

# Communigram

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY

## Paschal Candle: Symbol of the Continuity between our Baptismal Consecration and our Consecrated life as Religious Women

Why do we have candles at Jubilee? What is the history or connection to other ceremonies in the Community? After some discussion and a bit of research the following was discovered.

The *Ceremonial of Reception and Profession of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity* was used through the summer of 1967. According to that Ceremonial, during the Ceremony of Reception, the novices received a candle with the words, "Receive this blessed candle which is a figure of Jesus Christ and an emblem of ardent love."

During the Ceremony of First Profession, the Sisters held lit candles at the time that the Celebrant gave the Book of the Holy Rule to each of the Sisters being professed. In the Ceremony for Perpetual Vows the Sisters held lit candles during the Prayer of Consecration.

In the current ceremonies, individual candles are used only at the time of Jubilee. In our Constitutions, Chapter 1B, it states, "As a Congregation of apostolic women religious in the Church we respond to God's call by living in a more intense way our baptismal consecration." This affirms the connection between our baptismal and religious consecration.

The Paschal candle is a symbol of the light of Christ that came into our lives at the time of our Baptism and a fitting symbol of that light that continues to shine through our lives as

consecrated women religious. Beginning with the ceremonies this summer, the Paschal candle will be present in the Sanctuary to remind us of that reality. A statement will be included in the booklet for each ceremony to draw attention to its presence and meaning. It will read: "The Paschal candle is lit as a symbol of the continuity between our Baptismal Consecration and our Consecrated life as Religious women. Jesus is the light that leads us and shines through us as we grow ever deeper in our relationship with Him."

—Sister Theresa Feldkamp, Vocation Formation Coordinator

## 50th Anniversary of Earth Day



To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Earth Day this White Pine was placed in the area behind Sacred Heart Grotto replacing the larger White Pine planted last June in honor of our 150th anniversary.



## Spiritual Direction During Quarantine



Though not the preferred setting for spiritual direction, it is possible to meet with directees via several social media platforms. I've been active on Zoom, Facebook Messen-

ger, Google Hangouts and Skype. I offer those four options to clients who wish to have a session. I've also used the telephone which is adequate but doesn't offer the body language and facial expressions which embody more emotions than just the voice. "Whatever works" is a motto/mantra I use to get a client connected with me. I encourage directees to speak their worries, fears, joys, dreams, challenges and experience(s) of God.

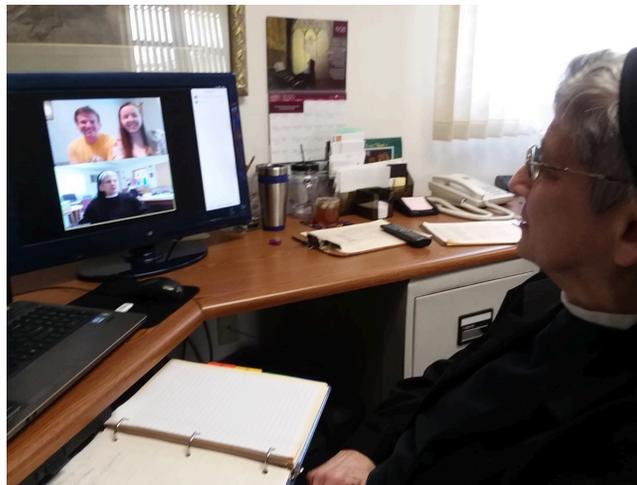
Admittedly, it took some experimentation to get the camera situated with decent lighting, height and clarity. A patient friend offered suggestions for day and evening lighting, camera placement and height. The volume of incoming and outgoing voices was a bit easier to calibrate. If any Sisters who come to me for spiritual direction wish to try these platforms, just email me and we'll try to make it work. You will need some privacy and a computer with a camera. If video is not possible, the phone will work as well.

—Sister Anne Marie Lom

## Formation and Community Building Continues

*Chasssel/Houghton, Michigan*—As we all know the situation with Coronavirus abruptly changed our daily routine. Suddenly our St. Al's Campus Ministry's Mission Trip to Fr. Carr's Place2B was shortened when Wednesday night, March 11th we were informed that Michigan Technological University would not have classes face to face on Monday. Decisions had to be made in every area of campus ministry and parish life.

Everyone scrambled to learn video chat programs online to stay in touch with parishioners and to continue ministries. What would we do with the Marriage Preparations? Some couples were in the middle of the program, and were planning May and June weddings. After discussion the issue with Fr. Ben Hasse, I was online learning about



ZOOM chatrooms.

I have been doing ZOOM with four couples so far and will be starting with a few more who have just been engaged. Mat and Kiaya pictured in the ZOOM chat mentioned that it really went well. They thought it would be strange but it did go smoothly.

Not only has marriage preparation gone to ZOOM, we also have the Adult Education (17 people are in the Wednesday classes), RCIA sessions, Spiritual Direction, and Friday Night FireSide. Last Friday we had Seniors' sharing their graces and memories of St. Al's on campus. There were fourteen testimonies heard by over 50 participants. Socializing and building community has always been important, we just have to be creative in this "stay at home" situation.

—Sister Jaqueline Spaniola

## Baptismal Consecration: An “All or Nothing” Transformation in Christ

In our last issue, this column focused on the fact that, at our Baptism, Jesus Christ claims us for His own. No longer do we belong to ourselves, but we BELONG TO CHRIST. We noted, however, that to think of ourselves as belonging to Christ might make us wonder if, deep down, we count for anything at all. If it is indeed “all or nothing” and we, at the end of the day, are “nothing,” must we obliterate ourselves in order to belong to Jesus? Or worse, does Jesus really obliterate me in order for HIM to prevail in me?

While these questions might seem irrelevant or even irreverent, much pastoral experience both in and out of the classroom has taught me that many, if not most, Christians struggle with these questions, particularly when we are / were young. So let’s take a moment to reflect on what the Tradition teaches us about belonging to Christ.

St. Paul is the first to articulate what it means to belong to Christ: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20). In saying that he has been crucified with Christ, he communicates Christ’s having consecrated him through his Baptism *into Christ’s death*, a consecration St. Paul received from Jesus Christ in the Spirit and lived with energy. Do we live our Baptisms as Jesus’ action in our lives? Or do we live them as *our action* in the Church?

St. Paul goes on to say “it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” With this observation St. Paul communicates the profundity of his baptismal experience / consecration: Paul is no longer “the one” living, but rather, it is CHRIST who lives in Him.

“But Sister, this sounds an awful lot like Jesus obliterated Paul!” Yes, it does. In his struggle to communicate the depth of his baptismal experience in words, St. Paul makes it seem as though he is a zero. If we keep reading, however, we see that St. Paul says: the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2.20).

St. Paul still lives his own biological, historical life. He is

still a tentmaker and a preacher to the Gentiles. But now that he belongs to Christ, his biological, historical life (just as it is) has become soil for *divine life in the Spirit*. St. Paul has been transformed so completely that the entirety of his biological and historical life has become an “real presence” of the living God. In light of the reality of Christ’s presence living within him, St. Paul enthusiastically acknowledges and chooses his nothingness so that he might choose Christ! Choosing our *nothingness* frees us up to *choose Christ, our ALL*.

One of the “signatures” of Catholic thought is our focus on Jesus’ real presence in the Eucharist. We draw attention to Catholic teaching regarding the real presence, focusing on the transformation of bread and wine into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. Biologically and historically, bread and wine still look, smell, taste and act like bread and wine. However, after they have been consecrated, they become Jesus Christ’s own body and blood.

St. Paul’s teaching in his letter to the Galatians speaks to just as profound and radical of a transformation *of the Baptized* into Jesus Christ. Biologically and historically we remain ourselves . . . we remain parents, teachers, engineers, bankers, business owners. All of this human reality is taken up and transformed by our Baptism. Indeed, it is not too much to say that what Jesus is by nature, He makes us become by the grace of our Baptism.

Baptism changes everything. By the divine life that has been planted with us at our Baptism, we believe that we will not stay dead, but that, like Jesus Christ, we will bodily rise from the dead. *That* is indeed an amazing and total transformation.

During this Easter season, and as we live the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic, let’s beg the Lord Jesus to deepen our experience of our Baptismal consecration. The next time we are live-streaming the Mass, let’s pay attention to the Eucharistic prayer. As the priest calls the Holy Spirit down on bread and wine to transform them into the Body and the Blood of Christ, let’s beg the Holy Spirit to come down upon us, to renew within us the life and love given us at our Baptism; to complete our transformation into fully transparent icons of Jesus Christ.

Sister Marie Kolbe Zamora, OSF, S.T.D.  
[smkolbeschol@gmail.com](mailto:smkolbeschol@gmail.com)

As we join the Church in celebrating the Easter Season, we recall the beginnings of the Church and the institution of the diaconate. Pope Francis calls this office in the Church to mind in his intention for the month which states: *We pray that deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church.*

If we recall the purpose of the institution of the diaconate we will remember that it was for service to the poor. Deacon Greg Kandara puts it this way, **“We have deacons because the Church herself is called to be deacon to the world.** We have ministerial deacons to help us actualize our ecclesial identity as servants to and in the world.”

The United States Bishops’ website offers a reflection on Francis as deacon. “Francis often used the word ‘mercy’ or in Latin *misericordia* — a heart sensitive to misery. That’s what a deacon is all about. That’s what mercy is all about.” *Misericordia* might also be defined in lived form as being ‘heart sore.’ To live the mercy of God is to become heart sore. Your heart is aching when you see people in need or people who are hurting or people who are broken. How did St. Francis teach us, through his actions, to be that way? Find the leper. Find the one who is so repugnant to you and embrace him or her.”

Francis felt called to serve the Church as a deacon, because the role of the deacon is that of servant. For Francis serving also required mercy in its highest manifestation. Service without mercy, without love becomes condescending and self-serving. We pray for the heart of Francis present in all deacons ordained for the service of the Church today.

Pope Francis tells us that deacons must have "a healthy heart" that has been healed by God through forgiveness and constant dialogue with Jesus, through daily prayer and the sacraments. Speaking directly to ordained deacons he says, "You can offer the Lord your work, your little inconveniences, your weariness



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and your hopes in an authentic prayer that brings your life to the Lord and the Lord to your life. When you serve at the table of the Eucharist, there you will find the presence of Jesus, who gives himself to you so that you can give yourselves to others.”

The liturgical actions of the deacon shed light on his call. Deacon Joseph Donohoe shares his insights on the deacon’s work at Mass. “He stands at the altar because of his contribution to the poor—both the earthly poor and the spiritually poor. The Deacon conducts the prayers of the faithful for God to hear the petitions of the Church offering them up to God like incense before His throne. It is the Deacon that mixes the water into the wine as a product of hard work, sweat and blood, of the community and presents this gift to the priest so that he can offer it up to God. The Deacon is also the one who helps bring resolution to conflicts within the community. In the Acts of the Apostles, the Twelve ordained seven worthy men to become Deacons. This was due primarily to the need to bring unity between the Hebrew speaking and Greek speaking communities. Thus, the Deacon invites all to share a sign of peace at Mass.”

To further inform our prayer this month, we can recall this passage from the writings of St. Francis.

“We must be simple, humble, and pure. We should never desire to be over others. Instead, we ought to be servants who are submissive to every human being for God’s sake. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on all who live in this way and persevere in it to the end. He will permanently dwell in them. They will be the Father’s children who do his work. They are the spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we pray for vocations, let us remember to pray for good and holy deacons to serve the Church with mercy, humility, and love for God’s Word as well as for his little poor ones.

# Holy Family Conservatory of Music Goes Online Because of Pandemic

*Manitowoc, Wisconsin*—Holy Family Conservatory Families of Music for TOTs, Children’s Choir, Group Lessons, and Private Lessons were updated on April 9, 2020 regarding the Conservatory status of music instruction due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Beginning the week of March 16, 2020 some of the teaching by the Conservatory teachers had moved to the format of Zoom or some other similar platform. By March 30 all lessons and groups of the Conservatory were being handled through on-line formats. Presently we have ten teachers providing online instruction for Children’s Choir, Music for Tots™, piano, violin, guitar, trumpet, and group piano classes. So, what does an online music instruction look like?

## CHILDREN’S CHOIR

Rehearsals for Children’s Choir are provided with an online platform through Carol Storck. She runs online rehearsals for eleven choir members every Tuesday.

## MUSIC FOR TOTSTM

The TOTS teachers provide their families with video classes and post them on You-tube. These classes can be viewed repeatedly and sustain the relationship between teacher and the tots. This is the way classes were fulfilled for the families but all involved definitely look forward to meeting in person come the Fall of 2020.

## PRIVATE LESSONS

The student and teacher see and hear one another through the computer. The teacher has his or her own music to know what the student is looking at and playing. The student performs the music he/she has prepared during the week and receives educational instructions from the teacher.



*Sister Mary Carol Kopecky presently teaches nineteen online students.*

The ability to teach online lessons has meant a lot for the teachers, students and parents. We know this is less desirable than in person face to face lessons, however given the circumstances there is no other option but to move to online. With the united effort of teachers, students and parents we have helped the school day to be the centerpiece of their lives. Children count on the reliable routine that a school day offers. So, we rose to the occasion to make sure the continued growth in musical skill and routine for daily practice is observed by providing this online instruction. We do see progress in the students and the parents have told us they are very supportive of the online process.

Maintaining learning momentum to the greatest extent possible, given the circumstances has been a top priority for Holy Family Conservatory of Music. And we have been grateful for the patience and understanding of everyone as we continue to work through this difficult situation. We are getting through this challenge together!

*—Sister Carol Ann Gambsky*

## Pray for the Deceased



SISTER PETER STENGL

Born: October 4, 1920  
Died at Holy Family Convent  
April 8, 2020

Religious Profession of Vows  
August 15, 1939



SISTER FRANCES JOSEPH  
HILDEBRAND

Born: November 17, 1921  
Died at Holy Family Convent  
April 11, 2020

Religious Profession of Vows  
August 15, 1961

# By the Holy Cross You Have Redeemed the World



*St. Clare of Assisi Convent 640 Wellington Street in Imperial, Nebraska is the site of a tree that had seen its better days.*

On Friday, March 27, Joe, the landlord, came to the Sisters home and announced, "Today the tree will have to end its ways!"

Sadly, Sister Rochelle and Sister Michael Ann agreed, but they were in a haze!

That such a noble tree would have to be razed?

On its boughs, chick-a-dees, blue jays, robins and mourning doves have gazed!

But now, the end of its branching maze!

Picture 2

Joe, the landlord, paid no heed!  
Immediately executed his dastardly deed!

Limb by limb, he did trim,  
It was done, only by him.

Calculating where each large branch would fall, Successful in sparing his house, after all!

Buzz, Buzz, Buzz, sounds came and went  
To the city dump, bulky limbs are sent.

Darkness crept into that day's light,  
Eventually, home he went for the night.

Picture 3

Tuesday, March 30, was bright with light,  
Joe, the landlord, returns with all his might!

Zigging here, zigging there,  
As if there wasn't a care!

Joe, the landlord, had a thought in his mind,  
Cutting deeply into the wood all during this time.

No change would be enough to warrant this  
Destruction of such wood, surely to be missed!



But wait!

Therein lies another's fate!

"Bravo"! "Bravo"! "Bravo"!

Cries arose,  
neighbors' doors would not close.

O Lenten Cross, so fresh and new  
Only Joe, the landlord, knew.

The tree was not finished yet  
Inside its bark, a sign he set.

By the wood of such a tree,  
Our Savior did see  
A way to take care of you and me!

Sisters smiled! Sisters clapped!  
How perfect is that!

Thanks be to Joe, the landlord,  
Appreciation and faith, you have scored.

By all who pass by this way  
From now and through Easter Day!

*Photos and verse by Sister Rochelle Kerkhof*



*Sister Kathleen Murphy shares this from Greenwood, Mississippi:*

A beautiful moment on this holy day [Palm Sunday] was provided by our eldest parish family member, Papa Sam Leach, 89.

Though the church is locked by diocesan decree and there are no services, Papa Sam drove up at the normal Mass time of 11:00, parked and swung his crippled legs out of the car. There he sat in prayer before his beloved church until Mass would have been over around 12:00 and he drove home. What an example of faith!

## Women's Healing Retreats at the St. Francis House of Prayer



*Before the Safer at Home mandate Sister Marsaia Kaster was able to hold two Women's Healing Retreats at the House of Prayer.*

Our November 12-15, 2020, Women's Healing Retreat had women from: Menasha, Chicago, Oshkosh, Manitowoc and Pulaski. They all have their stories and concerns.

One of the women was notified directly before retreat that she would need surgery for a newly-found brain tumor after retreat and simultaneously her husband received word he would be losing his job almost immediately.

It is always such a blessing to hear how God is working in their lives. (I have received permission from Lori to share the following with you.) On April 19, Lori wrote: Hello my dear sisters in Christ! This has truly been a whirlwind as you say! Since the day before I came for my retreat till now so many things have happened from tumors to surgery and pandemics. I am so glad we have each other in prayer and I'm so glad that I hold tightly to God's hand and know without a doubt that He is in charge. I am doing very well. It was a rough 4 to 6 weeks and then I started to see real progress. I was living through a hell that no one could properly prepare me for. Soon after I started to be able to do more of my normal day. I still struggle with balance but compared to where I was which was absolutely horrible I am so grateful for where I am. There wasn't a minute that I didn't know I was being held in prayer and there wasn't a time where I didn't just think about those days we had at the convent and feel a sense of calm and peace. I am so blessed and grateful! I have been in the

house since my January 30th 11 hr. surgery. I have come to see it as a beautiful opportunity for an in-home retreat to learn more about being contemplative to clean out closets, to rearrange cabinets, to purge all the things I don't really need, to start working in my garden in the backyard truly making my own little safe place spirituality center. Through that weekend and all our prayers, Matt did get that job and it's been such a blessing. So much to tell you guys, we definitely need to have another few days together. It's amazing what God has done. Matt is in this job of director of spiritual care for the hospital system during the pandemic it's just amazing to watch. God really is in control. It is changing Matt in many ways, too. Yesterday we drove up to Wisconsin with signs we had made and stopped outside the homes of all our relatives and waved and put up a sign. We ended by my Uncle Len and brought him some food and were able to talk through the patio door for a little while. Would love to hear how everyone else is doing. Know I continue to pray for you and hold you dearly in my heart. You were there at the scariest moment of my life and you helped me through those few days. I will never forget that. Love and peace to all!! Lori



The above photo is from our women's healing retreat, March 10-March 13, 2020. The retreatants are from Manitowoc, Two Rivers, and Seymour. Here we are taking a "mini-pilgrimage" to the Motherhouse chapels.

*—Sister Marsaia Kaster*

## Eucharistic Adoration



*Chassell/Houghton, Michigan*—During this pandemic, we have adoration at St. Anne Catholic Church, Chassell and St. Albert the Great Catholic Church, Houghton, through a window. St. Anne's from the parish parking lot: Saturdays 3-5 p.m. (left photo) and St. Al's from the Michigan Technological University parking lot (right photo): Tuesday evening: 7-9 p.m., Wednesday evening: 8-9 p.m., and Sunday: 4-8 p.m.

Confessions are offered at St. Al's - drive up in your car next to the car of either Fr. Ben Hasse or Fr. Dustin and roll down your window.

*Sister Jacqueline Spaniola  
Pastoral Associate*

## Spreading Love



*Motherhouse*—The third floor parlor window of St. Rita Health Center, decorated to spread love during this time of the pandemic, is filled with colored hearts, a Teddy Bear face, and the words: *Spread the Love*.

Colored hearts also appeared in the windows of the cafeteria—the creative work of one of the cooks.