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## The Hope of Our Call

In the letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul prays that we all “may know what is the hope that belongs to his call” (Ephesians 1:18).

During this Jubilee of Hope, we have a beautiful opportunity to reflect on the role and necessity of hope in our lives.

### ***What is His call?***

I have perceived it as an invitation to give myself totally to God, all that I am and all that I have. That can seem like a lot to ask: “all of me, Jesus? Everything?”

“I have come to set the world on fire.”

*Luke 12:49*



But what, then, is the hope of His call? It is the hope of an eternity spent with God, the recognition that He desires to give me Himself! In this light, to give everything doesn't seem like too much to ask. In addition, as I have entered more deeply into religious life, I realize more and more that all that I give to Jesus, however big or small, is not lost, not "wasted," as the world might think. Rather, it is received by Him with love unimaginable, multiplied, and used for His glory and the salvation of souls, including my own! From this realization came the song "Nothing's Wasted," which expresses the joy of spending my life for God, which comes from the hope of his call, the hope that all that is given to Him is not wasted, but glorified. I hope in His love and grace, that through responding to His call, I will dwell with Him on earth and rejoice in perfect union with Him forever in Heaven.

*by Newly Professed Sister, Sr. Amanda Lucia Marie of the Love of God Hartwell, HMSS*

*Listen to "Nothing's Wasted" on our YouTube Channel and read more about the First Profession of Vows on page 4.*







# Highlights & Glory Stories From Summer Camps Across the Nation!



Sr. Katelyn Marie Amata, HMSS: Steubenville South

It was such a blessing to be able to accompany 140 students from the Diocese of Baton Rouge to Steubenville South this past summer! The youth conference was so full of life from beginning to end as we explored what it means to be consumed by the love of Christ. The powerful speakers broke through to the youth, bringing Jesus into new places of their hearts and pouring out His profound love upon them. The Holy Spirit moved to bring about a great sense of being the Body of Christ, and students left the weekend with new or renewed zeal for the faith and community in Christ. The highlight of the weekend for many (including myself) was a time of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on the second night of the Conference. Jesus opened many hearts and gazed on His beloved children, reminding them of their goodness and wholeness in Him. It was an enormous privilege to be a spiritual mother to the group and witness their transformation in the Lord!



Sr. Alaina Marie Therese, HMSS: Damascus

Holy Spirit was alive and moving beautifully and powerfully at Catholic Youth Summer Camp (Damascus) this summer. It was such a joy and privilege to be there with the high schoolers for worship, witness, prayer, and play, and especially to accompany my small group of high school girls as a spiritual mother. To see these young people's hunger for Jesus, openness to the Holy Spirit, and seriousness about their own prayer life and Christian witness was beautiful and edifying. My heart came away from that week well and truly full. It was my first time at Damascus, and God willing, I would happily go back!



Sr. April Marie Josefina, HMSS: Camp Wild Sky

I was blessed to go to Camp Wild Sky in Burnet, Texas, with two Sisters this summer. It was a different experience for my sisters and I to be invited to serve as part of the "leadership team" for a camp, and to be asked to offer feedback and share ideas about how the already scheduled programming could be modified each day. The Sisters and I helped by giving a couple of talks about Momma Mary, and participated in the general talks, liturgy, meals and activities (including kayaking, repelling, paddle boarding, sports, and a low ropes course). For me, one of the most powerful experiences we had at the camp was being able to witness God's love and mercy being poured out on parents and campers through healing prayer (which was not part of the regularly scheduled programming, but the Lord had it in mind!). We saw, for example, a mom who had spent the night in the emergency room with a terrible foot injury begin to walk normally again after praying with her. Overall, our experience at Camp Wild Sky was a delightful adventure and I rejoice in the relationships the Lord established and strengthened for me and my sisters while we were there.



# Profession of First Vows

*Solemnity of the  
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
August 15, 2025 - Baton Rouge, LA  
Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church  
Presider: Bishop Michael G. Duca*



For the first time in our U.S. Region,  
FIVE beautiful Sisters professed at once!  
ALSO, our General Superior, Mother María de  
la Luz del Sagrado Corazón Acosta Bustos (Mother Lucero),  
HMSS, traveled from Mexico to receive their vows,  
accompanied by our General Secretary,  
Mother Graciela Cuevas.

*...To Evangelize with Mary...*



## Significant Moments of the Mass of First Profession:



- Professing to God and signing at the altar our profession formula, which includes the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. This is the first time the sisters stated their new religious names that are added on to their baptismal names.
- Symbolizing the internal transformation, the sisters exchanged the white novice veil and 12-pleat habit for the black veil and 4-pleat habit.
- Receiving the medal of our Institute (bearing the monstrance and Mercedarian shield), a copy of our Constitutions, and a crucifix to wear over their hearts.
- Our Regional Superior Mother Isabel Rodriguez announced the sisters' first obedience to our different communities and apostolates (2 sent to Cleveland and 1 each to Maumee, Gainesville, and Baton Rouge!)



*"I, Sr. N., intimately consecrate myself to God... I promise, with the grace of God and with the help of Our Mother of Mercy, to strive for total receptivity to being perfected in the fire of Eucharistic love."*

*- excerpt from our Profession Formula*



*"Before the Profession Mass began, I had the opportunity to pray. I was calm, but I asked Jesus, 'Am I really here? Is it really today?'" The Lord spoke in, "This is the way, walk in it." The call was to keep my eyes fixed on Him. For me, the beauty of the day was simply one of following our Lord's lead. Everything else of the day was just an added blessing!*

**- Sr. Megan *María* Luz, HMSS**

*"Merciful Father, in the name of our lovable Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and all the saints, I ask You to set me on fire with your Spirit of Love, and to grant me the grace of making You deeply loved" (Consecration renewal prayer from 33 Days to Merciful Love by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC). As I was writing my petition letter to our Mother General for the religious name I wished to take at First Profession, Jesus gave me grace to understand the Consecration to Merciful Love, which I had made before entering our community and which is based on the prayers and writings of St. Thérèse, as a reflection of our own Eucharistic-Mercedarian charism: to be consumed by the fire of Eucharistic love so that we may help set it ablaze in others. Both before Profession and since, it has been a beautiful, consoling grace to reflect on how Jesus has revealed His particular love for me and the charism with which He has gifted me, through Our Lady and St. Thérèse."*

**- Sr. Alaina *Marie* Thérèse, HMSS**

*"I was very moved during the liturgy by a sense of truly being ekklesia (Church) through Christ in His Holy Mass. From the moment we were processing in, I was overwhelmed by the sense of the community gathered being One Body in Christ and how in our Profession of Vows, we were being brought into Christ's Body in a very particular way as His Consecrated Brides. This meditation continued throughout the Mass, especially as the Lord highlighted the blessings that are poured on our Institute through the many gifts each Sister offers along with the sacrifice of Jesus on the altar. By the time I was to read the simple introductory part of the Profession Formula "...before you my brothers and sisters in Christ...", I could not help but smile. I recognized, in this moment of grace, my gratitude for all the ways in which the community gathered had taught me about how to lay down my life. This moment of gratitude expanded through the reception of the Holy Eucharist and still extends continually today as I reflect on the communion to which we are called in Christ. May we remain one in Him."*

**- Sr. Katelyn *Marie* Amata, HMSS**

*...in the light of the Eucharist!*



*"In Psalm 45:16, which was the responsorial psalm for our Profession Mass, the psalmist declares 'they are borne in with gladness and joy; they enter the palace of the king.' During the Mass, I received such a powerful sense of how my Sisters and I were being 'borne in,' carried by the prayers, love, and support of so many people, both on earth and in heaven. I felt it as we processed in, during the psalm, and in particular, I felt so surrounded and lifted up by the entire Communion of Saints as the five of us stood at the foot of the sanctuary steps right before we professed our vows, as Bishop Duca and the whole gathered community stood and prayed for us."*

**- Sr. Amanda *Lucia* Marie of the Love of God, HMSS**

*"Meditating on the prayers and readings for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary to prepare for our profession, I was struck by a portion of the Collect prayer referencing our Lady and asking God 'that, always attentive to things that are above, we may merit to be sharers of her glory.' For me, the day of our profession was one of experiencing here "the things that are above," a taste of heavenly beauty, peace, and communion with each other and with Christ. It's difficult to put into words. It was the freedom to truly pray from the heart and live in the present moment. I am incredibly grateful for everyone who prepared us, prayed with us and for us, and continues to pray for us. May our Lord keep us always attentive to things that are above!"*

**- Sr. Maria Beatriz *Fidelis*, HMSS**

**Visit our YouTube Channel to watch the Livestream of the Profession Mass and the "New Name Explained" videos for each Newly Professed Sister!**

Like the *Dewfall* | 5





# Admittance to Postulancy

This year, four women entered Postulancy in our Region:

Maria Clark, Alana Endres, Kelly Lilak, and Clare Schachte!

Please keep them all in your prayers as they begin their formation and continue discerning the call Christ has placed on their lives!

*Enjoy this reflection one of our new Postulants wrote about her experience:*

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come." I have never felt the truth of this verse more than I have since joining the convent as a Postulant this past August! In one afternoon, I was transformed from a single, carefree waitress living in Texas who went to concerts every time she got the chance and was always spending time with

family and friends, into a Religious Sister living in a convent in Louisiana. Of course, this day was actually just the first day of my formation to become a Sister, and the transition to the convent took much longer than one afternoon, but that day still represented a very big life change!

My life, especially these past two years, has been leading me to the Mercedarian Sisters, and August 8th was the day I finally arrived. The people who see me now have no idea who I used to be; they know who I am now. When people look at me they see, simply by the outfit I wear, that I belong totally to Christ. They see Him and my relationship with Him before they see anything else about me. How beautiful that is!

Entering Postulancy has shown me in a very tangible way that the Lord can, and will, work through anyone who gives Him space to do so. Though I am still the girl from Texas who likes concerts, I am also so much more now. In entering Postulancy, I let go of all my other, lesser desires, and grabbed a hold of my true desire; intimacy and union with Christ.

And the Lord has responded to this step by increasing my desire for Him and filling me with all the graces I need to continue pursuing Him. He is transforming me into the bride He wants me to be for Him - the bride who knows, loves, and serves Him with her whole heart, and will bring others to do the same.

Praise God!





# Entrance to Novitiate

On Friday, August 22, 2025, we welcomed last year's Postulants into their first year of Novitiate! Bishop Michael G. Duca presided over Morning Prayer and the Entrance Ceremony.

Wondering what this means for our new First-Year Novices?  
Read their Q&A below!

## What's a Novice?

A Novice is a young woman in formation who begins a stage of formation called "novitiate" and is formally recognized as a member of the Community. The Novitiate is a time of greater prayer, formation, and discernment where the Novice learns more about God and herself. The sister who is a Novice is "engaged" to Jesus, beginning greater preparation for her First Vows.

## Cloistered? You can't go out?

Being cloistered refers to the period of time we spend within the community during the first year of Novitiate. We take a break from outside apostolates to really get to know Jesus, our future spouse, better!

## Do you miss your hair?

It can be difficult, but it is our gift to Jesus! As a sign of giving everything over to Him, including our beauty, we have our hair cut before receiving the veil during the Entrance Ceremony.

## What's it like wearing a veil?

Wearing a veil is such a beautiful experience. Just as cutting our hair within the Ceremony is a sign of giving everything over to Jesus, wearing our veils is a sign that we are His! It is a sign of our hope to one day be totally consecrated to Him through vows and a reminder of our identity as His bride.

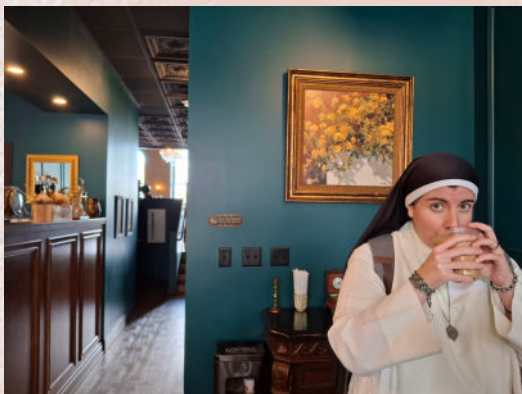




# Moments Throughout the Semester



Community outing to Maumee River and local Metro Parks



Much needed coffee respite after a teacher's conference in Maumee



Maumee Community visits Blessed Solanus Casey Center and nearby Sweetest Heart of Mary Church (ft. Sr. Lucia Marie of the Love of God, HMSS)



S'mores night in Cleveland!



Parish mission in Maumee, OH with Deacon Michael Parker from Baton Rouge!



Gainesville Sisters attended the USF Fall Retreat in Tampa



Gainesville Community banana phone fun! "Jesus is calling!"



Solemnity of Our Lady of Ransom celebration with Cleveland and Maumee Communities

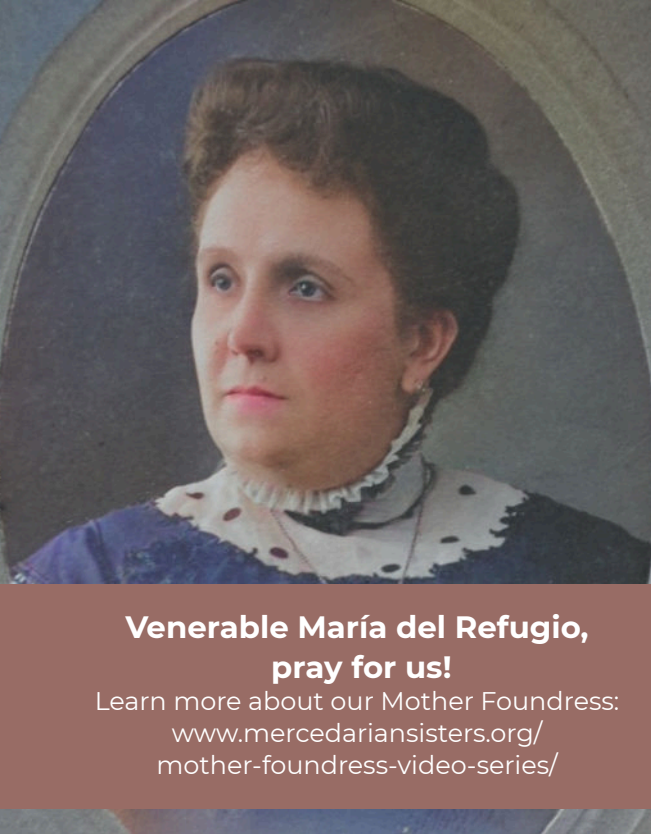


Most Blessed Sacrament Parish Fair adventures with Baton Rouge and Novitiate House Communities



Sr. Cecilia, HMSS gave a talk and led praise & worship on stage during the Hope Youth Festival at Our Lady of Hope Retreat Center in Mississippi





**Venerable María del Refugio,  
pray for us!**

Learn more about our Mother Foundress:  
[www.mercedariansisters.org/  
mother-foundress-video-series/](http://www.mercedariansisters.org/mother-foundress-video-series/)

# *On our Mother Foundress*

*by Sr. Yvelyne Marie Bernard, HMSS,  
Coordinator of Promotion of our Mother Foundress*

“Why don’t you want to get canonized?!”

Yes. I have asked our Venerable Mother Foundress this question. Truthfully, I ask her this question quite often. Mr.

George Foulkes, our Postulator for the Cause of her Canonization, has shared countless stories of wonderful miracles attributed to her intercession. But none of those miracles can be used because of one reason or another.

For instance, a child had a rare cancer that was documented as being there one day and not being there the next and the thing that happened in between was prayer for his healing through her intercession. But then the hospital burned and the medical records were lost.

Or another instance, a couple could not conceive because both the man and the woman were struggling with extreme infertility. So, one day they were infertile and the next day they were not and the thing that happened in between was prayer for a baby through her intercession. But when asked to give official testimony, they declined. They do not deny that they were able to get pregnant through her intercession but simply do not wish to testify. And the instances go on and on and on.

Mother Foundress’ answer to me is always the same. “I don’t need to be canonized”. My response to her is always, “I understand. You’re already in heaven; you’re already a saint. But your canonization is for our benefit. We need you to be canonized. We need your name to be known in this generation.” And she just shrugs her shoulders, gives me a smirk, and disappears back into the Beatific Vision.

This is the irony of it all: those persons in the canonization process do not care so much about getting an St. in front of their names. The entire process is for the encouragement of all of us still on the way to heaven. Realize for a moment that Carlo Acutis had friends who conversed with him, observed him, played with him, prayed with him, laughed with him, lived life day by day with him. These people were interacting with a canonized saint long before Carlo had an St. added to the front of his name! Why then, is it so important for us that he is canonized? It helps the Church spread a beautiful message of hope and joy to the world: “Look at this person, in this time period, who loved God and lived the Gospel. If this person could do it, so can you!”

Would that Maria del Refugio be one of the main patrons for the next National Eucharistic Congress. Her whole life is a testament to the resignification of the Eucharist in our lives. She found herself being redeemed by Christ over and over and over again every time she encountered Him in His Eucharistic mystery. The fire of His Heart enkindled in her a similar fire until, like Him, she too had an insatiable desire to “set the world on fire.”

Bringing Maria del Refugio to the level of the altar would be for our sake the most magnificent gift from the Church, to the Church, for the Church: “Look at this person, in this time period, who loved God and became Eucharist. If this person could do it, so can you!”





# Mercedarian Laity *of the* Blessed Sacrament

## Winter 2025 LEM Update

"With joy, we would like to share that as of this Fall 2025, we have started our fourth group of formation for the Mercedarian Laity of the Blessed Sacrament, since the formation process started in Fall 2022. Our mission is to form lay people in the charism and spirituality that was given to the Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament through our Mother Foundress, Venerable María del Refugio Aguilar y Torres. By participating in a two-year formation process, under the patronage of Our Lady of Ransom, lay people will be strengthened to live out the universal call to holiness. They learn about our Eucharistic spirituality, the Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina (praying with Sacred Scripture), Our Blessed Mother, freedom from captivity, the history of the Mercedarian Order, the history of the Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Discernment of Spirits, Documents of the Church, and more topics in order to meet today's needs and form men and women who are striving to live a path of holiness that is rooted in a strong relationship with Our Eucharistic Lord. Those who go through the formation process are encouraged to live our spirituality from their own homes, among their families and within their own communities.

The meetings are held twice a month via Zoom and are led by one of our Sisters. We currently have 45 people in formation. A retreat for those who have gone through the formation process for two years already is being organized and they will soon make promises to live the Mercedarian Laity of the Blessed Sacrament spirituality in their own lives. We are filled with joy to be able to share "who we are and what we have," as we state in our own profession formula as Mercedarian Sisters to share "all that we have and all that we are" with our community. Freely and generously, we have been given the gift of our charism by the Holy Spirit through Venerable María del Refugio and freely we share it!

"All you who are thirsty, come to the water!"  
-Isaiah 55:1."



*Sr. Raquel of the Holy Spirit*  
JHMS  
LEM Coordinator

"The formation process has both humbled me and shaken me. I feel my spiritual life is different, probably weaker, than many of the other LEM members. I have come to realize that I have not developed the deep relationship with God the Father, Jesus, and Mother Mary that many other members have. However, the LEM formation process, although difficult, has changed and improved my understanding of myself, my motives, and what my relationship with Jesus and Mary actually is. Today, God is pulling me into some very different aspects of involvement within our Church, requiring me to look forward into the future of our Church. One thing that is certain is that the LEM formation process has helped me to understand the need to let go, focus on the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and let Him be in control."

-Dave Wither, Fourth-Year LEM Member



"While I already lived a pretty committed prayer and sacramental life before joining the LEM formation process, being a part of the LEM community enhanced, solidified, and disciplined my spiritual practices in a way that gives me more peace and joy in my daily life. I have become more disciplined and obedient in praying the Rosary daily and doing Lectio Divina weekly, which is because we're being asked to do this as LEM members. I have found myself spending more time in front of the Blessed Sacrament, and not only that, but my husband is also committed to this, so our marital life has grown more holy and happy as we worship Our Lord and our Blessed Mother in new and deeper ways."

-Kathy Wither, Fourth-Year LEM Member

For more information about LEM, visit:  
[www.mercedariansisters.org/lem](http://www.mercedariansisters.org/lem)



# Vocational Ministry Updates



We joyfully announce that Sr. Katherine Marie Chiara McCloskey, HMSS, is now serving as our National Vocation Director from our community in Maumee, Ohio. Sr. Chiara has long served in Vocations Ministry with Mother Jeanette Marie Estrada, HMSS, who will focus primarily in continuing to serve as Mistress of Novices in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

We thank Mother Jeanette Marie, HMSS, for her many years of service and guidance of young women in the role of Vocation Director and ask for your prayers as Sr. Chiara and our Vocations Team continues to accompany young women in discerning God's call!



## *Fruits from our Gainesville, FL Discernment Day Retreat*

*There was one talk where Sr. Maria Luz talked about her discernment story, and there was one thing that stood out to me that I will never forget: it was Jesus telling her, "I love you, come with me." In Adoration and after the reflection, I got to truly understand that sentence and surrender to the Lord all my burdens and worries so that I could follow Him even more than I already do, while receiving the love He abundantly gives. Overall, I got to see the Lord in a new light and deepen the relationship I have with Him as I continue to discern what He would like for my life.*

*~ Bela*

*I really enjoyed the retreat, it was great to spend a day with young women that are thinking like me about giving their life to God in whatever way they're called to. It was nice not to feel like the only one with these thoughts. I felt a lot of peace during Mass and the silent times, but also a lot of emotions while reflecting on letting God guide me and not having all the answers to my future in one day. Something that stuck with me that day was hearing about letting God love you, it was relieving to hear it. This discernment retreat really moved me to think openly about how I can put God always in the center of my life no matter what path I choose and I am so grateful for that.*

*~ Amelia*

## Upcoming Discernment Retreats

**January 16-18, 2026**

Cleveland, Ohio

Contact Sr. Josefina, HMSS before making plans to attend  
[sisterjosefina@mercedariansisters.org](mailto:sisterjosefina@mercedariansisters.org)

**March 13-15, 2026**

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Contact Sr. Yve Marie, HMSS before making plans to attend  
[sisteryvemarie@mercedariansisters.org](mailto:sisteryvemarie@mercedariansisters.org)





*Connect With Us!*

MercedarianSisters.org



*Vocational Inquiries*

MercedarianSisters.org/  
inquiry-form/

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### January

- 1-5 SEEK Columbus & Fort Worth
- 16-18 Discernment Retreat (Cleveland)
- 23 March For Life

### February

- 19-23 Come and See (Baton Rouge)
- 27-Mar 1 High School Retreat (Baton Rouge)

### March

- 7 ARISE Diocesan Middle School Rally (Baton Rouge)
- 13-15 Discernment Retreat (Baton Rouge)
- 22 Strolling Buffet Fundraiser (Baton Rouge)



*Our Lady of Mercy,  
pray for us!*