Dear friends,

2016 is slowly winding down. On November 20 the Year of Mercy will come to a conclusion but hopefully not the awareness nor practice of this important virtue. Mercy will never go out of style because our sinfulness (unfortunately) does not leave us either. We will always be in need of mercy and will be called upon to bestow mercy.

Mercy is a gift to both the giver and receiver. Both parties find greater peace as they participate in the divine act of forgiving. How meaningful it is that November is also the time when we Catholics have a month-long Memorial Day, remembering our loved ones who have passed on.

Since we don’t know for sure their judgment, we have two days to honor them: All Saints Day for all who have won the ultimate prize of eternal union with God, and All Souls Day for those still undergoing purification with the assurance that they will be rewarded with God’s eternal love as well. All of these people have experienced the infinitely rich mercy of the Father in spite of the fact that no one really “deserves” forgiveness for turning our backs on our creator and redeemer. And yet our very misery is our victory over the Father’s heart. He as a father just cannot resist the helplessness and cries of his children.

For this mercy which we have celebrated all year long, we say “thanks.” For being called to our vocation as consecrated seculars, we say “thanks.” For each of you I say “thanks.”

A blessed and happy Thanksgiving!

Marcia Vinje
FOR RELIGIOUS, YEAR IS OVER BUT MINISTRY CONTINUES…
February 10, 2016, By Antonina Zielinska

Hundreds of religious sisters, brothers and consecrated laity gathered February 6th, 2016, at the mother parish of Long Island to celebrate the closing of the Year of Consecrated Life together in community as Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens.

“Today, as we draw the Year to a close and combine it with the annual World Day for Consecrated Life celebration, it’s clear that we are far from finished,” said Sister Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, S.C., the episcopal delegate for religious in the diocese. “The Gospel still calls us, still provokes us to respond, urges us to serve and to be present to the People of God in all the places and ministries we see around us.”

“Religious life is in a time of profound transformation,” said Sister Mary Hughes, O.P., the guest speaker at the closing celebration at St. James Cathedral, Downtown Brooklyn. “We have to walk into this transformation with faith.”

Sister Mary taught in the Diocese of Brooklyn, served as the president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and twice as the prioress of the Amityville Dominican Sisters.

She admitted that the world’s challenges seem overwhelming, especially as vocations to consecrated life are dwindling and those in consecrated life, on average, are getting older and frailer.

“We are moving into the future more lightly,” she said, which is not necessarily a bad thing. It forces the congregation to rely more heavily on Christ and less on human strength and organizations.

She said religious must now take the example of the widow who had but a little bit of flour in her jar and a bit of oil in her jug when Elijah came and asked her for food.

“If we do what we can and we give what we have, if we give ourselves wholly then we will find that it is enough and more than enough for the future that awaits us,” she said.

Sister Mary reminded her audience that, at the beginning of the year, the Vatican investigation of American women religious was still fresh on everybody’s minds. She said that although it was a difficult time, it has inspired congregations to share resources and knowledge for the greater good of the people.

Men and women religious participated at a closing ceremony marking the end of the Year of Consecrated Life and a Mass celebrated in the cathedral by Bishop DiMarzio.

“We found greater unity and wholeness,” she said.

Brother Campion Lally, O.S.F., said it is a greater sense of community that he is thankful for as the celebratory year comes to an end.
He said he would avoid coming to gatherings among various congregations, but he came to the opening ceremony of the Year of Consecrated Life and has come to nearly every event since. He said all the liturgies, vespers services and talks have given him an incredible opportunity not only to reconnect with old acquaintances, but also to meet fellow Christians who have given up everything to follow Christ.

Debbie Parise, a consecrated laywoman of the Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ, said that thanks to the year’s activities she has come to better know the community of consecrated life in the diocese. She has also better understood the importance of being a witness to her vocation as an example to others who may be called by the Holy Spirit. She said consecrated laity traditionally are not vocal about their vocation but her congregation has become more open about the lay vocation.

As a consecrated laywoman, Parise has taken vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. “We give ourselves completely to God but did not want to separate ourselves from the world,” she said.

Doreen Routie, a fellow consecrated laywoman of the Missionaries of the Kingship of Christ, said her vocation requires her to give everything up and follow Christ. She said the Year of Consecrated Life has renewed her zeal.

Men and women religious draw the Year to a close and combine it with the annual World Day for Consecrated Life celebration.

“Pope Francis has called us to look at ourselves and to recall the purpose of our vocation and to question who we are,” she said. “I do feel the need to be more radical, radical in the sense of service, prayer and sacrifice, prayer for the world to be at peace as St. Francis taught us.”

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio and Auxiliary Bishops Octavio Cisneros and Raymond Chappetto joined in the festivities to celebrate Mass at St. James Cathedral-Basilica.

During his homily, Bishop DiMarzio urged the congregation not to grow weary. He said he understands how frustrating it can be when efforts to recruit vocations, minister to the youth and form adults in faith yield meager results. But he urged the congregation to take the example of St. Peter when Jesus appeared in his life: “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.” (Luke 5:5)

The Tablet is the Catholic Newspaper of the Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens.

For those interested, below is the direct link to this article.

http://thetablet.org/for-religious-year-is-over-but-ministry-continues/
On 2 December 1894, Marie-Eugene was born into a modest family in Gua-Aveyron, a small mining town in the south of France. From an early age he felt called to the priesthood and entered a seminary when 17 years old. Three years later the First World War broke out and he joined the army as a volunteer. He felt that he had special protection from Sister Therese of the Child Jesus (of Lisieux) while serving as a soldier. At the conclusion of the war he re-entered the seminary and was ordained a priest on 4 February 1922, at the age of 28.

He had felt God's call to Carmel during his seminary years and, 20 days after his ordination, entered the Discalced Carmelite Novitiate in Avon, near Paris. He took the religious name Marie-Eugene of the Child Jesus.

There he intensified his prayer life and immersed himself in the teaching of the Carmelite masters. From the very outset of his ministry, through his writings and retreats, he dedicated himself to sharing the deep spiritual experiences of the Carmelite saints and of the practice of prayer.

Fr. Marie-Eugene founded Notre Dame de Vie as a secular Institute in 1932 in France. The Notre Dame de Vie community belongs to the Carmelite Family and strives to live in the spirit of the prophet Elijah and the Carmelite Saints. The vision of this community is to form contemplative apostles who work in any professional environment and witness to the living God.

He was elected General Definitor in 1937 and had to assume the role of General in 1954, when Fr. Silverius of St. Teresa died tragically. It was precisely during his years in Rome that he wrote his masterly synthesis of the teachings of the Saints of the Order: I Want to See God. He died on 27 March 1967 in Notre-Dame de Vie (France), at the age of 73.

On 19 December 2011, Pope Benedict XVI pronounced favorably on the heroic virtues of Fr. Marie-Eugène, who was then declared Venerable. Here is an extract from the official document:

«In the riches of a life marked by effort and activity, the spirituality of the Servant of God was distinguished by a strong faith nourished by daily prayer, by the fervor of the Eucharistic Celebration, by the constancy of his gift to the Holy Spirit, by his immense confidence in the Virgin Mary, by his love for the Saints of Carmel and for Saint Emerentiana, as well as by his missionary zeal that pushed him to offer his whole life to the Lord. With the foundation of his Secular Institute, he proposed a balanced synthesis of the dimensions of the Order of Carmel, which are contemplation and the apostolate.

Fr. Marie-Eugene was beatified on Saturday 19 November 2016, in Avignon, France. The next day his relics will be transferred to the shrine of Notre-Dame de Vie in Venasque.
A Celebration In Honor of Consecrated Life at the Archdiocese of Hartford

I received an invitation from the Archdiocese of Hartford to a liturgical celebration in honor of Consecrated Life on Saturday, the twenty-ninth of October, 2016.


When making the reservation we were asked to say if we were celebrating an anniversary. I therefore acknowledged that I was celebrating my 60th year as an Oblate.

When I arrived in Hartford, to my surprise I was given a corsage and asked to sit in the front row. I was also asked to bring the Eucharistic Chalice in the offertory procession.

After Mass, photos were taken with the Archbishop; a reporter was there as well talking to various sisters celebrating also. (Some additional photos and article may appear in the next Catholic Transcript). Then we had a buffet reception. The Vicar for Religious, Sister Mariette Moan, ASCJ, organized this event.

She introduced me as a new attendee and stated I was a member of a secular institute, the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate.

A gift was also given to each celebrating an anniversary; a paper weight which states:
“O Loving God grant us minds to know you, hearts to love you, hands to do your work and voices to sing your praise.”

I thanked her for inviting me and I sent her a handmade thank you card afterwards.

Humbly submitted by
Claudette Cyr

Volunteers Needed:
An Indian prelate has described Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, who will be canonized by Pope Francis Sept. 4, 2016, as the “best missionary of the millennium.”

Bishop Salvadore Lobo of Baruipur, who headed the canonization committee, reported that Christ had said to Mother Teresa in a vision: “Go into the houses, I cannot go alone, you be my face.” Indeed, “for the world today she has become the face of Christ,” the bishop said.

Bishop Lobo said that Hindus are also convinced that she was a saint. He said: “Some Hindus wonder why the Church needs to go through a canonization process. They say, ‘Mother Teresa was a saint anyway. But if the Church needs these formalities, then so be it.’”

Hindus also understand, Bishop Lobo added, that “service to the poor is service to God.” The bishop reported that during the beatification process as well, a large number of witnesses had come forth, including many Hindus and Muslims. He described the canonization as “a great joy” for all of India.

Bishop Lobo, who met Mother Teresa as a young seminarian and worked with the dying at her “Kalighat” hospice in Calcutta as a volunteer, described his first impression of her as that of a “transformative saint” who “emanated the personification of Christ.” “She taught the world a lesson: Jesus lives in the hearts of the poor. We shall find His face in them,” the prelate said.

Mother Teresa was born Anjezë (Agnes) Gonxha Bojaxhiu August 26, 1910 in Skopje (at the time it was part of the Ottoman Empire, today it is part of Macedonia). Her family was Albanian. At age 18, she entered the Order of the Loreto Sisters. Soon thereafter she was sent to India, where she worked as a teacher until 1946, when she felt the calling to serve the poor.
At first she went alone into the slums of Calcutta, but was then joined by several former fellow students. She founded the order of the “Missionaries of Charity,” which continues to take care of the poorest of the poor all over the world today.

Mother Teresa was already considered a saint during her lifetime and became famous the world over as the “Angel of the Poor.” She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. She died September 5, 1997, in Calcutta, India. Pope John Paul II beatified her on October 19, 2003, only six years after her death. Her liturgical feast day will be the 5th of September.

IN MEMORIAM

**Father John Lorenz**, 88, died November 1, 2016, at the Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines, Iowa. The Wake – Vigil Service on Friday, November 11th for Father Lorenz was *family*. Over 30 persons gathered by 7:00 pm at St Augustin Parish in Des Moines to pray and celebrate Father John. His two brothers and their wives had flown to Des Moines from the West Coast, but were not present. His Jesu Caritas priest group (meeting since the mid-1970s), priests, parishioners, Bob & Cindy Kodis from Cor Unum in Patre and myself to represent USCSI gathered. Karen Ceckowski from Maryville, Missouri, was unable to attend due to recent knee surgery. Father Ken Gross officiated as songs and readings and sharing of memories took place. Beginning with St Irenaeus’ “The Glory of God is Man Fully Alive,” he shared how Fr John’s introvert and simple life was so immensely rich in his relationship with God, family and friends – he was one to have his life in order; always gracious and hospitable. His work and prayer life, a little golf and an occasional ice cream were enough. He never sought the stage or limelight. “Right.” Or “Great.” Or “How about that.” were powerful in his “economy of words.” We are most grateful for his total commitment to the USCSI – whether from the beginning years when he provided active leadership, to his untiring support, and total commitment more than forty years later. May he continue to inspire and counsel from eternity.

*Jessica Swedzinski*

**USCSI Mission Statement:**

The USCSI shares in the mission of Jesus Christ in serving its member institutes by providing education, resources, and support for member institutes.

The USCSI is an organization of member institutes committed to making known, understood, and appreciated the call to consecrated secularity in the Catholic Church.

USCSI collaborates with other groups to present consecrated secularity as a viable option in today’s Church.
The annual meeting of the USCSI was held from September 16-18 at the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center near Baltimore, MD. It was attended by principal officers and delegates from various secular institutes in the United States. The meeting opened on Friday evening with Holy Mass and a welcome by our president, Marcia Vinje.

Our featured speaker this year was Sister Sharon Holland, IHM, who spent 21 years as a canon lawyer in Rome, where she was one of the highest ranking women in the Vatican. When she went to Rome, she was told to study consecrations in secular institutes.

In the first part of her talks, she pointed out how they were founded within a society with various outside influences. Some ideas that she mentioned in this part include the development of Secular Institutes in the Church.

◊ The spirit and intent of the founders is more pertinent in the Church of Vatican II.
◊ Baptism is the source of all vocations in the Church, not the form of consecration.
◊ The Church should be the leaven in the world (Lumen Gentium). The Church had seen itself as the salvation in itself. The language of leaven from within for the world changed this idea. Secular Institutes spread this gospel in the world.
◊ In 2014 Pope Francis saluted “Provida Mater” as a revolutionary and courageous act by Pope Pius XII in 1947 and 1948. He said to “Be revolutionary.” Secular Institutes were growing before “Provida Mater.”
◊ Each of the Institutes came into existence in different situations. We can ask what is the social context that gave rise to each institute and what is it for today?

During the second session of her presentation, Sr. Sharon spoke about how society influences the institutes. The various founders saw the needs and responded to them. Many images of society are negative, and this negativism gave rise to the positives of the different foundations. Pope Francis said: “You are in the heart of the world with the heart of Christ.” Some institutes arose during times of persecution, others during times of indifference.

Today’s world is characterized by racism, speech, violence, a search for power with the need to dominate others, individualism, and a resistance to refugees and immigrants. In addition there are ethical questions such as abortion and gay marriage. Pope Francis speaks about the challenges of present society, and that social and environmental forces are related.

Sr. Sharon then spoke about five mindsets in the world, and asked if we have taken on a mindset. (Reference was made to the analysis of Pope Francis’ encyclical letter Laudato Si by Sr. Amata Millerr, IHM, entitled: Another World is Possible and It’s Happening)

Technocratic paradigm – where we think that we have power over everything and that the goods of the world are infinite. Should we develop all we can?
Misguided anthropomorphism – where we risk losing our sense of self and our relationships. We need a true sense of human development.
Excessive individualism – where we have a misuse of creation. We are not the center of the universe, and we have a right to protect nature and not to abuse it.
Compulsive consumerism – where we have a throw away culture. There is a loss of the sense of the common good.
Idolatry or the autonomy of the market. People must be at the center and not money. Health care has become more expensive.

With all this the question was asked about how we are influenced by this society. How do these concerns impact our work or our ministries? What aspects of society influence your institutes and is it positive or negative? How do the mindsets of today’s society influence the vocations of your institute?

The third part of her talk dealt with how our institutes may be able to influence our societies. Sr. Amata said that there must be a new value system where people are more important than things. Violence never succeeds. Lifestyles must reflect the new value system knowing that my decisions affect society. Selfishness and greed lead to inequalities that fragment society. Using money to make more leads to more poverty.

In 2014 Pope Francis said to the Italian Institutes: “You are there where salvation is worked out – being at the heart of things, you are the yeast that makes the kingdom grow.” He also has said: “The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and the lives of all who encounter Jesus.” A danger of today is that from consumerism there is a blunted conscience that does not feel the joy of Christ’s love. How do we counter this? The Pope’s response to this can be summarized in a renewed encounter with Jesus as well as a no to an economy that kills, to a new idolatry of money, to a financial system that rules and does not serve, and to an inequality that spawns violence.

The remainder of her talks dealt with how the institutes can influence the world. There can be the person to person evangelization where we are not preaching to them, but responding to the opportunities, and practicing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Each of the institutes was formed to answer a need of the time.

Several other points were mentioned, which have come from various sources, but offer suggestions for consideration.

   The power of intercessory prayer – we are the leaven in the heart of the Trinity, and as such touch God’s heart.
   In the Year of Mercy, how the heart of God is moved with mercy.
   We can respond to the needs of the poor, the migrants, children, in the depersonalization that is experienced.

The relationship between the hierarchy of the Church and the Secular Institutes was briefly discussed. In some cases we are not understood or easily recognized. We can be a new impetus of grace for the Church.

Saturday evening we had time for relaxation, and enjoyed a couple of games that Marcia Vinje and Jessica Swedzinski provided. This concluded a very busy and informative day.

Sunday morning after Holy Mass we had our annual business meeting. During the meeting, Father George Hazler was unanimously elected to the office of Vice President, and Claudette Cyr was elected as Councilor. Other items can be found in the various printed reports and the minutes of the meeting.

We need to thank our officers for a well organized time together. We will return to the same location next year from September 15-17, 2017.

Annmarie Wacker