



THE WORD LIVES

December 2017

Reflection from Sister Annette

This month we prepare to welcome the Prince of Peace. Peace . . . what a wonderful thought. Global and national news shriek of the lack of peace. Personal conversations and my own observations in my corner of the world echo violence in word and action.

Surely I need this Prince of Peace. Although only a small element of true peace, non-violence can be both a fruit and expression of the peace that the Incarnate Word offers to Mother de Matel and me:

I delight in granting you great gifts; my love wishes to remove your fears. Do not dwell upon your weaknesses but upon these powers. Your thoughts are as far from mine as heaven is from earth. My thoughts for you are of peace and joy while yours are of conflict and affliction because of sin, which I have plunged into the ocean of my infinite charity.

. . . With humble gratitude, accept my graces, then, and suffer Me to love you and to pour out my torrents of goodness upon you.

What a lovely Christmas present I am offered! Do I have the humility, gratitude, trust to allow His torrents of goodness to pour over me? Can I let go of my focus on sin's effects, and focus on the goodness of the God who loves unconditionally? Can I accept the gift of personal peace?

If everyone could, the Prince of Peace would truly reign!



Front L-R: Teresa Salazar, Amber Blanco, Madeline Villa, Abby Sheets
Back L-R: Lisa Gallegos, Anthony Matl, Andrew Boland, Carolina Muñoz, Kaylyn Dihm

WELCOMING OF GALILEE DE MATELS

Nine Galilee De Matels (high school and college age) were received as members on Sunday, November 5th at 3:00 p.m. at the Sisters of the Incarnate Word Chapel. Parents and families attended as the members made their commitment. Each received a crown of thorns medal from Sr. Annette Wagner. All present were invited to a reception after the ceremony.

On the evening of November 14, the De Matels met with the Sisters in their chapel for Taizé prayer. Several members from near-by parishes also attended

+ + + + +



María del Carmen Aceituno, Promoter of the Cause for the Canonization of Jeanne Chézard de Matel, has asked that we please begin a prayer chain asking for the intercession of Jeanne for **Stéphane**, an adolescent who has been diagnosed with a cancerous tumor in his eye. You may recall that Jeanne had terrible eye problems in one eye and, thinking she would be blind, asked the Incarnate Word to intervene and save her sight so that she could continue

ophthalmologist. Now we ask her to intercede for this young man, that he may recover his sight.

And do you know where Stéphane lives? In Roanne, in the Chateau de Matel. He is the son of Laure Jeanne and Olivier Jean, the current owners of the house, where Venerable Jeanne Chézard was born and grew up. When Sisters visit the Chateau they are always welcomed. This is where Laura greets us with her smiling welcome to "our house" and where she says she feels Jeanne's presence with whom she speaks. We are very grateful to them, and what better recompense than to pray for their son Stéphane, that through the intercession of Venerable Jeanne Chézard de Matel he may be fully cured.

Please pray for Stéphane.

MINISTRIES
CORNER



The CC Diocesan Vocation retreat was held at the Pax Christi Retreat Center, November 3—5. The ten retreatants and the staff spent the weekend with prayer, reflection, presentations, Q & A periods, liturgy and Eucharistic adoration. Bishop Michael Mulvey, **Sr. Anna Marie Espinosa, Sr. Lou Ella Hickman** and other priests and Sisters were presenters. **Srs. Jo Ann Saenz** and **Rose Miriam Gansle** also participated.

+ + + + +

On November 6, Jeanne Chézard de Matel's birthday, at IWA High School Mimi Guajardo, Mary Ellen Galvan and **Sr. Judith Marie Saenz** prepared a short presentation on Jeanne. The celebration included prayer, a brief review of the meaning of charism, a short activity, "Fun Facts on Jeanne de Matel," then a reflective time using



Srs. Annette Wagner, Irma Gonzalez and Colette Brehony attended the LCWR Region XII Fall Assembly at San Juan Retreat House October 30 through November 1. As one of three conveners, **Sr. Marilyn Grace Springs** facilitated the meeting. The three days consisted of prayer, faith sharing, business meeting, a tour experience and several guest speakers. The morning tour of Las Milpas Colonia included a visit to ARISE--a community outreach organization founded in 1987 by Sr. Gerrie Naughton RSM, presently led by 35 women, from 5 community centers, serving more than 2500 families in Hidalgo county. Three guest speakers described the beginning, development and present status of Valley ministries. Sr. Norma Pimentel, Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, described her work and plans for the respite center (for undocumented immigrants apprehended by the Border Patrol) supported by the Humanitarian Crisis Relief effort in McAllen, Texas. Sr. Fatima Santiago, IHM, traced the story of Proyecto Desarrollo Humano (Project Sustainable Human Development) to the present status of parish. Stella Sosa Garza presented the purpose and methodology of Valley Interfaith since 1985, and her involvement in it. A consistent theme of all these organizations is a motto: *We don't do for the people what they can do for themselves.*

PEACE AND JUSTICE
CORNER



Following are quotes from Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si*, chapter 6:

Our concern cannot be limited merely to the threat of extreme weather events, but must also extend to the catastrophic consequences of social unrest. Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. #204

When social pressure affects their earnings, businesses clearly have to find ways to produce differently. This shows us the great need for a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers. #206

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life". #148

If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society. #208

If the laws are to bring about significant, long-lasting effects, the majority of the members of society must be adequately motivated to accept them, and personally transformed to respond. #211

The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. #217

Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds. #219

Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. #222

The earth on which we live is holy. (Jeanne Chézard de Matel)

NEWS TIDBITS



Srs. Ann Brigid Schlegel and Brenda Thompson were among the hospital volunteers who worked on the NICU (Newborn Infant Care Unit) Reunion at Christus Spohn South Hospital on November 11th. The children who had spent time in the NICU came dressed as their favorite sea creature or nautical pirate character. They received goodie bags and were greeted by the doctors, nurses and aides who had cared for them. After a blessing and welcome there were refreshments, games, face and balloon painting.

~



Srs. Emma Marie Stillman and Therese Ann Ridge gave a "Healing the Family Tree Seminar" for 80 pilgrims from different States on a Canadian pilgrimage to beautiful shrines, including St. Ann de Beaupre and St. Joseph Oratory. Many pilgrims reported personal inner healings upon applying a process for healing their family trees through the Eucharist, and a much greater appreciation for the power of the Holy Eucharist.

Let us rejoice over the glory of Jesus Christ,
our Word Incarnate,
and may He ever be for us
an inexhaustible source of happiness.
Jeanne Chézard de Matel, OG-04,

THENEWVERSE.NEWS PUSHCART NOMINATION

A poem by **Sr. Lou Ella Hickman** has been selected as one of six 2017 nominees for the Pushcart Prize. The poem was published in TheNewVerse.News on September 18, 2017.

a sacred rite: when athletes kneel

it could have been genuflections in a church
but there was no stained glass no pews
yet they knelt in a presence greater than themselves
a silence a sanctuary on a field
now a battle wages using words that pelt like stones
that cannot comprehend
this sacred moment this most protected of all rights
to dissent to kneel to stand to risk it all



*I thank you, Mother of God, Universal Empress, Divine Noemi,
who are all-beautiful and immaculate.
I acknowledge that this Order was born upon your knees.
It came into existence to honor your Incarnate Son
and for your glory.
It lovingly professes to honor your Immaculate Conception.*

Executions in Texas

Thursday, December 14:
Juan Castillo

Thursday, January 18:
Anthony Shore

Tuesday, January 30:
William Rayford

You are invited to join in prayer with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, 5201 Lipas 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 members of the victims.



Srs. Kathleen Goike, Clare Underbrink (IWBS Victoria) and Rosa Ortiz (IWBS Corpus Christi) attended the RFC Congress



2017 RFC CONGRESS

Sr. Rosa Maria Ortiz attended the 2017 Religious Formation Congress (RFC) held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from November 16-19, 2017. The theme of the Congress was ***Grace in the NOW: The Gospel of Encounter***. Sr. Rosa attended the Pre-Conference Workshop, ***Mentoring: A Near-Occasion of Grace***, presented by Mary Pat Garvin RSM, Ph. D. The focus of mentoring is on the development of the new member through the dynamics of the relationship. "Mentoring relationships" are: 1) a type of "relational learning" built upon mutuality, reciprocity and friendship (A friend is someone who wishes the best for another). 2) particularly beneficial during times of transition; 3) transitional relationships are most helpful when they lead to internalization." Mentoring is also vital in/to on-going formation.

The keynotes for the Congress were given by **Teresa Maya, CCVI, *Encuentro: A Call for Our Time***, and Stephen Bevans, SVD, ***Becoming Prophets of Encounter: The Culture of Encounter and Religious Life Today***. Teresa defined "Encuentro" as a multifaceted encounter of Mercy that denounces exclusion and isolation, proclaims relationship and is a journey through Mystery. She reminded us of the importance of our daily and community encounters with Jesus, rooted and renewed in and through our own personal encounters with Jesus each day. Teresa challenged us to reflect and to act. "We are in the middle of a paradigm shift. We can't let this hour of grace slip by. We need a new Pentecost." We are called to share our encounters with Christ, share joy, hope, faith and to "proclaim that evil and death do not have the last word!" Teresa's address affirms that Religious Life in the United States stands at the threshold of a profound transformation.

In his address, ***Becoming Prophets of Encounter: The Culture of Encounter and Religious Life Today***, Stephen Bevans, "building on Pope Francis's understanding of religious life as prophetic and on his hallmark phrase, 'culture of encounter,' reflect[ed] on the various ways that today's religious need to be formed-initially and continually-to be 'prophets of encounter.' Becoming a 'prophet of encounter' begins with encountering ourselves in wonder, humility, and possibility. It grows as we encounter both the world's beauty and cruelty. It is rooted in the realization that, before we encounter God, God encounters us. It matures as we encounter others 'as Jesus did, not just seeing but looking, not just hearing but listening, not just passing by, but stopping with them' (Pope Francis, Sept 23, 2016). Prophets of encounter eschew the 'culture of indifference' so prevalent in the world today and seek to witness clearly to the gospel, offer a word of hope in our difficult times, and never hesitate to confront oppression and injustice."

The Post-Conference offered a presentation by Mary Johnson, SNDdeN, and Sandra Schneiders, IHM, ***Re-Imaging Formation for Religious Life for the Future: A Sociological and Theological Analysis of Religious Life in the United States Today***. The presenters offered participants "the sociological and theological 'big picture' of religious life. that they (and many others) have been discerning with the help of many Congregations and leadership groups. They have also utilized the best tools of sociological and theological analysis, suggesting some ways we could undertake the re-imagining and re-organizing of formation programs, and provoking conversation on what could possibly