Great, in speaking to seminarians, said: “In particular, Eucharistic Congresses are called to highlight the attractiveness of the priestly vocation and the identity of the presbyterate in relation to Christ the Head, Shepherd and Bridegroom.”

How providential that the CMSWR sponsored Eucharistic

Congress will be held in October of this year, God willing! It is for just such a time as this that we need this Eucharistic Congress! The hope of the CMSWR is to deepen love for and devotion to Jesus’ Real Presence in the Eucharist and to support our brother priests, highlighting “the attractiveness of the priestly vocation,” revealing the truth that the priest is “Alter Christus” and without the priesthood there would be no Eucharist!

“Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.”



<sup>1</sup> Theme of the First Eucharistic Congress, held in Lille, France, on June 21, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Vatican Website, International Eucharistic Congresses, history

<sup>3</sup> Vatican Website, International Eucharistic Congresses, history

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

**Sister Mary McGreevy, RSM**

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Dear Friends,

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

This revelation is our sure hope in all circumstances of life as it is now in this unprecedented time of shared anxieties and fears about disease, sickness and possibly death. We can so readily identify in our shared humanity with one another scattered throughout the world. Jesus Christ shares this same humanity, with the exception of sin, because the Father so loved the world that He sent His only Son to save us from our sins, and to bring us to a place of light and refreshment. He has drawn near to us and He sustains us with His Grace.

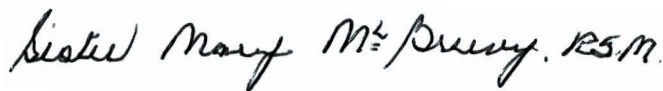
As you read and reflect on what is being shared in the pages of this Consecrata, you will encounter persons progressively transformed by drawing near to Jesus and letting Him enter, by His Grace, their minds and hearts. He leads them by the gentle promptings of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission

the Lord has entrusted them with for the building up of His Body, the Church.

The CMSWR is, as you will see, planning a Eucharistic Congress. Our goal is to provide an occasion during which we can together adore our Eucharistic Lord and pray for priests the world over who faithfully and humbly offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass each day bringing to us the Bread of Life.

We join with each of you in prayer that we be delivered from this pandemic, and that in this time of imposed “enclosure” we meet the Risen Lord in new and varied ways.

In Christ,



Sister Mary McGreevy, RSM  
Chairperson of CMSWR



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# TO WATCH THE SUN RISE

## *Commemorating the 100th Birthday of Pope Saint John Paul II*

by Sister Caroline Caritas, SV

When asked one day why he rose before dawn, St. John Paul II answered simply, “I like to watch the sun rise.”

Born in Wadowice, Poland, on May 18, 1920, Karol Wojtyła’s early life was marked by war and oppression. At 21 years of age, after the sudden death of his father, and having already lost his mother and brother, he said, “I have never felt so alone.” George Weigel, noted biographer of St. John Paul II, compared these sufferings to the keen pressures found within the heart of the earth resulting in the formation of precious gems. He said that “in Wojtyła’s case, the pressures formed him as a human diamond, able to cut through impermeable walls and reflect light in a unique way”.

Long before he implored the world to “open wide the doors to Christ!”, Karol Wojtyła deeply welcomed the person of Christ Himself into his own life. As he daily opened his mind and soul to Our Lord’s light and Resurrection, Christ continued to rise in him like the sun, forming his heart. And when John Paul II took the world stage, the marvel of a life transformed into the undeniable beauty of the Resurrection — bright as the sun, strong and brilliant as a diamond, totally open in self-gift — was unveiled for all to see. And now St. John Paul teaches us with certainty his greatest lesson and legacy: the truth that a life lived *for God* leads to eternal life *with God*.

Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of St. John Paul II offers us an occasion to marvel anew at the gift of our own lives, knowing the truth that we are sons and daughters of *inestimable worth*, souls of dazzling, everlasting light, made to be forever *full of life*.



*Mayor Raymond L. Flynn with Pope Saint John Paul II*



*Pope Saint John Paul II meeting with President Jimmy Carter*

## BLESSED JULIA RODZINSKA, OP

How does one keep hope in dark times? This year, the Sisters of St. Dominic honor one of their own, Blessed Julia Rodzinska. Blessed Julia maintained hope and restored hope to her fellow prisoners in Stutthof concentration camp in 1944. Seventy-five years after her martyrdom, Sister Julia is remembered for maintaining hope through prayer, and giving it—with her life—as a consecrated woman.

Sister Julia showed how to keep hope when her community, her breviary, and even the sacraments—were taken from her. She was sustained daily through prayer. As a religious sister and as a local superior, she urged all her Sisters to faithfulness to prayer; now she lived by it. Arrested by the Nazis in 1943, Blessed Julia was held for a year in isolation, amid torture and the terror of the Lukiszki Prison. Hope should have been lost. Sister Julia, however, remained so recollected that peace emanated from her face.

After her transfer to Stutthof, fellow prisoners described Blessed Julia as seemingly immersed in constant prayer. Where bestial conditions forced others to focus on survival, Julia sought sacramental sustenance. She traded precious bread for a Rosary and risked her life to smuggle notes arranging a priest-prisoner's undercover visit.

In her prayer life, Julia not only nurtured hope, but restored it to others. Prisoners grouped around her for daily prayer, despite camp rules forbidding religious practices. Moreover, Julia sought out those in need to share her bread and words of encouragement. One man survived because Sister Julia sent him secret notes, dissuading him from suicide.

Where the common life and her religious habit were as far removed as a square meal, Blessed Julia did not lose sight of her vocation. She spoke of religious life with such fondness that it impressed even her Jewish campmates. But she didn't merely reminisce. In circumstances no one could have imagined, Julia lived her Congregation's charism, preaching the Gospel through care of the sick and needy.

Blessed Julia cared for prisoners overcome by typhoid, even though others pled with her to preserve her own safety. All knew it would be a death sentence to interact with typhoid victims, given the conditions of the camp. Blessed Julia persisted, saving at least one woman left for dead. Her actions underscored the value of life even as she freely sacrificed her own.



Campmates saw Julia weep as she considered the loved ones she'd never see again. Blessed Julia contracted typhoid and died on February 20, 1945. While she knew earthly life was precious, her life and death attested to the hope of something more.

Hope shines most starkly where all else is bleak. But we don't need the darkness of a concentration camp to cast religious life into relief. We can learn from Blessed Julia to prioritize prayer, value our vocation, and commit ourselves to our religious charism...to restore hope in any age.

*The Sisters of St. Dominic celebrate The Year of Blessed Julia—"The Gift That Restores Hope"—from March 2019-2020. For more information on Blessed Julia Rodzinska, visit [sistersop.com](http://sistersop.com).*



# “PRAISE AND GLORIFY THE LORD WITH GRATITUDE AND SERVE HIM WITH GREAT HUMILITY.”

*(cf. Canticle of the Sun of St. Francis)*

*By Sister M. Alexandra Morrison, FSGM*

With prayerful hearts filled with gratitude and joy, we, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George celebrated our 150th Jubilee in 2019. Our Congregation was founded in 1869 in Thuine, Germany. Our foundress, Mother M. Anselma Bopp and another Sister went to a small German village in Thuine, on May 25th, 1857 at the request of Father Gerhard Dall, Pastor of St. George the Martyr Parish. Father Dall needed the Sisters to help care for all the needy children and sick there. The Sisters, while living in extreme poverty as they served, discerned the call to found a new Congregation. Adopting the rule of St. Francis, their mission was to “be simply ready in obedience to God’s call.”

Following the vision of our Foundress, the spirituality of our community focuses on the Sacred Heart, striving to make Christ’s merciful love visible through our service to others. We serve in hospitals, nursing homes, day care centers for children, in schools by providing both academic and religious education. We also care for the poor and needy through parish work and social services.

Our sisters arrived in the United States in 1923, and began their mission at an institution for neglected boys called “Father Dunne’s Newsboys Home” in St. Louis. Two years later on April 1st, 1925, the Community purchased Nazareth Home in Alton, Illinois, which eventually became St. Anthony’s Infirmary, and is now known as St. Anthony’s Health Center. In 1932, the Sisters began working at Mother of Good Counsel Home, a nursing care facility for the elderly in St. Louis. Ten

sisters continue serving there today. Another area of service in the St. Louis Archdiocese is St. Alban Roe School in Wildwood, MO where the sisters teach and work in youth ministry. Currently, Sisters are also working in Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Oklahoma, Ohio, and Nebraska. Outside the US, there are Sisters serving in Germany, Holland, Italy, Albania, Cuba, Japan, Brazil, and Indonesia. There are also 10 young Sisters in the novitiate and 16 Junior Professed Sisters in Formation.

Our Jubilee year was filled with many spiritual, apostolic and community celebrations. A highlight was an open house providing an opportunity for the Alton civic community to become more acquainted with the Sisters and learn about our history and apostolate. On the actual week-end of our Jubilee and the Feast of Christ the King, November 22 -24, 2019, Sisters from all over the United States came together to celebrate. The festivities began with a candlelight procession to our cemetery to honor our Sisters who prepared the way with courage, and with fidelity to our Charism. The celebration included beautiful Liturgies, community prayers, shared pictures, group discussions, a live play about our Foundress, memories and stories of the past, and of course, recreation together!

The Sisters left the weekend rejoicing in the gift of our vocation, sharing in the Holy Spirit’s gifts of unity and charity, and renewed in our call to live daily our Congregation’s charism “To Make Christ’s Merciful Love Visible!”



# SPANISH FOUNDER OF THE SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY DECLARED VENERABLE

*By The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita*

*On January 23, 2020 the Holy Father, Pope Francis, authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate the decree of heroic virtues of Joaquin Masmitjà, Canon of the Cathedral of Gerona, Spain and founder of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. With this promulgation, Father Masmitjà was declared “venerable” and moved one step closer to canonization.*

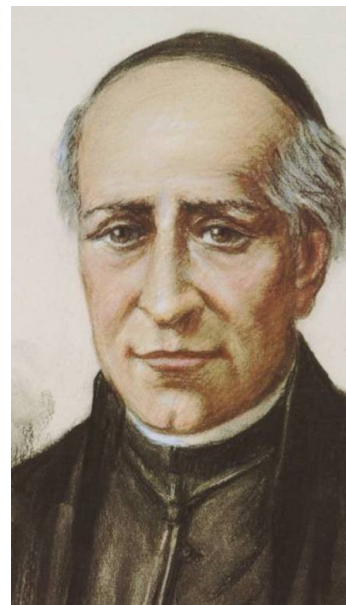
As a parish priest in mid-nineteenth century Spain, Father Masmitjà frequently encountered among his parishioners the reality of poor formation in the Faith. Catholic culture had disappeared; secularism was gaining ground and morality was eroding. His concerns so closely resemble the needs of our own time; in fact, his priestly heart's overriding concern was for the salvation of souls and how seemingly impossible it was to pursue holiness amidst the secularism of his day. He established the 40 Hours devotion in his parishes, trained catechists, and hosted missions for his parishioners, most notably given by St. Anthony Mary Claret, his good friend. But this, he found, was not enough.

In 1848 Venerable Joaquin Masmitjà founded the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to teach and form the young in the truths of our Catholic Faith and to pray for the conversion of sinners. By 1870 their reputation had grown and they were asked by Bishop Thaddeus Amat of Los Angeles-Monterey to come to the new world and teach on the West Coast. In 1871, following the encouragement of St. Anthony Claret, Fr. Masmitjà sent 10 Sisters. The community grew in number as well as in reputation and by the 1960's, numbering 600, they were teaching throughout California and beyond. In 1976,

three Sisters of the California Institute, desiring to preserve the charism of Father Masmitjà, asked The Most Reverend David M. Maloney, Bishop of Wichita, if they could come to his diocese and open a foundation. He welcomed their presence and their apostolic work. In 1979 under the direction of the Holy See, the Sisters in Wichita separated from the Institute in California.

In today's world, with society promoting vice as virtue and teaching that tolerance -- not charity, truth and zeal for souls -- is seen as a good, praying for the conversion of sinners is not as well-known as in previous decades. And yet, a true love for souls is the motivation to pray and work for their salvation. The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 172 years after their foundation, continue, in union with Our Lady, to pray and teach, to sacrifice and work, for the salvation of souls.

Father Masmitjà believed in and promoted the powerful intercession of the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of Mary. He also wanted with all of his might to protect that Heart from the cruel sword that pierces it when sinners renew the passion



Venerable Joaquin Masmitjà

and death of her Son by refusing His mercy and forgiveness. The declaration of his heroic virtue is a good reminder to renew the commitment to pray for hardened sinners that they may know the forgiveness of God and the tender love of their Heavenly Mother.

The Sisters invite you to pray through the intercession of Venerable Joaquin Masmitjà for all of your intentions. Reporting to the Sisters any favors or miracles received could possibly further his cause for beatification. *For holy cards or more information please contact Mother Mary Magdalene at (316) 722-9316 or email her at [mmm@SistersIHMofWichita.org](mailto:mmm@SistersIHMofWichita.org).*

Heavenly Father, We praise and thank you for the life and work of Venerable Joaquin Masmitjà. You stirred within him a boundless love for the Immaculate and Sorrowful Heart of Mary and an urgent concern for the young who were suffering from society's divorce from religion. In Your providential design You inspired Him to found the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary which would meditate on the cruel sword of sorrow that pierces Mary's heart when it sees sinners renewing the passion and death of her Son and through their prayers and apostolic works seek to shield her maternal Heart from this sorrow. In his love for hardened sinners he instructed the Sisters to seek from Your divine mercy the grace of conversion. Now, we beg You, Heavenly Father, to answer our prayers. If it should be for Your greater glory, the honor of our Blessed Mother, and the good of our souls please grant us, through the intercession of Venerable Joaquin Masmitjà, a favorable response to our petition. *(Please state your request.)* We ask this through Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Savior. AMEN.

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Please communicate graces and favors received to:  
General Superior of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary  
3550 N 167th Street W, Colwich, KS 67030 | (316) 722-9316





Jesus in the Eucharist  
**INCREASE OUR FAITH**

## **EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS**

**OCTOBER 9-10, 2020**

**CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL  
AND SHRINE OF SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL  
18th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103**

Our national fast from the celebration of Mass  
and the Reception of Holy Communion  
during the COVID-19 pandemic awakens in all of us  
our need for the Eucharist  
and our gratefulness for so wondrous a Gift  
from Jesus to his Church.

**Every member of the Church** is welcome to participate in this Eucharistic Congress  
— *a time to profess our faith more profoundly  
in the true and real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.*

Mark your calendars and save the dates!

You can register at **[archphila.org/eucharistic-congress](https://archphila.org/eucharistic-congress)**

The Eucharistic Congress opens with the Celebration of the Eucharist  
on **Friday, October 9, at 6:00 PM**,  
followed by Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament until the close of the Congress.

The Eucharistic Congress closes with the Solemn Celebration of the Eucharist  
on **Saturday, October 10, at 5:15 PM** (Anticipated Mass for Sunday),  
followed by an outdoor Eucharistic Procession.



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