

The Widows' Mite

Widows of Prayer Issue No. 27 Fall/Winter 2019

Celebrating 25 Years

Our Celebration

September 29th was overcast and rainy at times, but the loving arms of our Widows of Prayer were happily embracing one another as they entered the narthex of the St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay. The Deacons were asking where they should vest, and the last-minute details for the Mass were being discussed.

The altar was richly decorated with 115 roses; red for the living Widows of Prayer and white roses to depict the deceased Widows of Prayer. The organist intoned the hymn, "You Are Mine" as the procession of Priests, Deacons and Altar Servers made its way to the Altar.



Father Tom Farrell, our Spiritual Director, began the prayers. Tom Groschel, Mary Reardon's son-in-law, proclaimed the first reading and Alice Peeters said the second reading.

In his homily, Father Tom spoke of the reason for the gathering and highlighted Mary Reardon's life and accomplishments. He explained how the Widows of Prayer are an asset to the life of the church and the need for them to continue. The apostolate helps redefine prayer for widows. From that, Father spoke on the power of prayer being the greatest weapon to change hearts, for good ministers, good leaders for our country, and to grow in faith and make right decisions.

He quoted St. Augustine: "Where there are good sheep you will find good shepherds." He then emphasized that Christ feeds His sheep, and that his sheep hear His voice. We need to learn how to listen and experience silent prayer.

Father Tom explained that God gave us a free will because He wanted to be freely loved – one's commitment to prayer comes from one's decision to love God freely. Prayer is not asking but rather listening to God's voice in the depths of one's heart. True silence is where only the soul can meet its God. Time spent in silence is holy. Silence is truth in charity. Quoting Mother Theresa, he said, "Joy is prayer, strength, love, a net of love by which you can catch souls."

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Congratulations!

Dear Widows of Prayer,

I join together with many men and women of faith who give thanks to Almighty God for the Widows of Prayer as they celebrate their Silver Jubilee. Over the last twenty-five years, the Widows of Prayer have been a spiritual powerhouse providing vital assistance to the Church's pastors and future priests.



I first encountered the Widows of Prayer at my priestly ordination. It made such an impression upon me that these faithful women were praying for me all through my years in seminary. Since 2012 I have been blessed to assist the Widows in their mission by serving as the spiritual advisor to the Franklin/Milwaukee community. My monthly meeting with the Widows remains a highlight and a priority.

As a Church we face serious challenges in our present day. The way forward is, as it always is, a return to the basics of the Gospel and Christian living. In this way, the Widows of Prayer are a powerful source and sign of authentic renewal. Rooted in a love for Christ and His Church, and committed to prayer, the Widows of Prayer stand near the heart of the Church and provide invaluable support for the Church's mission.

The Widows of Prayer are a great gift to the Church and have been a blessing to me. May God bless each of these women as they live their lives devoted to prayer.

Congratulations on your Silver Jubilee!
Ad multos annos!
Sincerely yours in Christ,
Rev. Aaron J. Esch

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.

Our Celebration (contd. from page 1)

In speaking of the 2nd reading from St. Paul to Timothy 6:11-16 a beautiful prayer saying to "pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience and gentleness... keep the commandments...until the appearance of Our Lord Jesus Christ."



"Priesthood Sunday", said Father Tom was no accident to fall on the 25th anniversary of the Widows of Prayer for that is their main charism. He quoted St. Paul from the Philippians in thanking the Widows of Prayer by saying, "Every time I think of you, I thank God for you - which is constantly in my every prayer, I rejoice as I plead on your behalf."

Roses were brought to the Blessed Mother's statue at the offertory by Mary Reardon's daughters and 3 Servant Leaders representing the 6 Widow of Prayer Communities.

Following Mass, a delicious chicken dinner was held at the Riverside Ballroom. Father Tom led the prayers and both Kay Groschel and Carlotta Stricker thanked everyone who came and all those who helped in any way to make it such a grand day. Above all they were grateful for what Mary Reardon began. Carlotta detailed the beginnings of the Widows of Prayer and how it grew over the years. It was a beautiful day with memories that will last a lifetime.



August 28th was the day that the **Verona/Madison Community** of the Widows of Prayer convened for their annual chapter meeting. Father John Sasse, pastor of St. Andrew Church, Verona, led the rosary. Sue Dahms then made private vows with a special blessing. The meeting followed with special treats.



Community News

The Widows of Prayer in **Franklin/Milwaukee** continue to meet every Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. in the Chapel of Clare Meadows. Our prayers are offered for all priests: living, deceased, in active ministry, and retired. We always include seminarians, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters. Our prayers include the Liturgy of the Hours, many prayers for priests, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Rosary, Prayer for our Country, Prayers for the abuse crisis and many other prayers. We conclude with a Communion Service or Mass with our Spiritual Advisor. As we all get older, many of our ladies have certain medical conditions that need attention and prayers. We include them and all Widows of Prayer in prayer. Of course we pray for the souls of all our deceased husbands. On May 18th many of us attended the Ordination at our cathedral in Milwaukee for six new priests ordained for the Milwaukee Archdiocese. After Mass when we approached them, introduced ourselves as Widows of Prayer, and received a blessing, they had big smiles on their faces and gave us joyous hugs. They knew we've been praying for them and were very grateful. Yes, we'll continue to pray for them.

On Wed., August 7th we had our annual Day of Reflection at St. Alphonsus Parish in Greendale. Carlotta Stricker and Alice Peeters came to provide us with necessary information about Widows of Prayer. Fr. Aaron Esch also gave us an inspiring talk on the topic of "The Church Triumphant, Militant and Suffering." At the Mass celebrated by Fr. Aaron Esch, the following widows made their

Promises:

Rose Marie Peyovich (1st Promise pictured with Bernie Ziemba left and Rev. Aaron Esch.



Photo on the right: Paula Ann Pezzi (2nd Promise), with Bernie Ziemba and Rev. Aaron Esch.



Bernie Ziemba, left and Rev. Aaron Esch, along with Teresa Erdelt who made her 3rd and final promise.



Joining them from Fond Du Lac, was Gail Welter who made her 2nd Promise. (Picture on the left).



We all had a spiritual and inspiring day, and we ask all of you to pray for Fr. Aaron as he continues to study for his Canon Law Degree.

Community News

On Wednesday, July 17, our candidate, Kathy Heying, made her First Promise, pictured here with Father Silvino.

We, in Indiana, were meeting with Carlotta in Chapter. Our previous Spiritual Advisor, Father Silvino was the celebrant for the Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception here in **Fort Wayne/South Bend**.



Kathy Heying is a member of Holy Family Parish in South Bend and has been a remote candidate with the **Huntington Community**.

This was a lovely visit with Carlotta Stricker and Alice Peeters who accompanied her. Carlotta gave us information about the upcoming anniversary which will be celebrated with a Mass at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay, WI on Sept. 29, 2019. She also reminded us to return our nomination forms and later our ballots for the General Election will be at the end of Sept. on the 30.

Four members of Fort Wayne Community and 3 members of Huntington with 2 candidates from Huntington also attended the Chapter event though Fort Wayne has 10 members, 6 of them are homebound. We also met Emma Momper, from Ft Wayne community who had made her first promise on April 5 this year.

Pictured are:
Left to Right
Mary Lou Sohn,
Emma Momper,
and Ginny Gibson



Huntington has 6 members, Cecelia and Vera are homebound, because of their age (one doesn't do much traveling at 100 years of age).

Catherine also introduced her new candidate, Janice Martin, to the assembled Widows. Janice works in the Office of our Diocese and with our Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. In fact, when Janice was widowed 18 months ago, she approached Bishop Kevin and asked his advice on how to continue as a widow in her spiritual life. Did he perhaps know of an Order of Widows in the Church similar to the Order Of Consecrated Virgins and of Hermit? We have members of both of these in our diocese. He said he did not, but had she heard of the Widows of Prayer? He suggested she speak to me and told her also about the news article we had in [Today's Catholic](#).

Our very enjoyable day of course included, Kathy Heying's first profession, and ended with a very delicious lunch at a local restaurant named Sara's.

On May 4th, Pat Jeschke made her 2nd promise at St Peter's Parish in Slinger, WI. Pictured is the Very Rev. Richard Stoffel, Carlotta Stricker, Pat Jeske and Eileen Belongia, Spiritual Director for Pat.



May 7 thru 9 many of the **Appleton Community** participated in the annual retreat at the Schoenstatt Retreat Center in Waukesha. The experience provided a bit of pilgrimage as it is a well known place of strong Marian devotion as well as a quiet environment for us to recharge.

On June 25th the Appleton Community gathered for our Annual Chapter Meeting and a half day of reflection. Father Paschal OFM CAP talked about his experience working on the cause for Father Solanus Casey. Blessed Solanus has a tie to Appleton as his First Mass was held at St. Joseph's Parish in Appleton. Father Paschal had known Fr. Casey when he was in seminary. We gathered for Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy and then celebrated Mass at 5:30 with evening prayer. A time for personal prayer and confession was available. We gathered for dinner following Mass. It was a wonderful time together.



On September 12th, Kathleen Endres made her 2nd Promise at St Pius X in Appleton. Father Kennedy was celebrant.

Nine members of the Appleton Community were present and dinner at a local restaurant followed.



On Oct. 13th, Suzanne McKenzie made her final Promise and her Vows at Mt. Angel Abbey in St. Benedict, Oregon. Pictured with Suzanne is Father Martin Grassel. Carlotta Stricker, Kathy Feistel and Alice Peeters attended the event.

We continue to gather weekly for prayer and adoration on Thursday, ending with evening Mass at 5:30. Our monthly 1st Saturday Mass and breakfast allowed us time for fellowship as we live our busy lives at our home parishes and with family. It also allows us to invite ladies to get to know the Widows of Prayer and our Charism. We continue to invite the recently widowed to a Mass of Remembrance on a quarterly basis. They are held in February, May, August and November. To date in 2019, an invitation to attend and the condolences of the Widows of Prayer were extended to 67 ladies. In between the community has gathered to help with lists and mailings for the 25th Anniversary Celebration.

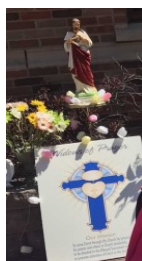
Community News

July 31st was chosen as the day that our Widows of Prayer gathered at Blessed Sacrament Parish in **Hibbing MN**, to witness members taking promises. Pictured left to right: Mary Wanala, Servant Leader, Beverly Gherardi 2nd promise, Father Gabriel, Joyce Toonen, 3rd, and Jean Walters, 2nd promise.



Following the promises, the Chapter Meeting was held with Carlotta Stricker discussing the upcoming 25th Anniversary Celebration and the General Election of Officers to follow the next day. Joyce Toonen showed her ability to make cord rosaries, hundreds of them.

At noon the Summer Tea sponsored by the Widows of Prayer was held. It is a spectacular event for any women wanting a good time with good food.



For more information about the **Widows of Prayer**, go to our website (www.widowsofprayer.org)

or e-mail: widowsofprayer@yahoo.com

Appleton, WI area – 920-284-9476

Franklin / Milwaukee WI area – 414-427-0020

Verona / Madison, WI area – 608-845-9386

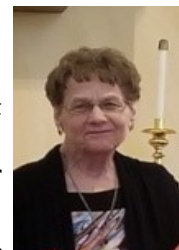
Huntington, IN area – 260-356-8021

Fort Wayne, IN area – 260-484-6300

Hibbing MN area – 218-966-9074

From Our General Servant Leader

What a beautiful legacy to leave behind is that of a Widow of Prayer! She not only married, raised a family, suffered through the difficult moments in life including that of her spouse passing away, but also took on the role of praying for Priests and other Church leadership.



The vision of being able to see this idea for each of us in our own lives is a miracle. In a time when praying for Priests is much in need, we have this special calling to step up to the plate and assist Our Blessed Mother in caring for them. How satisfying can it be to come to our final judgment and place those hours of prayer before the throne of God!

It is with a humble heart that I accepted the position of the General Servant Leader. I had not wanted the position, in fact I thought of every other reason why not to have it. However, I realized, as time continued, if this was truly something I needed to do, that I had to bring it to God. So, in adoration I began my conversations. In my heart, all I could hear was "Trust in Me." So, after that, and with great trust, I put in my name for nomination as the General Servant Leader. I pray for your patience and trust in me, but most of all for your prayers as we continue together as part of a worthy calling as a Widow of Prayer.

Alice Peeters WP

General Servant Leader.

It is with deepest sympathy that we say goodbye to our sister who has moved on to her final resting place with God. May she rest in peace.
† Barbara Garrard of Ft. Wayne 05/27/19

Will You Help the Widows of Prayer?

The Widows of Prayer are growing in number with satellite communities in neighboring states and dioceses. Our financial needs are growing as well.

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., 414 Frances Way, Menasha WI 54952

WIDOWS OF PRAYER DONATION-----

Name _____

Address _____

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

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

www.widowsofprayer.org