

THE WORD LIVES

April 2018

Reflection from Sister Annette

"Madonna and child"—the perfect portrayal of the Holy Spirit's gift of mildness! It suggests tenderness, gentleness, tranquility. All these qualities we expect as natural to a mother with her infant.

Yet, our Foundress consistently attributed these same qualities to the Incarnate Word. He overlooked her faults, consoled her during her tribulations and sorrows, and rejoiced in her "daughters," or members of the Order. She even pictured herself cuddled on the Father's lap—a delightful reverse echo of "madonna and child."

How appropriate, then, that she also encouraged her Sisters and those she counseled to use this same gift in their interaction with others. In doing so, she frequently referred to the good example of her contemporary, St. Francis de Sales, whom she described as "the worthy bishop of Geneva."

Although he died many years before Mother de Matel, she was clearly aware of his mildness and consistently called attention to his meekness and gentleness. Surely she agreed with his comment,

"Nothing is as strong as
gentleness, nothing as
gentle as real strength."

As the Incarnate Word exemplified in His dealings with her and with us: Strength to control one's power when treating with gentleness one who is "less." Gentleness to tend with concern one whose situation or condition cries out for attention.

As those called to extend the incarnation of God's loving tenderness, let us welcome this gift of mildness to strengthen our union with and resemblance to the Incarnate Word, and to enrich our response to others.

SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On March 17-18, 2018, Incarnate Word Sisters who minister in Beaumont, Bluntzer, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Edinburg and Rockport, gathered at the Motherhouse in Corpus Christi for the annual spring assembly. The event opened with the celebration of the Eucharist, Rev. Eric Chapa presiding.

The meeting began with a hymn and orientation by Sister Annette Wagner, Superior General. Sister then offered a DVD presentation of the presidential address from the 2017 national meeting of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). It addressed liminal transition and diminishment; communion and Paschal Mystery. Reflection questions, conversation, and formulation of idea catchers about sections of the presentation were shared by participants at each table. Volunteers posted the idea catchers from their respective groups for all to view.

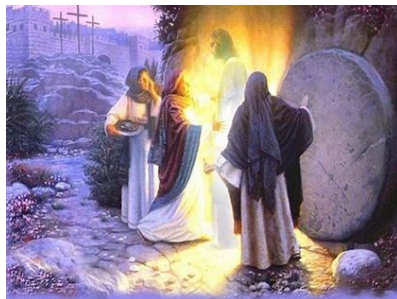
In the afternoon, Sister Anne Brigid Schlegel presented a power point, tracing a narrative of changes which took place after the Sisters arrived in Texas to begin ministry in the United States. Questions and conversation followed the presentation. Holy Hour, including Evening Prayer, concluded the afternoon sessions. After the evening meal, the community was entertained by a number of Sisters.

The Sunday morning session began with faith sharing in small groups. Sister Irma Gonzalez then gave an informative report, including power point features, on the progress of the reunification process. Sisters responded with questions and conversation. Celebration of the Eucharist, with Msgr. Tom Feeney presiding, concluded the weekend assembly. Lunch was served after the Mass.

REUNIFICATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Members of the Committee working on the Reunification process of the Order of the Incarnate Word were hosted by the Corpus Christi community, March 8—12. We are grateful to these Sisters for their dedicated work in this process for the Order: **Sr. Ma. Irma Gonzalez**, Corpus Christi; Hna. Vicky Diaz, Mixcoac, DF; Hna. Margarita Cortez J., Guadalajara; Sr. Mary Rose Kocab, Cleveland; Hna. Margarita Dibildox, Tlalpan, DF; and Hna. Alicia Carrera, Gomez Palacio.

† † †



*On Easter Sunday, joyous, victorious
and triumphant over all your enemies,
You became our Easter or our passage
from death to life. But it is a new life,
being the death of our death and the
sting of hell.*

Jeanne Chézard de Matel, OG-02, Ch. 161, p. 1155

Contributions for The Word Lives may be sent to Sister Rose Miriam at
SecretaryGeneral@iwbccc.org by the 20th of each month.



BUSY PERSON'S RETREAT

In March, several Sisters at the Motherhouse ministered as spiritual companions in a Lenten Busy Person's Retreat. A Busy Person's Retreat is a four day guided prayer retreat made within the daily schedule of the retreatant. It provides an opportunity for prayer and reflection in the midst of busy life activities.

The Retreat consists of one half hour of daily prayer with Scripture and one half hour of daily sharing with a spiritual companion. Retreat times are scheduled at mutually agreeable times according to each person's availability.

The Busy Person's Retreat is intended to help the retreatant to deepen awareness of his/her faith relationship with God. The two most important elements of this retreat are the commitment the retreatant makes to spend time in personal prayer and reflection each day and to meet with a spiritual companion to discuss his/her journey and the fruit of his/her prayer and reflection.

The role of a spiritual companion is to sit prayerfully in the presence of God with another individual, listen for God's movement within that person's life circumstances and be a soul friend. The role of the retreatant is to be responsible for his/her own spiritual journey, be intentional in his/her prayer life, claim whatever insights are uncovered during prayer and be responsible for his/her own course of action.

Srs. Colette Brehony, Camelia Herlihy, Lou Ella Hickman and Martha O'Gara served as spiritual companions for the Lenten Retreat.



April 14: Jubilee Celebration

April 22—28: Motherhouse retreat

June 3—10: Retreat at Oblate
Retreat Center

July 23—28: International Reunion

PRAYER FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Loving God,
I thank you for choosing me to be
your disciple
and for the gift of your Son, Jesus.
Help me proclaim and bear witness
to the Gospel
by word and by deed
today and every day.
Open my heart to
the outcast, the forgotten,
the lonely, the sick, and the poor.
Grant me the courage
to think, to choose, and to live
as a Christian,
joyfully obedient to God.

—Pope Francis



Executions in Texas

Wednesday, April 25:
Erik Davila

Wednesday, May 16:
Juan Castillo

You are invited to join in prayer with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word, 5201 Lipos Blvd., at 6:00 p.m. on days when prisoners are scheduled to be executed by the State of Texas, and for the victims and the family



PEACE AND JUSTICE CORNER

"Fossil fuel companies risk wasting almost \$1.6 trillion on oil, gas and coal projects that will become uneconomic," if the world continues to adopt policies that fight climate change's worst impacts.

—Financial Times

From 2001 through 2012, 6,410 women were murdered in the United States by an intimate partner using a gun—more than the total number of U.S. troops killed in action during the entirety of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined.

—Center for American Progress

The United States military is participating in the Yemen civil war by helping Saudi Arabia carry out airstrikes. These strikes amount to war crimes, and have killed tens of thousands of people. The US-backed coalition's decision to block food and medicine from getting into the country has pushed more than 8 million Yemenis to the brink of starvation. And it's created the largest cholera outbreak in modern history.

—Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Pope Francis spoke of "the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of any employment of nuclear devices. He went on to say, "If we also take into account the risk of an accidental detonation as a result of error of any kind, the threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned."

—Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

We need a legislative pathway to citizenship so DREAMERS are protected from the fear of deportation. We must also find a way to protect their families. We must continue to take action.

—Franciscan Action Network

Seven Deadly Social Sins:

- Politics without principle
- Wealth without work
- Commerce without morality
- Pleasure without conscience
- Education without character



INCARNATE WORD ASSOCIATES BROWNSVILLE

The Incarnate Word Associates of Brownsville have undertaken as a social action project to make "in kind" donations to Friendship of Women, Inc. This is a local organization that provides short term solution for women, men, and/or children needing to find shelter from an abusive situation. The Friendship of Women website requests that one contact them by phone to inquire if they can use items one may wish to donate.

In the past the Associates have donated dozens of handcrafted items such as crocheted lap throws, knitted caps, as well as toiletries. HEB cards for groceries have also been donated. Special donations included hand-made stuffed bears sent from a sewing group in Minnesota.

This year a member donated five sets of comforters with shams, bath towels, a couple of sweaters, five fleece blankets plus personal hygiene items. The organization's officers are always very grateful for our contributions.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

The oppression of any class of people corrupts the very heart of a society. It elevates hypocrisy to virtue and reduces equality to a lie. (Sr. Joan Chittister)

Authority without wisdom is like a heavy axe without an edge, fitter to bruise than polish. (Anne Bradstreet)

The true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations that we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within each of us. (Audre Lorde)

Those who do not move do not notice their chains. (Rosa Luxemburg)

None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free. (Johann von Goethe)



HOLY THURSDAY AGAPE

Sisters in Leadership washed the feet of other Sisters during our Holy Thursday Agape celebration.

