



Flowing From His Side



Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George

Making the merciful love of Christ visible to the poor, sick, and needy of every condition.

Fall 2011

Reverence and Service to Priests

Our Holy Father St. Francis always held the prelates and priests of Holy Church in veneration. He used to say to his brothers, "We have been sent to help the clergy toward salvation of souls. Know, brothers, that the fruit of souls is most pleasing to God, and it can be better obtained by peace with clerics... Therefore, be subject to prelates... and sons of peace for the clergy" (cf. Celano II, 146). Following our Founder St. Francis, we recognize in our service to the Church, his reverence for priests.

In this spirit, and following the example of our Foundress, Mother M. Anselma, "It is our special mission to be simply ready in obedience to God's call. One of the ways in which He lets us know His Will is to show us, by the signs of the times, what is needed in our service of Christ" (Constitutions 104). Our religious Community has always held the clergy in great reverence. The last 24 years have brought us many opportunities to serve priests directly. These apostolates vary according to the "signs of the times," but all of them require us to serve with a truly Franciscan heart.

Our service to priests began in the summer of 1987 at the invitation of Bishop Glennon P. Flavin of the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska. The Bishop wanted our Sisters to staff Bonacum House, the newly built residence for retired priests. The residence has twelve apartments, and currently three Sisters serve the needs of ten senior priests. Our work in Bonacum House was soon followed by a similar apostolate at Maria Regina Residence for retired priests in the Diocese of Metuchen, New Jersey, in 1989. Maria Regina Residence currently has the



Bishop Edward Rice raises the Most Blessed Sacrament to bless the faithful attending the Corpus Christi Procession in St. Louis in June 2011

capacity to house fourteen priests. They are served by two of our Sisters. It is fitting that our introduction to the care for clergy began as a grateful service for them in their later years. In some small way, we wish to serve these priests who have generously spent their lives for the Church.

Several years after these two ventures, our service to priests took on a new face. At the request of Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, our Sisters began to serve at the Papal Nunciature in Washington, D.C., in 1995. This was eventually followed by similar apostolates in the household of the Archbishop of St. Louis as well as that of the Archbishop of Philadelphia. In addition to serving the clergy in the United States, three Sisters are currently stationed in Rome, Italy, in the household of Raymond Cardinal Burke who is the Prefect for the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura.

We never dreamed that our service to priests would take us beyond Rome. However, God's designs are always full of surprises! The sending of four Sisters to Havana, Cuba, in January 2011, for service in a newly dedicated seminary, brings us full circle. Beginning with service to retired priests, we find ourselves called to nurture the initial growth of priestly vocations. What a blessing and privilege it is to serve and support our priests and bishops in all these ways. By caring for them in their needs, we benefit from the many graces that flow from their hands which sanctify us and the world they touch through our Eucharistic Lord.

"The surest way to heaven is to be simple, humble, and faithful in your duties."

~ Mother M. Anselma



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR MOTHER

Dear Families and Friends of our Sisters,

Pax et Bonum! In this fall edition of *Flowing from His Side*, we are featuring articles concerning our service to priests, active and retired. It is our privilege to strive to imitate St. Francis in his love and reverence for the Church and for her clerics.

In the *Mirror of Perfection*, Francis says, *The Lord has called us to uphold the faith and to help the prelates and the clerics of Holy Church. Because of this, we are obliged to love, honor, and respect them at all times.*

On his deathbed, St. Francis called Brother Benedict of Prato and gestured to him to write down his three last requests. Besides loving one another and always having a love for Lady Poverty, he made this final request, which was ever on his mind and heart: *May they (his followers) always prove loyal to the bishops and the priests of Holy Mother Church.*

This reverence for the Church and for those who alone can bring us the Holy Eucharist is seen by Francis' contemporaries as one of the most characteristic features of his spirit. Indeed, *Francis was a Catholic and entirely apostolic man who taught fidelity to the Church and admonished his followers to revere priests above all others* (First antiphon for the office of first vespers on the Feast of St. Francis).

In imitation of St. Francis, we serve priests and seminarians in two retirement homes, in two prelates' residences, in a seminary, in a diocesan office, and as secretaries to two cardinals. We are grateful to God that He has given us these opportunities to serve the Church by serving her sons.

In the joy of Jesus and Mary,

Mother M. Regina Pacis, FSGM

Mother M. Regina Pacis, FSGM
Provincial Superior



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We offer our gratitude and prayers for the Serra Club of Madison County, Illinois and the Knights of Columbus who have generously contributed toward the cost of our publications.



Franciscan Reverence for the Holy Priesthood by *Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke*

As a prelate, I treasure very much the service of the Sisters of Saint Francis of the Martyr Saint George in my household. I was blessed by their service in the Archbishop's Residence, while I was the Archbishop of Saint Louis, and now I am blessed with their service in my apartment in Rome where I serve as Cardinal Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura.

First of all, the Sisters maintain and enhance the life of prayer and worship which should mark the household of every prelate. A mosaic image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is enthroned in the Chapel of my apartment and several statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus can be found throughout the apartment. It is my heartfelt desire that Christ be both the abiding Guest of my apartment and its Master. The Franciscan Sisters of the Martyr Saint George, with their particular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, are a great help to me in keeping the Sacred Heart of Jesus as King and Center of my apartment, in which their convent is also located.



Left to right: Sister M. Regina, Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, Sister M. Joan, and Sister M. Antonilla



Above: Sister M. Antonilla keeping the floors sparkling clean

Secondly, the Franciscan reverence for the Holy Priesthood, in its essential relationship with the Holy Eucharist, is both a consolation and inspiration, as I strive to be a good priest. In a totally secularized culture, the Sisters give a strong witness to the presence of Christ in our midst, alive in His Church for our salvation and the salvation of the world, especially through the Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Priesthood. Their witness assists me to be strong in my priestly identity for the sake of the salvation of many souls.

Lastly, the Sisters bring all of the other Franciscan virtues to the life of the apartment through their consecrated life and their various forms of service, whether it be cleaning, cooking, or secretarial. Their joy and their attention to the perfection which Our Lord asks of us in all of our activities, no matter how exalted or how lowly they may seem to the world, stand out, in particular.

I remain deeply grateful to the Superiors of the Franciscan Sisters of the Martyr Saint George for their generous willingness to mission Sisters of their religious Congregation to my apartment. The highly treasured service which the Sisters offer me is, in the end, service given to the whole Church. May God reward the Sisters always.



Left: Sister M. Regina delivering mail for His Eminence after a day in the office



Right: Sister M. Joan preparing a meal for the Cardinal and the Sisters

SERVING OUR RETIRED PRIESTS

Bonacum House ~ Serving since 1987

Since 1987, our Sisters have had the joy of serving the retired priests of the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska. The Sisters work at Bonacum House, a twelve-apartment residence, named after the first bishop of Lincoln. There, they perform the services of daily living: cooking, cleaning, laundry, and setting up for Holy Mass.

On a daily basis, the Sisters care not only FOR the priests, but also ABOUT the priests. The presence of the Sisters helps to make it a true home for the priests and offers the Sisters an opportunity to be spiritual mothers.

The care goes both ways. The priests minister to the Sisters as well. They take turns celebrating Holy Mass early in the morning for the Sisters; are available for Confession, offer words and deeds of encouragement, and share insights, humor, and stories from their lives. Most of all, they pray for the Sisters and our Franciscan Congregation. These priests have given their lives for Christ and His Church, and their gratitude and dedication is a witness that helps the Sisters to live faithfully their way of life as well.

"We have to work with total dedication to our assignment. In the service of God, we can never do enough. We should honestly endeavor to spend ourselves for Him. ~ Mother M. Anselma



Sister M. Andrea and Monsignor Daniel Pohl at Bonacum House



Sister M. Paula and Bishop Edward Hughes at Maria Regina Residence



Sister M. Martin (back) and Sister Cordia Marie serving our priests at Bonacum House

Maria Regina Residence~ Serving since 1989

We are blessed to serve holy priests who still give freely of themselves even in their retirement. Amidst suffering and aging, they are joyful, and they often share jokes and stories that gladden our hearts with laughter. We are edified by their prayerfulness and the way in which they have made the Chapel the center of the home and the dining room the center of community.

Bishop Edward Hughes, retired bishop of the Diocese of Metuchen, asked Mother M. Ingeborg for our Sisters in 1989, and now lives with twelve other retired priests to whom we have the privilege of bringing Christ's merciful love.



Left to right: Sister M. Jessica, Msgr. Nevin Kennedy, Bishop Edward Hughes, Father Neil Davin, CP (Passionist), and Sister M. Paula



Sister M. Jessica and Father Davin at Maria Regina Residence



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"The priesthood is the love of the Heart of Jesus." ~ Curé of Ars



1. Monsignor Kenneth Steffen, Sister M. Anne, Maurice and Dorothy Schulz , in Alton, Illinois
2. Archbishop Jerome ListECKI, Aspirants, and Sister M. Stephania in La Crosse, Wisconsin
3. Monsignor Paul Sheridan and Franciscan Friars at St. Clare's Villa in Alton, Illinois
4. Sister M. Isabella, Monsignor Kenneth Steffen, and Sister M. Caterina preparing vestments for Holy Mass in Alton, Illinois
5. Father James Knapp, SJ, Sister Mary Gabriel and Mrs. Millie Knapp at Mother of Good Counsel Home in St. Louis, Missouri
6. Father Norbert Swagemakers from the Netherlands concelebrating Holy Mass with Monsignor Kenneth Steffen in Alton, Illinois
7. Cardinal Justin Rigali (middle), our Sisters, and priests in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
8. Father Tom Neihaus (back left), Sisters, and visitors from Winona, Minnesota in March 2011
9. Priests and Jubilarian Sisters at St. Francis Convent in Alton on the Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, November 17, 2010
10. Bishops , Reverend Mother, and Sisters after Reception and Profession of Vows in Alton, Illinois on August 15, 2006
11. Blessed John Paul II, Sister M. Stephanie, and Sister M. Benedicta, during the Papal Visit to St. Louis in January 1999
12. Archbishop Joseph Naumann from the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas with Sister M. Juliana
13. Father Joseph Hirsch (bottom), Sisters, and young adults at the annual John Paul the Great College Retreat in Rosholt, Wisconsin, in February 2010



SERVICE TO THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIO IN WASHINGTON, DC SINCE 1995

Our American Province embarked on a new type of service to the Church on August 16, 1995. At the request of Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan, we began our apostolate of taking care of the household of the Apostolic Nuncio in Washington, D.C. Sister M. Wiltraud, Sister M. Clarita, and Sister M. Christina were the three pioneer Sisters of this form of service to priests.

We are grateful for the three prelates who have served as Nuncios in the last sixteen years: Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan, Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, and Archbishop Pietro Sambì. They have been outstanding models of fidelity to the Holy Father and to the Church. It is an honor to serve the Apostolic Nuncio and priests who work with him.

“St. Francis was called to renew the Church by the word which came to him from the Lord: ‘Go, repair My house.’ This task he accomplished, together with his brethren, in his deliberate choice of union with the Pope, with bishops, and with pastors of parishes.”

(Constitutions of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George)



Our Sisters with Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Pietro Sambì in 2008



Left to right: Sister M. Lucia, Sister Mary Grace, and Sister M. Elena

Reflections from our Sisters on Serving at the Apostolic Nunciature

Serving at the Apostolic Nunciature is, first of all, a privilege. It is developing a heart like our Blessed Mother Mary because our life is very much like hers. We serve the Church in a domestic role by caring for the priests who labor tirelessly for the Church in the United States. We try to provide a home for them and to make their home a little more tranquil, hospitable, and friendly, as Mary of Nazareth would do. ~ Sister Mary Grace

This is my fifth year working at the Apostolic Nunciature, and I see it as a blessing and a gift. It is a privilege to be able to serve our priests, especially the Nuncio, who is the Pope’s representative to the United States. This is our Holy Father’s house, and I had the joy of meeting Pope Benedict XVI here.

I consider myself as Christ’s servant and try to serve with love and humility, doing the best I can in whatever task is asked of me, whether it is cooking, cleaning, shopping, taking care of the Chapel, or laundry. We serve the Church. Everything we do is for Jesus, and He is more present to us here, because the priests are Jesus’ representatives on earth. Love, kindness, and joy are important to me in working here. I pray to Mary for help because she is that perfect servant of Jesus Our Lord.

~ Sister M. Lucia

It is a grace and privilege to serve at the Apostolic Nunciature. The atmosphere here is one of love, joy, peace, prayer, and sacrifice. The Sisters’ work is more of a contemplative nature, and there are many hidden sacrifices. It fills me with joy and a sense of purpose to pray and sacrifice for the Church, my family, my religious Community, and the world. I am grateful that I can help create a home for these priests who carry many heavy responsibilities for the Church. In serving them, I definitely feel that I am serving Christ and His Church.

~ Sister M. Elena



Sister Mary Grace returning from the grocery store



Sister M. Lucia keeping everyone clean and neat!



Serving the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
by Sister M. Maximilia

Currently serving the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois as a canonist, I spend the bulk of my time doing tribunal work. Every diocese has a tribunal where, among other matters, marriage cases are handled. The tribunal acts in the name of the diocesan bishop and understands itself to be an extension of his ministry to and for the local Church. In my particular role as defender of the bond, I speak for the validity of marriages whenever possible. This task helps the judge to see the “big picture” before coming to a decision about the status of a marriage (i.e., whether or not a marriage is declared null).



Left to right: Sister M. Dominica, Sister Mary Gianna, Bishop Thomas John Paprocki, and Sister M. Maximilia at St. Michael Convent in Springfield, Illinois



Bishops and our Sisters after Profession and Reception Ceremony on August 15, 2011

Ever since beginning my apostolate for the diocese, I have reflected much on the charism of our Community and also my religious name. Our Thuline Franciscan charism is to make Christ’s merciful love visible. St. Maximilian Kolbe lived the cruciform mercy of God in a time and place that seemed to be without hope, transforming it into a place of compassion. I pray that my service will lighten the sufferings of those who come to the tribunal for help.

Regardless of the outcome of a marriage case, people thirst to know that brokenness is not the last word in life. Christ is that Word.



Bishop Thomas John Paprocki and our Sisters outside the Provincial House in Alton, Illinois

Serving Our Future Priests in Havana, Cuba
by Sister Eva-Maria

When Cardinal Jaime Ortega Alamino wrote to Mother Margaretha Maria, our Superior General, in 2010, he asked for Sisters to oversee the service areas in Cuba’s newly dedicated inter-diocesan seminary located in the Archdiocese of Havana. He wanted the Sisters to serve, but also to provide a “feminine presence” for the seminarians.

We arrived at “Seminario San Carlos y San Ambrosio” on the scenic outskirts of the city in January 2011. We live our vocations to the consecrated life as Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George in the midst of the seminary community through our witness to the consecrated life, fidelity to our prayer life, and joyful service. We daily seek to “make visible the merciful love of Christ” by overseeing the work of the kitchen, Chapel, laundry, housekeeping, seminary library, garden, and seminary secretariat.

We daily serve, support, pray with, and interact with our 57 seminarians who come from dioceses throughout Cuba. Through these young men, we have experienced the vibrancy of the Church’s life here. We joyfully participated in the priestly ordinations of six of the seven deacons already this year. The seventh deacon will be ordained a priest in the national Shrine of Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, Patroness of Cuba, on December 27, 2011.

Sister M. Wiltraud, Sister M. Philippa, Sister M. Seraphica, and I thank you for your support. We ask your continued prayers for our seminarians and for all bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and laity in Cuba.



Father Alexander (front row, left), Bishop Emilio Aranguren Echeverria of the Diocese of Holguin, seminarians, acolytes, and our Sisters after Father Alexander’s First Mass.



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Thank you and may God bless you!*

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Return Service Requested

Mother - Daughter Retreat

When: Saturday, November 19, 2011: 9:30a.m.—5:30p.m.

Who: Daughters (ages 12 to adult) and their Mothers

Where: St. Francis Convent ~ Alton, Illinois

Cost: Free (donations accepted)

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP by November 10, 2011,
by e-mail: oma@altonfranciscans.org or call (618) 474-6193.

Check out our website for more details: www.altonfranciscans.org

**Our Congregation makes Christ's merciful love visible in nine countries throughout the world.
Please pray for the Sisters of our Congregation as *we keep you in our prayers* at Holy Mass each day.**

**1869 ~ Thuine, Germany 1875 ~ The Netherlands 1920 ~ Japan 1923 ~ United States of America
1932 ~ Indonesia 1972 ~ Brazil 2001 ~ Albania 2005 ~ Italy 2011 ~ Cuba**

