

The Widows' Mite

Widows of Prayer

Issue No. 36

Spring/Summer 2024

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!

Mary Reardon, Foundress of Widows of Prayer

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.

We Invite You
A DAY WITH OUR LADY
MONDAY, MAY 20
 National Shrine of our Lady of Champion

The day begins with Mass in Mother of Mercy Hall.
 Father Tom Farrell, Spiritual Director for the Widows of Prayer will be our Celebrant.

Mass at 11:00 AM
Lunch - 12:15
Words of Wisdom - 1:15 Father Tom
Blessing - 2:15 PM
Time to Enjoy the Grounds

The event is open to all women, especially widows. A free will offering of \$20 is suggested.

To register, call or text Kathy at:
 920-284-9476 by May 14th
 Sponsored by the **Widows of Prayer**

Prayer for Priests

Lord Jesus Christ, eternal High Priest, You offered yourself to the Father on the altar of the Cross and through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit gave Your priestly people a share in Your redeeming sacrifice. Hear our prayer for the sanctification of our priests. Grant that all who are ordained to the ministerial priesthood may be ever more conformed to You, the Divine Master. May they preach the Gospel with pure heart and clear conscience. Let them be shepherds according to Your own Heart, single-minded in service to You and to the Church and shining examples of a holy, simple and joyful life. Through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Your Mother and ours, draw all priests and the flocks entrusted to their care to the fullness of eternal life where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

-Prayer by Pope Benedict XVI

Community News

Appleton: Kathy Feistel, Servant Leader

We continue to meet on Thursdays for Adoration, Evening Prayer and Mass. In December we gathered for a holiday meal at Alice Peeters' home. Our quarterly Mass for all deceased husbands was changed from Saturday morning to Thursday evening which allows more ladies to attend. We had nine widows gather for dinner after our last quarterly Mass!

On the Feast of St. Joseph (March 19th) we met at St. Joseph's Church for a Mass for the WP husbands, enjoying cookies and coffee after Mass. (photo on right). We are also gathering once a month for a community rosary via zoom.



Dorothy Mueller, our new candidate, is working on her formation and is very comfortable with her decision to join. She's wondering why it took so long to say yes. We are thrilled to have a second new candidate, Theresa Schreck, who will be starting her formation in April.

Nancy Mary Siebers was invited by the Green Bay Catholic Women group to give a presentation on the Widows of Prayer at her parish. Alice, Carlotta and I joined her in a brief review of our call and witness to the power of WP in our lives. We were pleased to answer all their questions.

The Shrine Day of Reflection is set for May 20th, which is open to all WP Communities. (more details and registration information on poster in this newsletter). Our 30th Anniversary will be celebrated at St. Pius X on September 29th at the 10:30 am Mass. Plans following Mass are still being developed.

Appleton Remote:



Elizabeth Giffie made her 1st Promise as a Widow of Prayer on November 16, 2023. Pictured left to right: Alice Peeters General Servant Leader, Elizabeth Giffie NE, Rev. Douglas Daro, St. Benedict Parish, Nebraska City, NE.



Mary Rose Verdigan made her final Promise on April 5 at St. Joseph Church in Sturgeon Bay, WI (photo: Mary Rose, Fr. Matthew Rapp and Alice Peeters).

Community News

Molalla, OR: Suzanne McKenzie, Servant Leader

The Oregon Community meets twice a month at Mt. Angel Abbey, a community of Benedictine men religious. Abbot Jeremy, the Abbot of Mt. Angel Abbey, has graciously allowed our meetings there since 2017 and has also provided our Spiritual Advisor. Fr. Paul Thomas, OSB, had been our advisor since the start of our community. This last year he appointed a new advisor, Fr. John Paul Le, OSB. Fr. John Paul led our annual day of retreat on November 28. It was a beautiful and holy day spent together, with Holy Mass and two conferences by our new advisor. Six ladies attended, three in Promises and three discerning.

One of the ladies who attended the retreat, Veronica Conklin, has since then decided to begin formation as a Widow of Prayer.

We are anticipating a visit from Alice Peeters WP, General Servant Leader, in June. We will have our Chapter meeting at that time.



Ft. Wayne, Indiana: Mary Lou Sohn, Servant Leader

We are in the process of getting a new Spiritual Director. Our previous Director, Father Wimal is the newly ordained Bishop of the Diocese of Sri Lanka. He was ordained on March 2nd. Our own Bishop Rhodes, Fr. Jacob Runyon and Fr. Mark Gurtner traveled to the ordination from Fort Wayne. Our widows are so proud.

One of our members, Rita Carboni died on January 21st. I was a friend of Rita's for many years. When I joined the Franciscan secular order 50 years ago, she was my Formation Director. She loved to read and always gave me books to share. When I came into the Widows of Prayer, I called her right away to tell her and she was interested and wanted to come a WP. She loved people and did not know a stranger.

Our ladies have not been meeting in the last several weeks due to the weather (thin ice). We don't wish anyone to fall and several members have been in and out of the hospital for various reasons. I hope by the next Widows' Mite that we will have a new Spiritual Director. Keep us in your prayers.



It is with deepest sympathy that we say goodbye to our sisters who have moved on to their final resting place with God. May they rest in peace.

*Louise Bordon, January 10, 2024—Hibbing, MN
Rita Carboni, January 21, 2024—Ft. Wayne, IN
Fiorita Ricci, February 22, 2024—Hibbing, MN*

Community News

Franklin/Milwaukee: Teresa Erdelt, Servant Leader

We are still meeting Wednesday afternoons at the Sacred Heart Monastery Lake Apartments. Two of our widows live in this building, which makes it very convenient for all of us. We usually have 6-8 ladies gather with us each week. We are especially grateful to Rev. Chuck Wonch SJC, our Spiritual Advisor, who celebrates Mass for us one Wednesday of the month.

On March 13th, Josephine Janezic (on the right) made her 2nd promise and Margaret Rewolinski (left) made her 1st promise as a Widow of Prayer at Sacred Heart Monastery of the Lake. Fr. Chuck witnessed the promises



along with Joyce Eesley WP, Assistant Servant Leader. I, unfortunately, could not attend because I had tested positive for Covid.



Here is another picture taken the same day with our entire group.

Community News

Hibbing, MN: Mary Wanhala, Servant Leader

Our community continues to meet weekly when I am home, but I have been traveling a lot lately, both out of the state and country. I met with a group of widows in Crosby, MN, organized by Tammy Ringhand. Tammy does Faith Formation for her parish, St. Joseph's, and is interested in joining the Widows of Prayer.

Two of our members died recently: Louise Bordon on January 10th at the age of 95. She loved crafts, painting and her faith. Having grown up on a farm, she was a hard worker her entire life. When her husband's health was failing, she lovingly cared for him. A few years ago, her own health began to decline and eventually had to move to a nursing home in Buhl, MN where she died. She had 4 children and many grandchildren of whom she was very proud.

Fiorita Ricci died February 22nd at the age of 100, with her family at her side. During World War II, she worked at a factory as a "Rosie the Riveter". Up until three years ago, she helped serve at church soup suppers and funeral lunches. She had 11 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren.

Spotlight on Widow of Prayer

The Widows of Prayer are scattered throughout our country. In an attempt for us to know each other better, we try to highlight 1 or 2 members in each newsletter.

Kathy Feistel – Appleton, Wisconsin

Kathy's husband died of pancreatic cancer on December 21, 2011. Two months later, Kathy accepted an invitation to the Widows of Prayer Mass at her parish. Soon she was attending their regular meetings. It took two years before she asked to become a candidate.

Kathy is a retired Certified Financial Planner. She also obtained her Master Gardener certificate. Kathy has two children. Son Greg died in 2020 and he had 1 son. Daughter Stacy has 2 boys. All three grandsons are over 6 ft. tall! Kathy is so thankful they live just a few miles from her.

Kathy took over the Divine Mercy program at her parish from Mary Reardon in 2012 and ran it for ten years. She currently facilitates the Grief Ministry program which gives a 9 week program twice a year. She is a part of the Healing Ministry, the weekly Bible Study group, attends weekly Eucharistic Adoration, and brings Communion to the homebound. When she is not at church, she loves to quilt.

In 2014, Kathy took over as the Servant Leader for the Appleton group. Kathy stated that she likes that the WPs are an active and a contemplative group. As we get older, we can't really age out of our group; we sort of age into it. All we really have to do then is pray -- and that is extremely useful.



Huntington, IN: Catherine Fitzgerald, Servant Leader

We have changed our weekly meeting day from Tuesdays to Thursdays. We have 3 new widows who began Inquiry in October. Each of them made their decision after much discernment: Margaret (Peg) Handwork, Mary Bartrom, and Astrid Hensel. They are studying Unit 2 *Turned to the Lord* in the Formation binder and we are now beginning chapter 4.

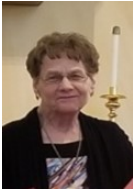
I meet with our four remote members on the first Saturday of the month at the Oratory of the Holy Family in Rome City, IN. This is equal distance between Elkhart, South Bend and Huntington. This is the site of the visions of Our Lady of America to Sister Mildred.

Mary Therese Turner WP suffered an infection which made her very ill. She is still on Hospice but is slowly regaining her health. Peg broke her left leg just above the ankle the first week of January. She still is in a cast and cannot leave her home.

Our two parishes keep Holy Week as a week of Eucharistic Adoration. From noon on Palm Sunday until 5 pm Holy Thursday all parishioners are invited to keep a personal hour of adoration. Since 2003, we Widows of Prayer try to spread ourselves out so that at least one of us is before our Eucharistic Lord daily.

This past Monday was a blest day for us as the Total Solar Eclipse was centered over our Huntington County. I was amazed the Moon was fully covering the Sun right at the Great Hour of Divine Mercy. My family and I paused our chatter and prayed the invocation for Divine Mercy. What a great blessing this was!

From Our General Servant Leader



*"When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,..."
William Shakespeare*

How can we not sing of spring with all the beauty surrounding us?

The Widows of Prayer burst open with new and exciting times as well. Our activities including the monthly rosary is being prayed on the 3rd Monday of the month. Invites are sent out to our Widows to join us on the Zoom platform. For those who cannot join us by Zoom on their computer now can phone in and then when prompted dial the passcode of Meeting ID. That's all there is to it. We also help those who may be apprehensive in this wave of technology.

Meet & Chat is every 4th Monday of the month for one hour on the Zoom platform as well. We find topics of interest for discussion. Recently our ladies told of books that they recommended for spiritual reading. Some were able to display them on the screen. This brought new reading for many of us.

Traveling to our communities and to the cities of our remote members is always a great time to see our members face to face for Chapter Meetings and to witness promises and vows. We have travel plans to go to Columbus, OH as well as visit the Molalla/Portland OR Community. Milwaukee and Sturgeon Bay, WI are also in our planning itinerary. Some 2024 destinations that may still occur for visits include: Hibbing, MN; Ft. Wayne, IN; and Nebraska City, NE.

The seasons of spring and summer hold many wonderful times for enjoyment and reflection on the goodness of God and for allowing us to be Widows of Prayer.

Alice Peeters WP, General Servant Leader

Widows of Prayer Retreat

September 17, 18 and 19, 2024

International Shoestatt Center

W284 N698 Cherry Ln., Waukesha, WI 53188

Arrival: 4:00 pm on Tuesday, September 17, and depart after the noon lunch on Thursday, September 19.

Cost: Estimated cost is \$230 which includes 2 nights lodging including meals. (Cost is subject to change as we get closer to September.)

Your deposit of \$50 to secure your room will be due at a later date, and at that time if you have any special dietary needs, please indicate them. The balance of the room/board rate will be due upon arrival at the Schoenstatt Retreat Center.

For questions, contact Alice Peeters, General Servant Leader at 920-725-7768.

For more information about the *Widows of Prayer*:

website: www.widowsofprayer.org

or e-mail: widowsofprayer@gmail.com

Appleton, WI area – 920-284-9476

Franklin/Milwaukee WI area – 414-427-0020

Huntington, IN area – 260-356-8021

Fort Wayne, IN area – 260-484-6300

Hibbing, MN area – 218-966-9074

Molalla/Portland, OR area – 503-949-3142

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 54952-1350

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