



THE WORD LIVES

2019 November

CELEBRATING OUR 2019-2020 JUBILARIANS

Sr. Annette's Reflection

...when will this King alone reign in me?

This cry came from a heart struggling to respond to the Incarnate Word's invitation.

Surely this cry can also come from the heart of each of us as we seek to live the call of our own Baptism within our own unique circumstances.

It is even a cry echoed in our liturgy as we move from the Feast of Christ the King to the mantra of Advent, seeking to prepare for the King's return.

Only a year later (1625) then 29-year-old Jeanne Chezard, Catherine Figent Elizabeth Fleurin formed the seed community of the Order of the Incarnate Word.

Mother de Matel's life-long mission was truly marked with frustrations, oppositions, even persecution.

However, even with these experiences, she revealed a view surprisingly different from what we might expect. She continually expressed gratitude for all that her Lord and King both provided for her and was accomplishing through her.

As we approach our national Thanksgiving Day, what is the focus of our gratitude to God? Material blessings are the most obvious and not unimportant.

Mother de Matel focused on her being loved and showered with intangible gifts by her God

A challenging focus for our November reflection. Can we name our spiritual gifts? Do they give us peace and joy?

A counter-cultural focus for our December preparations. How are we preparing for the coming of our King? As our



Sr. Agnes Marie Tengler
75 years



Sr. Catherine Brehony
70 Years



Sr. Mary Paul Hon
60 years



Sr. Jude Janecek
60 years



Sr. Maria Irma Gonzalez
50 years



Sr. Anna Marie Espinosa
50 years

Sr. Agnes Marie Tengler (Margaret Christine) was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, on October 22, 1926, the daughter of August John Tengler and Agnes Cecilia Whelan Tengler. She was educated by the Incarnate Word Sisters and belonged to Cathedral Parish. She entered the convent on February 2, 1944, made first profession on August 6, 1945. She served as Superior General from 1968-1976 and then as Assistant General from 1976-1984. She served as Principal of Incarnate Word Academy from 1962-1968, and then as Registrar from 1976-1984, and again as Principal from 1984-1992. She was appointed the Bishop's Representative for Religious in the Diocese of Corpus Christi in 1976 and the Bishop's representative to the Diocesan Development Commission where she served as Chairperson. She also served on the Diocesan Pastoral Center Commission and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. In 1984 she received the Papal medal, Pro-Ecclesia El Pontifice, for outstanding service to the Church. Her past involvement in the civic and diocesan communities includes membership on the Board of Directors to the Coastal Bend Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Red Cross Advisory Council, Educational Development Office, and Governance Task Force, Mission 2000. Her devotion and service to her Sisters and to other Church and civic groups was accompanied by a great sense of humor, a sharp mind, and willingness to help in any situation.

Sr. Catherine Brehony (Teresa Evelyn) was born in County Sligo, Ireland, on July 26, 1929, the daughter of John and Catherine Anne Brehony. Her mother introduced Teresa to the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament by talking about and sharing letters from her own two sisters who had entered the Congregation. Three of her sisters followed her to the Congregation: Sr. Rita (d.1996), Sr. Maria Elizabeth and Sr. Colette. Sr. Catherine entered the Congregation August 26, 1947 and made first vows on April 2, 1950. Sr. Catherine taught in Catholic schools in Corpus Christi,

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she taught mathematics and religion. In addition to her teaching in schools, Sr. Catherine taught religious education at St. Patrick, St. Theresa, Our Lady of Guadalupe and Holy Cross in Corpus Christi; St. Paul in Flour Bluff and Our Lady of Refuge in Refugio. At IWA she directed the student CCD assistants and teachers in preparing for programs in their parishes. In her congregational service, Sr. Catherine served three four-year terms on the General Council, coordinated Initial Formation and served as Director of Postulants. She also served as Vocation Director for six years, and participated in many of the commissions and committees of the Congregation. In commenting on future members of the Order, Sr. Catherine said: *I hope they will radiate happiness and peace and be a sign of God's love, presence and hope for a broken world. To do this we must all be firmly rooted in a relationship with Jesus, the Incarnate Word.*

Sr. Mary Paul Hon (Marjorie) was born June 27, 1938, in Brownsville, Texas, to Marion Edward Hon and Pilar Padilla Hon. Sr. Mary Paul was taught by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word, and graduated from Villa Maria High School in Brownsville. Before she entered the convent, she was challenged to serve in ministry by her pastor, who assigned her to teach all ages in religious education. In September, 1958, she entered the congregation, making first profession of vows in August, 1960. She taught and served as principal at Incarnate Elementary, Corpus Christi, and Villa Maria High School, Brownsville, as well as in parish schools in the dioceses of Brownsville and Corpus Christi. When Sr. Mary Paul heard a request for help from Deacon George Wiest, then chaplain at McConnell State Prison in Beeville, she answered the call and worked diligently during her ten years of service to the imprisoned. She was recognized by Bishop Michael Mulvey in 2016 with the *Evangelii Gaudium* medal, which acknowledges those whose lives radiate the joy of Gospel living and in recognition of a way of life. In the congregation she has served as General Counselor, Chapter Delegate, and as Committee and Commission chair and member. In reflecting on her experiences of ministry, Sr. Mary Paul said she *found the youth to be accepting, open, perceptive and full of surprises.* She enjoyed her work with parents, teachers and staff as a team effort to evangelize and proclaim the Incarnate Word.

Sr. Jude Janecek (Mabel Gertrude) was born July 31, 1939, in Victoria, Texas to Cyril Methodius Janecek and Ruth Pearl Bracht Janecek. Taught by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, she graduated from Incarnate Word Academy in 1957 and entered the Order in September of that year. She made first profession of vows on June 3, 1959, and professed final vows in 1962. Sr. Jude has taught and been principal in schools in the dioceses of Corpus Christi and Brownsville. She served in Campus Ministry at Texas Southmost College, Brownsville, before establishing the Office of Youth Ministry in the Diocese of Corpus Christi. In congregational ministry, Sr. Jude has served

at the Women's Shelter of South Texas and Christus Spohn Hospice, then was able to offer her valuable experience for her parish ministry. She currently serves as Adult Faith Formation Coordinator and Pastoral Counselor at Sacred Heart Parish in Rockport, where she contributes to evangelization in creating a welcoming and caring faith community. *I rejoice and give thanks, Sister said, for sixty years of being blessed by God, my family, my Sisters, and the many friends with whom I shared ministry and friendship. I place my trust in the Word Incarnate, as together we continue our journey, connecting His story with our story.*

Sr. Anna Marie Espinosa (Anna Marie) was born on October 21, 1947, to Ernest and Beatriz Espinosa. After graduation from IWA Corpus Christi, she entered the Congregation on September 8, 1966, and made first profession of vows on August 1, 1969. Her ministry in education included teaching at Christ the King School, Incarnate Word Junior High, and St. Theresa School in Corpus Christi. When she was assigned to Brownsville, she served as registrar and then principal of Villa Maria High School. From 1989 to 1992, she worked as Development Director for the Diocese of Brownsville. She also served as Incarnate Word Academy Director of Development in Corpus Christi. Beginning in July 2001, she served as President of IWA in Corpus Christi for nine years. Sr. Anna Marie has also been active in Congregational governance, chairing and serving on numerous commissions and committees of the Congregation. In 1984 she began serving on the General Council during the administration of Sr. Martha O'Gara. She has been an elected delegate to numerous General Chapters of the Congregation. Since 2011 she has served as Vocation Director for the Congregation. She also designs print media and a Facebook page for the Congregation as one instrument for the sharing of vocation information. She is a current member of the National Religious Vocation Commission (NRVC) Board and is a member of our 2020 General Chapter Facilitation Committee. Reflecting on her life experience, Sister said, *I have been greatly blessed in my journey as a Sister of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament. The people I have known and with whom I have served have given me great joy and have reflected back to me the loving presence of Jesus in our world.*

Sr. Maria Irma Gonzalez (Maria Irma) was born April 5, 1947, to Juan Gonzalez and Maria Hinojosa Gonzales. After graduation from Brownsville High School, she entered the Congregation on September 8, 1967, and made first profession of vows on August 1, 1970. Sr. Irma taught in schools in Corpus Christi and Brownsville beginning in 1972. For four years she served as Assistant Principal for Academics at St. Joseph Academy in Brownsville. Sr. Irma's participation in Congregational leadership has included her position as Superior General for eight years and on the General Council for 16 years as well as four years as Sister-in-Charge of the

2019 JUBILEE MEMORIES

experience has included treasurer of the Sisters' Council, the Educational Development Board, and Long-Range Planning Committee for St. Joseph's Academy, Vicar of Religious and Pastoral Planning Advisory Group for the Diocese of Brownsville, and the national Visioning Group of the Religious Life Futures Project. She served on the board of directors for Mary's Pence, an organization that works to fund women's projects in the Americas, especially those that focus on women and children. July 1, 2009, Sr. Irma began serving as Campus Director of Incarnate Word Academy and Villa Maria Language Institute in Brownsville. On June 10th, 2016, she was installed as First Councilor to the Superior General, Sr. Annette Wagner and the Leadership Team of the Congregation. Currently she is the Finance Director of the Congregation as well as the Liaison to the Incarnate Word Associates in Brownsville. Sr. Irma comments, *My life as a Sister of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament has been a gift from God. I am grateful for the experiences that I have been afforded and the continued support of my Sisters.*



(above) Jubilarians, Sisters, families and friends gather in celebration of God's goodness.

Sr. Maria Irma Gonzalez, Sr. Anna Marie Espinosa, Sr. Jude Janecek, Sr. Mary Paul Hon,

RENEWAL OF VOWS

Word Incarnate, Son of the Eternal Father, You came that through sharing in Your life all creation might be sanctified and all might become one. You took me into the mystery of Your life and love at baptism; and I, by professing the vows of religion, confirmed my desire to be there.

Today I choose freely to renew those vows, to pledge again through and in this community a life of chastity, poverty, and obedience; to reconsecrate myself to the love and service of You and Your people.

As I rededicate myself today, I place my trust in the goodness and support that You, and also my Sisters, will afford me. Amen.



Sr. Agnes Marie renewing her religious vows as Sr. Annette Wagner, Superior General, receives them.



Sr. Agnes Marie ready to celebrate with Sisters, family and friends.

*You will make this day solemn and fill us with Your rejoicing
by the many favors we receive at our altars
where we pledge our vows to You.*



**THE RESOURCE CENTER FOR
RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES (RCRI)**

RCRI is an organization created to serve the needs of Catholic communities of religious women and men. The professional staff offers advice and provides resources for the leadership of religious institutes who become members of RCRI. For over 35 years, RCRI has helped communities to navigate the many complexities related to taxes and tax-exemption, corporate structure, internal organizational setup, finance, administration, and canon law. **Sr. Irma Gonzalez** and **Sandra Trespeces**, Treasurer General, attended the National Conference in Dallas, Texas, October 1-4. The program included 39 workshops related to finance, Canon Law and civil law.

The keynote speaker was **Sr. Norma Pimentel, MSJ**, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley. Sr. Norma oversees the charitable arm of the Diocese of Brownsville, providing oversight of the different ministries and programs in the areas of emergency, especially in organizing community resources to respond to the surge of Central Americans seeking asylum in the US.

LCWR REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Sr. Rosa Ortiz was invited to represent the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament and the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker (as a Board member) for a Homelessness Summit hosted by Corpus Christi Mayor Joe McComb on October 16. The Mayor invited agencies and organizations who currently support and help the homeless to gather, give input and feedback on how best to help the homeless. The city has added three city staff positions to address homelessness and the lack of affordable housing in Corpus Christi. The city hopes to provide leadership, coordination, and

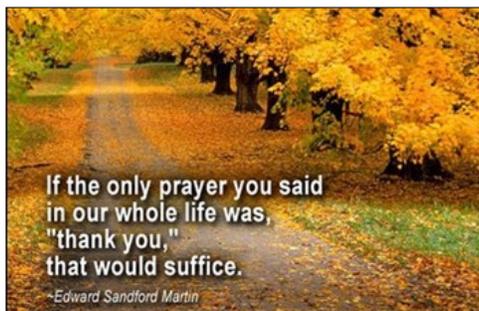
2019

November 8-10: Discernment Wkend for those invited to consider congregational leadership
November 9—11: Vocation Retreat
December 8: Associates Advent Retreat
December 20-23: Retreat & Chapter of Elections

2020

February 21-23: Pre-Chapter Meeting
March 1: Associate Lenten Retreat
April 24-26: Pre-Chapter Meeting
June 13: Leadership Installation
June 14-21: Chapter Retreat
June 22-29: Chapter of Affairs

Leadership Meetings are held on the



EXECUTIONS

2019 Scheduled Texas Executions
Prayer vigil gathering

Wed. September 4—Billy Jack Crutsinger
Tues. September 10—Mark Anthony Solis
Wed. September 25—Robert Sparks
Wed. October 2—Stephen Dale Barbee
Thurs. October 10—Randy Ethan Halprin
Wed. October 16—Randall Wayne Mays
Wed. October 30—Ruben Gutierrez



Wed. November 6—Justin Grant Hall
Wed. November 20—Rodney Reed
Wed. December 11—Travis Runnels

You are invited to join in prayer with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word on days when prisoners are scheduled to be executed by the State of Texas, and for the victims and the family members of

PEACE AND JUSTICE CORNER

One international campaign, [Move the Nuclear Weapons Money](#), notes: "One trillion dollars is being spent to modernize the nuclear arsenals of nine countries over the next 10 years." This money, it argues, "could instead be used to help end poverty, protect the climate, build global peace and achieve the sustainable development goals."

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Climate change is an urgent moral issue because it compromises the future of our common home, threatens human life and human dignity, and adds to the hardships already experienced by the poorest and most vulnerable people both at home and abroad. We teach that governments exist to protect and promote the common good, and that "the climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all." (Pope Francis, [Laudato Si'](#), #23).

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A recent report from Brown University on the costs of war found that the U.S. military is the "largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels in the world".

Watson Institute, Brown University

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We hope for a world where differences like skin color, religion, and nationality are not seen as separation, because there is no "we" and "them." We all participate in the same world, we share the same humanity, and we must confront the messages in society that promote the belief that we are all not one human family.

—Pax Christi USA

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We must fix our eyes on the future, on forging new relationships of love that include the earth, all peoples, all religions, all planets and all galaxies.

—Ilia Delio

MORE JUBILEE MEMORIES

Disney sponsors a contest every year honoring a family who does community service. This year one of our former students from Villa Maria High School in Brownsville and her family are listed among the top five families. The family is that of Connie and Rick Aguirre. While the family gets an all-expense-paid trip to Disney, the charity of their choice gets \$10,000. The Aguirre's chose St. Juan Diego school in Mission, Texas where Mr. Lugaresi is the Principal and **Sr. Anna Marie Espinosa** is on the School Board.

Read their story below.

Emily's Meals

The Aguirre family of McAllen, Texas, saw their community service evolve from a chance encounter.

About five years ago, then-6-year-old daughter Emily noticed a man who was homeless outside their local grocery store. Emily had many questions after her father, Rick, explained that the man did not have a home and lived on the streets.

Emily's generosity kicked in when she asked if they could give him some food, since he looked hungry. So they did just that, purchasing a dozen tamales and a cup of coffee for the stranger, who appreciated the token of kindness.

Soon afterward, the family went on to found [Emily's Meals](#), which works to feed 40 people every day, and connect the homeless to numerous local health and social service agencies, and even coordinates pet care. The family also has a trailer, where the people they help can take showers and get access to toiletries.

"Volunteering has brought us close together, especially with the girls. We look forward to feeding the homeless together every week," they said. Their advice to other families who may be considering getting involved and helping their community?

"Start small. It can be as simple and little as a bottle of water. It doesn't have to be complicated. You don't have to feed 40 people, start by feeding one person a day. It's all about making a difference in someone's life."



The Aguirre Family: Emily is holding her sign.

