

THE WORD LIVES

May 2018

EIGHT SISTERS CELEBRATE JUBILEES

Reflection from Sister Annette

These past months we have been exploring how the fruits of the Holy Spirit blend together into one life lived in unity with God. Within these twelve, several pairings are particularly appropriate. One pair is the combination of Faith and Modesty.

Faith accepts as true those realities that extend beyond objective or logical "proof." Often recognized as loyalty to a relationship, it calls forth a life lived in accordance to God's will in this time, this place. Abraham modeled it in his offering of his son to God—as he understood to offer. Peter expressed it in his testimony that the only Jesus had the words of everlasting life. We express it each time we take the road less traveled but clearly marked by the footprints of the Incarnate Word.

Modesty involves the humility of knowing that our achievements and abilities are gifts from God's gracious love and generosity. Not a blanket denial of the good that comes from our actions, but a joyful awareness of God's presence and action in our world, of the extension of the incarnation in this time, this place in and through us.

Mother de Matel recorded this invitation given her—and us—by the Incarnate Word. *Having confidence in Me, you will never be confused. Come to Me with faith and humility.*

Faith and modesty—both fruits of our awareness of whose we are and who we are. May our awareness grow ever stronger!

Sisters and many relatives and friends joined in celebrating the Jubilees of Religious Profession of eight of our Sisters on April 14th. Mass was celebrated at 10:00 a.m. at St. Patrick Church in Corpus Christi with Bishop Michael Mulvey as the main celebrant.



Sr. Mary Lucy Garcia (70 years) Born in Brownsville, she graduated from Villa Maria High School there. In her years of ministry, she taught at IWA Corpus Christi, Villa Maria, Brownsville, and other Catholic schools in those dioceses. In addition, she spent one year (1966) in McKinney, Texas, where she helped initiate the first Job Corps program for women. From 1991 to 1997 she served as Head Mistress of St. Xavier High School in Nakuru, Kenya. She also worked in campus ministry at Del Mar College and at the University of Corpus Christi, and served in pastoral ministry at St. Joseph Parish in Alice, Texas.

During her retirement she has devoted herself to prayer and giving adult Bible Study classes.

Reflecting on her years in religious life, Sr. Lucy stated: "I am extremely grateful for a life with God and for many lives I have touched and in whom I have encountered Jesus. I thank God for the grace of perseverance. Vocation to religious life is a call from God. If we persevere, it is God's gift to us, because our human nature can get in the way, but with God all things are possible."

NOTE: Two weeks after her Jubilee celebration, Sr. Mary Lucy died from a massive stroke. She continues her celebration with the Communion of Saints.

Sr. Stella Barrientes (70 years), one of fourteen children, was born in Port Isabel, Texas. She had a lengthy teaching career in South Texas schools in Beeville, Goliad, Brownsville, and Port Isabel. In addition to her teaching ministry, Sr. Mary Stella taught in the Diocesan Pastoral Institute, conducted reading and art workshops, and gave first aid classes for the American Red Cross. She sponsored the Sodality and the Legion of Mary, and coordinated CCD and CYO groups.



In her reflection on her life as a religious, Sr. Mary Stella said: "My desire has always been to teach children about God and to bring the good news of salvation in all areas of my ministry. While I was teaching in the ESL Program in Brownsville, children from different parts of Mexico came to learn better communication in the English language, and they showed a great love of music and art in their final presentations."



This year, on February 28, Sr. Mary Stella marked her 104th birthday, and the joy of the dance is still celebrated in her smiling eyes.

Sr. Christina Bradley (70 years) grew up in the Bronx, one of eight children. At age 14 she followed her great aunt, Mother Antoinette Bradley, and an older cousin, Sr. Noreen Begley, in their vocations as Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament. She went through formation with her older sister, Sr. Margaret Patrice Bradley. Eventually, the two Bradley sisters were joined by another sibling, Sr. Marian Bradley.

Sr. Christina earned the Montessori International Diploma from the Montessori Institute in Washington, D.C.. She taught in parish schools in the Diocese of Corpus Christi, served as principal of Cathedral School, and for many years was the Director of the Incarnate Word Montessori School which she helped to found.

Sr. Christina Bradley, continued:

Sr. Christina said that one of her greatest pleasures was working with the youngest Montessori students, who “were a source of joy and kept me young at heart. No wonder Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.’”

In her retirement, Sr. Christina is still active, whether it be with art projects, prayer, or helping out with community projects and activities.



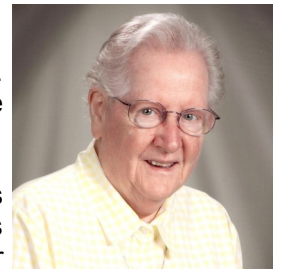
Sr. Brenda Thompson (60 years), Director of our Heritage Gallery, was born in Dublin, Ireland. She tragically lost both parents by age four. Two aunts and uncles cared for her. In 1955 she met Sr. Claude McManus who was on a home visit from Corpus Christi and told the students stories of her life as an Incarnate Word Sister in Texas. One year later, Philomena (as she was known), entered Incarnate Word Convent in Corpus Christi.

After earning Bachelor and Master’s degrees, Sr. Brenda was licensed as a professional counselor for the State of Texas. She served for eight years on the Board of the Coastal Bend Mental Health Committee and the Board of the Coastal Bend Childhood Mental Health Commission. In her years of ministry, Sr. Brenda was the administrator of the IWA/CC Kindergarten and taught at IWA in Brownsville. In 1990 she was honored as an “Outstanding Educator” by the President’s Commission on Education. For 24 years she served as the Director of IWA Alumni. Currently, as Director of Heritage, she organizes and preserves documents and artifacts important to our history and gives tours of the Heritage Room to visitors. She presently continues her service with volunteer work at St. Philip the Apostle Parish and Spohn Hospital.

Sr. Brenda has always enjoyed animals and nature. “I love being with animals and nature”, she said, “as much as I treasure having time to grow spiritually while answering the call of Pope Francis to go out and work beside the laity as a joyful, prophetic witness to God’s goodness.”

Sr. Denise Cassidy (60 years) was born in Dublin, Ireland. Like Sr. Brenda, she met Srs. Claude McManus and Noreen Begley who were on a home visit. They so impressed her, that she wanted to follow them to Texas.

For over fifty years, Sr. Denise taught and/or served as administrator in Catholic schools throughout South Texas: at the Corpus Christi Cathedral, Sacred Heart in Sinton, IWA in Corpus Christi and in Brownsville, St. Patrick, St. Theresa, and Central Catholic in Corpus Christi. After retiring, she tutored students at IWA. Currently she enjoys nature walks, listening to music and books on tape, knitting, crocheting, playing Canasta with the Sisters, and communicating with her family in Ireland.



In reviewing her life as a teacher, Sr. Denise commented: “It is a great source of joy to work with young children and let them know in the process how much God loves them.”



Sr. Esther Dunegan (50 years), Chancellor of the Diocese of Beaumont, Texas, was born in Kingsville, Texas. After teaching for ten years at IWA and Villa Maria in Brownsville, she earned her Licentiate in Canon Law from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. In 1989, Bishop John Fitzpatrick appointed her as Chancellor of the Diocese of Brownsville. She was among the first women (non-clerics) in this country to be appointed to the Office of Chancellor of a Diocese.

In 1995, Sr. Esther was appointed Chancellor of the Diocese of Beaumont, Collegiate Judge in the Tribunal, and Diocesan Canonist, positions she currently holds. She also served as Associate Director of Formation for the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese. In 2009, she was awarded the Holy Cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* (For Church and Pope), the highest honor that can be awarded to a Catholic lay person by the Papacy.

In reflecting on her years of ministry, Sr. Esther stated: “The past 50 years have been a journey of faith, transformation, and service to the Church. They have stretched me far beyond my comfort zone and enabled me to be available to others—an abundance of grace-filled encounters! Whether assisting the Bishop in the governance of the Diocese, listening to the heartache of a co-worker, being present to and supporting someone battling cancer, or assisting with behind-the-scenes tasks in the convent, the Lord Jesus has used me to reach others and let them know they are loved. Through them, and especially my Sisters, I have been truly blessed!”

Sr. Barbara Netek (50 years), St. Pius X Pastoral Minister and Leadership Team Member of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Corpus Christi, entered religious life with Sr. Esther Dunegan. Sr. Barbara was born in Sinton, Texas, where she loved life on the farm with cattle in the green pastures and crops in the fields.

As a student at IWA, she boarded with the Sisters on Alameda Street, got to know them, and realized her call to join them as a religious.

Her years of ministry include teaching, school administration in Brownsville and Corpus Christi, directing the diocesan youth camp, Camp Corpus Christi, directing Catholic Charities in Corpus Christi, chairing the Council for Institutes of Consecrated Life, and training for the Safe Environment program for the Diocese of Corpus Christi. Currently she serves in Pastoral Ministry at St. Pius X Church, Corpus Christi and is Co-Director of Incarnate Word Associates.

Sr. Barbara enjoys "fixing things." She has a tool for every kind of minor repairs in plumbing, carpentry, and auto-mechanics. She continues to enjoy the outdoors of her early farm life. Growing and caring for a garden, trimming trees, mowing yards, walking the dogs, and any way of helping in the care of the earth and respect for God's creation give her energy and peace.



Sr. Rosa Maria Ortiz (25 years), Adult Faith Formation Director at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Corpus Christi, was born in Laredo, Texas. Later she moved with her family to Orange Grove and attended St. Theresa School in Corpus Christi where she was taught by Incarnate Word Sisters. The Sisters and her Pastor, Fr. Seamus McGowan, inspired her to want to live a life of service in the Church.

Sr. Rosa's ministries have included teaching religion and band at IWA Middle School, Corpus Christi and St. Joseph Academy, Brownsville. She also served as Campus Minister at IWA Corpus Christi. Wherever she has ministered, she leads students in serving the needy. Together they have done missionary work in **Mexico? And** southwest Texas, assisting in rebuilding and painting homes and leading groups in prayer. Currently, as Adult Faith Formation Director at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in Corpus Christi, she oversees a Spanish Women's Prayer Group, directs the Alpha Program, assists with funeral liturgies and grief / consolation ministry, oversees and coordinates RCIA, Bible Study Groups, Faith Sharing Groups, the ACTS retreat program, and instruction for adults receiving Communion and / or Confirmation. She has been one of the organizers of the De Matels, a group of young people who are members of the family of the Incarnate Word. These young people seek to live out their baptismal promises and their call to be missionary disciples by actively seeking to love and serve others in the spirit of our Foundress, Venerable Jeanne Chézard de Matel.

Sr. Rosa strives to live according to these words of our Foundress: "The intense fire that is burning within you is the Divine Word living in you. Through this union with you, the Word has been made flesh."

Executions in Texas

Wednesday, May 16:

Juan Castillo

Monday, June 21:

Clifton Williams

Wednesday, June 27:

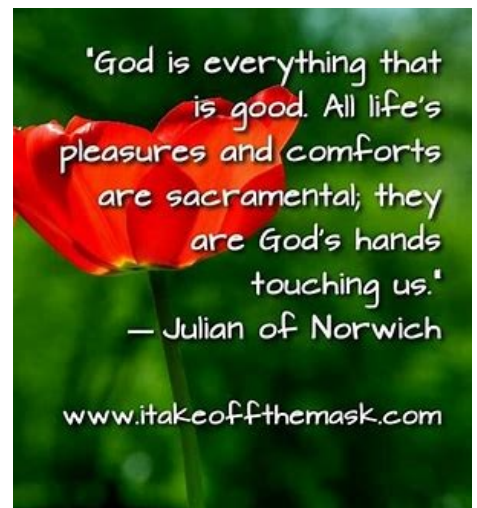
Danny Bible

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



June 3 –10: Retreat at Oblate Retreat Center

July 23—28: International Reunion in Tlalpan, Mexico





MOTHERHOUSE RETREAT

Fr. Martin Iott, OP of Houston directed an annual 8-day retreat for 21 Sisters at the Motherhouse, April 22—29. The theme of the retreat was *Living in the Light: A Life of Grace and Truth*.

BUSY STUDENT RETREAT

Busy Student Retreats were offered at A&M University, Kingsville, April 15—19 and at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg, April 22—26. **Srs. Anna Marie Espinosa, Camelia Herlihy, Lou Ella Hickman, and Mildred Truchard** (Victoria) met with several students daily for faith sharing. Each student committed to a 30-minute sharing with a spiritual companion as well as a 30-minute prayer time each day.

A WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Sr. Lou Ella Hickman was a presenter at A Women's Conference at St. Theresa Church, Corpus Christi, Saturday, April 28th. Her presentation, *Woman: Living the Joy of the Gospel*, examined Mary's lived response to God and how the life of the Mother of the Redeemer informs women today how to live and impart the joy of the Gospel. Embracing the Good News with renewed fervor, women of faith are called to help usher in the reality of the New Evangelization called for in the Church today.

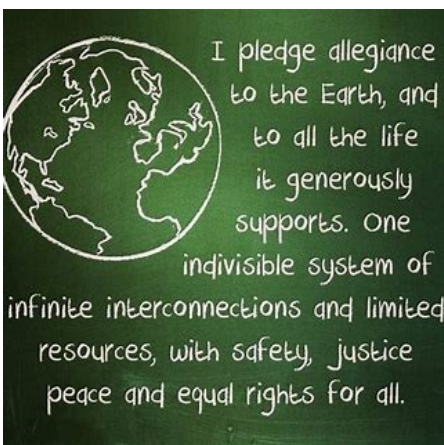
LCWR REGIONAL MEETING

Srs. Annette Wagner, Irma Gonzalez and Colette Brehony attended the LCWR Spring Regional Meeting chaired by **Sr. Marilyn Springs** at the Dominican Convent in Houston April 23-25. An experience entitled "Six Word Memoir" provided spiritual formation. Business included a review of the Border Project donations to ministries addressing specific needs found along the border of Texas and matters prescribed by the national conference.

PRE-SYNODAL MEETING IN ROME, MARCH 2018

Following are some responses from a Pre-Synodal Meeting in Rome with young people about how the Church engages with them in the 21st century:

- ◆ Young people look for a sense of self by seeking communities that are supportive, uplifting, authentic and accessible.
- ◆ We need inclusion, welcome, mercy and tenderness from the Church—both as an institution and as a community of faith.
- ◆ We value the diversity of ideas in our globalized world, the respect for other's thoughts and freedom of expression.
- ◆ Some young people are trying to make sense of faith in an increasingly secular society, where freedom of conscience and religion are under attack.
- ◆ We want a world of peace, one that harmonizes integral ecology with a sustainable global economy.
- ◆ The impact of social media in the lives of young people cannot be understated.
- ◆ Young people are disconnected from the Church choose to do so after experiencing indifference,



PEACE AND JUSTICE CORNER



What you don't do can be as destructive as a destructive force.

— Eleanor Roosevelt

The opposite of love is not hate, but indifference.

—Elie Wiesel

Your life begins to end the moment you start being silent about the things that matter.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

We carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: We have the power to imagine better.

—J. K. Rowling

Peace comes from within. Do not seek it from without.

—The Buddha

The universe that God created depends on us to do our part in the redemption of the globe from the greed that is destroying it.

—Sr. Joan Chittister

I think it is better for the world if one has a broken heart. One is then quick to recognize it elsewhere.

—Helen Waddell

Capital Punishment is against the better judgment of modern criminology, and, above all, against the highest expression of love in the nature of God.

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

If we are to speak of miracles, the most miraculous thing of all is that God uses the very thing that would normally destroy you—the tragic, sorrowful, painful, or unjust—to transform and enlighten you.

...Jesus is indeed saving the world by guiding us through all would-be deaths to a life that is always bigger than death.

—Richard Rohr

