

AUG
2018

FRANCISCAN SISTERS, T.O.R.

of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother



Under His Mercy

This August 15th, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of our founding. In honor of our 30 years, we are doing a couple throwback articles from early newsletters. We hope you enjoy these as much as we do!

THE MIRACLE OF THE EUCHARIST: REFLECTIONS OF A SACRISTAN

WHY “UNDER HIS MERCY”

When our community first came together in 1988, the founding group felt strongly that we were to be united with Mary at the foot of the cross. The 19th chapter of St. John was a key scripture passage for us as we began our life together. When we chose the title “*Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother*” we only gradually began to realize that we also chose to stand with Mary “*Under His Mercy*.” Jesus’ death on the Cross is the greatest act and most abundant source of God’s Mercy. As He offered Himself up for our sins, Jesus unleashed His never-ending fountain of Mercy on mankind. [...] The world in which we live today has turned away from God. Over and over again God’s Mercy is mocked and rejected. Yet, His Mercy is the only answer! As we humbly submit our lives to God and beg to live always under His Mercy, our prayer is that we can draw others to stand with us UNDER HIS MERCY!

EXCERPTED FROM FALL 1991, OUR FIRST ISSUE

I gaze upon the host in the monstrance now and suddenly realize I am gazing upon the greatest miracle ever known to man. I put that host in the paten this morning. When my hands touched it, it was nothing more than an ordinary piece of unleavened bread. But now as I look upon this same piece of bread, I realize that it is not what it once was and appears still to be. It is a miracle I witness every day – how easy it would be to think of it as commonplace. It’s not as if I didn’t know this before, but now it is clear to me in a new and deeper way. This host was changed in the miracle of the Mass when an ordinary man who has been given extraordinary power said all the right words and went through all the right motions and we just simply expected Jesus to come. And He did. He faithfully comes whenever we gather to celebrate this re-presentation of our salvation. The host I now gaze upon is a Person – Jesus – present in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, whom I can see only with the eyes of faith. What a great miracle! That ordinary bread can become God Himself through the power of the Holy Spirit in the miracle of the Mass! Lord, help us not to take such a great gift for granted.

FROM OUR SUMMER 2000 ISSUE

To Glorify God and Make Known His Merciful Love



FULLY GIVEN & FULLY RECEIVED

BY SR. RITA CLARE YOCHES, T.O.R.

There are no words! No words can describe in full the perfection of the best day of my life! What I experienced as I professed my perpetual vows on June 30th felt like a fulfillment of Isaiah 62:1-4, a scripture the Lord spoke to me back in March of 2006:

For Zion's sake I will not be silent, /for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep still, /Until her vindication shines forth like the dawn /and her salvation like a burning torch. Nations shall behold your vindication, and all kings your glory; you shall be called by a new name bestowed by the mouth of the LORD. You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of the LORD, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No more shall you be called "Forsaken," nor your land called "Desolate," But you shall be called "My Delight is in her," and your land "Espoused." For the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be espoused.

The Lord made my vindication shine forth like the dawn and my salvation like a burning torch – and not just because it was 95 degrees that day and my face felt like a burning torch – but because the Lord allowed His light to radiate forth through me for all to see the joy and peace that come when you follow the Lord's will for your life. I have been called by a new name: Sr. Rita Clare. The Lord placed a glorious crown, a royal diadem on my head to claim me as His delight. The ring on my finger is a sign of His espousal to me, that I am not forsaken or desolate. My Builder has married me (Is 62:5) and my God has rejoiced over me.

The image of my dad walking me down the aisle as I wore

the white cape that represented my baptismal and nuptial garment and the bridal crown is something I do not want to forget, because that moment represents who I am at the core of my being: pure, holy, beautiful, fully given and fully received, betrothed to my Maker. I feel different now as I look down at the gold ring on my finger.

At the end of the two-and-a-half hour long Mass, I felt like I had given all and I was totally spent, sweaty, and consumed. From the sprinkling rite that renews our Baptism, lying prostrate and feeling all the saints in heaven as close to me as my closest friends, to professing vows and receiving Communion, I felt stable, complete, and whole. I felt holier and closer to the Lord than I have ever felt. It was the deepest union with the Lord that I have ever experienced.

And then getting to share my jubilation with the sign of peace with all of the clergy and my sisters who were there was another slice of heaven. I pray that I may continue to live out the call the Lord has placed on my life to be fully given to Him and to lead others to that JOY.





THE HUSBAND I ALWAYS WANTED

BY SR. MARIA CLARE SMITH, T.O.R.

Usually, a woman waits for her wedding for years and years with great expectation, maybe even beginning to plan out how things will go and what her children will be named and what type of husband she is looking for. I am not an exception to this. In my call to religious life, I gave up having a family and husband of my own for a greater call in my life – to belong completely to God the Father and to be given over to His Son Jesus in a spiritual marriage.

In my preparations for final vows, it was still not easy to give up the details of the wedding planning and just allow myself to be served by my sisters. I am so grateful to my sisters for all they did to make this profession possible and that their service and love allowed me to enter into the ceremony in a spiritual way. Everything was taken care of; I just had to invite the guests, pray, and show up. On the day of the ceremony, I was surprised by a huge grace from the Lord: I was able to just receive Him and enter into the ceremony as if it were just He and I. Perhaps you are wondering, “What does she mean by ‘receiving the Lord?’ Isn’t it you who are giving yourself to Him?” Yes, that is true, but the greater gift that day was not the one I made. The greatest gift was the gift of Jesus to me in a special way through my profession of vows and the Eucharist: “This is my body given up for you.”

What can I say in response to all of this? “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior... the Almighty has done great things for me” (Lk 2:46, 49). Being given this great invitation by the Lord and the gift to make final vows this year is really humbling for me as I have become more aware than ever of my weaknesses. He has done so much to prepare me for this day, and there have been so many graces that truly I am speechless before His throne. All I can say to Him is “fiat” and thank you. Thank you, Lord, for being the husband that I have always wanted, but didn’t always know it. Thank you for being my defender and healer and for being so patient with me. Thank you for saving me from death and for the great gift of forgiveness that you give me again and again in the sacrament of reconciliation. Thank you for the gift of your heart in the Eucharist that you feed me with daily. Thank you for going so far beyond my expectations. Life without you, Jesus, would be empty and without meaning.



FRANCISCAN SISTERS, T.O.R.
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THREE BRIDES OF CHRIST!

We are blessed to have three more perpetually professed sisters: Sr. Maria Clare Smith (left), Sr. Rita Clare Yoches (center), and Sr. Miriam O'Callaghan (right) professed their final vows in late June. Thank you for supporting their vocations with your prayers and gifts. May God richly bless you and our three brides!

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*"To Glorify God and Make
Known His Merciful Love"*



Thank You!

Thank you to all who responded to our needs from the Begging Box!



The laundry department is so grateful, the kitchen division is deeply appreciative (especially for the brand name aluminum foil - what a treat!), and the lovely black socks you sent will keep our sisters' toes warm as we look into the fall and winter months. Your generosity is a great blessing to us!

UPCOMING EVENT

Please join us for our 2018
Share His Mercy Benefit Banquet
Empowered by the Holy Spirit
Saturday, October 20, 2018

4:00 - 5:00 PM
Vigil Mass at Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery
5:30 - 8:30 PM
Banquet at St. Florian Hall
Silent Auction and Cash Bar

Please join us for our largest fundraiser of the year. The funds raised at the banquet help make our way of life possible, allowing us to root our lives in prayer, participate in works of mercy to the poor, give guidance and witness to students on college campuses, visit our friends in nursing homes, and develop vocations. To learn more, visit www.franciscansisterstor.org/share-his-mercy-benefit-banquet-2018/