

The Widow's Mite

Issue No. 6



A Sense of Communal Identity

An important thing for any new movement in the world and in the Church is to make itself known to the larger community. The Widows of Prayer have taken on a new role in the Church. How many people really know what that role is? The better known you are, the more you are likely to survive as a special group in the Church Community.

If someone were to ask you, "Who ARE the Widows of Prayer? What do they do?", are you prepared to clearly respond to that question? And to do so in a way that makes your community appealing to others, especially to priests and bishops? Remember that soon you will have to deal with several bishops, not just your bishop in Green Bay. Every new group that forms outside of the Green Bay Diocese will require the permission of the local bishop and each of those bishops will have to be convinced of the benefit of having Widows of Prayer in his diocese.

Keep this in the back of your minds; you are not simply "widows of prayer", you are "THE Widows of Prayer"! Be very aware of

your identity and its uniqueness among the ranks of the faithful in the Church.

It is always important to advertise, even for a contemplative group such as you are. People need to know you and what you are offering to the Church. Advertising pays; it gives you legitimacy in the eyes of those you are serving. How will the larger membership of the Church benefit from what you are and from what you have to offer?

Obviously, at this stage, you are limited in your possibilities, but don't be afraid to step out and make yourselves known. Ideally, people who see your insignias should be able to say, "Oh, that's one of those Widows of Prayer!", without your even having to introduce yourselves.

When most parishes in the country are eager to have at least one or two Widows of Prayer in their membership, you will have succeeded, you will have your place in the future of the Church.

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

News from the Fort Wayne Group

The Fort Wayne "Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament" community, joined the "Queen of Peace" community of Huntington in a retreat given by Fr. John Guimond. The title was "Joy in the Lord", and dealt with the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary and their application to our lives. It was a rich experience for all of us.

Four members renewed their promises during Mass at the retreat. We now have 14 insignia wearing members in the Fort Wayne community. At the Appleton retreat one member will be making final promises.

We continue to meet weekly with Fr. Guimond. He has just finished teaching "Revelations" and we are now studying the Book of Consolation from Isaiah.

We recently went out to a restaurant for a social time together, which all enjoyed.

To help promote our ministry we sent letters to 35 pastors in the area and included a "Widow's Mite" and the brochure, hoping they will pass the word on to the widows of their parishes.

Dorothy Ward wp



Front Row Left to Right: Edna Poitras, Mildred McAfee, Virginia McKenzie, Virginia Gibson Back Row Left to Right: Felice Alvarez, Mary Cuney, Veronica Bartoch, Mary Lou Sohn, Fr. Guimond, Mary Voors, Rita Carboni, Dorothy Ward Missing members are: Jean Kelly, Barbara Garrard, Mary Hernandez, Charlett Mann

How I Became Interested in the Widows of Prayer

The day I knew that my husband was to die of brain cancer, I started thinking and praying of what I would do when he was gone. I knew that I would not want to get married again. I knew that it could become lonely living alone. I also believed that God has a purpose for me and that He would guide me in what I have to do. One day, in my conversation with a priest friend of the family, I mentioned that I don't want to get married again and that I would like to spend the rest of my life serving God and His church. I was thinking then of volunteering in the ministries of my parish, nothing particular in mind. Our priest friend replied, "then you should start practicing virtues." I didn't quite understand what he meant.

After my husband passed away, I continued to pray for guidance. I also started meeting and praying with another widow. We discussed our experiences as a widow, how we are coping with our grieving, the adjustment of living alone, our difficulties, our faith in God who sustains us, etc. We also went out together with other friends to socialize. I recall these times to be uplifting especially when we prayed together and prayed for one another. We were also able to help others like giving a ride to the doctor or referring a trusted handyman to do some needed repairs in the house. I thought to myself, wouldn't it be nice if widows got together to pray and help each other in their need. But, how do I get widows together? Not every one has the same interest as mine especially when it comes to praying.

Days and weeks passed by and I continued to ask God what does He want me to do? Where and how can I serve Him the most? One day I sensed that God was calling me to some kind of religious or consecrated life. I found it hard to believe. It is out of my character. I liked nice clothes and traveling. I even wore make up. Could I give it up? As I continued to pray, I wanted more and more to obey Him. I prayed that if this was what He wants, that He would give me the grace to give up whatever I must give up for the love of Him.

There was a vocation awareness week in my particular diocese. My widow friend and I went to see the display of various religious groups and to inquire about vocations. Nothing drew me to any particular religious community.



Cecilia Vilorio Skrzypek and May Yturralde

The sense that God is calling me to a consecrated life is still very strong. I took this to mean that I should become a religious sister or a lay consecrated widow. Then the questions came to my mind, – How can I meet the obligations of prayer time, spiritual readings and meetings in the diocese with other lay consecrated persons when I still need to work to support my needs and still need to maintain my dwelling? This will curtail the time for prayer and spiritual readings. I am too young to receive social security benefits or pension benefits. Yet I wanted to obey. How can I be consecrated? Am I just imagining this desire? How do I know that I am really called to this?

I met with one of the local pastors of the parish and asked him the question, "how do I know that God is calling me

to a religious/consecrated life?" He replied, "if you have the desire." I was not satisfied with his answer. I sought to talk to a lay consecrated widow in my own parish. When I did, she told me to continue praying and that she would pray for me. She encouraged me to start praying the liturgy of the hours. She said that it is a required prayer of consecrated souls.

"Lord," I said, "what shall I do?" The thought came that if I joined a religious community, I would have someone to pray with, work with and work for. I would always have time for prayer because prayer time is scheduled. In short, I entered a religious community only to find out that it is not where God wants me to be. My desire to consecrate myself to God and to serve him is still very strong.

Now that I am living alone again and have to work for a living, I just do my very best to have a daily time for prayer, spiritual reading and meditation; and to volunteer time for the Eucharistic Adoration Ministry. When I got the brochure about the Widows of Prayer from my widow friend, I prayed about it. It fits my desire to serve God and His church and the promise that Widows of Prayer make is like, in my mind, a consecration. I also believe in the need to pray for priests.

*Cecilia Vilorio Skrzypek
Lindenhurst, Illinois*

To learn more about the Widows of Prayer, call:

Appleton, WI area
920-733-2652

Franklin & Milwaukee, WI area
414-858-9811

Lindenhurst/Chicago, IL area
847-265-0411

Huntington, IN area
260-356-0919

Fort Wayne, IN area
260-422-2960



Meditation of a Widow of Prayer **(St. Paul to the Ephesians 3:13-20)**

I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of His glory, He may grant that I may be strengthened in my inner being with power through His Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith, as I am being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that I may have the power to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that I may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to Him who by the power at work within me, is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all I can imagine, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

Mae Leedy wp



Victory Hall Ministry Center – Recent meeting of the Huntington, Indiana Widows of Prayer

What is it Like Being a Widow of Prayer?

I can't answer this for others, but for myself I can tell you this: One day, two years ago, I visited a neighbor who was ill. I had known her for many years when both of us belonged to another parish but we were more acquaintances than friends. Both of our spouses belonged to the St. Vincent de Paul Society. At that time it was a "male organization." So, we saw one another only occasionally, at Mass or at the St. Vincent de Paul breakfast, which was held once a year and included spouses. (It was good to "go out" for breakfast without our children). They had nine – we had five.

Later, after both spouses passed away, we sort of lost track of one another. She moved and eventually I did too. She brought me a rose as a welcome gift to the neighborhood. (I found out she lived only 4 doors from me).

I heard that she was ill, and so I visited her several times. The first time I went to see her she got up off the sofa and said to me, "Ginny, you just have to join this group of Widows of Prayer." I thought to myself, "That's all I need, another thing to belong to and another place to go when I already had enough things to do and enough places to go to," but I listened and she went on to tell me, "they pray 1 to 3 or more hours a day, isn't that wonderful?" And, it's for priests too. Well, she has a son who is a priest, so I see her point of view. She was so enthusiastic about it, that I told her I'd read over the information she gave me. I had visited her with hopes of cheering her up, but the opposite happened. I went home, read the information she gave me, and I don't know if it was the Holy Spirit or what but the next month I went to see what it was all about and to see if it was as great as she seemed to think it was. Well, it was! The ladies welcomed me with open arms, and Fr. John is a wonderful Spiritual Advisor for us. He is a great leader. The prayer time goes fast. As a matter of fact, I love spending time before the Blessed Sacrament.

Ginny McKenzie wp

We Need Your Help!

The Widows of Prayer is a growing number of widows who have dedicated their lives to prayer for priests and other Church leaders. We have 36 members who have made promises, and several more widows are in Formation at this time. Our satellite groups now extend into 4 dioceses. Because of our continuing growth our Statutes have been revised.

We have financial needs for books and other materials for our spiritual growth. There are fees for Chapter meetings and retreats as well as traveling costs (difficult for women on a low fixed income).

Are you willing to support a new movement in the Church with your financial help? The Widows of Prayer is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Tax Deductible Charity. Cut off the bottom of this sheet, fill out and send along with your check to: Widows of Prayer, Inc., 1021 W. Windtree Dr., Appleton, WI 54914

Widows of Prayer Donation

Name: _____ Address: _____

I am willing to give: \$100 - \$75 - \$50 - \$25 - \$20 - \$10 - Other \$ _____



The above picture was taken at a recent gathering of the Appleton Community of Widows of Prayer



Perpetual Adoration Chapel of Divine Mercy, St. Pius X, Appleton, WI. Call Mary Reardon, wp, 920-733-2652 to sign up for a weekly Hour of Eucharistic Adoration.

Holiness

Holiness is not something that comes from doing good;
we do good because we are holy.

Holiness is not something we acquire by avoiding evil;
we avoid evil because we are holy.

Holiness is not something that follows from prayer;
we pray because we are holy

Holiness is not the result of kindness;
we are kind because we are holy

Holiness is not something that blossoms when we are courageous;
we are courageous because we are holy.

Holiness is not the result of character building;
we build character because we are holy.

Holiness is not a gift we obtain after a lifetime of service;
we give service because we are holy.

Our holiness is God-with-us; Emmanuel.

And while it is true that holiness carries with it both the Cross
and Resurrection, it is more a gift than a reward.

Father John Catoir



Above are members of the Franklin and Milwaukee Widows of Prayer Community

First row: Helen, Theresa, Rita Second Row: Marion, Mary Ann S. and Karen Missing are: Connie, Ginny and Mary Ann P.

Our Mission

To serve Christ through His
Church by praying for priests
and others in Church
leadership, to be devoted to
the Blessed Sacrament and to
promote Adoration of Christ
in the Eucharist.

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