

The Widow's Mite

Vol. 3

February, 2004

No. 3



Widows of Prayer

The spirituality that the Widows of Prayer chose to follow is Franciscan spirituality. As part of our spiritual growth and study, each month we gather to continue our study and understanding of the spirituality of St. Francis. At the present time we are using Murray Bodo's book entitled *The Way of St. Francis*. We read one or two chapters and then when we come together we discuss the material and share our reflections. It has been a very helpful and growing experience.

During these discussions the Widows have shared some of their life experiences and also shared their faith. It has been a beautiful way for the women to come to know one another better and to deepen their faith. Whenever we share our faith with others it helps us to grow in our faith.

These monthly gatherings for study and reflection have proven to be very helpful and enlightening. Little by little we learn how we can incorporate the spirituality of St. Francis into our lives.

*Fr. Kieran Hickey, O.F.M. Cap.
Advisor of Widows of Prayer*

Crowns

Some time ago, I was reflecting on the Coronation of Mary and the thought came to me that crowns were not given as an honor but as a burden of service. In ancient times, many different kinds of people wore crowns; emperors, kings, dukes, counts, popes and so on.

The words I received in prayer as I was reflecting on the Coronation is that I, too, have to wear a crown of sorts; my priesthood. It may carry some honors but it carries also a great deal of responsibility and the honors will soon turn sour if I do not properly fulfill the responsibilities.

To become a Widow of Prayer is to accept such a crown of service. We have statements like, "the crowning glory of a mother is her children", to remind ourselves that it is in fulfilling our task properly that our life receives its crown.

For a Widow of Prayer, the crown is to bring the needs of people to the Lord and to call down the blessings of the Lord on the Church and on the world. The glory of that crown will be in the fulfillment of the task it places on the shoulders of those who accept it.

Sometimes we may find ourselves tempted to refuse the 'crown' that the Lord wishes to place on our head – the vocation to which He has invited us – because of the burden that will be a part of it. Yet what an honor and what a joy to enter Heaven wearing the crown of the ministry that the Lord confided to us in this world!

Those of you who are invited to take on that crown may want to reflect on this. And those of you who have accepted it have accepted a sacred burden that you should consider a special honor to fulfill properly. It is those who have worn the crown of service faithfully and humbly who will be wearing it in glory in the Kingdom of God for all eternity.

*Fr. John Guimond, Capuchin
Advisor to the Widows of Prayer
of Huntington-Fort Wayne, Indiana*

Thoughts on the Life of a Widow of Prayer

I have made notes of the talks given by the Spiritual Directors of the Widows of Prayer the last few years. In going back over these notes, I found some thoughts I'd like to share with you, given by Fr. John Guimond, O.F.M. Cap.

This particular day he spoke to us of our journey. All of us sometimes can have a sense that we're not getting anywhere. Life can be tedious, boring and frustrating. I thought, "Yes, I know. I've been there."

But, if we keep trying we ARE going to get somewhere. We all need a sign of God's grace in our lives like:

The Cross – a sign we are precious to God

Eucharist – A divine food to see us through human reality

Rosary – A connection with the Holy Mother, a reminder of her tender love

Personal Shrines – Reminders to us of where we have been especially touched by God.

The symbols of hope are there for us. We have to make use of them. They are the visible signs of our invisible Presence watching over our journey. It may be a very long journey, but there IS a Promised Land somewhere ahead of us. If we stop believing that, we can become cynical and hopeless "Like a dry weary land without water."

Our water is the hope that keeps renewing us day by day.

To follow the Lord we have to believe in Who the Lord is – we have to center our attention on Jesus. The journey is taken a mile at a time – otherwise it can become overwhelming.

Our gaze must be fixed not on where we are going but on who we are going with. If we enjoy the company, we will enjoy the journey. What makes life beautiful is the one we are following – not the scenery we encounter on the way.

Like Mary who followed Joseph, trusting in his wisdom and good sense and simply enjoying the long journey wherever it led.

Not knowing can become part of the excitement when we trust completely in the one who is leading us. When we lose our trust – as the Israelites with

Moses – we become negative and complaining. Then we miss out on the beauty.

We are on a journey, and sometimes it seems long and problems are countless. If we concentrate on that, we lose courage. Our vision must be on the leader of the journey.

When we feel discouraged, we need to refresh ourselves in the Presence of Jesus. He is the remedy for the journey.

Ultimately, we are not just trying to build something beautiful, but we are following something wonderful, and whatever we build we build because we love that someone.

Then we will be less concerned with results and far more willing to let things develop as they will. As long as we trust the leader, the way will be wonderful. When we think we have to do the leading ourselves, we will get "worn out by the journey."

As Widows of Prayer you are called to be "His delight day by day." Then, indeed, you will be "craftsmen" building something beautiful for love of Him.

A simple thought: If the Lord speaks to us a special invitation, can we ignore it without frustrating our own life? His way may not be easy, but it IS the only way that brings happiness to anyone.

As I go over the notes of the teachings given the Widows of Prayer by our Spiritual Directors, I thank God for them and their great wisdom in instructing us along our journey.

JMJ
Mary Reardon, WP

P.S. If you are interested in learning more about the Widows of Prayer, please call 920/733-2652 in the Appleton, Wisconsin area or 260/356-4798 in the Huntington-Fort Wayne, Indiana area.



Quotes from “Widows of Prayer”

I am blest to be accepted as a member of the Widows of Prayer and I am looking forward to receiving the Insignia at our retreat in May. It is a treasured gift for me to be able to walk my faith journey with the friendship of other widows who are also seeking a close union with God. I am delighted that I can be of service to Christ and his church through my commitment as a Widow of Prayer. This association has enriched my life and my prayer-life.

Germaine Doerfler

I have been a widow for 7 years, and after talking to another Third Order Franciscan widow, I became interested in the Widows of Prayer. I am very happy to attend the meetings with Fr. John Guimond. Fr. John is very informative and a delight to listen to. About myself – I am 76 years old and the mother of 9 children, 13 grandchildren.

Mrs. Edna Poitras, WP

Approximately 19 months ago I followed my conscience and drove into Huntington, Indiana to check out what the Widows of Prayer was all about. After my first gathering with the ladies, I knew this was what I wanted and invited several other ladies to join me in my weekly trip to Huntington.

July 16, 2003, Dorothy Ward, Edna Poitras and I, Mary Lou Sohn, accepted the insignia. The insignia is a gold heart with the Chalice, Host and rays etched in it – above is the inscription of a dove, depicting the Holy Spirit. Since that time, we still drive to Huntington once a week.

However, effective Wednesday, January 14, 2004, we will meet at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. We have three or four inquirers who will join us. Widows of Prayer will meet on a weekly basis at the

Cathedral from 9:30 a.m. until 11 a.m. for a meeting with Fr. John Guimond, O.F.M. Cap., to discuss business, introduce new widows and prayer. This is followed by the parish rosary at 11:30 a.m. in the chapel and then Mass at noon.

Mary Lou Sohn, WP

The day I walked into my first Widows of Prayer meeting, I said “YES”! this is where I belong! I truly believe the Holy Spirit sent me to this group. As Fr. John said, “You have raised your families – now give your life to the Church.” I believe this is what I am called to do at this stage of my life. May God give me the grace to persevere.

Dorothy Ward, WP

When I was widowed 46 years ago, there were no Widows of Prayer to share my grief and help me in my journey to God as a widow.

I thank Him for the “Widows of Prayer” who pray for vocations to the priesthood and other religious life, and who share their faith and help me grow in my relationship to God.

Millie Schneider, WP

On the second Tuesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. Fr. John Guimond, Cap., offers Mass for all deceased husbands of widows present.

At the present time at our weekly meetings we are studying the Gospel of Luke with Fr. John.

On the 3rd Wednesday of each month the Widows of Prayer share their thoughts on a given subject – along with a social time and an appropriate video at Victory Noll.

Mae Leedy, WP

Will You Help?

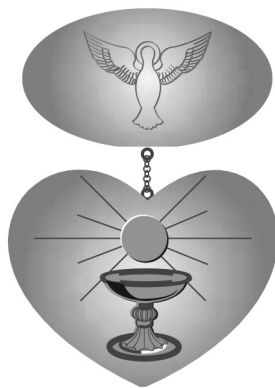
The Widows of Prayer are growing in number. We are 23 insignia wearing widows, 5 more preparing to accept the insignia and others in formation. We have off-shoot groups in other areas. As we grow the needs, expenses and responsibilities also grow.

There are needs for spiritual guidance and instruction, fees for annual retreats and chapter meetings, fees which are prohibitive for some widows on a fixed income. There are books, instructional materials, office and mailing expenses, and the list goes on.

We are incorporated and are a 501(c)(3) Tax Deductible Charity. No amount of help is considered too small. would you consider helping with \$1.00 a month? If so, send to: Widows of Prayer, Inc., 1021 W. Windtree Dr., Appleton, WI 54914. May God bless your generosity!

Widows of Prayer, Inc. Board of Directors

Mary Reardon, President
Robert Harper, Vice President
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Fr. Kieran Hickey, O.F.M. Cap.
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Our Mission

Prayer for priests and others in
Church ministry

Primary Function

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

*The Widows of Prayer, Inc. is supported by
those who believe in our ministry. We are
non-profit and tax deductible.*

Send donations to:
Widows of Prayer, Inc.
1021 W. Windtree Dr.
Appleton, WI 54914

RETREAT FOR WIDOWS

(open to all women interested in a deeper spirituality)

May 14-16, 2004

Theme:

LIVING A HOLY WAY
(A FRANCISCAN FORMULA)

Presenter:

FR. JOHN GUIMOND, O.F.M. CAP.

Conferences:

1. ANAWIM SPIRIT – Being poor at heart
2. FRANCIS & THE WAY OF CHRIST – Called to holiness
3. HOLY OBEDIENCE (St. Clare's response to grace)
4. WALKING WITH FRANCIS TO CHRIST
(Being heart-Christians)
5. FRANCIS' EXTRAVAGANT DREAM (Choosing the best)

Cost:

\$140.00

To register call: Mary Reardon, WP: 920/733-2652 or
Monte Alverno Retreat Center: 920/733-8526

COMING SOON!

PERPETUAL ADORATION is the new "Chapel of Divine Mercy" will begin after 3 p.m. Mass on Mercy Sunday, April 18th, at St. Pius X church, 500 W. Marquette St., Appleton, WI 54911.

The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time you will spend on earth. Each moment that you spend with Jesus will deepen your union with Him and make your soul everlastingly more glorious and beautiful in heaven, and will help bring about everlasting peace on earth.

For further details or to sign up for a personal or family hour of adoration, call Mary Reardon: 920/733-2652 or Dan & Ann Cotton: 920/739-4554.