

# The Parish Visitor



**2024 Parish Visitor  
Brides of Christ**

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In this issue of "The Parish Visitor" we share the great joy of five new Brides of Christ. Within the Year of Our Lord 2024 Sister Mary Leticia professed her Perpetual Vows in Nigeria, Sister Alina Marie, Sister Marie Meaghan and Sister Rebecca Miriam professed their Perpetual Vows in the United States and Sister Maria Rowena professed her Perpetual Vows in the Philippines. What is that profession and what does it mean? The following quote from our constitutions explains it well.

"In a free response to a divine call, the Sisters offer their whole lives to God, Who consecrates them by the profession of public vows. By this profession they oblige themselves to observe the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience according to the constitutions.

This special consecration, which is an act of the worship of God, is rooted in their baptismal consecration and is a fuller expression of it. By it the Sisters commit themselves to follow Christ more perfectly and to dedicate themselves entirely to His service.

Their life hidden with Christ in God is the source of their love of neighbor and compels them to labor zealously for the salvation of the world and the building of up the Church."

## *Our Vow Formula*

*Called by the Holy Spirit to a greater perfection of love in union with Jesus, I desire to give myself totally to God in this Congregation. For the honor of Almighty God, and under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our holy patron St. Joseph, I ...vow for life to live the Gospel counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience according to the constitutions of the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate, and I promise with God's grace to observe them faithfully.*

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# “Walk with one”

*Fruits of the  
National Eucharistic Congress*

By Mother Maria Catherine, PVM

Throughout the Eucharistic Congress, held in Indianapolis, IN from July 17-22<sup>nd</sup> this year, we were introduced to some of our brothers and sisters whose evangelizing efforts led them to simply and beautifully “walk with one.” In other words, they accompanied one person as they journeyed with him/her on their way to a deeper knowledge of and love for Jesus Christ!

How thrilled we were to see and hear through video sharings the way many of our brothers and sisters were putting into practice our own vocational grace! As many of you know, Mother Mary Teresa has told us that we are to go out to persons and speak to them “heart-to-heart” as one friend to another. She also said, “make every soul count.” The Parish Visitors “walk with one” each time we engage in our missionary visitation to homes and in the faith formation programs/OCIA classes with our parishioners. It is especially in our accompaniment of those persons whose faith has grown weak, or who have completely left the practice of their faith that we “walk with one.”

How often have our Sisters walked the journey for years with persons who were afraid to take the first step in “coming home” to Jesus and His Church! How often have our Holy Hours been filled with the names and stories of those we are longing to make a place for Jesus in their hearts! How many sacrifices have our Sisters offered for the conversion of each person she has met in her missionary apostolate!

In the Parish Visitor Recruiter, Mother Mary Teresa has said: “The Parish Visitor must have before her mind the thought that one soul alone is worthy of an entire lifetime of hard work, of

sacrifices, of disappointments and trials of all kinds. Even if, at the last moment of life, this soul is brought to Christ, and this is the only work performed by one called to the apostolate, it would be well worthwhile." (p. 36)

If Mother Mary Teresa was still alive and read Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, "The Joy of The Gospel," she would probably say that Pope Francis has the Parish Visitor vocation! He says, in paragraph 127, under the heading "Person to person": "Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet, whether they be our neighbors or complete strangers. This is the informal preaching which takes place in the middle of a conversation, something along the lines of what a missionary does when visiting a home. Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey."

Mother Mary Teresa would call this "on the way" evangelization. Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate engage in this "on the way" apostolate to persons daily. As we go anywhere Mother's words "make every soul count" are in our hearts because the love of Jesus is in our hearts and it is to that love we wish to draw all persons.

In this issue of the Parish Visitor, you will meet the young women who have professed Perpetual Vows this year. In the process of formation, we also "walk with one." Each Sister is a unique person, a gift sent by God to our Congregation. Each Sister has her unique gifts and talents given by God to be used for His honor and glory! In their formation, directors and superiors "walk with each one" as she journeys in her relationship with Jesus, as she grows in her understanding of our contemplative-missionary vocation and as she learns to use the gifts and graces God has given her for His people.

Mother Mary Teresa also said, in the Parish Visitor Recruiter: "A great beauty will come into the lives of those who strive to follow the example of Christ in helping needy souls." I think you will agree with me as you view the photos and read the reflections of the newly Perpetually Professed Sisters, that there is a beautiful

glow both interiorly and exteriorly that can only be explained by the fact that they have given themselves completely to Christ for the salvation of souls.

We hear so often that there is a “lack of vocations”. I do not believe it – nor have I ever believed it! The need today is SO GREAT that I believe God is calling many young women to be His in this unique vocation as contemplative-missionaries! On March 21, 1922, Mother Foundress said to the Sisters: “The world is astray from God. Fallen nature has made passionate straylings of the children of Christ. Every parish has a large proportion of these stray ones who will be lost unless religion saves them, and religion alone is the remedy for the wounded ones lying by the wayside.... the Parish Visitor goes out to act as first aid to them. Just in proportion as there are numbers of Parish Visitors, or not, will these lost ones be rescued or remain lost. Right here we see the value of fostering more Parish Visitor vocations.” (pp. 29, 31)

Doesn't it sound like someone speaking of today's society? How many bishops, priests and laity are asking for the help of our Sisters in their dioceses, parishes, lay movements! They are asking us to help them reach each person who is away from the sheepfold. What a joy it would be for us to say: “Yes, I have some Sisters I can send to your diocese, parish...”!

You who receive our magazine have often commented on your appreciation of the articles that reveal the “one to one” missionary outreach of our Sisters. With this issue of our magazine, I am asking you to do more than appreciate its contents! I would like to challenge you to “walk with one” person whom you might think has a vocation to the consecrated Religious Life!

Many of you attend daily Mass and are involved in daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Maybe you see a young woman there whom you think may have a religious vocation. Don't be afraid to go up and ask her if she ever thought of Religious Life.

I had an experience this past year: I was at a parish Mass and the lector was a young man. As he was reading, I felt the Lord put these words in my heart: “this young man has a vocation to the priesthood. Go and speak to him.” I said to the Lord: “Are you serious? I don't even know this guy.” But the Lord insisted. So, I made a bargain with Him: “**IF** he does not stay for the Rosary

after Mass, then I know You want me to speak to him.” Guess what? He did not stay for the Rosary! So, I was compelled to speak to this young man. After introducing myself, I told him what the Lord put on my heart. He responded: “I am discerning”. This past summer the young man visited us at Marycrest on his way to the seminary!

What can each of you do to be “recruiters”? Here are some ideas:

- **PRAY:** the most important thing we can do. How many young people are afraid to commit themselves; how many young men and women are gifted with vocations to priesthood and Religious Life but have fallen away from the practice of their faith? They need your prayers.
- **ENCOURAGE:** parents/grandparents/aunts/uncles/friends – encourage your children and friends to pray to know their vocation; to learn about the priesthood and consecrated Religious Life.
- **PROVIDE:** pass along our magazine in your parish; to your friends; provide good Catholic literature (lives of the saints) in your homes and to others or share good Catholic learning websites (example: Word on Fire, Formed, EWTN ...and many others)

If you would like us to visit your faith formation classes to speak about consecrated Religious Life or you believe God is calling you to give yourself totally to Him as His Bride in consecrated Religious Life, contact our vocation director: Sister Theresa Marie at [pvmi@frontiernet.net](mailto:pvmi@frontiernet.net)

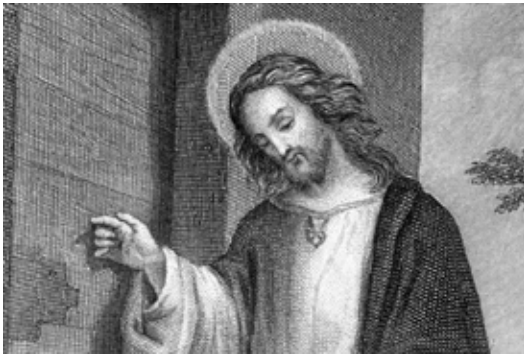
Here are some words to encourage you and those you know:

*"Put out into the deep. Do not be afraid."*

(Pope Saint John Paul the Great)

*"Do not be afraid to give yourself to Christ.  
He takes nothing from you  
but gives you everything in return."*

(Pope Benedict XVI)



### *A Few Words about Wills*

*More than a mere legal document that will be accepted in a court of human law, a well-prepared Will is a statement of faith, hope and love. Family, charities and others in need benefit from this final act of material kindness.*

*The Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate consider it a privilege to be mentioned in yours. Thank you for this and all your other gifts and sacrifices.*

*Our legal name is:*

**Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate, Inc.**

# “CARRYING” RELIGIOUS LIFE

By Sister Mary Emmadoña, PVM I



Have you ever tried to carry a heavy load – say 20 pounds of potatoes or rice in a bag and instead of letting it hang from your arms, you decided to pick the bag and hug it close to your body? It worked its trick, right? The closer the heavy load is to your body, the more manageable the weight seems to be.

For me, this image reflects the sweet cross of Religious Life. It may be heavy, but when I embrace it, fasten it close to my heart, the weight becomes bearable.

Part of our morning oblation to the Lord goes like this, *“I not only wish to carry it, but desire to fasten myself to it, by renewing my holy vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.”*

Many mothers carry their babies in their arms but nowadays, many use a baby carrier. One particular baby carrier resembles a backpack. They allow moms to move their arms freely while keeping their baby comfortable and close. The baby is at ease because of the closeness of mom and mom can freely use her hands to do other things while at the same time carrying her bundle of joy. Now, that for me perfectly illustrates the quoted part of our morning oblation.

In the morning, I pick up the sweet cross of Religious Life, my bundle of joy, Jesus, and place Him in this carrier. I wear the first strap on my left shoulder renewing my vow of chastity. I wear the second strap on my right shoulder renewing my vow of poverty. And then, I fasten the strap around my waist renewing my vow of obedience. Carrying Jesus close to my heart allows me





to serve Him in many ways throughout the day. I know Jesus is happy as I engage with others and fulfill my duties.

Yet, just like any baby, Jesus needs quiet time. Jesus gives me the “grace” or signal to pause and sit down. It’s time to “be with Jesus.” It is time I allow Jesus to fall asleep in my embrace. As I look at Him, peacefully sleeping, I also renew my tired spirits. I also rest as He rests in me.

The straps don’t lessen the weight of my load, but they make it much easier to carry. But I need to wear the straps properly, otherwise, it doesn’t help at all. This means that I must live my vows the right and proper way. I must live my vowed life authentically. Only then will the weight of Religious Life be more manageable.



# Very Grateful

By Sister Maria Rowena, PVMII

What a great blessing it was to make Perpetual Profession of Vows; and what further greater blessing it was to have it on the Memorial of the Coronation of our Blessed Mother as Queen of Heaven and Earth!

On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, the celebration of the Memorial of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I made my Perpetual Profession of Vows, at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in the Diocese of Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines. A few weeks earlier, while on Retreat, I was asked to write a reflection on how I have grown in my understanding of and living my vows of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience; and in the three areas of our life as a Religious: Prayer Life, Community Life and Apostolic Life. While doing the exercise, I couldn't help but be VERY GRATEFUL for



the many graces and blessings, for each area and evangelical counsel. Through God's grace, I have experienced tremendous growth as a Bride of Christ and as a servant of the Church. Allow me to share some portions of my reflection.

**CHASTITY:** Before I entered Religious Life, I knew in my heart that I wanted to love God above all else, and I often would say that He was #1 in my life. However, because of some challenges, I wasn't always able to uphold that principle. But thanks be to God, now, having spent seven years in this Religious Community, and having been consecrated with a vow of Chastity, I believe I have grown in loving God above all else, not only in principle but also in trying my best to live it out. In all my decisions, I try to base it on my desire to please God and glorify His Name. In my actions, I strive to only do things that show my love for God and my brothers and sisters. When I fall into sin, I immediately beg for God's mercy and forgiveness, for I never want to be separated from His love. I am grateful that we, Parish Visitor Sisters, go to Confession twice or at least once a month. Also, it is unthinkable to miss receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Partaking of His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, and my vow of Chastity, move me to try to keep myself pure and holy because Jesus, my Spouse, is pure and holy.

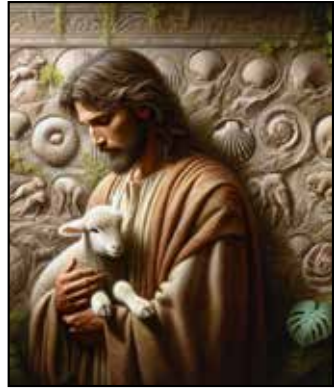
**POVERTY:** Before I entered the Convent, I was a "heavy user" of various types of gadgets (cellphones, laptops, tablets, etc.), as "tools" both for work and personal purposes. But through the grace of God, I don't remember missing the use of any of these tools in the Convent. I appreciate it so much that we use them only on a limited basis. Another aspect where I see my growth in poverty is that I have become more simple. I am able to use and appreciate pre-loved items of Sisters or donors/benefactors (like shoes, etc.). I am joyful when still-usable items are put to good use instead of being thrown away. I am more conscious now of recycling and saving every resource possible (especially paper, water, and electricity). But the most important aspect of growth, I believe, is that it is much easier for me now to entrust everything to God: my own needs and dreams and of those who are close to my heart, my Sisters, family and friends, with confidence and peace.

**OBEDIENCE:** During my early years in the Convent, I thought that Obedience would be the most challenging for me. This was because before entering Religious Life, I had already reached that point in my life when I had been making my own decisions; with no longer needing to ask for anyone's permission (for e.g., from my parents). But I was wrong; it wasn't so challenging to practice obedience because I've seen how blessed I was (and still am) to have Superiors who were sincere and authentic in being "human agents of God's Will." It wasn't hard to obey my Superiors because they were all generous, patient, considerate and compassionate. However, I believe I have grown in the discipline of asking for permission and following and trusting the wisdom of my Superiors. I have also grown in terms of praying and seeking for guidance from the Holy Spirit to know the will of God and trying my best to align my will to His. It is not hard to trust and obey God who truly loves us and cares for us.

**PRAYER LIFE:** I would say that I now have a more meaningful Prayer Life. I now have a better understanding of the different types of prayer (liturgical vs. private, vocal vs. mental, etc.). I have grown tremendously in my understanding, appreciation and reverence for the Holy Mass. I have been enlightened that everything I do can be a prayer (and thus help me to fulfill what the Scriptures tell us: "Pray without ceasing."). I have been immersed in the welcoming and embracing presence of Jesus during Eucharistic Adoration and Holy Hour. I now have a deeper devotion to praying the Rosary. For years before entering Religious Life, I seldom prayed the Rosary. I was praying it with my family when I was a child but stopped because I had misconceptions about it. I am now more comfortable and confident in asking for help from our intercessors in Heaven: Mama Mary, the Saints and the Angels. I am now more mindful of the power of prayer, which makes it easier for me to give it as gift to others -- more precious, more valuable than material gifts. I could say that I have been inspired to be more generous in praying for others.

**APOSTOLIC LIFE:** I am grateful to God and the Community that I have been given opportunities to go out into the mission field, in imitation of the Good Shepherd; looking for the lost sheep of the flock. I have grown in knowledge and experience; through the different assignments I was given since my Novitiate. I have learned theories from and experienced actual visitation with my

Directors and senior Sisters who took me along as a “buddy” and allowed me to learn from the experts. I would say, however, that the biggest growth for me in the Apostolate is my current assignment at a Parish, here in Mandaluyong, Philippines. It is in this assignment that I have been able to apply the things I learned and experienced during many visits to homes. It is also here that I experienced giving catechesis to public high school students, and some of whom were 13



to 17 years old and I helped prepare them for their much desired, “overdue” First Communion. It was in this endeavor that I got to experience helping those whom we call in the Community as, Mother Foundress’ “Specials,” those who need extra care and attention, to be brought closer to Jesus. In this assignment also, I had the chance of being in-charge of one of the scholarship programs of the Parish, where I have grown in compassion, dedication and love for the poor. In this aspect of my assignment, I have been moved to help the scholars and their families become closer to the Church and to have a deeper relationship with God, through regular formation, one-on-one sessions, and visitations.

**COMMUNITY LIFE:** Growing up in a family of devout Catholics and studying in schools run by Religious, I was formed to have deep reverence for Priests and Religious men and women. This helped me in relating well with my Sisters in the Community, regardless of background, race, behavior, temperament, personality, preferences, etc. I thank the Lord for the grace of love and respect for each of my Sisters, whether near or far. I believe I have grown in charity, as guided by the two greatest commandments: to love God and to love my neighbor. As a Parish Visitor of Mary Immaculate, my nearest neighbors are my Sisters. I have grown in charity because I always pray and desire what is best for each one of them. Sometimes challenges are inevitable, but through the grace of God, charity in Community Life becomes easier. God’s grace helped me embrace my Sisters in their strengths and weaknesses. His grace also helped me with my own strengths and weaknesses, making me strive to be a good Sister both in and out of the Community. It is always God’s grace. Also, I

have grown in knowledge on how to go about Community Life through the formation given by Directors and formators, referenced from: 1. Excellent sources like Mother Foundress' writings; 2. The Lives and works of Saints and deeply spiritual authors; and 3. Their own rich experiences.

The Lord has truly blessed me by letting me hear His call to this way of life. Now that I am a Perpetually Professed Parish Visitor of Mary Immaculate, I am more hopeful that like Mama Mary, our Blessed Mother, I (and you) could be perfectly happy in Heaven.



*“Mary was perfectly happy in this coronation because she had fulfilled her title of Queen of the Saints. In Heaven there is a joy “that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither hath it entered into the heart of men to conceive” (I Cor 11:9), of the reward promised to those*

*that love God. And if that reward is great for anyone who loves God, how much greater will it be for those who, having given up all things, placing their whole trust in Christ, go out to seek souls for him. How great that reward is, especially to the wholly consecrated daughter of Mary Immaculate. Where the Mother is, there will the daughter be; as the Mother has received her crown, so will the daughter receive hers, also, if she has walked in her Mother’s footprints. As Mary was Queen of the Apostles, she received a special coronation; so will her daughter receive a special reward for her apostolate. When we reflect, therefore on the coronation of the Blessed Virgin, we will also consider Heaven, because coronation in this sense means Heaven attained.”*

– SERVANT OF GOD, MOTHER MARY TERESA TALLON  
(from The Parish Visitor Catechist,  
chapter on “The Fifth Glorious Mystery”)



## FROM THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY:

### *Chastity*

“In the life and teaching of Mother Mary Teresa, consecrated chastity was understood to be one of the chief means to arrive at a contemplative union with God - the pure and single of heart shall see God. Faithfully lived, this chaste life gives a special grace of holiness which is essential to the missionary work of the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate, enabling them to be unafraid of the corruption they will meet in their travels.” C. 15

### *Poverty*

“Through evangelical poverty the Sisters follow the poor Christ. Placing themselves in a state of dependence on God through the Community, they are to live simply and share joyfully what is provided for their life together in the Lord.

Striving further to be freed from attitudes of possessiveness of material and spiritual goods, they seek entire attachment to God. Total detachment of heart will enable them to receive all as gift from God and to be happy and thankful for it, whether it be plenty or lack, suffering or joy.” C. 18

### *Obedience*

“Led by the Spirit to enter more deeply into Jesus’ loving surrender to the Father through the human agents of the Father’s will, the Sisters consecrate to God their entire will through the profession of evangelical obedience. In return, God gives the assurance that He will unfailingly lead them to union with Him through their obedience. C. 28

In all things they shall endeavor to have that supernatural spirit of faith which enables them to be joyful, ready and uncomplaining in their obedience. The interior freedom which is necessary for this will come only as they let the grain of self die and lovingly surrender with Jesus to the Father.” C. 30

# News from Nigeria



By Mother Maria Catherine, PVMI

When Sister Margery Therese and I landed in Nigeria on January 25, 1991 we were 2 white faces in the sea of African children eager to see these oddities in their midst!

From that day until May 1995, we were the only two Parish Visitor Sisters living in Nigeria. On the feast of the Visitation 1995, we accepted our first group of postulants. They made their Perpetual Vows in 2005, which was an historic event both for the





Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate and for the Church in Nigeria. They recently celebrated their Silver Jubilee.

Now, in 2024, 33 years later, our Nigerian mission has grown to 23 African Sisters!

Recently, our aspirants Edna and Mary Rose became postulants. Our postulant, Vivian, has entered the Novitiate, and now called Sister Vivian Mary. Our novices: Sister Mary Callista & Sister Mary Bernadette have made their First Profession of Vows.



In January, Sister Mary Leticia professed her Perpetual Vows.

Despite the ever present and real physical danger, as well as exorbitant food prices, our Sisters continue to minister in our Mother Mary Teresa Tallon catechetical schools and in several parishes. Women of deep faith, they live daily trusting in God's Divine Providence.





May I ask your kind prayers for the safety of our Sisters in Nigeria? I know they count on our prayers and you can be certain that you will be remembered in theirs!

***Chukwu gozie gi!***  
*That's Igbo for*  
*"God bless you"!*





“I  
see  
you.”

By Sister Rebecca Miriam, PVM

How great is the love of God that He should gift me with a vocation to the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate! Words cannot even describe the depths of His gift of this vocation of being united entirely to Jesus and in His service. Yet, there are a couple of events that I recently experienced which in a way deeply portray what it is to me to be a Bride of Christ forever.

The Spring before my Profession of Perpetual Vows I had the opportunity of going with a group of youth from the parish to the annual New York Catholic Youth Day sponsored by the Archdiocese of New York. Toward the end of that faith-and fun-filled day all 1,200 participants gathered outside for a time of Eucharistic Adoration. Due to the large crowd, our parish group found itself unable to sit together. So, after assuring all our youth had a seat, I discovered a little space tucked between two rows of seats, and there I knelt, feeling quite small and unnoticed. During the Holy Hour, the Blessed Sacrament was processed down the aisles, and periodically the Bishop would stop and bless a group of people. When the procession finally arrived at my aisle, I thought that surely, I would not be seen to receive a blessing. True enough, the Bishop blessed a group of people a little way before me and then walked right passed me with Our Lord. In my heart I cried out silently, “I love You, Jesus.” Suddenly, the Bishop stopped in his tracks and turned around, bringing our Eucharistic Lord right up to me. “Sister,” the Bishop said, “Jesus is smiling at you.” Then he came so close I became completely enraptured in the humeral

veil. As I bowed my head in Adoration, I suddenly felt the Bishop's hand on my head. He spoke again, "He loves you so much." Then I was blessed with our Lord in the Monstrance and the Bishop continued with the procession. In that encounter with our Lord, I felt Jesus speaking strongly in my heart, "I see you...You are not hidden from My sight nor My love."

That beautiful experience in a way captures the gift of my vocation. In my littleness, weakness, and insignificance Jesus saw *me* and fixed His gaze upon me. In the truest sense God "sees me" and loves me for who I am. He drew so close to me and called me to be His forever. This glance of love then captivates me to surrender my entire self to His embrace. I become enwrapped in Him, clothed in grace and the protecting mantle of Our Lady. In professing Perpetual Vows as a Parish Visitor of Mary Immaculate, Jesus united me to Himself forever. Everything that I am is His and all that He gives me is lifted back up in love and praise to Him, and the overflow of His gifts are poured out for the redemption of the world. As Pope Saint John Paul II exhorted Religious in his beautiful Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*: "Do not forget that you, in a very special way, can and must say that you not only belong to Christ but that 'you have become Christ!'" (109)



I was reminded of these words just a month before my Perpetual Vows. Still carrying in my heart the grace-filled experience of being "seen" by Jesus, I had the immense privilege of attending the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis with several of our Sisters. With the great amount of people and activities, the Congress encompassed a few different buildings to accommodate everything, which required a bit of walking outside between places. It did not take long for some of the homeless of Indianapolis to realize the advantage of sitting along the

sidewalk where so many charitable people walked around for five days. One day, as we passed two homeless men and smiled in greeting, I felt inspired to stop for a moment. Materially they were literally overflowing with things to meet their daily needs, but the Holy Spirit stirred in me that perhaps I could give them something different. After speaking a little with them I offered each a Rosary and a promise to pray for them, which they happily accepted. A couple of days later I again saw one of the men I had spoken to earlier, sitting on the sidewalk. I called out to him by name and without getting up from the ground, he smiled and reached out his arms to me as a child would do when wanting its mother to pick them up. In that instant I heard Jesus in my heart, "Let Me love him through you." I gently embraced him as my brother and my spiritual child. I strongly felt Jesus speaking from my heart to this man's heart, "I see you...right where you are, and I love you." The man's face lit up with innocent joy and he began waving the Rosary I had given him as I continued on my way with the Sisters to our event at the Congress. In that moment, I remembered kneeling on the ground with Our Eucharistic Lord before me and His words to me, "I see you." Jesus had touched me especially at the youth event that I may be able to love Him more and that He may in turn use me to show His love to others. In a song about the Immaculate Heart of Mary by the Benedictine Sisters of Ephesus, there is a line, "The lance thrust, two Hearts were rent; for Thy new children all was spent." Yes, to be a Bride of Christ forever means that our hearts (His so great, mine so little) are joined together. The things that bring Him joy are also my own, and that which grieves Him is my sorrow as well. My heart is Jesus' to be forever a place where He finds an abode of special love and a docile instrument to use for others. As His Heart was entirely poured out for us, so also my heart, my life, is surrendered over – entirely spent – for love of God and with Him for souls.





## For His Mercy Endures Forever

By Sister Alina Marie, PVM

There is a psalm that the Sisters pray regularly as part of our Religious Life that sums up the reason for my vocation. That psalm is 136, which is labeled “Easter Hymn” in the Divine Office prayer book. (The Divine Office is the public prayer of the Church that Religious pray at specified times each day.) Indeed, that psalm leads me to

sing of the Easter of my own life, the works of God in redeeming me and raising me to new life in each event in my own journey towards the Promised Land of complete union with God. It is a psalm that reminds me of my continual experience of His Merciful love forming, molding, and transforming me until I am finally freed from all that keeps me from total union with Him and am able to be consumed by His Divine thirst for souls in every aspect of my being. These lavish and saving works of God in my own life that have led me to my Perpetual Profession of Vows on August 15<sup>th</sup> of this year is why I proclaim with JOY that *“His love endures forever!”*

Psalm 136 begins,

*“O give thanks to the Lord for He is good,  
for His love endures forever”*

and it goes on to tell line by line all the things God has done for His people in detail with *“for His love endures forever”* repeated between each line as the reason. For example, it says that He made the skies, *“for His love endures forever”* and He made the sun, *“for His love endures forever”* so that we know that everything created is made for one reason: because He loves me and wants to give me all these gifts as an expression of His personal love for me.

Then the psalm goes on into the nitty gritty of His Fatherly *relationship* with His people and all He did to rescue them from slavery in Egypt. When praying this psalm, I think of His rescuing actions in my own life. It causes me to reflect on how His saving grace has again and again *saved me* at various times in my life to teach me His faithfulness in His espousal to me, *“for His love endures FOREVER.”*

It says,

*“The first-born of the Egyptians He smote,  
for His love endures forever.”*

In my own life, He fights for me against all the “Egyptians,” which represent anything that enslaves me to sin and the lies that the Evil One uses to try to hold me in bondage, away from the true joy and freedom of union with God. God fights for me against my foes. The Evil One who wishes to destroy my soul and sabotage God’s good plan for my life is no match for the One whose *“love endures forever”!*

*“He brought Israel out from their midst,  
for His love endures forever.”*

Even in the most difficult times, God is always acting and saving me. Just as when God split open the Red Sea to create a path for the Israelites when all seemed lost as the Egyptians attacked them, nothing is impossible for God in my own life – *“for His love endures forever”!*

*“Arm outstretched, with power in His hand,  
for His love endures forever.”*

Throughout my life, whenever I really surrendered and let “Jesus take the wheel” in the most “impossible” circumstances, it was incredible to see His power handling everything. It is a cause for wonder and awe. It is a cause for deep gratitude. It is a cause for being in a state of peace, as an infant is in the arms of her mother – *“for His love endures forever”!*



There is so much more to this psalm, which goes on to speak of God leading His people through the desert, feeding them, destroying their enemies, and remembering them in any distress – all with the sole reason of “for His love endures forever.”

In Hebrew, the original language of the Psalm, the word “hesed” is the word used for “love” and is most closely translated as “mercy.” This hesed-love, or mercy, is deep and rich. It describes the covenant faithfulness of God which is steadfast and unwavering, from the depth of One’s being and is not thwarted by betrayal. It is as intimate as the love from a mother’s womb, particularly compassionate to the suffering of others, and is dependable and powerful through any obstacle. (cf. *Divine Mercy 101: What is Divine Mercy?* | *The Divine Mercy*) Therefore, the depth of the meaning of God’s covenant with *me* in my own life is best described with one word: *hesed*.

I am what I am because of God’s *hesed*. I was given a beautiful Catholic upbringing with all the sources of grace right in front of me because of God’s *hesed*. I feed daily on Jesus’ own Body and Blood because of this *hesed*. He has forgiven me again and again because of His *hesed*. And now, I am perpetually professed as His own spouse, for one reason, and one reason only:

***HIS HESED ENDURES FOREVER!***







# With Your Grace

By Sister Marie Meaghan, PVM

There are all kinds of sounds each day - whether it is the sound of a friend or family member at the door, the laugh of a child, the birds or honking of horns outside. The list can go on and on. In the midst of it all, and in light of it all, we are called to listen with the “ear” of our hEART. It was when I listened to the voice of God in my heart that I “heard” through prayer, Mass, the Rosary that He was calling me to Religious Life.

I was raised Catholic and grew up with my family in a suburban neighborhood on Long Island, NY, attending the local parish, St. Frances de Chantal. My family was not, and is not rich, but is rich in the love, support and encouragement of my Mom. She works so hard and has encouraged us to follow our dreams.

I enjoyed horseback riding, working at the barn, jiu-jitsu, helping at the dojo, and being outside. I loved animals and the environment. I wanted to “save the environment” and went on to pursue studies with that goal in mind.

It was fun going on geology field trips at college and getting involved in various ways. One club that I got involved with was the Newman Club. We went on retreats at Immaculate

Conception Seminary that were amazing. The seminarians ran parts of the retreats, and it was great to see their love for God, the Eucharist, Mama Mary, and the Church. I also occasionally went to Faith on Tap in my hometown, and there, I was invited by a few soon-to-be friends, to a youth/young adult group in another parish. The witness of those in the group was inspiring. We attended different Catholic events together or just hung out at the diner after a meeting. As a parish we went to the March for Life. Things were snowballing in a sense, and God was drawing me in. Over time, whether by attending Catholic Underground in NYC, the Padre Pio Prayer Group on Long Island, or participating in a Polish Walking Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA, God was revealing His love for me in a deeper way. Later, I would realize that He was calling me to be His.

I graduated and was working in the environmental consulting field. It felt great to be actively working in the field and going on various “adventures,” as they seemed to me, to places that few people normally get to see. While in graduate school in Boston, studying Geology, I was working as a teaching assistant and research assistant. I was able to do field work in Mexico collecting samples and archives for research from caves including one involving vertical rope work. It was amazing! When I returned, I saw an article in a caving publication that St. Benedict was the patron saint of cavers.

While in Boston, I got involved with various groups on campus and the young adult community at St. Clement’s Eucharistic Shrine. There, through the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, I made a consecration to Jesus through Mary. I was active and volunteered readily for several events. Even though I had not completed my master’s thesis, I had to go back to work full time and was able to return to the field of environmental consulting. Now that I was back on Long Island, I joined the Nocturnal Adoration Society and Catholic Daughters of America in my new parish of Our Holy Redeemer in Freeport, NY. where I also served as a lector. A priest suggested that I read a chapter of a book put out by Acton Institute on Environmental Stewardship in the Christian Perspective. If I recall correctly, it basically asked the question, how can we be focused on environmental stewardship if we, as a society, do not defend life in all respects, from conception to

natural death. Now, I was pro-life and involved in peaceful pro-life activities, but this struck me.

For some time, I had been discerning a call to Religious Life but was unsure of which Community to enter until I came to know about the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate. I visited the Sisters on several occasions. I thought it was beautiful how the Sisters reach out to everyone – people of all ages, cultures, and economic levels, all over the world, like the Good Shepherd. In some literature that I received there was information on the mission crucifix that the Sisters receive at their perpetual profession. I did not fully understand it at the time, but it appealed to me. I had a deep desire for something more, and God confirmed in prayer that He was calling me to be a Parish Visitor of Mary Immaculate. I was prompted to apply for entrance while I was at adoration of the Blessed Sacrament during the Polish Walking Pilgrimage. I was accepted and entered the Community in 2016. This year, on August 15, 2024, through the grace of God, I professed my perpetual vows as a Parish Visitor. He has worked numerous miracles for this to take place and continues to do so – thanks be to God!

In stepping out in faith – leaving my job and entering the Community, there was peace and joy, and there has been all along the way. God continues to amaze me and provide His grace and mercy. “For His mercy endures forever.”

After my Perpetual Profession, someone asked me what Jesus said to me when Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, placed the crucifix ring on my finger. I said that I did not hear anything, but it was as if Jesus was saying, “Will you be Mine forever.” And I said, and continue to say, “With Your Grace.”

If Jesus is calling you to be His, I would encourage you not to be afraid to follow Him!



# Novice Notes

By Sister Marie Michelle, PVMI

On one of my visits to the Community before I entered, I received the “Parish Visitor Missionary” to read. I opened it and saw the chapter entitled “Doing the Will of God.” On the first page I read these words of Mother Mary Teresa Tallon, “according to the vocational calling, the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate...are convinced that Our Lord has laid upon them, especially, the command: ‘Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage.’ (Matthew 22:9). What is the marriage? It is the nuptial bond of love between God and the soul, which awaits the charitable message of the charitable Sister to affect.” Those words were, at the time, a clear confirmation of the inspiration I received that morning at Mass.

Now, as I am preparing to profess my vows, I reflect more deeply on the words, “What is the marriage? It is the nuptial bond of love between God and the soul.” I realize that to profess vows of chastity, poverty and obedience is really to respond to the invitation of Jesus Christ to my soul to become His Bride, to receive the gift of a nuptial bond of love with my Creator, Redeemer, God, Savior, Beloved and best friend. I realize this gift is so great, and I am entirely unworthy of it as a mere creature, and a repentant sinner. However, I find peace in the words of St. Therese of the Child Jesus who said on the first page of her autobiography, “He does not call those who are worthy, but those He chooses.”

I see now that Jesus began to call me years ago, although I was not aware of it. Several Scripture verses that I now see in light of the vows, struck me deeply, especially Matthew 19:12, “Some have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it.” I remember sitting in my apartment on Long Island years ago as I read

theses word, and saying to myself, "I understand this, and I can accept it...although I have no idea how this is possible, since no one ever explained to me the meaning or purpose of this, and I had never thought of becoming a Religious Sister prior to that time. Then, on another occasion, I was reading the Acts of the Apostles, around the same time during my life, and I was particularly touched by Acts 4: 32-35: "the community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own...For those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need." Somehow, I realized I wanted to live in this way, although I did not understand as I do now, that this is really the Scriptural basis of the community life of Religious and of the vow of poverty.

Jesus and Mary were also particularly preparing me for the vow of obedience prior to entering this Community, from the words of St. Maximilian Kolbe chosen for the Office of Readings: "Obedience raises us beyond the limits of our littleness and puts us in harmony with God's will...Obedience is the one and the only way of wisdom and prudence to offer glory to God. If there were another, Christ would certainly have shown it to us by word and example. Scripture, however, summed up His entire life at Nazareth in the words: 'He was subject to them,' Scripture set obedience as the theme for the rest of his life, repeatedly declaring that He came into the world to do His Father's will."

It is amazing how Jesus and Mary have worked in my life, from one that grew up like other Long Island girls, shopping at the mall each year for new clothes, now to wear with great gratitude through an undeserved grace the religious habit of the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate, and the freedom from those cares now living, in some sense, what Mother Mary Teresa said; "When this outfit wears out, where am I going to get another" Never mind, I know where I will get it; God will provide, so we do not have to worry. Our Heavenly Father will take care of us. 'Consider the lilies of the field...they labor not, neither do they spin.'" (Matthew 6:28)

During this phase of my novitiate, as I live in quiet prayer, word and study, my heart resonates with the word of Pope St. John

Paul II in Vita Consecrata #81: "The new evangelization, like that of all times, will be effective if it proclaims from the rooftops what it has first lived in intimacy with the Lord." What a grace and blessing to be called to this Community, which truly lives a contemplative life of daily meditation, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a spirit of Recollection throughout the day, daily communal Rosary, coupled with the call to be missionaries in today's world, where so many have lost their way, or are confused about their identity as children of God. They may not have had the chance to learn the truth of the Catholic faith, nor to receive the Sacrament of Baptism and Holy Communion and appreciate the beauty of Holy Mass.

I think it best to end with the words of Mother Mary Teresa Talon from 1929, asking her intercession as I continue to prepare to profess to live in a way pleasing to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, through the powerful help of Mary Immaculate the vows, Rule, spirit and charism of the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate.

***"When you get something so fine  
that there are no words to express  
it—you feel like being silent—the least,  
the lowest of all—to be His spouses.  
Think of it, think of it! You cannot  
estimate it—Sponsa mea—Christ  
says—My spouse."***

## Pray for Us — We Pray for You.



- October 4 Sr. Mary Colette McCarthy, 1992  
4 Sr. Mary Bertille Beaudreau, 1992  
7 Sr. Mary Clarissa Albach, 1980  
9 Sr. Mary Hilda Broderick, 1954  
9 Sr. Mary Elise Stutzenberger, 2021  
11 Sr. Mary Theodora Timony, 1965  
12 Sr. Mary Rita Ready, 1998  
12 Sr. Mary Matilde Thompson, 2000  
14 Sr. Mary Concepta Deady, 1980  
17 Sr. Mary Irma Powers, 2005  
22 Sr. Mary John Bosco McTernan, 1943  
23 Sr. Mary Scholastica Werner, 1973  
25 Sr. Rose Aimee Tremblay, 2008  
28 Sr. Marion Adele Mitchell, 2008  
31 Sr. Mary Verda Mutz, 2006
- November 2 Sr. Mary Lucian Keyes, 1977  
3 Sr. Mary Josephine Seitz, 1978  
10 Sr. Mary Martha Keville, 1953  
11 Sr. Mary Alberta Money Penny, 1979  
20 Sr. Mary Barbara Enright, 1964  
21 Sr. Mary Joan Halton, 1953  
23 Sr. Mary Melanie Quaid, 1969  
23 Sr. Mary Celeste Taylor, 1981  
25 Sr. Mary Ludivine Whitty, 2000
- December 1 Sr. Mary Claret O'Melia, 1983  
5 Sr. Mary Horan, 2010  
7 Sr. Mary Suzanne Burke, 2009  
8 Sr. Mary Marcella Parnoff, 1994  
13 Sr. Mary Mercedes Cernich, 1984  
14 Sr. Mary Grata O'Donnell, 1961  
14 Sr. Mary Elaine Blais, 1986  
16 Sr. Mary Elizabeth Brady, 1959  
16 Sr. Mary Zita Stack, 1962  
28 Sr. Mary Lydia Mullen, 1966  
28 Sr. Jeanne Marie Dufour, 1988  
30 Sr. Mary Helen Pfundner, 1997



Is God calling you to give your life totally to Him  
as a Parish Visitor of Mary Immaculate?

**4 Steps to discern  
GOD'S WILL**

**Prayer / Eucharist  
Sacred Scripture  
Holy Mass & Adoration**

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**Visit us!**

**Spend time with us!**

**Be open!**

**Go wherever He leads!**



*Please consider passing this magazine on to a friend or relative.*