

Comments for the Rite of Initiation into Religious Life
By Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director
July 15, 2018

Sister Concepción, it is with great joy that I greet you and all present here in St. Mary's Chapel this afternoon! It was six months ago today, on January 15th, that we were gathered in this same sacred space to welcome you into the Postulancy of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity.

You heard the Lord call your name and you responded. Sister Concepción, you wrote that your new name has great significance for you. It came from your great grandmother and was given to you at birth to be your middle name. Although you never knew your great grandmother in person, you have heard stories that affirm that she was a woman of strength, wisdom and courage. There is great character and love associated with this name. This name is also in honor of the Immaculate Conception. You learned about Mary through the faith of your Mother and Grandfather. The name given to you today, Sister Concepción, represents Our Blessed Mother, Mary, and your ancestry in a beautiful way. You have chosen December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, as your Feast Day.

Your Group Title is "God's Love" and the Feast Day chosen is March 25th, another feast of Mary. You wrote that the Annunciation is a huge depiction of God's Love. Aside from each person's creation, the fact that God would send His Son to participate in human life depicts and demonstrates an incomprehensible love!

Today is also the feast day of Saint Bonaventure. St. Bonaventure embraced the spirit and vision of St. Francis of Assisi. His life was devoted to prayer, study, preaching and writing to lead and guide the followers of St. Francis, even to this day, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. In writing about St. Francis, St. Bonaventure stresses that the only source and purpose is focused on Jesus. Jesus is the focus of our life. Along with the Scripture readings from our Mass this morning and those you chose for the service this afternoon, we can look to St. Bonaventure for some quotes to ponder as we strive to live the Gospel in our daily life:

- "In all your deeds and words you should look upon this Jesus as your model. Do so whether you are walking or keeping silence or speaking, whether you are alone or with others. He is perfect and thus you will be not only irreprehensible but praiseworthy."
- "To know much and taste nothing, of what use is that?"
- "That heart is free which is held by no love other than the love of God."

Sister Concepción, you have come today expressing your desire to learn the life of a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. We, your Sisters, assure you of our willingness to pray, witness and journey with you to grow daily in love of God. In closing from St. Bonaventure, "If you learn everything except Christ, you learn nothing. If you learn nothing except Christ, you learn everything!"