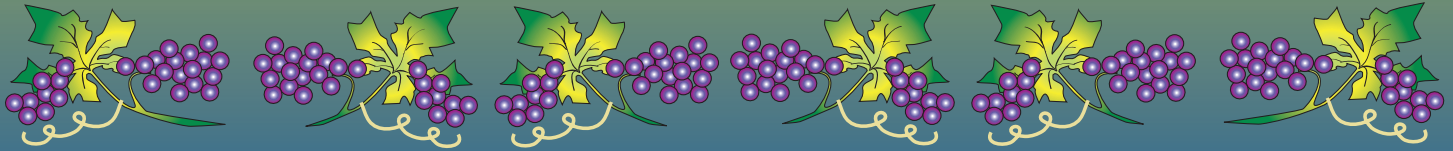


CONSECRATA

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



SPRING 2018

LOVE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE FROM THE HEART OF THE CHURCH:

Executive Committee's Rome Visit

By Sister Marie Bernadette Mertens, IHM

As a newly elected member of the Executive Committee of the CMSWR, I had the wonderful privilege of traveling with Mother Mary, RSM, Sister Mary Elizabeth, SV, and Sister Mary Angela, OP, to Rome to meet with four of the Vatican Congregations. Our purpose was to present this year's portfolio of the Council's activities and share the joy of celebrating the 25th anniversary of the CMSWR. All of the meetings were very congenial in nature, as well as encouraging and informative. Being at the heart of the Church, receiving her enthusiastic appreciation for the gift of Religious Life to the Church in the United States and the Church Universal, was a life-giving experience.



Executive officers of the CMSWR: Sr. Mary Christine Cremin, R.S.M., Sr. Mary Angela Highfield, OP, Mother Mary McGreevy, RSM, Sr. Mary Elizabeth Wusinich, SV, and Sr. Marie Bernadette Mertens, IHM

Visiting the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Congregation for Bishops, the Secretariat of State, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the CMSWR officers not only shared our activities but also learned a great deal. In May, CICLSAL is hosting an international symposium to clarify, through the presentation of a year-long study, the different types of consecration in the various forms of consecrated life. The Congregation for Bishops is continuing their work on updating *Mutual Relations*, scheduled to be published in 2019. Marc Cardinal Ouellette, Prefect of the Congregation, emphasized the importance of preserving and promoting the religious institute's charism within the diocesan Church and that it is the consecration of religious, first and foremost, not merely the work of the sisters, that serves evangelization.

A weekend free of meetings allowed time for the group to take a short pilgrimage, beginning with Mass at the tomb of Pope St. John Paul II in St. Peter's Basilica. After a short bus ride to Florence, the sisters visited the Convent of San Marco and viewed the frescos of Fra Angelico and then drove on to Orvieto and Bolsena to view the Eucharistic miracle which took place in 1263.

One of the highlights of the trip was being able to pray with Pope Francis, attending his Mass and greeting him afterwards. After the Mass, the Holy Father greeted us, asked for prayers, since being pope "is not easy," and then gave us his blessing. We assured him, not only of our personal prayers, but of **yours** as well!

Staying at the Domus was a welcome treat and a great respite from the busyness of the city. The resident sisters outdid themselves in showing hospitality! The centrality of the location also allowed the sisters to take advantage of the free hours of the afternoon to visit and pray at nearby pilgrimage sites.

At these meetings, the Church's love for religious life became increasingly clearer. It was a wonderful and great privilege to represent the many wonderful religious institute members of the CMSWR!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

Mother Mary McGreevy, RSM

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Dear Friends,

Having been led by the Church through the days of Lent, we are emerging now into the time of the Easter season. This path is opened for us each year as an invitation to ponder anew, and with greater attention, both what the Lord has done for us and what He has won for us. We are not left to find our own way, but rather we are given a guide book to help us focus our attention as each day of this journey unfolds. The prayers of the Liturgy celebrated until the end of time invite us to draw near and unite in mind and heart around the Person of Jesus Christ, abiding, feeding, and loving.

Our lives as baptized Christians are centered in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, both Word and Eucharist. The Eucharist, “re-presents (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross, because it is memorial and because it applies its fruits...” (CCC, 1366).

Consecrated at Baptism, we are united in Christ as we each pursue the path laid out for us personally by our provident God. As a Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious we greet you in this issue of *Consecrata*

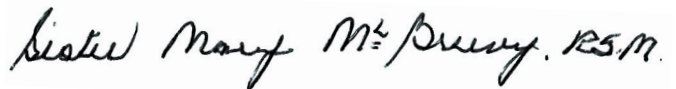
and wish you every blessing. We are so grateful for your support. The privilege we know of serving the Church in so many varied ways throughout the United States is what we celebrate together as a Council.

Please be assured of our prayers for you and our esteem for each of you as we together seek for the good things which come from above.

In closing I wish to recall the Collect of the Easter Vigil:

O God, who make this most sacred night radiant with the glory of the Lord's Resurrection, stir up in your Church a spirit of adoption, so that, renewed in body and mind, we may render you undivided service. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Sincerely in Christ,



Mother Mary McGreevy, RSM
Chairperson of CMSWR



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RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS CONTINUE TO BLOSSOM WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

2017 Demographic Study Article

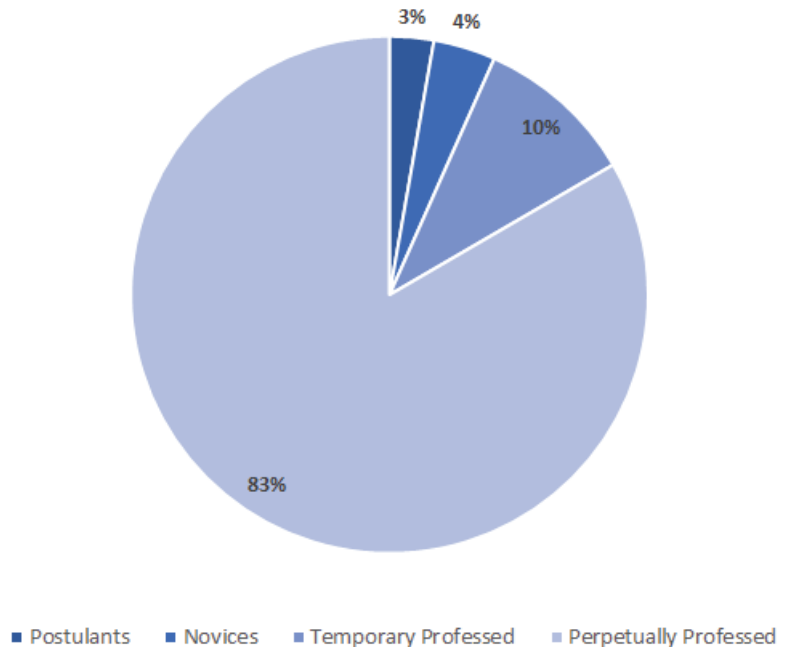
The Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious recently released findings from its annual survey of communities whose major superiors (or those analogous to a major superior) are members (or associate members) of CMSWR. The 2017 report, prepared by Sister Mary Bendyna, OP, continues to confirm an encouraging trend in the number of young women who are choosing consecrated life. This year's report again shows over 900 sisters currently in initial formation. This number has remained steady throughout the six years this survey has been conducted, continuing an encouraging trend among CMSWR members and their communities.

Along with the trend in new vocations, the 2017 report again shows a wide range of apostolates that span every field and ministry. The sisters serve in well over 400 educational institutions and nearly 200 health care facilities, as well as in almost 300 parishes, 50 retreat or spirituality centers, and numerous other institutional and non-institutional settings.

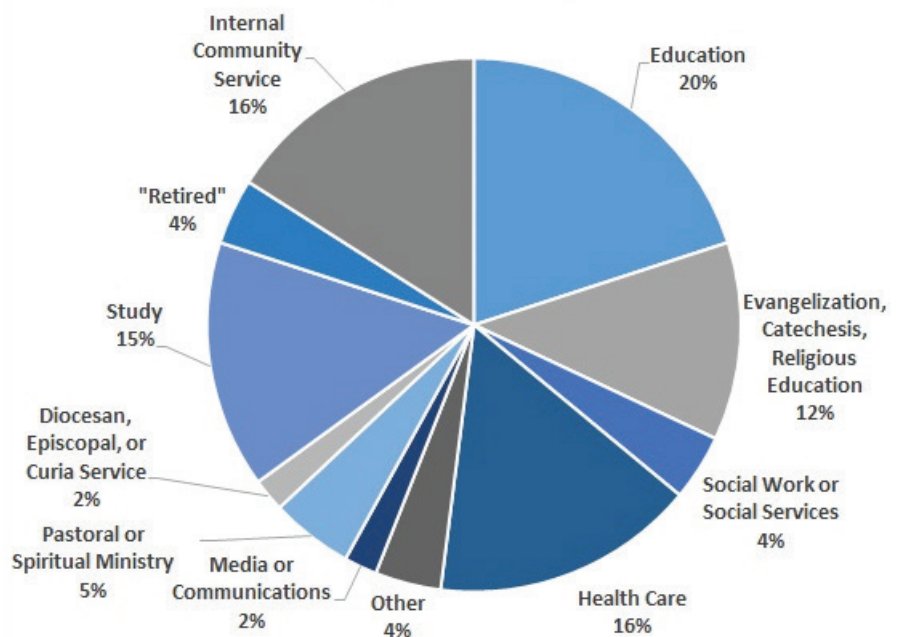
Finally, the survey asked respondents to indicate the country of birth for each sister who made perpetual profession in 2016. The data showed that the majority of newly perpetually professed sisters (62.5%) were born in the United States. The next most common countries of origin were Mexico (7%) and the Philippines (6%).

"Religious life continues to blossom in the United States," said Mother Mary McGreevy, RSM, Chairperson of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious and Superior General for the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma. "These numbers indicate that young women today are hearing and responding to God's call for a total gift of self. This encouraging trend is a blessing not only for the individual communities but for the entire Church."

Sisters in Initial Formation and Perpetual Vows



Apostolates of Professed Sisters in CMSWR Associate and Full Membership Communities



2017 CMSWR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:

Celebrating 25 Years: Gift Given, Received, Shared

By Sister Mary Catherine Kasuboski, TOR

“What would the Church be lacking if there were no longer women religious? Mary would be missing on the day of Pentecost! There is no Church without Mary! There is no Pentecost without Mary! ...The consecrated woman is an icon of the Church, an icon of Mary.” This quote from Pope Francis’ address to religious superiors in May 2016 was mentioned several times during the National Assembly this year. Our whole experience of the National Assembly was one of encouragement, gratitude, and celebration. So many of us felt such deep gratitude as we listened to the stories of how CMSWR began 25 years ago.

Although he couldn’t be present, Archbishop William Lori sent a video message to us, speaking of the history of the CMSWR from his perspective as well as from the perspective of James Cardinal Hickey, whom he served as priest secretary for many years. His message was heartwarming as well as informational for those of us who have not known the story. All our speakers nourished our hearts with inspirational and encouraging words. The major superiors from over 100 communities were present for the conferences, liturgies, and the election of board members. Council members were also invited this year, and several communities’ counselors were able to be present to hear the inspirational conferences.

Sr. Clare Matthias, CFR speaking to another sister about what a blessing it is for us to gather together said, “This is essential. We need to come together.” Our gratitude for this time is profound, and we offer special thanks and prayers to the Drury family, the Knights of Columbus, and Christian Brothers Services among many others for their contributions to this time of grace.





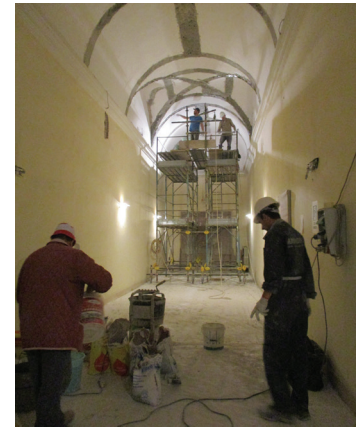
ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR RENOVATIONS AT THE DOMUS

By Sister Maria Socorro, MCMI and Sister Pauline Therese, OCD

We always wonder what the New Year will bring. Here at the Domus, 2018 began with a bang, and the noise has not stopped! A year ago an earthquake shook Rome. A couple of gentlemen from APSA (the Vatican office that deals with Vatican properties) came to the Domus to check the building. The result was that all the rooms on the park side of the building needed repair. The ceilings of the hallways on the 2nd and 3rd floors had to be reinforced. “Ground zero” needed major structural work to be done as well. In early January, we were informed that the estimated three months of repair work and painting would begin January 22.

In preparation for the CMSWR Board visit in late January, we planned for the painting of the library, community room, sacristy and priest dining room to be completed first. The challenge was that we had to move everything out of these rooms very quickly! A call for help went out to our deacons, seminarians and priests from the North American College, who responded generously as in the past. After the completion of the painting, they returned to reset the library. “Ground zero,” where the major structural work is currently being done, is off limits. Everyone has to use the back entrance of the building in order to enter the house.

Twenty years ago, the founding sisters began living in the Domus Sanctae Mariae Guadalupe amidst the renovation of this building in preparation for the opening of the House of Studies. They went to school/work during the day and returned in the evening to clean and move furniture, as well as to pray and study. History repeats itself! Even though this necessary work of renovation has been during final exams, the sisters have been real “troopers.” Like the founding sisters, it has been our privilege to be of service during this project so as to provide a safe, clean, and beautiful home for all who come to stay at the Domus. We are deeply grateful to APSA, the CMSWR Board and to our donors for making this possible.



The crew is hard at work on structural renovations at “Ground zero”.



Thank you to all who have come from the NAC to help us!

APOSTLES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS REJOICE AT BEATIFICATION OF FOUNDESS



The Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus announce that at the Ordinary Session of Cardinals and Bishops of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints held on January 9, 2018, the miracle attributed to the intercession of our Foundress, Mother Clelia Merloni, was recognized. On January 27, Pope Francis cleared the path to her beatification by approving the miracle attributed through her intercession.

The approval by Pope Francis was the final phase of the process recognizing the miracle under examination by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The miracle took place in Brazil in 1951 when Brazilian doctor, Pedro Ângelo de Oliveira Filho, was stricken suddenly by a progressive form of paralysis known as Guillain-Barré syndrome. When the family, along with Sr. Adelina Alves Barbos, prayed through Mother Clelia’s intercession, Pedro Ângelo, whom the doctors said would not survive through the night, began to improve and was completely cured.

Clelia Merloni was born in Forli, Italy on March 10, 1861. Although she came from an elite and wealthy family, she was attracted to prayer and solitude at an early age. She responded generously to God’s call by choosing consecrated religious life. On May 30, 1894, Mother Clelia founded the Congregation of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, sending sisters to the Americas at the turn of the last century. For the holiness needed to be able to fulfill God’s will and lead the sisters, Mother Clelia had to sustain many years of difficult trials, profound humiliations, and unspeakable sorrows. Mother Clelia died in Rome on November 21, 1930. Her remains were placed in the Generalate chapel after her body was exhumed in 1945 and found to be incorrupt. The Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus seek to make the compassionate Heart of Christ better known, loved, and served, faithful to the charism of Mother Clelia Merloni. We do this by personal and communal witness to the Gospel, commitment to growth in holiness, and ministry to the people of God. The U.S. Provincialate is located in Hamden, CT.

ESPOSAS DE CRISTO, HIJAS DE LA IGLESIA:

The Third Summer Theology Course for Spanish-Speaking Sisters

By Sister Theotokos Adams, SSVM

In July 2017, CMSWR hosted our third course offering of *Esposas de Cristo, Hijas de la Iglesia* ("Spouses of Christ, Daughters of the Church"). We were graced by the writings and witness of the four women Doctors of the Church: St. Hildegard of Bingen, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa of Avila, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Over twenty Spanish-speaking sisters participated in this two-week long summer course of ongoing formation *for* and *by* other women religious *en español*. CMSWR member community, The Oblates to the Blessed Trinity, hosted the event at their St. Aloysius Retreat Center in Hopewell Junction, New York. Our days were filled with daily Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic Adoration, class sessions, times of personal study, group projects, meals in common, and recreation.

A special part of last year's course was a pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Patron Saint of Immigrants, and a cultural outing to The Cloisters Museum, both in Upper Manhattan. Taking time to pray together and have Mass at the relics of Mother Cabrini was a powerful experience for the sisters because she is tied to the lives of immigrant families and provides a wonderful model of a missionary woman religious who became a saint serving the Church in the United States. The Cloisters Museum is the branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art dedicated to medieval art and architecture. Most of the spaces and much of the art that filled the museum was made by and for monastic men and women of the past. Our study of St. Hildegard of Bingen in the context of 12th century Germany along with the 14th century Italian St. Catherine of Siena came to life through period artwork inspired by the Catholic faith.

Esposas de Cristo, Hijas de la Iglesia will meet again in July 2019 in California for a course titled, "St. Junipero Serra and Beyond: the Contribution of Spanish-speaking Missionaries to the Church in the United States." We look forward to a wonderful time of study and a visit to one of the California Missions!



The sisters enjoy the medieval art and architecture of the Cloisters.



The sisters take part in Mass at the Shrine of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini.

The CMSWR Intercultural Subcommittee has been sponsoring this course since 2015 as an outreach to Spanish-speaking women religious serving the Church in the United States. Please consider sponsoring a sister in your own diocese or through the scholarships we offer by making a donation to the Intercultural Subcommittee "Esposas de Cristo" Fund.



Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious

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“You, dear consecrated brothers and sisters, are the Church’s perennial dawn! I ask you to renew this very day your encounter with Jesus, to walk together towards him. And this will give light to your eyes and strength to your steps.”

–Homily of Pope Francis,
22nd World Day for Consecrated Life

