

The Widow's Mite

Vol. 4

Spring, 2005

No. 4

A Spirituality of Widowhood

Those of you who are choosing to be Widows of Prayer are also, by that fact, choosing to be women of destiny in the Church. You need to form a spirituality of Widowhood of Prayer that will serve not only your need for holy living but that will also enrich the widows of the future who will seek in this religious calling a means of enriching their lives and also the vitality of the Church.

I cannot dictate to you what your Widowhood of Prayer ought to be. I can only ask you to look at some of the realities that should help to shape your vocation. To do that, you need to look at the greatest Widow of the Church, Our Lady herself. What was her attitude, her spiritual focus? Reflect on her joys, her resignation, her manner of searching out the meaning of life.

Mary said, "I am the servant of the Lord." How have you been the servant of the Lord throughout your life? What you have been has brought you to where you are. "Mary pondered all these things." The purpose of pondering is to see how things fit together and reveal the plan of God for your life.

"They have no wine." A non-controlling intercessory prayer. We are not called to tell God what to do but to open our heart to Him concerning the needs of our world, our Church, our family. Reflect on your own prayer stance and what might to be changed in it.

"Do whatever He tells you." You are the Wisdom-figures for your family. It is important that your advice be liberating for them and not just a list of shoulds and should nots. If your loved ones know how to listen to God, they will come to the fulfillment of his will.

Develop a sound attitude toward faith sharing. Be a light to others, not a spotlight. Reflect on how you are called to be servants of Jesus and what being a Widow of Prayer means for you.

These reflections might be part of your gatherings together. Say what you feel and listen intently to what others are saying. Listen with an open mind and a non-judgmental attitude. You are gathering a treasure for the future. Make sure it is pure gold and not an alloy.

*Fr. John Guimond, O.F.M. Cap.
Spiritual Advisor of Widows of Prayer
of Huntington-Fort Wayne, Indiana*

What Have I Learned From The Widows of Prayer

During the past several years I have been serving as a spiritual guide for the Widows of Prayer. During this time I have learned a great deal about the transition a woman experiences when her spouse dies. I never realized how much that has changed her life and how difficult it is to adjust to all of those changes.

There are all different ways that women adjust when their spouse dies. Many of them find fulfillment and joy with their grandchildren in giving them lots of love and care. Others spend much of their time playing cards or bingo. Many of them find it very rewarding to get involved in volunteer work. But for many widows they are looking for something that will give them greater satisfaction and fulfillment.

It seems to me that those who have joined the Widows of Prayer have found what their

hearts were longing for. They have discovered a path which has led them to a closer relationship with God and support and understanding from other widows who are on the same journey. I have found it very inspiring to see these women grow and mature spiritually.

The rule of life which the Widows of Prayer follow might look a little difficult at first but from what I have heard and observed from them is that it has not been that difficult. It has been a gradual growth and development.

I would certainly hope and pray that more women will come to take that step in faith and join the Widows of Prayer. It is a commitment that will bring them fulfillment and satisfaction to fill that void that they perhaps have felt since the death of their spouse.

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

Consecrated Widowhood – Our Road to Holiness

The dictionary definition of consecration is, “to set apart as sacred, to dedicate to a sacred use in a ceremony.” When we made our first promises we spoke our consecration prayer before the uplifted host at Mass. We dedicated our lives, as widows, to prayer for Priests, the Church and those in Church Ministry. In return, Father, in the name of the Church promised us Eternal life. It was an awesome and solemn moment.

Sometimes in the “daily-ness” of life we may forget the great gift we have been given. We may be tempted to slack off a bit on what we have promised. It is then that we must remind ourselves that our widowhood is the way God has chosen for us to become Holy. He has covenanted with us in this new vocation. He will give us all the graces we need to remain faithful.

Living out our Commitment day by day takes discipline. It is good to look again at the Statutes and how we are to fulfill what we have promised:

1. Daily Mass – This is the highest form of worship and praise we can give to God. Vatican II speaks of the Eucharist as the “source and summit of the Christian life.” All the graces we need to live our commitment come through the Eucharist. What a privilege it is to pray for our priests who make Christ present to us each day in Holy Mass.

2. Liturgy of the Hours is the public prayer of the Church for the Church. It is like an extension of the Mass in that we continue to praise God through psalms, Scriptures readings, canticles, intercessions. In praying the psalms day after day, the “head words” eventually become “heart words” and we find ourselves spontaneously repeating phrases throughout the day in praise of God. It is a means of “praying without ceasing.” Even when we are praying the liturgy alone we are praying in unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world.

3. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – We kneel before the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and allow Him to speak to our hearts. Psalm 63 says: “My body pines for you like a dry weary land without water. So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory.” It is a time of special intimacy with Jesus. We give Him our problems. We are renewed in His love.

4. The Rosary – We invite Mary to walk with us as we contemplate the Mysteries. She was the first Widow of Prayer. She will teach us about her Son. One of her titles in the litany of Loretto is “Cause of Our Joy.” She will teach us how to be joyful in serving the Lord. Let us magnify the Lord with Mary and together extol His name!

May the Lord in His mercy keep us faithful to our commitment of prayer and may the consecration of our Widowhood bring us safely one day to the New Jerusalem, the Holy City!

Dorothy Ward, WP

What Does it Mean to be a Consecrated Widow?

Why Have I Become a Widow of Prayer?

Becoming a Widow of Prayer is the fruit of one’s prayer life – a coming to the point where the prayer calls you to action.

At first there seems to be a dialogue with the Holy Spirit – encouragements from God – personal hesitations – usually dealing with impediments we see within ourselves. We need to be convinced of what our heart already has chosen to follow. There is a feeling of unworthiness and what will people think?

This dialogue may go on a long time until we come to the point of saying, “Since I see myself as the Lord’s servant, I HAVE to do what the Lord is calling me to do.”

The result of a firm decision for the Lord is a tremendous sense of joy. Remember, God does His best work with little people! If you feel you’re not worthy of the task, that means you’re probably one of the chosen because then God will get the credit, not you. This is God’s work. If He chooses you to do it for Him, it’s because you’re just what He’s looking for.

To become one of His consecrated servants is to take on the grace of holiness. You want to become holy? Give God the full direction of your life.

The Widows of Prayer bring Jesus to birth in the Church in a new way through its chosen charism. Just think of how many people will get to know Jesus better because of you! Just think of how many widows will have an opportunity to dedicate their lives to Jesus because of you!

You are at the cradle of a new Bethlehem – you are the shepherds who go and tell everyone about Jesus – then come to give praise to Him. The Widows of Prayer is a new cradle for the Infant Lord of Humanity where He can dwell secure, rocked by loving, consecrated arms – your own!

To find out more about the Widows of Prayer and our activities call one of the following:

Mary Reardon: 920/733-2652, Appleton, WI
Mae Leedy: 260/356-0919, Huntington, Indiana
Dorothy Ward: 260/422-2960, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Mary Reardon, WP

Quotes from "Widows of Prayer"

Daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and the recitation of the Rosary every evening was a way of life for my husband and myself most of our married life. Then the Lord took him home and I sort of felt like a ship without a rudder! As the prayer goes – "Lord help me, Your sea is so big and my boat is so small."

Continuing with my mass attendance and devotions, especially after communion, one day a friendly smiling woman asked me to join a group to say the Rosary. I discovered that I wasn't alone, the Lord was with me all the time! The Holy Spirit through these prayerful women took me by the hand and introduced me to the Widows of Prayer, a gathering of kind and compassionate individuals with whom I have much in common. Now I am being helped by a gentle Capuchin priest who is teaching us the meaning of the Gospels and also I am learning from my very patient confreres how to pray the Hours.

Surely, the Widows of Prayer is an influence on my life now and will be eternally, so I say "Thanks Be to God!"

Peg Karst – Huntington, Indiana

It has been three years since I attended my first meeting of Widows of Prayer. There were five present, now we have ten. I don't know when I made the commitment. I just keep going and growing in my faith. We do not dwell on the fact we are widows, but on the power our prayers serve. Our group has adopted the title, Our Lady of Peace. We are encouraged to pray 1-3 hours daily, currently a novena for our groups is available with some discipline suggestions. In April we will have our retreat with Fr. John Guimond, our spiritual advisor. I hope to be worthy of the insignia I so proudly wear.

Cecelia Baker, WP

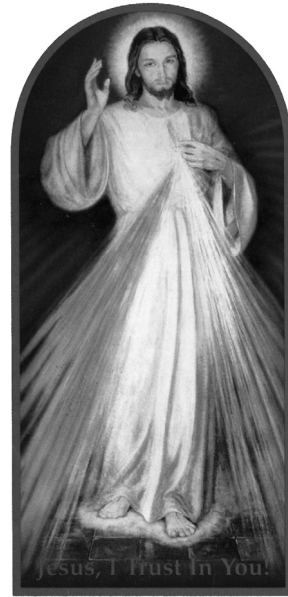
Jesus chose 12 men to be his apostles. Some were fishermen. Jesus said, "follow me and I'll make you fishers of men." Some were tax collectors. They "sold everything" and followed Jesus.

I was a wife and mother for nearly 52 years; my husband died and I became a widow. Now after four years of prayer, retreats and studying the gospels and Psalms with Fr. John Guimond, O.F.M. Cap., our spiritual director, along with the other "Widows of Prayer," I feel chosen to be a "Widow of Prayer."

The "Widows of Prayer" meet every Tuesday. The "Widows of Prayer" from Huntington, along with the "Widows of Prayer" from Fort Wayne enjoy one afternoon each month at Victory Hall. We share a chosen theme and also enjoy social time.

May Leedy, WP – Huntington

MERCY SUNDAY Sunday, April 3, 2005



**Special Celebration
St. Pius X Church
500 W. Marquette St.
Appleton, WI 54911**

*Sponsored by
"Widows of Prayer"*

1:30 p.m.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,
followed by Chaplet of Divine Mercy

and

3 p.m. Mass

Celebrant: Fr. Tom Farrell

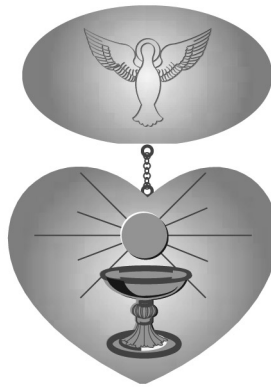
Veneration of the Divine Mercy Image
after Mass

To venerate a sacred image or statue means to perform
some act or make some gesture of deep religious
respect toward it because of the person it represents ...
in this case Our Most Merciful Savior

**All are invited to a reception
in the north narthex following the Mass
to celebrate the one year anniversary
of the "Chapel of Divine Mercy"**

Widows of Prayer, Inc. Board of Directors

Mary Reardon, President
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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)

May 13-15, 2005

Theme:

Gospel Women

Presenter:

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

Cost: \$140.00

To register call:

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

A Prayer For Those Who Live Alone

I live alone, dear Lord, stay by my side; in all my daily needs be my guide. Grant me good health, for that indeed, I pray, to carry on my work from day to day. Keep pure my mind, my thoughts, my every deed; let me be kind, unselfish in my neighbor's need. Spare me from fire, from flood, malicious tongues; from thieves, from fear, and evil ones.

If sickness or an accident befall, then humbly, Lord, I pray, hear my call. And when I'm feeling low or in despair, lift up my heart and help me in my prayer. I live alone dear Lord, yet have no fear because I feel your presence ever near. Amen.

— Author Unknown