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Dear Mercedarian Family & Friends,

May the grace and peace of Jesus Christ, truly present in the Holy Eucharist, be with you! We are so excited to share with you the latest volume of *Like the Dewfall*, a Newsletter filled with the graces, reflections, and happenings of our Sisters in Formation. It has been our joy, since our last Newsletter in Fall 2018, to work with the incredible people at Fuzati to rebrand our website and published materials and develop ways to better communicate to the world the unique charism of spreading the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament that God has given our Congregation. We pray that our efforts will be fruitful and you will not only enjoy receiving our updated content, but through it, continue to receive God's intimate love for you. We desire that as the Holy Spirit descends upon the bread and wine during Mass, our poor words, our 'dewdrops of grace,' may be instruments of the Holy Spirit to transform your life too. May your life then also be the offering that God transforms through Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, for God's glory and the redemption of the world.

Sr. Tonia Borsellino, Novice, Second Year

"I have come to set the world on fire."

Luke 12:49



Dear friends,

Praised be Jesus in all the adventures He takes us on, now and forever. Amen! I write to share one such adventure – or, rather, series of adventures – that took place in Mexico this summer. First, though, I would like to thank all of you who prayed for us and helped make this trip possible. We carry you in our hearts!

To begin, we stayed mostly in the Mother House in Mexico City. It was beautiful and certainly a unique experience sleeping without air conditioning, but it was part of the adventure! Meeting our sisters was the greatest blessing for me. Love transcends language and culture, and our shared laughs, meals and liturgy remain etched on my heart.

The morning after our arrival, we were off to see Our Lady of Guadalupe. ALREADY?! Yes. Honestly, I did not know what would happen when I approached her image, but, thankfully, she didn't jump off the wall or anything. Standing before her icon, she communicated her love to each of us without hesitation, and made Kleenex® a little richer that day.

Nonetheless, I am so glad we saw her when we did because the next day, we could have died! We went to the pyramids, and on the way there, we ate ant eggs! Okay, that is not actually the scary part. After the ant eggs, we climbed a pyramid, and at the top, Mother Jeanette and I made the discovery that IT HAD NO HANDRAILS. HOW IN THE WORLD were we supposed to get down?! In the midst of our minor panic attacks (alright, Mother was full on panicking), I think God inspired me to ask (i.e., demand) the tour guide to hold our hands all the way down. We made it, and our sisters laughed about it for the rest of the trip.

We also had a wonderful experience in Mother Foundress' paternal home in San Miguel de Allende, which is now a convent. We learned more of her story from Mr. George Foulkes, the postulator of her cause for canonization and were intrigued by relics from her childhood and adult life. It was beautiful to reflect on how the charism she had received – to spread the Eucharistic Kingdom here on earth – is also ours. We have only to live it out.

I feel like my Beloved Jesus when I say that there are many more things I wish to tell you, but I cannot tell you them now (cf. Jn 16:12)! May the Lord extend all of the graces we received on this little pilgrimage to you through His Most Sacred Heart, which beats for you in the Eucharist!

In the Love of Jesus and Mary,
Sr. April Marie Josefina, HMSS
Temporary Professed, Third Year



Mexico Trip!



The Vow of Poverty

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:3). A lot of prayer, time, and learning goes into our preparation of profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. I remember thinking as a novice, “Oh, the poverty one is easy. You just don’t own anything and share everything that you have and are with the community. If St. Francis and St. Clare can do it, so can I!” As God would have it, He quickly taught me that there is much more to the vow of poverty than living in simplicity. Last year, a good friend of mine “randomly” (there are no coincidences with God...) sent me a little book titled, *Poverty of Spirit* by Johannes Metz. Basically, I got destroyed and words were put to what I was already experiencing in my heart:

This poverty, then, is not just another virtue, one among many. It is a necessary ingredient in any authentic Christian attitude toward life. Without it there can be no Christianity and no imitation of Christ... It is the doorway through which we must pass to become authentic human beings. Only through poverty of spirit do we draw near to God; only through it does God draw near to us (Metz, pg. 21).

Every stirring of genuine love makes us poor. It dominates the whole human person, makes absolute claims upon us (cf. Mt. 22:37), and thus subverts all extra-human assurances of security. The true lover must be unprotected and give himself or herself

Christ proposes the evangelical counsels, in their great variety, to every disciple. The perfection of charity, to which all the faithful are called, entails for those who freely follow the call to consecrated life the obligation of practicing chastity in celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom, poverty and obedience. It is the profession of these counsels, within a permanent state of life recognized by the Church, that characterizes the life consecrated to God.

CCC 915

without reservation or question; and must display lifelong fidelity. Every genuine human encounter must be inspired by poverty of spirit. We must forget ourselves in order to let the other person approach us. We must be able to open up to the other person, to let that person’s distinctive personality unfold – even though it often frightens or repels us. We often keep the other person down and only see what we want to see; thus we never really encounter the mysterious secret of their being, only ourselves. Failing to risk the poverty of encounter, we indulge in a new form of self-assertion and pay a price for it: loneliness. Because we did not risk the poverty of openness (cf. Mt. 10:39), our lives are not graced with the warm fullness of human existence. We are left with only a shadow of our real self (Metz, pg. 43-44).

There are times where I find myself resisting this poverty of spirit where God wants to especially love and encounter me. It is hard for me to admit that I need God and other humans to help me on this journey of faith. Thankfully, God is patient but also creatively persistent in His pursuit of each of us.

I was blessed with the opportunity to help organize and run our Fall Discernment Retreat (Oct. 11-13). Our Sisters, Mercedarian brothers, a diocesan priest, and some seminarians generously shared their time and gifts with the retreatants. I love helping to create places of encounter with God for others. What I was not expecting was that God was waiting to encounter me. During a marathon period of Eucharistic adoration, that same friend I mentioned earlier sat down next to me and bluntly asked, "Do you want to know what the Lord asked me to tell you over an hour and a half ago?" He didn't really give me chance to answer before revealing, "You are worried and anxious about many things." After some time of prayer, he kept saying, "The Father is so proud. So, so proud." That pierced me, and I felt something lift. I shared, "I suddenly do not feel so alone anymore." The response I received was, "Or perhaps you are now seeing what you had all along." Poverty of spirit is the foundation of any authentic encounter. Every stirring of genuine love makes us poor (Metz, pg. 43). This genuine love is what the vow of poverty is essentially about, at least to me.

God was and still is teaching me that the poorer I am, the more I possess Him. This is especially evident in the apostolate. Presently, I am serving as a pastoral counselor and spiritual director at the Fiat Center in Gainesville, FL. It is a very humbling experience to enter into very vulnerable experiences with others, but I have to allow God to enter into "the poverty of me" first.

Religious poverty, like that of Christ, is above all the sharing of goods. We place in common, at the service of all, all that we have and are, from our experience of God to our material things.

(Constitutions #28)



The state of consecrated life is thus one way of experiencing a "more intimate" consecration, rooted in Baptism and dedicated totally to God. In the consecrated life, Christ's faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit, propose to follow Christ more nearly, to give themselves to God who is loved above all and, pursuing the perfection of charity in the service of the Kingdom, to signify and proclaim in the Church the glory of the world to come.

CCC 916

The more I am aware of my poverty, the more I find myself calling on God to lead these sessions. And you know what? God always shows up and does some pretty awesome things for His children. I just have to remain poor!

Reflection by Sr. K.M. Chiara, HMSS
Temporary Professed, Third Year



First Profession of Vows

I am Sr. Lourdes of the Holy Eucharist. On August 15, 2019, the Solemnity of the Assumption, I professed my first vows and at the altar became who I was always meant to be: a bride of Christ.

In our community we are allowed to take on a saint name or devotion in addition to our baptismal name upon profession. I asked my superior to pray and present to me God's will in what name or devotion I might take upon profession. What she presented to me pierced my heart for in the title "of the Holy Eucharist" is revealed both whose I am and who I am meant to become: Eucharist.

The following is a poem written about a month before profession when I knew that I was coming to the altar as an unconsecrated host about to become consecrated by the Lord, to the Lord, and for the Lord. I felt this to be my personal call, but there should be no mistake, we are all called to become Eucharist.

Becoming Eucharist

In the Eucharist is all.
Incarnation.
Passion.
Resurrection.
Unity.
But to become Eucharist
I must become small,
So small,
Bite-sized,
And as I consume my Beloved every day
Now He shall consume me.
And as I accept His blood to the last drop,
Now He will accept mine
To my last breath
How do I become Eucharist
If not by His words over me
And His Spirit coming upon me
Like the dewfall?
And if I become Eucharist,
Consumed by Him who is Eucharist
and is consumed by all,
Then I too will be with all,
Because I am with Him,
And in Him.
But first we must become small
Silent,
Hidden,
Often misunderstood
And often forgotten.
Then we must accept
that the world will look
on us
And think:
Foolishness!
While we know that
Before their veiled eyes
We become Eucharist.

Profession Day!



Entrance to Novitiate



Sr. Ashley and Sr. Monica entered the novitiate on September 24, 2019, the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mercy. Please keep them in your prayers as they begin their religious life in our Institute.

SR. ASHLEY SANTORA



SR. MONICA WATERS



Entrance to Postulancy



MIKALA EDENFIELD
AUGUST 14, 2019
VIGIL OF THE ASSUMPTION



JENNY KUNZ
OCTOBER 15, 2019
MEMORIAL OF ST. TERESA OF AVILA



Please pray for our postulants as they embark on this new stage in their lives.

The discovery of Christ who surrendered his life to redeem us from all slavery and its profound impact with the Eucharistic Mystery, constitute the foundation of our charism and our Eucharistic-Mercedarian spirit.
(Constitutions #6)

Wisdom from the Cloister



SR. RAQUEL GUTIERREZ

How was my first year of novitiate? Very EUCHARISTIC! By that I mean that it has been a real extension of the Holy Mass. What shaped my day and year was daily Eucharistic Adoration and daily Lectio Divina as is the norm in our community. As the Mass is composed of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Word and the Eucharist shaped my year. This year was very enlightening and strengthening. I'm thankful for the spirituality and formation I received this first year. Studying the documents of the Church have allowed me to fall in love more with Jesus, this calling, and His Church. I'm thankful to God, to my formator, to my sisters in community, my spiritual director, priests, and professors at the seminary who are all helping form me during this time. It has truly been a time of interior strengthening and transformation. I'm thankful for my first year of novitiate and as for this second year of novitiate, I pray to become that rich soil so when He comes to me in His Word and in the Eucharist, I will be ready for Him, and together, bear much fruit for the salvation of souls.



SR. TONIA BORSELLINO

In God's mercy, this past year provided lots of time for prayer and reflection, a given when you're in your "cloister year." But, as a surprise to me, that also meant that God began stripping away all my illusions, teaching me about my poverty, and continually bringing me to answer the question: "Do I trust God enough to follow Him beyond myself?" Do I trust Him enough to rely on Him for everything, to trust who He says He is, to go where I do not understand, and to remain in the face of suffering? I spent most of the year throwing a tantrum and wanting to run because of how difficult it is to live for God instead of myself – when I rely on my own strength. But every time a part of me died throughout the year, Christ rose and our faith became alive in me in such a real way. I always thought I was following Christ, but discipleship is a union of wills, a union of love, and I learned this year what that actually means. Though my impatient self is learning to accept the process, the journey really is the greatest joy because eventually, my deaths will be united to Christ's too – and it will no longer be I who lives but Christ who lives in me.

Reflections on their first year of novitiate

Life in Christ!



Evangelize with Mary in the light of the Eucharist



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UPCOMING EVENTS

November

- 18 - Theology on the Rocks (Akron)
- 26 - Blessing of the Divine Providence Chapel
(Baton Rouge)

December

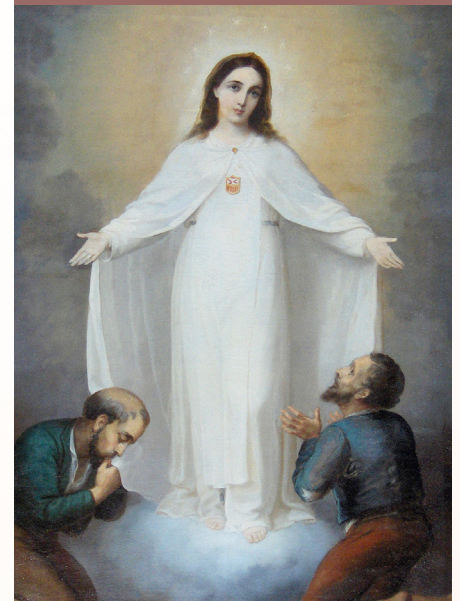
- 21 - Claimed by Love (Cleveland)

January

- 2-4 Encounter 2020 Conference (Toledo)
- 24 - March for Life (Washington, D.C.)

March

- 6-8 Discernment Retreat (Cleveland)
- 14 - Discernment Day Retreat (Gainesville)



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mercedariansisters.org

*Our Lady of Mercy,
pray for us!*