



Joyful Apostolate

Spring 2012

IN UNION WITH OUR SHEPHERD

It was a joyful privilege that Archbishop José Gomez was main celebrant, joined by twelve priests, for the Mass of Religious Profession when five of our young Sisters renewed temporary vows, and Sister Micaela pronounced her first vows on March 17th. The presence of our Shepherd, Archbishop Gomez, his love for Jesus Christ, and his warm words of encouragement for living our consecrated life filled our hearts with joy. His words spoke to us of his warm pastoral love.



With Archbishop José Gomez, left to right: Sister Laura, Sister Ines, Sister Gabrielle, Sister Jane Superior General, Sister Micaela, Sister Rose, Sister Sophia.

The church was filled with our families and friends; they responded with a thunderous applause when the Archbishop invited them to congratulate the Sisters.

Monsignor Jim Gehl, Pastor of St. Euphrasia Church, and his parishioners generously welcomed our community and lavishly provided the reception. It was an ecclesial event of joyful faith, strong hope and deep love, and our hearts were filled with gratitude!

*"As children of God, we reflect
This is the peace"*

FROM THE HEART OF SISTER IDA



There is no one more charming than Jesus Christ. He is most human, not in the sense of having weaknesses and defects, but in the sense of understanding and loving human nature. He is real God and real man. He has a real Heart with real emotions, real sentiments of love.

No one understands human nature and loves it better than He does. Human nature is so complex that even we who possess it hardly understand it. There are so many reasons why we might feel a particular way, there are so many things affecting our bodies. We know that even the best artist cannot play the violin beautifully if even one of the strings on the violin is loose. Our soul acts through our body and this union is sometimes disturbed because of human weakness. Our Lord knows that.

Jesus came to show us that, if we feel sad, dejected, discouraged, it is not because God doesn't love us. It is only because we are human. Feelings come and go, they can change. They are not what is most important. The spirit we are working with is what is important.

We mistakenly think that if something is harder, it is more pleasing to God. But if we really love someone, we are happy to do anything at all for that person. The measure is love. Love makes it easy. God never misses the good we do. No matter how small, He sees and appreciates all that we do out of love for Him.

Have a heart-to-Heart talk with Our Lord. He is waiting for you.

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ful source from which our acti*

REFLECTION AND RENEWAL

As a loving mother, the Church asks every religious Community to periodically pause to breathe in the freshness of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, and to be joyfully renewed in the privilege and responsibility of the specific charism of the Community, for the benefit of the entire Church.

Our Sisters gather every six years from around the world for such a meeting, called General Chapter. It will be held in June 2012.

We will give thanks for the many blessings we received, and gratefully reflect on the gift of our consecrated and apostolic life, as described by Sister Ida in our Constitutions, and approved by the Church. The Chapter will be at a providential time, as we approach the Year of Faith that our Holy Father announced.

Please join us in turning to Our Blessed Mother under the title of Our Lady of Humility, asking her to help us enter more deeply into the Heart of Christ during this momentous and blessed event in our lives, and in the life of the Church.

Our regular summer programs, Family Camp, Girls' Camp and Summer Schools will not be held this summer, so that the primary focus for our Sisters this year can be preparing for the Chapter and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in leading us to a deeper union with God and the gift of our charism from Sister Ida.

IN TAIPEI

One of the students in the Evangelization Group at Fu Jen University made this comment to our Sisters: "Sister, it is so obvious to me what your Community charism is, and how it is related to teaching about our faith." Our Sisters in Taiwan are invited to instruct many groups of catechists.

On the right: Sister Teresa gives a methods class for religious Sisters and catechists.

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on flows.” Sister Ida

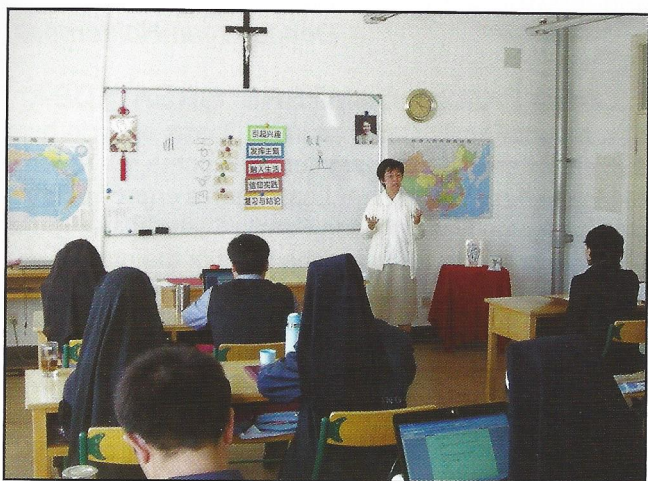
“BORDERLESS” CATECHESIS IN HUNGARY

Sister Michelle wrote recently from Budapest: “A Peruvian Verbum Dei Sister who is in my Hungarian language class, gives instructions to a Catholic Spanish-speaking group every Saturday. The people in her group live here in Budapest but come from South America and Spain.

She asked me if our Community had anything to help catechists, because she noticed that there was always a certain format I followed whenever I gave a presentation in class.

We gave her our Spanish DVD on “How to be a Dynamic and Effective Catechist” which she thoroughly enjoyed! This year there are children in her group who need Sacramental preparation, so we gave her a copy of our recently published book, *Catechist Companion* in Spanish, and she was delighted! She is having 3 young catechists watch the DVD with her, and then she gives them the lessons from the *Catechist Companion*.

God is amazing and delightful, He is reaching Spanish-speaking children here in Hungary through Sister Ida’s charism!”



RETREAT DAYS – A JOYFUL APOSTOLATE

At a recent gathering of our Sisters we happily realized that on just one weekend, five of our convents were giving a retreat. And that was only in southern California! How happy Our Lord must be to have so many of His children come away, rest awhile, and be with Him.

At a First Communion retreat, one child was overheard during Mass, just before the consecration, quietly saying, “Bye-bye bread”. Then, after the consecration, as Father elevated the Sacred Host, he said, “Hi, Jesus”.



The annual lenten retreat at the Heart of Jesus Retreat Center drew over 120 people. Some came in the evening, and some the next morning. Above: Sister Debra gives a presentation.

In St. Louis, our Sisters were invited for the 6th year to give a retreat for the whole student body at St. Sabina's Catholic School. Students were heard saying, “This is the best school day of the year!”

At the end of a Leadership Retreat in St. Louis, one of the young women wrote, “God has shown Himself to me. I know Him more personally now than ever before.” Another one shared, “On this retreat, I saw that, with God, anything is possible.” As they were leaving many of them came up to the Sisters and said enthusiastically, “See you next year!”

IN OKLAHOMA AND LOUISIANA

In Oklahoma, at Altus Air Force Base, Fort Still Army Base and Prince of Peace Parish, we were invited back to give retreats: to two groups of Confirmation students, to the children in the religious education program, and an Adult Retreat to the military personnel on base, as well as those who attend their local parish. Children, youth and adults received with enthusiastic gratitude and joy the gift of our teaching charism.



Sister Catherine Marie presents a lesson on the Holy Trinity, using the Five Step Illustrated method.

In Louisiana, Father Ed Richard, M.S. invited us to his parish to present our Five Step Illustrated Method. Catechists were thrilled to realize that the video on the Eucharist, which they have been using for years, was produced by our community! We presented our Five Step Illustrated Method, and one of our lessons from the *Catechist Companion*, recently published by LTP. They want us to come back for more formation, and possibly also to conduct a Sacred Heart Family Retreat Camp. It was a blessed trip, and our Sisters were grateful to experience the strong Catholic faith of the people of Louisiana. Father Richard is the former Director of Paul VI Catechetical Institute in St. Louis.

A FAMILY CAMPER'S LETTER...

"We attended our first Family Camp in 1993. That was a bad year and a good year: the bad - I lost my job; the good - most importantly, we were introduced to Sister Ida, Sacred Heart Family Retreat Camp and the community of Sisters Devoted to the Sacred Heart.

I remember being impressed with the teaching method of Sister Ida. She made it so simple to understand those very complicated theological ideas. I remember the humor of Sister Ida and all of the Sisters we met. I was so impressed with how joyful the Sisters seemed to be and how that joy spread to all of the adults participating in the weekend.

The children, too, were so happy and content being with the Sisters, away from Mom and Dad, receiving the unconditional love and acceptance the Sisters had for everyone. I remember the beautiful singing - songs that were simple and those more complicated, all sung loudly and with joy; more singing and "s'mores" around a warm campfire.

Now looking back over the years, my wife, Holly and I were talking about how important the Sisters have been in our lives. We have been involved with many groups throughout our married life, but the Sisters are the only 'church group' we know that ministers specifically to families.

How impressive! Such a small community of Sisters, and such great influence for so many families all over the world! Thank you, Sister Ida, and all your beautiful Sisters!"

Deacon Alan Holderness

... AND FAMILY CAMPERS' GREAT IDEA!

At a recent Family Camp reunion, it was a joy to hear that after Family Camp last summer, some 10-12 families in the Azusa area near Los Angeles organized their own "on-going Sacred Heart Family Camp". They found a way to continue to live in the spirit of the graces and mutual support they had received in our Family Retreat Camps. Once a month, they spend a day at one family's home, following the format of Family Camp. One couple prepares and presents one of our lessons from the *Catechist Companion*, then they divide into age groups of children, teens, young adults, and parents for discussion; they sing, bring and share a meal.