



The Widows' Mite

Widows of Prayer

Issue No. 23

Fall/Winter 2016

It's been two and a half years since the last Widow's Mite was published (Spring/Summer 2014). Typically this initial article in each newsletter is reserved for a message from the Association's Spiritual Director. However, as we reactivate this publication it might be appropriate to remember our roots by republishing our founder's article from the very first newsletter. So here are Fr Kieran Hickey's words from the very first Widow's Mite, March 2003:

When I used to read in Luke's Gospel about the prophetess Anna, it says that after seven years of marriage her husband died and she spent the remaining years of her life worshipping in the temple day and night in prayer and fasting. I never thought that I would be involved in ministry to a group of widows following the example of the prophetess Anna. But during these past years since the Widows of Prayer began, I have spent time with them in prayer and offering Mass for them every Tuesday afternoon. It has been a wonderful and inspiring experience.

From my pastoral experience, I know that the death of a spouse can be a very difficult and trying experience. Their whole life is changed. And if they are retired, as many of them are, they have to find some ways of living their new life. As I have spent time with the Widows of Prayer, I have come to realize that they have found a very fulfilling and rewarding way of life. When they share their faith journey with one another they find lots of love and support. They have been a great inspiration to me. We pray that more widows will find their way to join these wonderful women, the Widows of Prayer.

F. Kieran Hickey, O.F.M. Cap

What's New:

Advertisements congratulating new priests were placed in papers in Detroit (Michigan Catholic),

An ad was also placed in the publication at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help

Documentary DVD. Mary Reardon has recorded a brief history of the establishment of the group. It was a great privilege to view the documentary at Kathy Feistel's as a community. We were joined by Mary Reardon as well as Father Tom and Father Andrew from St Pius X. We closed with evening prayer and dinner.

Election Results

New officers were elected in October:

Carlotta Stricker - General Servant Leader (2nd term)

Nicolette Ellinghausen - Assistant General Servant Leader

Alice Peeters - General Secretary

Also the following General Counsels were appointed:

Suzanne Dahms - Madison

Catherine Fitzgerald - Huntington

Kathleen Hurley - Macomb

Bernadette Ziemba (incumbent) - Franklin/Milwaukee

Appleton, WI

Servant Leader – Kathy Feistel

Alice Peeters calls on widows who are parishioners at St John's. They talk about adoration and Alice encourages them to attend meetings if possible. She also speaks with them about praying at home and for Priests. In addition, Alice leads the rosary before Mass and the Divine Mercy Chaplet after Mass.

In Hibbing, Rosary is prayed for priests after mass, followed by a coffee and dessert social.



An Evening with Bishop Morneau

On September 29th, St Pius X hosted Bishop Robert Morneau for an Evening of Mercy. We used the gathering as our retreat time and helped sponsor the simple supper held between the Bishop's two talks. Kathy obtained an Action Team grant from Thrivent which paid for the supplies for the soup and salad supper. The Widows of Prayer and St Pius X members crafted the soups.

Our ladies brought desserts and helped set up. It was an excellent gathering of parish and our Widows of Prayer community. Several of the ladies brought guests. We had Mass at 4:30, a talk by Bishop, our simple supper and the closing talk at 6:40. We raised \$333.00 from the free will offering for supper and sale of extra dessert and soup for The St. Pius X St Vincent DePaul Group.

The following Widows made Promises and Vows:

Markie Burby: Private Vows

Lola Dorsett: Private Vows

Kathy Feistel: 3rd and Final Promise

Alice Peeters: Private Vows

Bev Poquette: Private Vows

Carlotta Stricker: Private Vows

Franklin/Milwaukee, WI

Servant Leader – Bernadette Ziemba

The Franklin/Milwaukee Widows of Prayer enjoyed a wonderful and spiritual Day of Reflection on August 17 at St. Alphonsus Parish in Greendale with Carlotta and Fr. Aaron Esch, our Spiritual Advisor. During the Mass *Teresa Erdelt* made her 1st Promise and *Jan Gilberto* made her 3rd and Final Promise. Another special part of this day was being able to visit the Holy Door in this Year of Mercy. Confession was also available to us as well as any blessings received.

We continue to expand our presence in the Milwaukee area by displaying our pamphlets at the Women of Christ Conference in West Bend and bulletin and parish directory announcements in area parishes.

Madison, WI

Servant Leader – Suzanne Dahms

The following Widows made Promises and Vows:

Catherine Duerst Schroeder: 3rd Promise

Mary Wanless: Private Vows

Fort Wayne, IN – Community 1

Servant Leader – Ginny Gibson

Fort Wayne, IN – Community 2

Sr Loretta Borgerding is the Acting Spiritual Director for this group of 8 Widows.

Huntington, IN

Servant Leader – Catherine Fitzgerald

In September, Carlotta Stricker visited Huntington to meet with the Widows here. During her visit, there were multiple ceremonies witnessing the following Promises and Vows:

Sept 21:

Bernice Bott: 3rd and Final Promise

Gloria Gerardo: 2nd Promise

Barbara Gerrard: Private Vows

Joanne Smith: 3rd and Final Promise

Dorothy Ward: Private Vows

After the ceremony everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch, thanks to the generosity of Jerry Bott (Bernice's son). By the way...Bernice is 100 years old and still able to get around.

Sept 22 (Day)

Marilyn Brown: Private Vows

Rita Carboni: Private Vows

Ginny Gibson: Private Vows

Mary Lou Sohn: Private Vows

Mary Troutner: Private Vows

The Mass and ceremonies were followed by lunch at Halls Gas House.

Sept 22 (Evening)

Cecelia Baker, Veronica

Bartoch, Catherine Fitzgerald,

Vera Johnson, Mae Leedy, and

Virginia Salge all professed their Private Vows of Consecrated Life.



Dinner afterwards at Moe's thanks to the generosity of one of Vera's sons.

Macomb, MI

Servant Leader – Kathleen Hurley

In November we had our own unique pilgrimage to the Holy Door as we focused keeping the door of

our hearts open wide to our Lord Jesus. Also this month, after Mass at the chapel, we will meet at Kathleen's home for fellowship and our 2017 planning meeting. Our primary focus for this meeting is outreach to the widows in our communities and the World Day Of Prayer, we are currently seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance as to how we can effectively present the heartbeat of the Widows of Prayer.

Washington, MI

Servant Leader – Nicolette Ellinghausen



Our big news is the induction of our newest Widow of Prayer, Elizabeth McHale. Liz completed the formation process over the past year. She

made her First Promise on Sept 19 during the Widows' Retreat held at Capuchin Retreat in Washington, MI.

We don't have set meetings, but at the end of each meeting we schedule the next meeting at a time and place that best meets all of our busy schedules. Right now we're so please to be working with four new potential candidates from Highland, MI.

Three teas (*Spring, Summer and Christmas*) for women were held in Hibbing, MN by Mary Wanhala. The food was scrumptious and her decorations were so creative and beautiful. Over 50 women attended, At least 5 women are interested in the WOP. Mary is working so hard to bring more women to Our Lord and to give them a fun filled and faith filled experience. **Thank you Mary for all that you do!**

Thanks to Catherine Fitzgerald for the following reflection:

How do you envision Mary? How did Mary respond to the experience of being called by an angelic messenger to God's work? (Luke 1:26-38) All of us have received an angelic calling; otherwise we would not be here today in this time of our life. Mary's life as a holy Widow spoke to your heart and you responded to a holy widowhood. What does her example say to you at this time? How did you respond: "I am elderly, ...am ill, ...not holy enough..."? No, you said "I will give it a try." Sometimes in the first few months of your candidacy you decided "this is not for me", but then you continued onward.

In Luke's gospel (2:36) he tells us about Anna of Jerusalem. When Mary gave birth to Jesus she was a teenager, probably about 14-16 years old. She had a teenager's outlook on people. When she saw Anna, she was still a teenager. Do you remember how you looked at older women when you were a teenager? When I was newly married I was 25 but I hadn't given up my teenage view of older women. My neighbor was 60 and one day, as I watched her in her garden hanging out laundry, I thought "my, she is old!"

How often do we think of Mary as elderly? In the first century, AD, the median age of death for women was 34, but only 3% of women reached this age! As recently as 100 years ago, those in their mid-forties were considered elderly.

Since Jesus was about 30 when He began His public ministry, Mary would have been around 45. In their world that would have been more like a 70 year old today. The early church, the apostles and first disciples and kind holy women would have looked at Mary with respect; not only because of being Jesus' mother, but also because of her age. As we reflect on Mary's example, we are reminded that as older Christian women we should never stop growing in our relationship with God. To be empowered as Widows of Prayer we must first gather and pray. This is what Mary Reardon and the first five women did in Appleton in 1994. They came together to study what their place was in Jesus' scheme of things.

Jesus was not only pleased with His mother; He was willing to praise her. He held her up as an example of discipleship (Luke 8:19-21). He is clearly using this incident to show what disciples are to Him; as close as His mother, His first disciple. All during her life, Mary heard God's call and responded and began to grow in her discipleship to God. Mary's path with God is the model for our path with God too.

Mary's "Yes" was the response to God's angelic call. She started on a path of wisdom that continues to grow. Her

"yes" led to a life-long relationship with God. Her "yes" changed everything from that moment. To be like Mary we must hear God's Word and act upon it. When we commit ourselves to God, then we will also be changed. Wisdom recognizes how often and how deeply we have been changed by Whom we have said "Yes" to. So we need to stand by our "Yes" and let God's will happen.

It is with deepest sympathy that we say goodbye to our sisters who have moved on to their final resting place with God since our last newsletter:

- ♥ Felice Alvarez
- ♥ Margaret Babel
- ♥ Kathryn Creigh
- ♥ Germaine Doerfler
- ♥ Ann Ehnerd
- ♥ Lois Herbers
- ♥ Mary Hernandez
- ♥ Margaret (Peg) Karst
- ♥ JoAnne Kern
- ♥ Beatrice (Bea) King
- ♥ Charlett Mann
- ♥ Casmira Mazur
- ♥ Addie Bell Ness
- ♥ Edna Poitras
- ♥ Esther Schnese
- ♥ Betty Schroeder
- ♥ Catherine Stahl

To learn more about the Widows of Prayer, check out our website: widowsofprayer.org or contact our General Servant Leader:

Carlotta Stricker

1600 S Rebecca Lane

Appleton, WI 54915

Email: widowsofprayer@yahoo.com