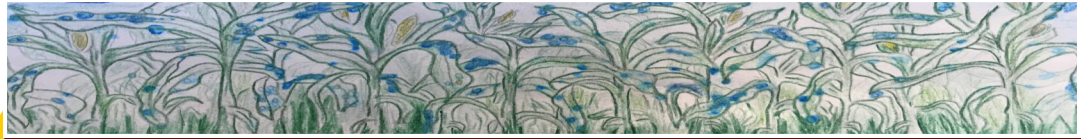




MERCEDARIAN
SISTERS OF THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT

Like the Dewfall



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**Praised be Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament,
now and forever! Amen!**

Dear Sisters and friends,

It is our joy to share with you some of the innumerable graces that God bestows on us, sisters in the Formation House. Please know that you are such an important part of those blessings and for that reason through this newsletter our hearts and prayers reach out to each one of you. May God deign to make of all of us a living tabernacle.

In the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus,
Sr. Jeanette Marie, HMSS

**“I have
come to set
the world
on fire.”
(Luke 12:49)**

Explanation of the Newsletter Title

In Eucharistic Prayer II of the Roman Catholic Church, the Holy Spirit is invoked to descend upon the gifts of bread and wine “like the dewfall, so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is our prayer, as Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, to always remain under the transfiguring power of the Holy Spirit, and it is our hope, through this poor, printed word, to share some of the dewdrops that gather there. “All who are thirsty, come!” (cf. Isaiah 55:1)

The Spirituality of Mother María del Refugio



To talk about the spirituality of our Mother Foundress, María del Refugio Aguilar y Torres, I think we must start by looking at the gift of her maternity. In fact, I do not think we can properly understand her spirituality outside of the lens of her motherhood. As Pope St. John Paul II writes in *Mulieris Dignitatem* (*On the Dignity of Women*), all women are called to be mothers, whether biologically, spiritually, or both, and women, like men, can only fully discover themselves by making a sincere gift of self to the other (*MD*, #7, 10, 18, 19, 20). Mother María del Refugio, I believe, exemplifies this beautifully. She became a natural mother through her marriage to Ángel Cancino and the birth of their two children. After the sudden death of her beloved spouse and her three-year-old son, she embraced spiritual motherhood in bringing forth the foundation of a Religious Institute, one in which she and her daughter would totally devote their lives to spreading the

love of the Blessed Sacrament.

Because Mother María del Refugio was both a biological and spiritual mother, her way of life and her way of loving influenced her spirituality and as were her daughters influenced by her spirituality. She was a Eucharistic-Mercedarian woman: **Eucharistic**, in that she desired that the world be spiritually set on fire with love for the Blessed Sacrament, and in the virtues that she exuded: gratitude, charity, humility and joy, all attributes that can be ascribed to a Eucharistic soul. She was also **Marian**, in that she shared in the redemptive spirit of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy,



founded in the 13th century to liberate captive Christians. In becoming more conformed to Jesus in the Eucharist, Mother María poured out her life in love and service to her natural family, then to her Religious family (i.e., her Religious Sisters), and then also to many others who came to her for aid, advice, or friendship. As a true Mercedarian (even before her Congregation was aggregated to the Mercedarian Order), she risked her life to help save Christians during the early 20th century religious persecutions in Mexico.

Thus, it was through loving and living in the way that God had marked out for her - a Eucharistic, Mercedarian, and powerfully maternal way - that Mother María del Refugio was able to make a sincere gift of herself to God and to the Church, to start a new religious movement, and to open a pathway of self-discovery for us, her spiritual daughters, who share in the same spirituality that she received. May we become the mothers, daughters, and sisters God has created us to be, so that we too may become Eucharist for the Church! Amen.

Venerable Mother María del Refugio, *intercede for us!*

Written by Sr. April Marie Candelaria
Novice, Second Year

March for Life 2017



“Remember that you are never alone, Christ is with you on your journey every day of your lives! “

(Pope St. John Paul II)



Discernment Retreat April 2017



Our Lady of Fatima procession



Tenebrae



"[Jesus] will never fail you; He will help you in all your trials; you will find Him everywhere. Do you think it's some small matter to have a friend like this at your side?"

-St. Teresa of Avila
The Way of Perfection,
Ch. 26, no. 1

"The novitiate, with which life in the Institute begins, has as its goal the novice's better understanding of a divine vocation, particularly within this Institute."

-Constitutions #107



Lourdes enjoying coffee!

Postulant Corner

Comic Writer & illustrator:
Lourdes Furnells

Postulancy aims at deepening the individual's human and Christian experience in order that she achieves greater maturity in her vocational choice for the Institute.

-Constitutions #106

Wisdom from the Cloister



Sr. Yvelyne Bernard

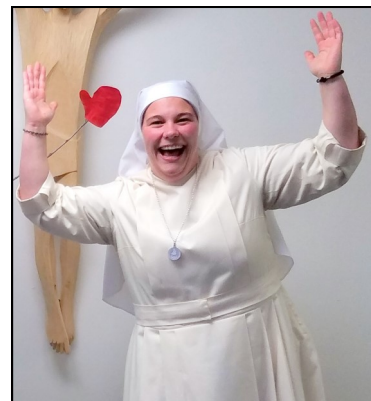
"Growth in the spiritual life only gets more difficult. It never gets easier... how paradoxically comforting."

"To love requires perseverance, and perseverance is an act of the will."



Sr. Kathrynne Lopez

"There is no better crucible for testing prayer than compassion." (St. Teresa of Avila)



Sr. Marianne Giovingo

"God is not disappointed in us! When we allow ourselves to be steeped in God's loving embrace, we are set free to receive all as gift and grace. Lord, I beg you daily to mercifully break through every obstacle that is blocking Your loving friendship and intimacy, and reign as supreme in our hearts once again."



Friends on the Path to Holiness!

In a General Audience on September 15, 2010, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI had the following to say about the spiritual friendship between St. Clare and St. Francis of Assisi,

“Especially at the beginning of her religious experience, Francis of Assisi was not only a teacher to Clare whose teachings she was to follow but also a brotherly friend. The friendship between these two Saints is a very beautiful and important aspect. Indeed, when two pure souls on fire with the same love for God meet, they find in their friendship with each other a powerful incentive to advance on the path of perfection. Friendship is one of the noblest and loftiest human sentiments which divine Grace purifies and transfigures.”

This sort of spiritual friendship is reflected in the lives of many of our beloved saints. Our Venerable Mother Foundress, Maria del Refugio, is no exception. In the beginning stages of our



community, she revealed a deep capacity for spiritual friendships, particularly with priests. Diocesan and Mercedarian priests became crucial strong supports and guides in our community’s foundation and identity. In particular, it is largely due to the friendship with Fr. Alfredo Scotti, O.de M, that Maria del Refugio was able fulfill God’s will for her to found our community in addition to receiving Papal approvals in this initiative. With our community being so centered on the Eucharist and our Mother Mary, it makes sense that God would desire special friendships between the Sisters and His priests—for there can be no Eucharist without priests!

Today, we are still blessed with the love and prayerful support of our Mercedarian brothers and our local diocesan priests. From our brothers, we learn how to incorporate the redemptive spirituality and a strong love for Mary into our daily lives. From our diocesan priests, we learn how to joyfully serve the diocese in which we live.

From them, we often hear how they need our love and prayers too.

In my own life, I owe a great deal to the loving support of priestly friendships. When I began to be aware of a possible religious vocation, I ran to my spiritual father for help. This priest not only guided me through the rough waters of discernment, but he and some of my closest friends literally took me to my new home when my parents were unable to! Like a good father, he continues to check up on me, but has since adopted my community as his own family as well. Our Mercedarian brothers have helped me to see why God called me to a Mercedarian community and to strengthen my relationship with our Mother. Also, in



St. Clare and St. Francis from a processional banner from Assisi by Niccolo Alunno (c. 1470)

getting to know the diocesan priests in this area, God has given me many more brothers to journey with. I was even given a “spiritual twin” who challenges me to love God more and to bring others to Him. If I have learned anything in religious life, it is this: we are not meant to be alone.

*Written by Sr. Katie McCloskey
Novice, Second Year*



Approaching the Altar

Pray for two of our second year novices who will be making their First Profession of Vows on August 14, 2017, on the Vigil of the Solemnity of the Assumption!

“Through religious profession, novices embrace the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience with public vows. They consecrate themselves to God through the ministry of the Church and join the Institute with the rights and duties defined by law.” (Constitutions #123)

Our Most Merciful Father, we give you thanks and praise for remaining faithful to your promise. Have mercy on us, O Lord, especially upon these your daughters who desire to profess the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Give them the grace to profess the vows wholeheartedly. Make them Eucharist.

Imbue them with the spirit of the Institute.

Remove all fear and anxiety from their hearts by the outpouring of your Holy Spirit. Perfect your work that you have already begun in them so that their joy may be complete. Our Lady of Mercy, Our Mother, intercede for your beloved daughters that they may conform perfectly to your Son, Jesus Christ. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Sr. Katie McCloskey (top),
Sr. April Marie Candelaria
(bottom)

Temporary Professed



Sr. Sabrina Carvajal

“The juniorate is the formation stage ranging from first profession to perpetual profession. During this time, the junior should integrate herself into the Institute in order to live a process of a deepening of faith in the charism and fraternal life that allows her to become conformed to Christ, the Redeemer, and part of the apostolic mission of our religious family. In this way she prepares for her final vows.”

(Constitutions #127)



“God sends us friends to be our firm support in the whirlpool of struggle. In the company of friends we will find strength to attain our sublime ideal.”
(St. Maximilian Kolbe)





Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament

We, the Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament consecrate ourselves to God, Source of all holiness. We conform ourselves to Christ the Redeemer in His Eucharistic Mystery through the profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience, and we work to spread the Kingdom of the Eucharistic Jesus throughout the world, under the maternal protection of Our Lady of Mercy. (Constitutions #5)

Upcoming Events

- July 12-16, 2017 Italian Festival
- July 14, 2017 Emmaus: Night of Adoration
- **August 14, 2017 Vigil of the Solemnity of the Assumption: Profession of First Vows**
- August 15, 2017 Entrance into Postulancy
- September 24, 2017 Entrance into Novitiate
- October 6-8, 2017 Discernment Retreat

Contact us:

Mother Jeanette Marie Estrada, HMSS

E-mail: sisterjeanette@hotmail.com

Website: mercedariansisters.org

Facebook: facebook.com/mercedarians

Instagram: [@mercedariansisters](https://www.instagram.com/mercedariansisters)

Blog: mercedarians.blogspot.com

Our Lady of Mercy, pray for us!

