



THE WORD LIVES

2019 September

Sr. Annette's Reflection

September gives us an opportunity to wish our Foundress, "Happy Birthday, Mother Jeanne!"

But wait! September 11 is the anniversary of Mother de Matel's death, not her birth. True, and in a tradition from the time of the martyrs, we Christians claim death as birth into heaven or eternal life.

Another viewpoint claims that our birth into eternal life starts much earlier. Some would say that from the moment of conception we are headed for eternal life. Others might add that our Baptism is our initiation or entrance into divine life.

Perhaps a better way to look at this feast is to see it as a celebration of completion. Completion of what had begun 86 years earlier.

Surely Mother de Matel was conscious of living the divine life. Isn't that at the heart of our charism? In her *Treatise on the Beatitudes*, she explains.

The Saints in Heaven neither desire, nor are they able to desire anything other than God, because God fills the whole capacity of their hearts.

Let us—like her—endeavor in our lifetime to deepen our hearts' capacity for life-giving Love.

*. . . do not fear death.
Your heart is in the
hands of Life.*

(Jeanne Chézard de Matel,
Autobiography)



After our generational meeting in Victoria in July, we enjoyed three visitors from Victoria the following week. Pictured (r. middle) is Sister Mary Beth Cernoch, who worked with several Sisters on loom crocheting. She brought patterns for caps, shawls, and plant holders.



Srs. Annette Wager, Irma Gonzalez and Marilyn Grace Springs joined over 700 members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious at the annual national assembly to address the theme *Imagining Leadership in a Global Community*. Speakers included Sr. Pat Murray, IBVM, Executive Secretary of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG); Sr. Sharlet Wagner, CSD, who gave the Presidential Address and Sr. Norma Pimentel, MF, upon her receiving the Outstanding Leadership Award.

Mindful of the fullest meaning of pursuing the mission of Jesus Christ, during the business meeting, the members discussed and approved several resolutions. These resolutions are found on pages 3 and 4.



Sr. Norma Pimentel, a Missionaries of Jesus Sister, and Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, received the Leadership Conference of Women Religious Outstanding Leadership Award at their annual assembly in Scottsdale, Arizona. She sees up to 800 migrants every day pouring into her center, often their first stop after being released from US Customs and Border protection. More than 150,000 migrants have passed through her ministry's doors. As she consistently explains, she sees her efforts as addressing and defending human dignity in those she cares for.



IWA BROWNSVILLE DAY OF REFLECTION
 On August 5, 2019 the administration, faculty and staff of Incarnate Word Academy, Brownsville met in La Parra, Texas, for a morning of reflection to open their in-service week before the school year. **Sr. Anna Marie Espinosa** led reflection and faith sharing on the Commandments and Beatitudes in the spirit of Jeanne Chézard de Matel. The morning's reflection closed with the celebration of the Eucharist at 12 noon. Father Andy of the Lebh Somea House of Prayer presided at the Eucharist.

ENCOUNTER TEXAS CONFERENCE
Sr. Rosa Ortiz accompanied a group of young adults to the Encounter Texas Conference held in Grapevine, Texas, August 16-18. The Conference included fun events, noted speakers and culminated with Eucharist concelebrated with Fort Worth Bishop Michael Olson.

JUAN DIEGO ACADEMY
Sr. Anna Marie Espinosa has joined the School Board of Juan Diego Academy located in Mission, Texas. A Catholic Regional High School of the Rio Grande Valley, its website is juandiegoacademy.org.

BOKENKAMP
Sr. Jo Ann Saenz (after a drug test, TB test, criminal background checks and training) was accepted as a volunteer to work with the children at Bokenkamp, which houses children from the ages of 12—17. These children come unaccompanied from Latin America and have had to leave their countries because of war and violence.

A diocesan team consisting of Sr. Jo Ann, Jaime Reyna, Fr. Jose Gutierrez, and Maria Macias has received clearance to visit the facility once a month. At their first visit on August 17, they provided activities for 17 boys and 36 girls. Activities included games and reflection on the Beatitudes. The time ended with Mr. Reyna playing "Entre Tus Manos" on the guitar.

2019

September 27-29:
 General Assembly /
 Pre-Chapter Meeting

October 12: Particular Jubilee

October 19: Community Jubilee

December 20-23:
 Chapter of Elections

2020

February 21-23: Pre-Chapter Meeting

April 24-26: Pre-Chapter Meeting

June 13: Leadership Installation

June 14-21: Chapter Retreat

June 22-29: Chapter of Affairs

JEANNE CHÉZARD DE MATEL'S LAST DAYS

On September 11 we celebrate Jeanne's perfect union with the God she loved completely and served faithfully.

1670

On **June 30th**, Pope Clement X wrote the Decree approving the Confraternity of the Incarnate Word.

On **July 21st**, during the election of the new prioress of the Mastery of Paris, the supporters of the former Ursuline nun violently entered the cloister and imposed her as superior. Jeanne was placed in seclusion.

On **September 10th**, Jeanne received the habit of the Order and made her profession in it.

On **Thursday, September 11th**, Jeanne made her final surrender into the loving embrace of the Trinity.

EXECUTIONS IN TEXAS

Wednesday, September 4:
 Billy Crutsinger

Tuesday, September 10:
 Mark Soliz

You are invited to join in prayer with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word, 5201 Lipas Blvd., at 6:00 p.m. on days when prisoners are scheduled to be executed by the State of Texas, and for the victims and the family members of the victims.

PEACE AND JUSTICE CORNER

We are called to confront rhetoric that stokes racism and hatred of anyone perceived to be "different" than we are. We are all responsible for monitoring our own language and actions and calling attention when the language and actions of others cross the line.

-LCWR, Sr. Annmarie Sanders, IHM

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The United Nations wants to end slavery by 2030. Slavery is the second largest criminal industry in the world—tied with arms dealing—with 40 million people in some form of servitude and profits of \$150 billion in 2015. This will require action from individual citizens, government leaders, and corporate executives.

-US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking

* * *

When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt.

-Leviticus 19: 33-34

* * *

I have learned that when we begin listening to each other, and when we talk about things that matter to us, the world begins to change.

-Margaret Wheatley

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Poverty is not natural, as rain or snow. People are made poor, kept poor. Poverty is the mortal sin of modern times.

-Cardinal Charles Maung Bo

**CORPORAL
 WORKS OF MERCY**

FEED THE HUNGRY
 GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY
 SHELTER THE HOMELESS
 CLOTHE THE NAKED
 VISIT THE SICK
 VISIT THE IMPRISONED
 BURY THE DEAD

The following is a letter sent by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious during its annual 2019 assembly to President Trump on August 14. The letter, affirmed by the 663 LCWR members gathered in assembly in Scottsdale, Arizona, calls upon the president to end all divisive rhetoric. The complete text is found below.

Mr. President,

We live in a world increasingly marked by hatred, brutality, and violent conflict. We see our own country threatened by increasing disparities in economic, political, and social power. We are caught in a political culture paralyzed by ideological extremism and hyper-partisanship. These are times that require exceptional insight and courageous leadership.

In the face of these unprecedented challenges, we are outraged and heart-broken when our political leaders appeal to our basest instincts and stoke the fires of fear that threaten to tear the fabric of our nation apart. We cannot, we will not, let the voices of hatred and fear carry the day.

Mr. President, we beseech you to end all divisive and polarizing rhetoric. We implore you to never use language that disrespects, dehumanizes, or demonizes others. We expect our president, and all who serve this nation as leaders, to be always mindful of the common good and the dignity of each and every person. You hold a position that has the potential to inspire the best of every one of us and we ask you to use this unique status to bring about healing and never seek to create division.

The people of this pluralistic nation form a diverse polity characterized by a wide variety of beliefs, experiences, and interests. Disagreements and differences have the potential to challenge all of us to abandon easy certainty and seek a fuller truth. The problem is not our many differences or passionate disagreements. Those differences are our greatest strength; those disagreements are opportunities for growth. It is how we handle those inevitable conflicts that spells the difference between building the common good and destroying the bonds that bind this nation.

In his address to the US Congress in 2015, Pope Francis invited our political leaders to promote respect for the dignity of every human person and to renew their commitment to a spirit of cooperation. He also addressed each of us and all who seek to lead this nation when he said, "Each son or daughter of a given country has a mission, a personal and social responsibility . . . You are called to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good, for this is the chief aim of all politics. A political society endures when it seeks, as a vocation, to satisfy common needs by stimulating the growth of all its members, especially those in situations of greater vulnerability or risk . . . Building a future of freedom requires love of the common good and cooperation in a spirit of subsidiarity and solidarity."

As Catholic sisters, our ministries frequently require us to be in the heart of situations of discord and division, and thus we understand the great complexities and challenges that are inherent in the work of reconciliation. We too have to reach deep within ourselves to bring forth the grace and strength that are needed to not give in to the temptation of labeling or judging those who are different from us. We share with you, Mr. President, that maintaining this fundamental stance in life requires discipline and fortitude and a constant examination of our daily thoughts and deeds in light of our beliefs. We sometimes come up short, but pledge to do better each day because we are aware of the moral authority we, as sisters, bear. We ask you, Mr. President, if you would consider a similar examination of the practice of your own moral authority.

We send this letter to you as 663 Catholic sister leaders gathered in assembly in Arizona. We and approximately 700 other Catholic sisters are members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and represent approximately 35,000 sisters who minister throughout this nation. We promise to never cease raising our voices on behalf of the common good and praying for the healing of this country.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious

At the same Scottsdale assembly, those attending unanimously committed the conference, their congregations and themselves to fight racism, welcome immigrants and help stop climate change as their focus for the next three years. This vote was the culmination of nearly a year of work drafting and shaping the statement and came at the end of a session that explored the ways racism, migration and climate change are interconnected. A summary of the rationale for this commitment and the complete text of the resolution is found below.

RATIONALE

We are committed to contemplative listening to the signs of our times and compassionate response to the cries of our brothers and sisters, and to Earth and its biosphere. In 2018 the LCWR membership pledged to go deeper into the critical work of recognizing racism as a systemic, structural cause underlying and contributing to the multiple situations of injustice identified in the LCWR Call. This resolution builds on the work undertaken in response to the commitments of previous assemblies and is consistent with the LCWR Call for 2015-2022.

Resolution for 2019-2022

Creating Communion at the Intersection of Racism, Migration & Climate Crisis

RESOLUTION

Reading the signs of the times from our desire to create communion, we, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, affirm the interrelatedness of the justice concerns addressed by the LCWR Call for 2015-2022. We are heartbroken by the myriad ways our one human family and Earth, our common home, suffer from disconnection, indifference, violence, and fear in the face of racism, migration, and climate crisis. Responding to God who loves all of creation into being, we recommit ourselves to create communion and examine root causes of injustice. We particularly focus on the intersection of racism, migration, and climate crisis. We recognize a sense of urgency and pledge prayer, education, and advocacy. We will use our collective voice, resources, and power in collaboration with others to establish justice which reflects God's creating love.

For the next three years the Global Concerns Committee will provide resources to the regions to facilitate the implementation of this resolution.