

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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Spiritual Affinity

I am writing on behalf of the "*Widows of Prayer*." I'm doing so because I believe so strongly in what I would refer to as: *a wonderful ministry* and I would like to see it grow. This ministry was established by Mary Reardon over thirteen years ago, September 29, 1994, "*the feast of the Archangels*." Her husband John was taken to the Lord in late June of that same year. It was many years earlier however in 1988 that Mary felt the call to simply gather people together for community prayer. The time chosen was Monday evening. The evening began with the recitation of the Joyful and Sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary at 5:30 p.m. followed by evening mass and concluding with the glorious mysteries. During it's earlier years, the Monday evenings of prayer exceeded over 200 people.

I first encountered those gathered for Monday evening prayer when I was a seminarian in the summer of 1990. I happened to be staying at St. Pius parish at the time during an internship as a chaplain at St. Elizabeth's hospital. After noticing a large number of cars in the parking lot I remember asking someone what was taking place. I was then told about the evening of prayer and mass. I visited the church that night and was pleasantly surprised not only to see a large gathering of people, but to learn that many of the people consisted of young families and I was able to witness first hand their great love for the faith. I was very inspired by them and would often join them, as it was a great opportunity for me to meet people who loved the Church. I was ordained August 22nd, in 1992 for the Diocese of Green Bay. On August 24th the first Monday after I was ordained, I celebrated my first mass for the Monday prayer community; *I had continued to celebrate mass for them on occasion for many years to follow*. It was through this ministry that I had gotten to know Mary.

It was just a few months later, after the loss of her husband John, when Mary felt called to establish another ministry, a ministry that would encourage other women who had lost

their spouses to gather together for prayer. This ministry is especially meaningful to me, as it is for many priests, as the main focus of the Widows of Prayer is to pray for priests and for religious vocations. I see God's hand in this ministry as their love and encouragement comes at a time when much criticism is made about priests and much negativity is being fostered towards the Catholic Church. How wonderful for priests to know these women are praying for them and supporting them along the way.

But most importantly it is a ministry of great love and devotion to our Lord. Those who are members of the Widows of Prayer are strongly encouraged to:

1. Attend daily mass.
2. Partake in the liturgy of the hours in the morning and evening.
3. Recite the Rosary and other meditative prayer.
4. Spend an hour in Eucharistic adoration as often as possible.

How beautiful is that! Even though many people recognize the value of prayer and spiritual reading for improving their faith life, the opportunity doesn't always arise. "*The ministry of the Widows of Prayer offers women the opportunity to come together not only in prayer but also in support of each other*." Having also lost a husband, the women are able to comfort one another, as they too know about loss and the hurt stemming from losing a loved one. For them, communal prayer is not only a time for Spiritual growth, but it is also a time for emotional healing.

I also believe that the widows of prayer are called to a new understanding of life, a spiritual life that can only be known through their commitment to God. As I was reflecting on the widows of prayer and their charisms, several key words came to mind that for me encompasses this wonderful ministry. It is an acronym from the word *Widows* that I believe help define the ministry of the widows of prayer. The acronym (or words formed from the initial letters) are: *Wonder, Inspiration, Dedication, Obedience, Wisdom, and Solidarity*.

“Welcome” Fr. John Doerfler

We are so grateful that Fr. John Doerfler, Chancellor of the Green Bay Diocese, has accepted our invitation to be Spiritual Advisor of the General Association of the Widows of Prayer, as well as of the Appleton area Community.

Fr. John will be meeting with us periodically. His talks will be recorded and CDs will be distributed to the various satellite communities of the Widows of Prayer.

May God continue to bless him in the wonderful work he does for Him!

Following are excerpts from Fr. John's first two conferences on Prayer given to the Widows of Prayer:

I. Summary previous talk – “God's Gift of Prayer”

Prayer as Relationship and Gift from God

God always takes the initiative in the relationship; it is up to us to respond.

Prayer is an opening of the mind and heart to God.

Prayer is receptive.

The reason for prayer is love, a covenantal relationship with God.

On these points see CCC 2558-2565

II. Prayer from the Heart

Quotes from CCC 2562-2563

“Where does prayer come from? Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole man who prays. But in naming the source of prayer, Scripture speaks sometimes of the soul or spirit, but most often of the heart (more than a thousand times). According to Scripture, it is the *heart* that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain.”

A life of Prayer from the Heart allows us to live from our deepest center rather than “going with the flow” or being tossed about by the storms of life.

III. Vocal Prayer

Vocal prayer is prayer in set words or formulas, e.g. Lord's Prayer, the Rosary, Novenas, Stations of the Cross, Litanies, Grace before meals, prayers found on holy cards, Intercessory prayers, etc. It is also prayer spoken in our own words. (For now I am omitting Liturgical Prayer, e.g., Mass, The Liturgy of the Hours. While liturgical prayer is also a form of vocal prayer, I will cover this special form of vocal prayer in separate talks.)

“Through his Word, God speaks to man. By words, mental or vocal, our prayer takes flesh. yet it is most important that the heart should be present to him to whom we are speaking in prayer: ‘Whether or not our prayer is heard depends not on the number of words, but on the fervor of our souls.’”

“Because it is external and so thoroughly human, vocal prayer is the form of prayer most readily accessible to groups. Even interior prayer, however, cannot neglect vocal prayer. Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of him ‘to whom we speak.’

Vocal prayer is fully human prayer, as we address God with human words and human voices as bodily beings.

Vocal prayer is the prayerful expression of the Church, as vocal prayer allows us to join our voices together as His People, as One Body, the Body of Christ.

Vocal prayer also teaches us. It is a way, through the Church, that Christ teaches us to pray as He taught His disciples.

IV. Problem: the Multiplication of Words

It is possible to have too much of a good thing, that then can be harmful. Excessive vocal prayer, the multiplication of vocal prayers can lead, then, to the exclusion or diminishment of meditation and contemplation: “Pondering the word day and night” (Ps 1:2) or the Marian disposition in prayer, in which, like Mary, we reflect upon Christ in our heart.

Vocal prayer (not including liturgical prayer) should not consume the majority of our prayer time.

Suggestions to improve vocal prayer:

- Remember the quality is more important than quantity.
- Do not multiply vocal prayers beyond measure.
- Follow the words of Jesus in Matt. 6:7 “In your prayers do not babble as the pagans do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard.”
- Pause for a moment of recollection before vocal prayer.
- If you are drawn into meditation or contemplation during vocal prayers, feel free to cease the vocal prayer and be drawn into meditation or contemplation.

*Rev. John Doerfler
Spiritual Advisor of Widows of Prayer*

In Memory

During the month of November the Widows of Prayer remembered their deceased members by having masses said for them.

The latest name to be added to the list of deceased members was Martha “Bea” Schabitzer of Huntington, Indiana, who died in a car/motorcycle accident.

Hours away from her 86th birthday, “Bea” Schabitzer wore a smile that made her blue eyes shine as she prepared to enjoy an annual birthday tradition – a ride on her son's motorcycle.

That tradition ended in a tragic crash that claimed Schabitzer's life less than an hour before that 86th birthday.

May she enjoy eternal peace. We pray for “Bea” as well as the following list of deceased Widows of Prayer: Jeanette Rico, Troy, MI; Clara Bir, Huntington, Indiana; Dorothy Ebben, Menasha, WI; Margaret Petrie, Huntington, Indiana.

cont. from page 1

W-onder: The state of mind produced by something new, unexpected extraordinary and amazing:

This ministry and GOD

I-nspiration: To be motivated by divine influence, to be impelled to some creative effort, or good:

This ministry and GOD

D-edication: To be consecrated to some sacred purpose, or to be wholly devoted to something or someone:

This ministry and GOD

O-bedience: Compliant with commands, dutiful, always ready to obey. To be faithful to: *This ministry and GOD*

W-isdom: The Quality of being wise, the ability to make the right use of Knowledge, to have a good perception of the spiritual: *This ministry and GOD*

In all honesty I was amazed to find these beautiful and very spiritual definitions for these words in a Webster dictionary, but it should really be of no surprise to any of us, when God has a hand in it. I do believe strongly in the Widows of Prayer, in their charisms, and in their faithfulness to God. I hope and pray, that this wonderful ministry will continue to grow to fruition. May God continue to bless this ministry, those who are members of it, and those who support it.

*Sincerely in Christ Jesus and in our common goal to serve Him,
Father Tom Farrell, St. Pius X Parish, Appleton, WI
Chaplain for the Widows of Prayer, Board of Directors, Inc.*

"Thank You" Fr. Kieran

The Widows of Prayer wish to express our deep gratitude to Fr. Kieran Hickey O.F.M. Cap. for his 10 years of wonderful guidance and support as Spiritual Advisor of our General Association as well as the Appleton area Community.

We have grown in our faith through his weekly masses with us, our monthly gatherings together, as well as his prayerful support as we dedicate our lives in prayer for priests.

We pray that God's special blessings be his as he enjoys his retirement years at St. Fidelis Friary.

Gifting the Lord

We are all familiar with the custom of giving our family and friends gifts for their birthday. But sometimes we can forget the most important birthday; that of our Lord. Of course we all know that Christmas is the Lord's birthday but how often do we stop to ask ourselves what we will give Him for his birthday because we are too busy buying gifts for everyone else. For some years, it has been my custom to begin to put together a gift for the Lord the day after All Saints Day. You should not need that long to find a gift He would really like, something to hand Him on Christmas Eve with the assurance that you have worked hard to put his gift together. Make your Christmas beautiful by doing something special for the Lord.

One might say, "What can I give to the One who has everything?" One thing He would like is for people to think well of themselves so that they will be more open to his love also. Here is one gift you can give the Lord; with each card you send, put in a couple of words of sincere praise for the person to whom you are sending the card. They don't have to be told of Jesus' love; they just need to hear of your own. That will allow them to experience his love through you.

You might consider someone who is difficult or unpleasant and try to discover a genuine good point in them that you can compliment them for. Sincere compliments can be one of the most healing gifts people can receive. I am reminded of the statement; "As long as there is someone in the world who thinks well of me, I am not lost."

Finally, appreciate your vocation as Widows of Prayer. This is your most special gift to the Lord. The better you live your vocation, the more pleasing you will be to the Lord. Of all the gifts you can give the Lord, your Widowhood of Prayer is indeed the greatest. Try hard to enhance its beauty as you prepare for the coming Feast of his Birthday which was undoubtedly the greatest gift He Himself gave to our world.

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

We Need Your Help!

The "Widows of Prayer" is an Association of the Faithful under the guidance of the Bishop. They have dedicated their lives to the Call of God to pray for priests and the other leaders of the Church. There are 50 members who have made promises, and 9 widows are in Formation at this time. There are communities of "Widows of Prayer" reaching into other diocese and states.

Our financial needs include materials for spiritual growth such as retreats, Chapter Meetings, travel costs, as well as printing costs office materials, etc. (very difficult for those widows on a low fixed income)

Please support this 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 - Other \$ _____

Any amount given will be greatly appreciated. Remember the "Widows of Prayer" in your will.



The above picture was taken after mass on September 8, 2007 at Monte Alverno Retreat & Spirituality Center.

From left to right are: Bernadine Ziemba wp, Alice Scheele wp, Jo Anne Kern wp, who made first promises from the Franklin/Milwaukee area; Fr. John Guimond O.F.M. Cap., Spiritual Advisor of the Huntington and Fort Wayne, Indiana Widows of Prayer, and Presenter of the Widows Retreat; and Helen Krueger wp, Servant Leader of the Franklin/Milwaukee community of Widows of Prayer, who made second year promises.



The above picture was taken after the 5 p.m. mass at Prince of Peace church, Lake Villa, Illinois on Saturday, November 17th. Cecilia Vilorio-Skrzypek, Servant Leader of the Lindenhurst/Chicago area Widows of Prayer, made her second year promises.

Front row (left to right): Helen Krueger wp, Cecilia Vilorio-Skrzypek wp, Mary Reardon wp. Second row: Ginny Rekoske wp, Jane Nischan, Bernadine Ziemba wp, Rita Lindisch wp, and Ann Ehmerd wp. Back row: Fr. Pawel Komperda, Spiritual Advisor of Lake Villa IL/Chicago area Widows of Prayer and Fr. Rich Yanos, Pastor of Prince of Peace Parish.



The above picture was taken after 5:15 p.m. mass at St. Pius X Church, Appleton on Thursday, August 30th. Fr. Quinn Mann was the celebrant of the mass at which Theresa Driessen made second year promises.

Just a few words to say how much the Widows of Prayer has done for me. My life has made some dramatic changes, which would not have been possible for me without the prayer cushion of the Widows of Prayer, and God's intervention.

I am now living at St. Anne's Retirement Home, a Catholic Community, but accepting all faiths, in an independent living apartment, and loving it. It has given me the beautiful opportunity to visit the chapel, which is open 24/7. There are six retired priests living here, as well as the Catholic Chaplain, which allows me to attend one of the two daily Masses. (Sometimes 3 priests concelebrate). I also spend quite a bit of time visiting the nursing home patients. I especially enjoy the ones who have no one to visit them. Through the help of Dorothy Ward, our local Servant Leader, our group has begun having one meeting of the Widows of Prayer a month here, and some of the Catholic widows in the apartments and the nursing home have attended the meetings. We are hoping in the future to find some interested in making commitments to the Widows of Prayer.

Another plus is that Jean Kelly who is also a resident here and a Widow of Prayer from our group joins me daily for the Liturgy of the Hours. She has been a real blessing for me.

I just wanted to share this with you – and to offer this sharing as a sincere thank you to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

*Mary Voors wp
Fort Wayne, Indiana*

I am now in my sixth year as a Widow of Prayer. In this time I've learned through prayer, retreats and guidance with Fr. John Guimond that God called me to my new vocation as a Widow of Prayer. I was not sure what God wanted of me, he knows my faults; but I believe in the power of prayer and that I love God and want to do what he asked of me.

Everyone has faults and we all have talents. We share our talents and work and respect each other in prayer and life to deepen our abilities.

Holiness is not being perfect, it's a relationship. God gives us a chance to do our best, to make us what he wants us to be, if we do the work He requires.

*Mae Leedy wp
Servant Leader
Huntington, Indiana*