



Joyful Apostolate

February 2010

Blessings of our Pilgrimage to Rome and the Holy Land in June 2009



Our Holy Father spoke with Sister Jane (r) and Sister Agnes, and inquired with genuine interest into our founding, our apostolic works, and the countries where our Sisters serve the Church.



It was an extraordinary gift for all of us to be seated near the Holy Father (upper left). When the Holy Father said, "My particular greeting goes to the Sisters of the Society Devoted to the Sacred Heart," we shouted for joy! The Holy Father responded with a warm smile and wave of welcome.

“When we open the Bible to hear

FROM THE HEART OF SISTER IDA



Consent to God's gift of Himself as Mary did at the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-56) "Be it done to me according to your word." She was overwhelmed with joy seeing herself as loved by God. When we receive the word of God when we open the Scriptures, do we have the

same wonder as Mary did? Can we accept God's word as a special gift to us, or do we just let the words pass by our ears? He is alive! He is present to us at all times.

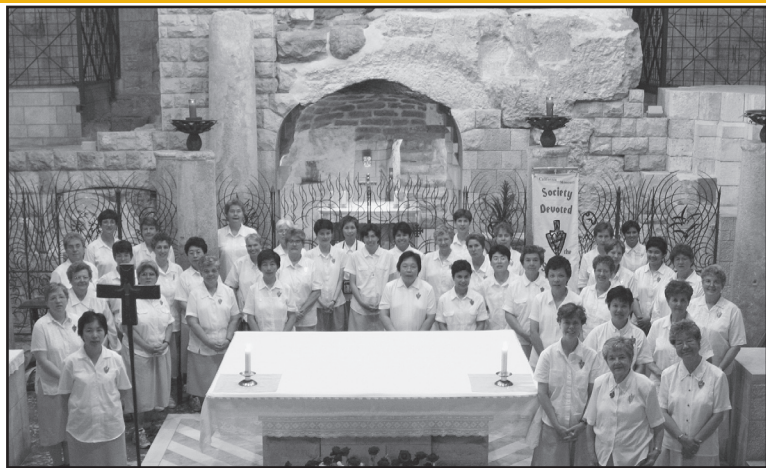
Our Lord wants to be with us as the Risen Lord, the way He is right now at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us, being very happy and very grateful that we are continuing the work He left to His disciples.

Enter the presence of the Lord in the depths of your being. "Seek the face of the Lord." Seek to look on the Lord, inwardly, with a great desire to see Him, to contemplate His face. And allow God to look kindly upon you. He has a special, unique relationship with each one of us. Allow God to love you.

Such great love is astonishing. God waits for our response. This is awesome! God is the One who is hoping that we will be open to Him and share the joy of His friendship. To respond to that great love with our love, with our praise, with our thanksgiving is not hard.

A grateful heart is a joyful heart. When we discover the intimate love He has for us and for the world, it fills us with peace, it fills us with joy and with hope.

*For the word of God,
it is like unsealing a love letter addressed*



In the Church of the Annunciation (above) we prayed for our friends and families. Behind us is the House of Nazareth where the Archangel Gabriel visited Mary. With God's grace may we too respond to God's plan for us with joy and trust as Mary our Mother.

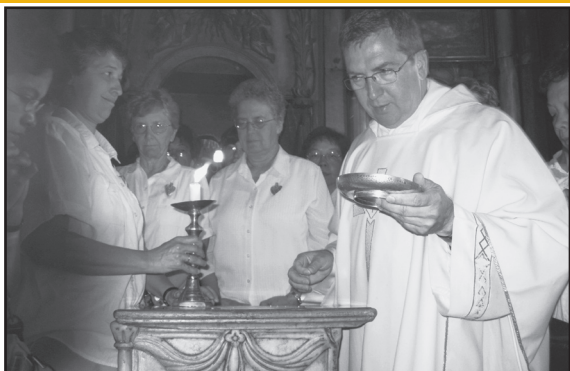


At the Jordan River Father Richard sprinkled holy water on our Sisters as we renewed our Baptismal consecration, and remembered those who are preparing for Baptism.

In Cana (right) our Sisters renewed our religious profession. This year we will celebrate Sister Mary Ann's (left) golden jubilee: fifty years of faithfulness serving God and His Church as a Sacred Heart Sister! Here she stands with Sister Yolanda, next to a huge water jar in the sanctuary.

essed to us personally."

Sister Ida

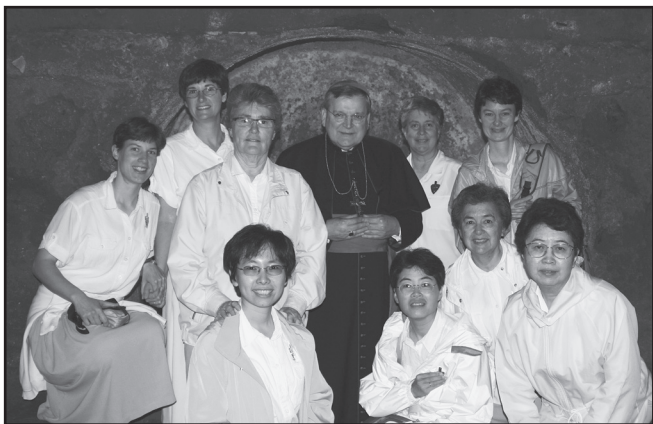


In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, (above) our hearts were filled with gratitude as our chaplain, Father Ed Richard of St. Louis celebrated Mass where Jesus was buried and rose from the dead.



In the Garden of Gethsemane we placed our Sacred Heart badges on the rock, giving thanks to God for His Son Jesus Christ and His gift of redemption. We kept company with Jesus where He suffered His agony, and in silent prayer we asked Him to grant strength to our friends and families.





In the Catacombs, accompanied by Archbishop Raymond Burke, Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura, we saw images of faith left by martyrs of the early Church. We prayed for the grace of faithfulness.



It was still the Year of St. Paul, and we solemnly processed into the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls where Archbishop Raymond Burke celebrated Mass for us. We presented our families, friends and benefactors to the great apostle St. Paul, asking him to give you strength and to walk with you to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.



We thank our friends who hosted our meals through generous contributions. Our delightful friend, Marjorie Weeke, (left, center) who worked in the Vatican Communication Department for years, was most

helpful in finding a good and reasonable restaurant for a special dinner, arranging for a great guide in the Vatican Museum, and special bus and car transportation while in Rome. It was a joy that she accompanied us practically everywhere. On the last evening we thanked her in song!

In St. Peter's Basilica (below) we prayed at the Holy Door that is opened for every Holy Year, that this would be a year filled with joyful blessings for our community, for our families and friends.



Msgr. Robert Sarno of the Congregation for the Causes for Saints spoke to us of saints as signposts in the Church whose holiness is imitable, and God grants favors, miracles, through their intercession. He encouraged us to live the special vocation to which we are called,



by following the charism that Sister Ida, our foundress, provided for us through the grace of the Holy Spirit.



Sister Jane (left) introduced our Sisters to Sister Sharon Holland and her successor, Sister Mary Wright, in the Congregation for Consecrated Life. We thanked them for their service to religious life in the Church, and shared about

our community and religious education apostolate in Taiwan, Hungary and the United States.



A group of our Sisters walked up 320 steps to the top of St. Peter's dome to enjoy the spectacular view of Rome.

In the Colosseum (below) we sang songs of faith, courage and truth, remembering all the martyrs, witnesses for our faith, who died there during the first centuries of persecution, proclaiming Jesus as Lord.



At the Trevi Fountain we thanked Our Lord for making it possible through our benefactors to bring our community back to Rome years after Sister Ida's golden jubilee pilgrimage. Once again we "tossed our coins" for a happy return some time in the future. Needless to say, our joyful presence made an impact!



It was a privilege to meet Archbishop Fouad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. He gave a special blessing to our community, and invited us to do catechetical work in the Holy Land.



In Ein Karem where Our Blessed Mother visited Elizabeth, we placed all the petitions that were entrusted to our pilgrimage before Mary, and burned them in a safe place.

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“WE MET SISTER IDA IN THE HOLY LAND!”



Several months after our pilgrimage, we received another sign of God's favor and blessing. A Hungarian pilgrim group returned from the Holy Land, and they sent the photo above to our Sisters in Budapest with a note: "We met Sister Ida in the Holy Land!" The photo shows items on the altar of the tiny church in the town of Naim, where Jesus restored life to the son of a widow.

When we were there in June, our Sisters spent an hour of prayer in this chapel where Mass is offered only once a year in what is now a predominantly Muslim town. We had discreetly placed Sister Ida's picture and holy cards under the altar cover, asking her intercession for the people there. Other pilgrims must have rearranged the items on the altar, so now Sister Ida is greeting all pilgrims with a smile. As evidenced by the cards, candles and notes around her picture, other pilgrims have joined us in prayer for her intercession!

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It was a beautiful walk from the Mount of Beatitudes down to the Sea of Galilee where we visited the Rock of Peter's Primacy and the town of Capernaum.



In the church of Dominus Flevit (The Lord Wept) we prayed in thanksgiving for the merciful love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd who always seeks the return of His sheep.



We gathered as a Community each evening, and we prayed for our friends and benefactors who supported us in this unforgettable experience.



Cardinal Levada, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, warmly welcomed us. Sister Ida was a significant part of our conversation. He knew and loved Sister Ida and was pleased to receive a copy of her newly published classic catechetical lessons in the *Catechist Companion*, and to hear that we gave a copy to the Holy Father. Several Sisters recalled that as Auxiliary Bishop, Cardinal Levada celebrated our Mass of Religious Profession in Solvang and also in Santa Barbara when our Sisters professed vows. He was happy to meet the young Sisters of our community!



During our visit with Archbishop Piacenza and Monsignor Anthony McDaid at the Congregation for Clergy it was a joyful privilege to present the *Catechist Companion* to the Vatican office which oversees catechesis in the entire Church. Monsignor McDaid graciously celebrated Mass for us the night we arrived to Rome, one day at the tomb of St. Peter, and on the day we left Rome on our way to the Holy Land.