

Vinculum

Newsletter of



The Secular Institute

Servitium Christi

Easter 2016

Dublin

Easter 2016

“Then an angel appeared to Him, coming from heaven to give Him strength” (Luke 22:43)

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, with its theme “Merciful like the Father”, this scene from St. Luke’s account of the agony in the garden can serve to illustrate the extent and alacrity of the Father’s mercy. When Jesus was distressed by His pondering on the suffering, the “Cup” which lay ahead, He turned to His Father pleading “Father, if You are willing, take this cup away from Me”. However, he added “Nevertheless, let Your will be done, not Mine!”. Despite His apprehension, His terror, He submitted Himself to His Father’s plan, knowing that His Father was merciful. And He was not disappointed. An angel appeared to Him, to give Him strength - an outreach from a Merciful Father.

And showing that He and the Father are indeed One, even in His hour of torment and suffering, Jesus Himself showed mercy and compassion - the divine traits He had brought with Him from His Father and incorporated into His human nature. He healed the soldier who had been injured by Peter, He consoled the women of Jerusalem, He forgave the man crucified with Him, and even forgave those who had crucified Him. And He gave His Mother and the beloved disciple – all of us – to each other to care for each other.

The unity between Jesus and His Father was the inspiration for St. Peter Julian’s Gift of Self and Vow of Personality. He wanted to become one with Jesus, just as Jesus was One with the Father. This is our inspiration, our role model. In this Year of Mercy, we draw strength from the example of Jesus, as we strive to surmount our own daily challenges and difficulties, and continue to work to bring His merciful Presence to people and to situations encountered along our journey in life. This is our special role as Members of Servitium Christi. Our place in the world, our secularity, opens up for us endless possibilities of serving God, and reaching out to others, making Him present and active in their lives also. We can be the angel from heaven who comes to bring comfort to others. When we find ourselves in difficult situations, we, in our turn, can be assured, that Jesus in the Eucharist will give each of us the strength we need to be an angel!

I wish each one of you, and your families and loved ones, all the blessings of this Easter Season, when we celebrate our salvation, and also the Institution of the Eucharist. We are now in the last few weeks of preparation for the Amplified General Council Meeting here in Dublin. Please pray that this meeting will be fruitful and successful, and will help to steer us on a good course to ensure that we can achieve the ideals of our Founders, and fulfil the purpose to which our merciful God has called us.

With every good wish in this happy Season,

Mary Keane
General Directress

CMIS Congress,

Augustianum, Rome - January 2016

On 30th January, Fr. Christoph Theobald SJ delivered a key-note address on the Theological Foundations of Secular Consecration. He was introduced by Fr. Paciola OCSO who spoke about our Vocation and our Response in its various dimensions.

Fr. Theobald opened by referring to No. 10 of Vita Consecrata, saying that Secular Institutes should strive to blend the sacred into secularised society. It is radical living of the common human vocation to be missionary disciples. Instead of sheltering in individual, or Secular Institute identity, we should “Go out” to the whole Church, adapt to the needs of modern society, and be a missionary link with society. He explored this under three headings:

1. Become Missionary Disciples of Christ

The absolute Rule of a Secular Institute, is the Gospel – the Good News, always “New”, and not a stagnant message. It is always a new message of radical kindness, Christ’s radical kindness. We proclaim this kindness, by conforming to Christ as in Galatians 2:22 : *I live, not I, but Christ lives in me.* (This of course, is of particular significance in Servitum Christi, as it inspired St. Peter Julian).

2. Difficulty

To pass from the message of the Gospel to implementation of the message is a challenge. The word “mission” may cause difficulty and negative attitudes, but it differs greatly from proselytism. We should be warned against relativism on one hand, and fundamentalism, on the other hand, and remember always that the grace of God precedes us in all circumstances.

3. Experience of Vocation

We should share the message of the Good News and exit from our own selves forming a connection with the secular world. “Vocation” is not just a noun, and we should not limit it in any way. “Vocation” is really a verb. Our listening should be both interior (the Divine voice says “Yes, you can!”), and exterior, listening to the world around us. We should experience and show joy in our vocation, and when the Gospel is working in us or in someone else.

Fr. Theobald then went on to say that Secular Consecration is a challenge of conversion. By Profession of the Evangelical Counsels we give attention to the articulation of Consecrated Life. What is Consecration? To what are we consecrated? He suggested that Consecration is “Total commitment of all our faculties to something about which we are passionate”. He then went on to remind us that our calling is to be holy in the midst of the world, just as Jesus is holy! Our works and actions must be consistent with this holiness, showing empathy with others, and approaching others presuming friendship. Our mystical/contemplative side should be attended to, and freedom, equality, brotherhood should be part of our ethic.

In summary, in Secular Consecration, we respond to the universal call to holiness, and enter into the mystique of encounter. We have to deal with solitude, loneliness, but we must go out, and be sensitive to others. We should become neighbours, with the grace of touching more closely the

other person's situation. We are present in secular life through brotherhood, contemplation, and from inside ordinary life, a permanent conversion, fertile and fruitful. In concluding he reminded us of Pope Francis' emphasis on an alternative style of life, and listening to the voices of the excluded. He also reminded us that our lives should be "Multi-disciplined", not keeping the spiritual for Sunday (or some other special time), and the work for the rest of the week, but totally integrating, and interspersing the two aspects. We should be open to opportunities for sharing and regard our daily work as a specific opportunity for this sharing.

Mary Keane
General Directress

Called and chosen... I have called you by your name

When I said YES to the invitation of General Directress (GD) Mary to join her and Vicar Chris for the Vatican, Rome trip to attend the closure of the Year of Consecrated Life, little did I know that I would be in for some big and wonderful surprises in my life. There were so many "FIRSTS" during this journey/trip to Vatican City – also my first time to be there.

To arrive in Rome one day ahead of schedule without being aware of it, was so Grace-filled moment. The trip from Manila-to-Hongkong-to-Rome was so hassle-free. Getting to know a fellow Filipina along with her daughter during that flight was also a relief as she gave idea where to get the airport taxi. It was so cold outside the airport terminal and I am so thankful that the taxi driver was also very welcoming. Since it was a long trip from Fiumicino airport to Casa Tra Noi Hotel, I enjoyed the scenery along the way- from a bleak, cold morning to a sunny beautiful day. We (the taxi driver and I) even took some pictures along the way. While registering at the hotel reception desk I discovered that I arrived a day earlier than the others. Since this would mean GD Mary and Chris arriving the next day, I had the whole day not only to catch up some sleep and rest but also to have my adoration and reflections on God's Goodness and unconditional love at the hotel's adoration chapel. Those were Grace-filled moments with the Lord. Imagine, the relief I experienced when I welcomed Mary and Chris at 3pm the next day. After registration and bringing their luggages inside their rooms, we then proceeded to Instituto Patristico Augustianum for the registration and to get our kits/conference bags.

And then, I am in for my second first.

The first activity for the world meeting was the Prayer Vigil at 6pm at Papal Basilica St. Peter. After registration, we started to join the long queue leading to the tight security entrance. I was so overwhelmed with the number of persons queuing... thousands of us who will attend the Prayer Vigil. I am there with all the other consecrated persons from various forms. So blessed to be with the other groups on said day. All I can say is, THANK YOU, Triune God, for calling me to the secular institute, Servitium Christi and for giving me the opportunity to respond to His invitation.

From January 29 to January 31, there were various sessions that were so enriching and uplifting, helping me appreciate fully my being a consecrated person. For two days – January 30-31 – the sessions and reflections focused on secular institutes (SIs). Those days were opportunities to meet other members of SIs, especially during linguistic group (English group) discussions/sharing after the conferences. I also had opportunities to meet Filipinos as well as those from other countries. During lunch time, there were also opportunities to bond and meet with other members of SIs, like NDV from France. Though language may be a barrier, we tried to understand one another and relate from the heart.

Another “first” is the Angelus Domini with Pope Francis at St. Peter’s Square. No amount of drizzle can stop us (GD Mary, Chris & I) from waiting and moving from one spot to the other, just to have a good glimpse/view of Pope Francis from the Holy Window. To be praying the Angelus with Pope Francis and the pilgrims from all over the world and to receive personally the Papal blessing not just from a video clip of Radio Vatican from You Tube, was truly a wonderful and awesome experience! As I am being blessed I also prayed that these blessings be extended to the members of my family as well as to the members of Servitium Christi- Davao & Manila Centers, members all over the world and SIs of the Phils and Asia.

Another “first” is the audience with the Holy Father Pope Francis on February 1. We were so very fortunate to be seated some rows behind the front row. We had a good view and felt so blessed to be again with all the consecrated persons in Paul VI Hall. I thought the day would end with these beautiful memories with Pope Francis, but God is really a God of surprises.

I was getting ready for bed when the phone rang in my room. At first I thought it was GD Mary who might have some updates on our plans for the next day. I cannot understand what the lady on the other line was saying, I even thought it was a wrong number. I presumed she was speaking in Italian, then the phone was transferred to another lady who asked- Habla Espanol? To which I answered, un poco. Then she asked, do you speak English? I said Yes. She then informed me that I am invited to attend a practice for the candle procession for the Eucharistic celebration the next day. Just to be sure, I even asked her if the invitation was for me. She said yes, you are Maria Concepcion de Castro Gonzales? Wow! No more doubts, it was really me. I immediately said YES and will be at the hotel lobby the next day at 8:15 am, as requested. The impact of the invitation did not immediately sink in. It was only while we (Chiara, the Italian lady who called up, Fatima from Spain who spoke in English, Vincent- NDV-France and Catalina from Buenos Aires) were walking towards the venue for the practice at St Peter’s Basilica, that the reality of being called and chosen finally imbibed my system. Being with the others during the practice, who are similarly situated as I am, was an overwhelming and awesome experience. We are to be seated at that part of the altar/sanctuary especially reserved for us. God has really made me feel so special and enveloped by His Love!

While we were having our practice, our (GD Mary, Chris & I) itinerary for that whole morning was cancelled. Instead, we agreed that I will be back at the hotel and together take our lunch. These meals with GD Mary and Chris were among the bonding moments I had with them - opportunities to experience community in Servitium Christi. They further strengthened my

desire to be faithful to our Institute and thankful for the gift of my vocation to consecrated life in our beloved Institute.

The highlight of all the “first” is to belong to the group of candle bearers during the candle-lit entrance procession at the closing Mass of Year of Consecrated Life at St Peter’s Basilica. We were so very close to the Pope especially during the rite of the blessing of candles but during the practice we were instructed to follow in strict orders not to have unnecessary movements & noise especially when the rite and the mass begin. This is to give importance to the solemnity of the celebration. As I was standing before the Pope while the rite was going on, all that was on my mind was to say THANK YOU! No other words could I ever utter, as I cannot find the word that would best describe how I feel during those moments. Imagine the joy and happiness that these moments bring and yet I cannot smile, laugh, shout or even jump. I just kept all these in my thankful heart, a heart filled with awe and wonder! But what was most wonderful – was when we started the entrance procession, walking towards the altar. With only the light of the candle on my left hand together with my companions’ candles as well as the light from the candles of all the consecrated persons inside the Basilica, all the more I cannot express how happy and joyful I am during those moments. The altar of the Basilica seemed like heaven as we moved towards it. Added to this, are the voices coming from both sides of us, singing the entrance hymn, my joy cannot be contained in my heart. God’s unconditional love was truly felt at that moment. And His Love for me is much more than I can imagine. That though I am unworthy of all these gifts and blessings, He continues to be faithful to His promise- He will not leave us, He will always be with us. Those moments were when I can feel God’s loving embrace around me. All I can say, other than THANK YOU for this Gift of vocation to consecrated life, is a prayer - for the Lord to give me that Grace to always be faithful, that my Yes be always constant and consistent all the days of my life. And that I may be willing and open to the opportunities to share Christ’s Light so that others will be attracted by His Light. And always be grateful for the life-changing encounters with Jesus and share the Goodness of our Gracious God to everyone I encounter and meet in this journey as consecrated person. May I continue to keep the wonder of my encounters with Christ in my thankful heart and always be a joyful and authentic witness of God’s Goodness, all the time.

Please allow me to share the prayer at the end of the sharing of Fra Jose Rodriguez Carballo, ofm, Archbishop Secretary CICLSAL during the Prayer Vigil for the conclusion of the year of consecrated life. This prayer as I read again and again, seemed to be my prayer to our Lord, prayer from the heart---

“Lord,

THANK YOU for having walked by us and called us by name to follow you in consecrated life.

THANK YOU for staying all the time close to us; in our joys and in our tribulations, in our sufferings and in our hopes.

THANK YOU for keeping on loving and trusting in us, inspite of our unfaithfulness.

THANK YOU for renewing your calling to us to be happy in our discipleship.

Mary, Mother of the Church and of consecrated persons,

Through your help and protection, keep on enkindling our hope and the fire of our passion.

Journey with us; be our companion, our Mother and Teacher, and grant us from the Lord the courage to go forth from our nests to meet the others, as you went to meet your cousin Elizabeth.

Teach us to say “here I am”, as you did, whenever we feel happy and whenever the light doesn’t shine for us; teach us to say “amen’ now and at the hour of our death.
Fiat, fiat, amen, amen.”

Thank you also to General Directress Mary for the invitation and for being an instrument for all these God’s Graces to me. To all the members of Servitium Christi – Davao and Manila Centers and members of SIs in Asia, for your unceasing prayers and all-out support. To all my friends from all over the world, you know who you are, who have been my prayer partners day in and day out, Maraming Salamat! Gracias! THANK YOU!

MARIA CONCEPCION DE CASTRO GONZALES
Servitium Christi- Davao Center
March 19, 2016, Feast of St Joseph



The Asian Pilgrimage of Consecrated Seculars *(Fr. Subash Anand at CMIS Congress Rome, 31 Jan. 2016)*

Consecrated Secularity, our Vocation, is somewhat misunderstood by the modern world as we do not live in communities or even live a common life although some may and do live together as friends e.g Grail Members who do have a sort of community life. We of course live by the three vows albeit in a secular context but are just as valid and meaningful as Religious or hermits etc. We are responsible for our own welfare etc., professions, shopping, surviving etc. in the celibate state and feel we are called and happy to live thus. Many are engaged in Apostolates of various kinds others are happy to live the Consecrated life in an unassuming quiet contemplative lifestyle but nevertheless just as consecrated and called to live out the Gospel message as Jesus would have us live according to our individual rules and statutes as laid down by our founders and foundresses. This is me now after man years of various apostolates.

Christine Stone

CMIS Website

Explore the newly enhanced and multi-lingual CMIS Website

www.cmis-int.org

also

Facebook: conferencemondialesinstitutsseculiers

YouTube: cmischannel

A wonderful resource!

Congratulations to Filomena Seguel Castillo.

On Saturday 28, November 2015, the members of the Nueva Imperial Centre participated in a Thanksgiving celebration on the 90th Anniversary of the Diocese of San José in Temuco, held at the Cathedral. The Eucharist was celebrated by the Cardinal Archbishop of Santiago and President of the Episcopal Conference of Chile, Mons. Ricardo Ezzatti.

On that same day, at 07:00 p.m., an Academic Ceremony was held at the Aula Magna of the Catholic University, which included a history of the diocese and an artistic show. In this opportunity, the "Saint Joseph Award" was given to outstanding lay people of the Church of Temuco.

Parish Presbyter Edgardo Betancur and the Council of the San Miguel Arcangel Parish of Nueva Imperial, appointed Miss Filomena del Carmen Seguel Castillo to receive such high honour. We accompanied her with great joy, to receive this great recognition. But we also had feelings of sadness, because three hours before this important event for her and for us, we learned that Miguelina went back to God.

Congratulations dear Filomena, for such great work and dedication to our Parish

María Valdebenito Palacios

Nueva Imperial, December 18th, 2015

Reflection on the Jubilee Year of Mercy

In this Holy Jubilee Year Mercy, we discover again the spiritual and corporal works of mercy which are based on the Holy Scriptures.

According to the book "The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy" of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, each of the corporal works of Mercy offers remedy to a neighbour deficiency.

Human beings can experience of resources in their bodies which are constantly needed either internally (1st.Food– “To feed the hungry” and 2nd. Drink “ To give drink to the thirsty”) (Mt25,35); or externally, (3rd. Home “To harbour the harbourless”) (Mt25,35);(4th -Clothes “To clothe the naked”) (Mt25,36); or else suffer internal transitory needs, (5° Disease –“ To visit the sick”) (Mt25,36); (6th. Liberty – “To ransom the captive”) and (7th. Burial – “To bury the dead”)(Mt25,36) (Tb1,17; 12,12s).

The spiritual works of mercy are responses to deficiencies pertaining to the spiritual dimension that humans suffer, either imploring God's help (7th: prayer), or intervening near neighbours; giving instructions or advising, consoling (4th: against suffering and pain) reacting against the disorders of their actions (3rd: correcting him/her, forgiving him/her 5 ° or 6 °) (: supporting him/her).

The spiritual works of mercy, can be divided into three parts: - Surveillance - the first three works, 1) To counsel the doubtful (Pr 11.14; Eclo21, 13); (2)To instruct the ignorant (At8, 30-31); (3) To admonish sinners; (2Ts3, 15); three works on reconciliation made up of 4) comfort the afflicted (Is40, 1; 1Cor14, 3); (5) forgive offences willingly (Mt5, 38-39.44.46); 6) To bear wrongs patiently; (Mt18, 23-35), and finally a work of synthesis, focusing on 7) prayer To pray for the living and the dead. (Ef1, 3-14) (2Mc12, 41-45.44)

Sonia Maria de Oliveira – Brasil



In Memoriam

Miguelina Fuentes Moraga (Chile)

She was born on January 8th, 1940, in Coelemu, a city in the southern part of Chile, and died on November 28th, 2015.

Since she started in the Institute (1983), she belonged to the Centre of Santiago, as she lived in San Bernardo. She worked hard as an agricultural technician in rural areas. When she finished her work, she moved to Coelemu and belonged to the Centre of Imperial.

She was a Formator and a Local Directress. She participated as a delegate in the General Assembly of the year 1995. Her pastoral work was focused in catechesis and the formation of worshipping groups. She became an Extraordinary Minister of the Word and the Eucharist. In Coelemu, she also formed what is called in Chile the group of "Cuasimodistas" (people who accompany the Priest every year to give communion to the sick, on the Sunday following the Easter celebration).

On the occasion of her funeral, Maria Valdebenito, R D. of Chile, addressed these farewell words:

"Dear Parish community of the Parish of the Heart of Mary of Coelemu.

Dear Miguelina, a dynamic and apostolic woman.

Today, we have been gathered by the Lord, here at the altar, to celebrate your Easter. We do it with deep gratitude to the Lord, for all the gifts given by Him to you, gifts which you tried to deliver to as many as you could, in your own way..

During our retreats in Boroa (Temuco), Miguelina was a cheerful person, but as she returned to Coelemu, she seemed to be apart from the world. Here, she carried out an intense apostolate. She made her own the thoughts of S. Peter Julian Eymard "See Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Look at His love and make that thought to dominate yourself, to catch you. Why? Because Jesus opens Himself and gives Himself without getting tired ever"

The Region of Chile of the *Secular Institute Servitium Christi* is grateful to F. Ricardo Oliva, the Parish Priest of Coelemu, and to all the members of this community, who fondly welcomed her and kindly supported her since her arrival to this city until she died.

Her legacy as a consecrated woman is to continue the Eucharistic apostolate truthfully, without forgetting that the centre of our lives should always be our Lord Jesus Christ, whom is present in the Sacrament of Love."

Dear Miguelina, Rest in Peace

Coelemu, November 30th, 2015.

Maria Valdebenito Palacios.

News

PRAYERS

For the health recovery of Antonio da Silva, Maria Luiza da Silva's brother, from the Centre of Belo Horizonte and for Maria Augusta Siqueira de Azevedo also from the Centre of Belo Horizonte.

CONDOLENCES

On January 2-2016, Zizita Vasconcelos passed away, Maria Santa Vasconcelos's mother, Centre of Tianguá.

On February 25, 2016, Maria de Oliveira passed away, Sonia Maria de Oliveira's sister, from Centro of Belo Horizonte.

May the Lord bring comfort and strength to both families. Let's remember them in our prayer.

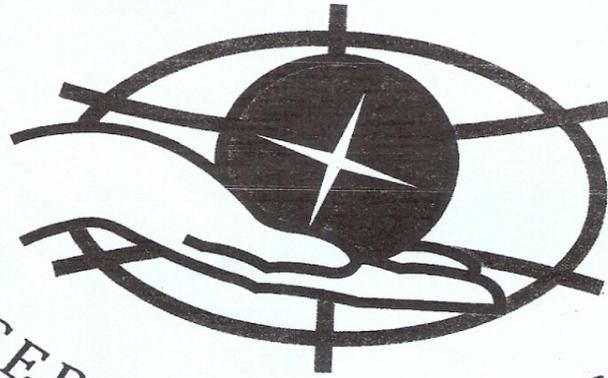
A CELEBRATION!

On Saturday 14th May, the local Members of the St. Clare Region will come to Emmaus Retreat and Conference Centre for their "Regular" May week-end Meeting. All those attending the Amplified General Council Meeting (also at Emmaus Centre) are invited to join them as guests on Sunday 15th May to celebrate the Perpetual Profession of Vows by Penny Carroll, from Warrington, England. The Profession will take place during Celebration of the Eucharist at 11.30 a.m. and will be followed by a celebration meal and afternoon outing.

Please keep Penny in your prayers in these final weeks of preparation for her Perpetual Profession.

Next issue : August 2016

Items for inclusion to be received by 15 July. Please send to Maria Angélica as attachment to e-mail : servitiumchristi@hotmail.com, or at FAX No. 56 2 29825878, or to Juan Francisco González 653- Villa El Andén- San Bernardo.-Chile.



SERVITIUM CHRISTI

- SECULAR INSTITUTE -

