

The Widow's Mite

Widows of Prayer

Issue No. 38

Spring/Summer 2025

The Meaning of the Insignia of Widows of Prayer

Our insignia is a gold heart with a chalice, host and rays extending from it. A gold bar at the top has a dove inscribed in it, depicting the Holy Spirit. This insignia is a symbol of who we are and a lifestyle that binds us together. It gives a message to the world as to who we are and what the world can expect of us.



The chalice and the host remind us that we are a people who center our spirituality around the Eucharist. We share one Body and one Blood—we are relatives to one another in the Lord. This is the reason why religious call each other brother and sister.

The dove depicts the Holy Spirit, the fashioner of community in the world and fashioner of holiness in the people of God.

Our insignia reminds us that we have chosen a life of joyful prayer, a life striving for holiness. It is a reminder that we are bound to a faith community by the manner in which we choose to live our life. We allow God's Presence to guide us along the ways He desires us to follow. It is a sign that we are willing to trust God to lead our life—to be what He wants us to be, and to fulfill His Will in our life. We are on a pilgrimage of holiness that will lead us to heaven.

The host and the chalice tell people we are a Eucharistic group, a group in unity among ourselves and with all members of the Church. We are women of the Church, serving the Church, and praying for the Church and its leaders. As the Church feeds us with the Eucharist, so we feed the Church with prayer.

The example of our lives of prayer and good works for priests and other Church leaders also feeds our families. The more we fulfill our vocation of prayer, the more we enrich the Church and the more we ensure the salvation of our loved ones.

Our life as Widows of Prayer is the heavenly insurance policy of the rest of our families. They can collect from our accumulated merits to insure their own entrance into heaven. Our insignia is our symbol of openness to God—of prayer in and for the Church and of an intercessory position on behalf of our families.

(continued on page 4)

We Invite You
A DAY WITH OUR LADY
MONDAY, MAY 19
 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 \$25 prepaid registration is required.

To register, call or text Kathy at:
 920-284-9476 by May 13th
 Sponsored by the **Widows of Prayer**

The Widows of Prayer will again pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, May 19, 2025. It will be a special day this year as the Shrine is one of the Holy Doors for this Jubilee Year of Hope in the Green Bay Diocese.

Our formal gathering will begin at 11:00 am with a private Mass in Mother of Mercy Hall. Our celebrant will be Father Tom Farrell, General Spiritual Director for the Widows of Prayer. The gathering allows our members from across the nation to make their profession of promises as well as final vows as a Consecrated Widow together.

We continue with a light lunch and words of wisdom from Father Tom. Our formal gathering concludes around 2:00 pm. This allows participants to experience the grounds, visit the apparition site and participate in other activities that are part of the Shrine's normal spiritual life.

Our conference room seating is limited, if you would like to join us, a \$25.00 prepaid registration is required this year. Contact Kathy at 920-284-9476 before May 13th.

Our Shepherds

Recently Fr. John Girotti, our Canon Lawyer for the Widows of Prayer, gave a talk in Appleton sponsored by the CIA Faith Mission Operatives, entitled "The Shepherds for Whom we Pray". It is an excellent talk that you can also find on YouTube. Our General Servant Leader emailed a link to us on February 11. Part of Fr. Girotti's talk is included below:

Pray for your priests and if you feel inspired, write him a little note or a card. I can tell you every time that I've received a card like that was exactly the day and the time that I needed one. The timing was perfect. If you feel an inspiration to thank him or to write him a card or bake him a batch of cookies, do it. That might be the very thing that allows him to carry on in the heat of the day, in the difficulties of Pastoral Ministry.

Another thing you can do, is to be patient. Priests are human beings. If the homily is lousy in a given weekend it's probably because he didn't have any time to prepare it. And he probably didn't have any time to prepare it because all sorts of things happened. If father looks very tired, it's probably because he is. If father was short with you, maybe he's having a bad week. Were you ever short with somebody? A priest is not God; he represents Jesus Christ, he acts in his person, warts and all. Priests are human beings -- I know you know that, but we have to be reminded of that. A priest is asked to do a Divine spiritual work which is totally of God. When we are ordained we are ontologically changed and conformed to Jesus Christ as priest, prophet and king, and yet an earthly vessel, as we all are. Sometimes we crack and sometimes people forget that. Priests have bad days and many more, many more, good days. Our lives are remarkably the same as yours. We all are human beings trying to muddle through. Have patience with your pastor.

I'll end with a famous poem. It's about a priest and this is the most accurate depiction of the priesthood I have ever read.

Thou Art a Priest Forever

J.B. Henri Lacordaire, OP

To live in the midst of the world with
no desire for its pleasure...
To be a member of every family
yet belonging to none...
To share all sufferings; to penetrate
all secrets; to heal all wounds...
To daily go from men to God to
offer Him their petitions...
To return from God to men
to offer them His hope...
To have a heart of fire for charity
and a heart of bronze for chastity...
To bless and be blest forever.
O God, what a life, and it is yours,
O Priest of Jesus Christ!

Candidates



Marie Czelusniak, Marlette, Michigan, has been very active in the Catholic faith community her entire life. Her husband, Edward, died on March 16, 2023, after 52 years of marriage. Months after his passing, she came across a Facebook entry of someone who was dedicating her life to praying for priests in a Community called "Widows of Prayer". For two months, she attempted to learn more about this Community. When she finally succeeded, she requested to be a candidate.

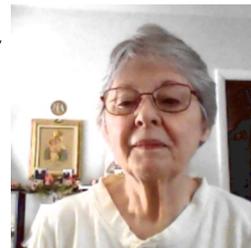
Paula Hand has lived in Bonita Springs, Florida, for the last twelve years but grew up in Chicago. Her husband, Peter, died in 2019 after 25 years of marriage. She is a parishioner at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, and serves in Faith Formation (catechist), facilitates a bereavement group, and leads a group of Seven Sisters (praying for priests). In addition, she has extensive experience as a hospice volunteer, providing spiritual/end of life care.



Mercedes Martin, originally from Puerto Rico, now lives in Oxford, WI. Her husband, Alex, died in 2019 in a car accident, the day after an ice storm. They have four grown children. She was a Bilingual/ESL teacher for 36 years & retired two years ago. She now works part time helping students who have limited English abilities. She also cantors each Sunday at a Spanish Mass in Madison. Mercedes heard about the Widows of Prayer through a friend who sent her an article published in the Catholic Herald.

Christine Poddig, Glen Carbon, Illinois. Christine's husband died June 4, 2023, just 3 months prior to their 36th wedding anniversary. She is retired and has 4 children and 8 grandchildren. Christine has been a member of the Schoenstatt Mother's League for 33 years.

Christine is a long-time member of Mother of Perpetual Help Church in Maryville, IL. As a widow, Christine wanted to follow the Blessed Mother's example of sanctifying her widowhood. Finding the Widows of Prayer website was exciting. After reading a few issues of The Widow's Mite, she made an inquiry and applied.



From Our Asst. General Servant Leader

Steps Toward Easter

Easter is on the horizon! Like most things in life that are greatly anticipated such as vacations, holidays, family reunions, it takes time and preparation. Easter is one of them.

The announcement that we as Catholics are beginning that preparation is Ash Wednesday when all devout Catholics



leave church with a cross of black ash on our foreheads, a mark that signifies our love for the one who gave his life for us, Jesus Christ. Thus it begins, the forty-day journey which involves soul searching... deep soul searching. Hopefully it includes additional prayer time and attending Lenten Services all for the purpose of improving our Lenten journey and bringing us closer to the one who saved us.

For some, Lent doesn't bring any changes and they merely go on day after day doing the same things. Do they just assume that on the day that they come face to face with Jesus that He will acknowledge them as a "good and faithful servant?"

Even as children we are taught to give up something we like during Lent, candy, ice cream or TV. I suppose in current times it's now limiting the internet or use of cell phones. But it all remains the same, this act of self-denial helps us to walk with Jesus and our desire to do so.

To be honest with ourselves and reflect on our previous Lent journey, did we find ourselves closer to Jesus? Had we become a better person, a more loving disciple and wanting Jesus more in our lives? These are some of the questions we need to ask ourselves as each year passes since it brings us closer to our face to face with Jesus. Or is Easter just a fun holiday with good food, baskets filled with candy for the children and colorful Easter eggs?

Now is the time to reflect on previous Lents and make this the best one! Then you will be assured that your face to face with Jesus will have Him saying, "Welcome good and faithful servant!"



On November 15, 2024, Elizabeth Giffie, made her second promise at St. Benedict Parish in Nebraska City, NE. Pictured from L to R: General Servant Leader Alice Peeters, Elizabeth Giffie and Rev. Douglas Daro.

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.

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

Teresa Erdalt – Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Teri Erdelt is currently the Servant Leader for the Franklin/Milwaukee Chapter of the Widows of Prayer. She joined about eleven years ago. She saw a notice in her church bulletin about an upcoming WP function and thought it sounded interesting, but other commitments prevented her from attending. Then a year or two later Joyce Eesley asked her if she would be interested in joining, and Teri said yes.



Teri's husband Rod had died in 2008 from a cardiac arrest at the age of 61. They had 3 children, two daughters and a son. Their son Kurt was home when his Dad died and performed CPR. Sadly, Kurt died in 2012. Teri's two daughters and 3 grandchildren currently live within a half hour drive from her.

Before retiring about 10 years ago, Teri had worked in accounting and computer work. She is dealing with lots of arthritis and had one knee replaced last year, the first knee was replaced 12 years ago. In addition to driving seniors to their appointments, etc., Teri also helps with volunteer tasks at her parish; she especially enjoys helping count the Sunday Mass collections and has been promoted to head of her counting team.

Her parish has been enjoying Perpetual Adoration for many years and Teri has been an active participant since 1999; the first 12 years taking the 1 am to 2 am time slot. At first it was difficult to get up at 1 am and then harder still to fall back asleep when she returned. After asking God for help, it got much easier. Teri insists we need to promote Eucharistic Adoration, not only for the Widows of Prayer, but others as well. "It is such a blessing!"

A few years ago, a new Servant Leader was needed for their Franklin/Milwaukee Chapter. No one stepped forward to take that position, and as Teri says " they scraped the bottom of the barrel to find me, so that God can get the glory!"

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

Meaning of WP's Insignia (Contd. From Page 1)

In life we sometimes speak most eloquently, not by what we say but by what we do and how we choose to appear before the world. Being a Widow of Prayer is not just a good way to finish one's life. It is a wonderful way to begin a new life filled with Holy Glory. The past is ended and the future is now beginning. Our task is to be faithful to what God has called us to do.

Mary Reardon, WP

This article, written by our Foundress, Mary Reardon, appeared in the Fall 2005 Widow's Mite.

Note: If you are a widow and would like to learn more about Widows of Prayer, call the phone number in your area listed on page 3 or visit our website: www.widowsofprayer

Meet and Chat



Above is a screen shot of one of our recent "Meet and Chat" Zoom sessions. We have been meeting on this platform since 2021 when our General Servant Leader, Alice Peeters, learned to use it and shared it with us. Meetings can be accessed with a computer, laptop or any mobile device such as a iphone or a tablet. These sessions are usually held on the 4th Monday of each month for about 1 hour. Topics range from "What to do When Sleep Doesn't Come" to favorite saints, etc. If you are not computer (or iphone) literate, you can also join with a regular phone. Call Alice Peeters at 920-540-5790 to obtain that special phone number.

More Opportunities

The Widows of Prayer pray the rosary on Zoom, usually the 3rd Monday of each month. To join, click on the emailed link, or with a phone you can join in with the audio. Again, call Alice Peeters for that special phone number to connect.

We have also begun to pray the Office of the Dead together on Zoom after the death of a Widow of Prayer.

Widows of Prayer Retreat

September 9, 10 and 11, 2025

International Shoenstatt Center

W284 N698 Cherry Ln., Waukesha, WI 53188

Arrival: 4:00 pm on Tuesday, September 9, and depart after the noon lunch on Thursday, September 11.

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 920-540-5790.

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.

Mary Wanless, January 4, 2025 – Madison, WI

Lola Dorsett, January 12, 2025 – Appleton, WI

Marketta Burby, January 17, 2025 – Kaukauna, WI

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