

THE WORD LIVES

March 2018

Reflection from Sister Annette

“Goodness” A word so over-used that we may miss the depth of its meaning. This fruit of the Holy Spirit’s presence within us is defined as “holiness in action,” “action for the benefit of others,” “motivation or desire to be a blessing for others.”

Our Foundress wrote continuously of God’s goodness. Occasionally she even refers to God **as** Goodness. She quotes the Incarnate Word as saying to her:

I will provide you with what is necessary, for I am rich in merciful goodness that is anxious to share.

Perhaps the first reaction to this statement is, “Sure, that’s Jesus talking to Jeanne, the foundress of an Order, someone on her way to canonization.” But doesn’t that comment deny the universality of the goodness that is expressed? Jeanne states in another passage:

In His goodness, He causes all things to work together for the good of those whom He deigns to love as His own.

Now the question might re-appear: **Do I believe that God loves me as much as God loves Jeanne? God loves Jesus?**

When the answer is yes, then truly Lent is a time of expanding our ability to welcome Goodness into our lives and thus being able to extend it into the lives of others.

As we prepare to celebrate Goodness revealed in the Paschal Mystery, Jeanne encourages us:

For those whom He loves, all things work together unto good, even regarding imperfections which, by his exuberant goodness, He changes into favors.

How comforting!
How encouraging!
How true!



ASSOCIATES LENTEN RETREAT

The Associates annual Lenten Retreat was held at Sarita on Sunday, February 25th. The presenter was Fr. Matthew Stephan. Father spoke on the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist with the theme: to experience the glory of the Transfiguration, we must experience transformation. Associates, Sisters and De Matels from Corpus Christi, Brownsville, Kingsville and Edinburg attended. The day included Morning Prayer, two conferences, Eucharist, lunch and opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

LITTLE BIT OF MEXICO

Incarnate Word Academy, Brownsville, presented the 65th “A Little Bit of Mexico”, February 18th at the TSC Arts Center in Brownsville.” Students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, as well as alumni and other guest dancers, performed a variety of Mexican folkloric dances. This year’s theme is: “A Flavor of Yucatan’s Dance.” Dances representing various Mexican states with their authentic costumes were crowned with the title “Al Son Que Me Toquen Bailo” (“I’ll Dance to Any Rhythm”). This year’s China Poblana and Charro performed the *Jarabe Tapatio*. All proceeds will benefit IWA. Three Bishops were honorary guests: Most Rev. Bishop Daniel Flores, Auxiliary Bishop Mario Alberto Aviles and Bishop Emeritus Raymundo Peña.



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



SOCIAL JUSTICE SPEAKER

The Social Justice Team invited Fr. Piotr Koziel, Pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Portland, to speak to the community about Contemporary Bioethics. Some of the topics presented were: when an embryo becomes a person, genetic engineering, stem cell research and end of life issues.

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS

Sr. Anna Marie Espinosa, Vocation Director and Board Member of the NRVC (National Religious Vocation Conference) shared good news about new vocations to religious life in the United States in 2017. CARA (the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) reported that 208 women and men professed perpetual profession in 101 religious institutes. Also, 524 women and men entered 182 religious institutes.

The average age a person first considers a vocation to religious life fluctuates between 17 and 20; however half are 18 or younger when they first consider a vocation

Both the spirituality and mission of the religious institute, along with the example of professed members, are most likely to attract newer members to their respective institutes, followed by the prayer life and community life.

...are we Lazarus, bound and sitting within darkened tombs of our own creation? Are these tombs of fear or indifference? Do we allow indifference to deaden and deafen us from the needs and the cries of others? Does fear drive us to possess more than we really need? Does indifference silence us from questioning and challenging those in positions of power within our church and our government?

Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF



March 17—18: Spring General Assembly

April 14: Jubilee Celebration

April 22—28: Motherhouse retreat

July 23—28: International Reunion in Tlalpan, Mexico

NRVC BOARD MEETING

Sister Anna Marie Espinosa attended the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) Board Meeting in St. Louis February 10-13. Currently, the Board is beginning its 2018 strategic planning process for the next three years and planning for the 30th Anniversary Convocation, "Walk with Me: Encounter, Accompaniment, and Invitation" to take place in Buffalo, New York, November 1-4, 2018. NRVC has 920 members including 632 Sisters, 74 brothers, 173 ordained, and 41 laity. Represented are 316 religious institutes, 30 religious organizations, 7 dioceses, and 2 foundations. On February 18-21, 2018, NRVC hosted a workshop, "The Roots of Racism: Implications for Candidate Assessment and Integration into Vowed Communal Life", at the Mexican American Catholic College in San Antonio which Sister Anna Marie will attend. NRVC recommends as a good read the recent CARA study by Sister Mary Johnson, SNDdeN, PhD, and others, "International Sisters in the United States", which can be found online.

Executions in Texas

Tuesday, March 27:
Rosendo Rodriguez, III

Wednesday, April 25:
Erik Davila

You are invited to join in prayer with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word, 5201 Lipes 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.



PEACE AND JUSTICE CORNER

We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. . . . Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living.

General Omar Bradley

The NYPD stop-and-frisk program affects thousands of people every day in New York City, and it is widely documented that an overwhelming majority of those people are Black or Latino. This report shows that many are also members of a range of other communities that are experiencing a devastating impact from this program, including LGBTQ/GNC people, non-citizens, homeless people, religious minorities, low-income people, residents of certain neighborhoods, and youth.

Center for Constitutional Rights

Haggai Matar writes in **+972** that one state or two states (Israel and Palestine) is asking the wrong question. What is desperately needed now is a return to basics and a recognition that guaranteeing Palestinians' rights is the foundation for any political solution.

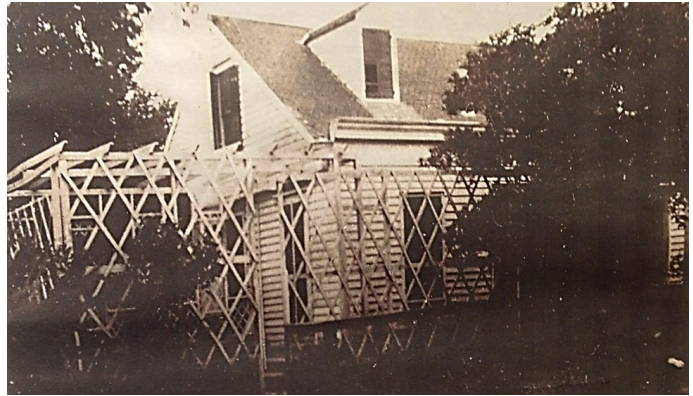
"All Christians and people of good will are thus called today to fight not only for the abolition of the death penalty, whether legal or illegal, and in all its forms, but also in order to improve prison conditions, with respect for the human dignity of the people deprived of their freedom."

Pope Francis

It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another,

INCARNATE WORD HERITAGE IN BROWNSVILLE

The Brownsville Historical Association in Brownsville has moved to a new location and has offered the use of one of their rooms to our Congregation to display our Incarnate Word Heritage in Brownsville. The display will be opened on March 7, the 165th anniversary of the opening of Incarnate Word Academy in Brownsville, the oldest continuously open Catholic school in Texas. The display will be housed at the Heritage Museum and Preservation



The Wells home in Brownsville, Texas, was the first American house of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament

On February 27th Aubrey Marie Nielsen, Collections Manager, Edward Camarillo, who will be in charge of our display, and Eric Gonzales, came to our Motherhouse to collect an agreed upon loan of 12 of our artifacts and 9 binders containing photos and history of our life and ministry in Brownsville. The month long display coincides with Texas History Month and Women's History Month.

The Sisters of the Incarnate Word are grateful to Eric Gonzales, IWA's middle school social studies teacher and a member of the Brownsville Historical Association for being the author of this display. Eric was inspired after a visit to the school's Heritage Center and after a visit to the Heritage Center at the Motherhouse. Backing him are several members of IWA's staff: Edward Camarillo, Development Director, Michael Camarillo, Principal, Sara Barrera, art teacher, William Lopez, maintenance.

Our heritage items will be returned to us in May. The Historical Association will be sending an invitation to our Sisters

SOCIETY OF THE INCARNATE WORD



We know that, during her life, Venerable Jeanne Chéizard de Matel had a deep desire to establish a Congregation of Priests to the Incarnate Word. Although Jeanne did not have the joy of seeing her desire fulfilled during her life, this intention has remained in the hearts of her Sisters. Attempts have been made at various times throughout the years to initiate the founding of the Priests of the Incarnate Word, and these attempts have been unsuccessful due to a variety of circumstances.

However, in 2012 Sister Margarita Dibildox wrote to your Congregation about new efforts that had begun in México City with Father Fr. Ricardo Villarreal Acosta. At that time she said, "The future of this institute lies in the hands of God. It falls to us to provide the means and to 'not stifle the Spirit,' (1 Th 5,19) certain that if this enterprise comes from God, it will thrive. (Cf Acts 5,39) The first communitarian experience towards

the foundation of the **SOCIETY OF THE INCARNATE WORD** began on Friday, August 15, 2014, under the protection of our Blessed Mother and of Venerable Jeanne Chéizard de Matel, and following the instructions of His Eminence the Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera. In God's mysterious plan, Father Ricardo died suddenly on November 23, 2016. Since that time the Sisters in Tlalpan have been praying and trying to find someone to take up this work. And God has responded not once, but twice on two different Continents.

Recently, the Bishop in Uruguay released a priest for five years to continue the work of Father Ricardo here in México. Father Jesús Antonio Weisensee Hetter has been working with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word in Uruguay for many years, and has also been in México many times for retreats and other community events. He is working with the five men in Mexico who have already been living in community and studying philosophy in preparation for priesthood here. At the same time, the Bishop of Nakuru has released a priest, also for five years, to simultaneously work with young men in Africa to establish the Society of the Incarnate Word there. Father Faustus Ndenyele has also had many years of association with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word in Africa. He came to México in November and will be here until the end of February, where he is being given an intense introduction to the history, spirituality, community life, etc. of the Order. There are many young men in Africa, most of them educated by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word, who have already written letters and expressed an interest in being Priests of the Incarnate Word.

(Excerpts from a letter from Hna. Lorely Ifran, Superior General, Mexico City, February, 2018)

LET US DO WHAT WE CAN—SPIRITUALLY AND PRACTICALLY—
TO COMPLETE MOTHER DE MATEL'S EFFORTS TO HONOR THE INCARNATE WORD.