



NEWS – US LAY ASSOCIATES SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

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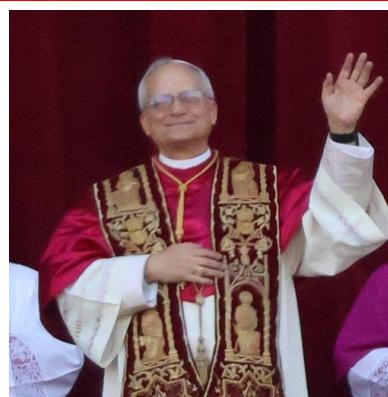
**No longer do I
call you servants,
for the servant
does not know what
the master is doing;
but I call you friends.**

John 15:15



**My command is this:
Love one another
as I have loved you
*Greater love has no one than this:
to lay down one's life
for one's friends.***

John 15:12-13



In his catechesis of January 14, Pope Leo XIV refers to the documents of Vatican 11, specifically to the document *Verbum Dei* and St. John's Gospel saying that we are Jesus' friends. That is our relationship with God, a relationship of friendship, its only condition is a covenant of love.

"In Jesus," he said, "God makes us sons and daughters, and calls us to become like Him, albeit in our fragile humanity."

Pope Leo emphasized the importance of listening, allowing

the Divine Word to reach our minds and hearts, and conversing with God—not to inform Him, but to better understand ourselves. He explained that prayer is so important for us to live and to cultivate friendship with the Lord. In liturgical and community prayer, "which we do not decide what to hear from the Word of God, but it is He Himself who speaks to us through the Church."

This liturgical prayer, he continued, is "achieved in personal prayer, which takes place in the interiority of the heart and mind."

Further, Pope Leo XIV pointed out that we know from experience how friendships easily end through a 'rupture' or neglect.

For these reasons, the Holy Father insisted, "time dedicated to prayer, meditation, and reflection cannot be lacking in the Christian's day and week."

Questions for reflection:

1. How would you define “friend”? Is that what Jesus is to you?
2. Do you listen when in prayer? Does this listening help you to know yourself better, to understand yourself?
3. In liturgical and community prayer, do you hear God speaking to you through the Church?
4. Have you recently ruptured a friendship? Can this happen with your friendship with Jesus?

Familiarize yourself with the document *Verbum Dei* from Vatican II.

Pope Leo refers to it in his catechesis.

**You created my inmost being;
you knit me together
in my mother's womb.
I praise you because
I am fearfully
and wonderfully made.
(Psalm 139:13-14)**



MARCH

March 9

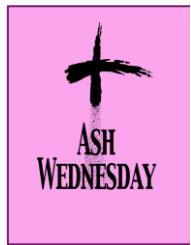
Enedina Martínez

March 13

Betsy Lauf

ASH WEDNESDAY – February 18 Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Season of Repentance culminating with the Day of Forgiveness. It is a reminder of God’s mercy, of his love for all. Ashes, as a sign of humility and death, remind all of us Christians of our origin and our end: “the Lord God formed the man out of the dust of the ground” (Gn 2:7); “until you return to the ground, from which you were taken” (Gn 3:19). Ashes represent that I am a sinner and, as they are in the form of a cross, tell all that I have a Savior who has known me, knows my sins and still took up the cross and suffered and died for me.

During these forty days leading to Easter Sunday, this symbol on my forehead becomes my pledge to devote more time to prayer and acts of charity. I reflect on forgiveness—both receiving it and extending it to others.





RESPONDING TO THE CALL

The *Responding to the Call* session for associates, part of General Chapter 19 of the Congregation, was held in San Antonio January 8th – 11th. We Lay Associates were represented by five of our community members. Mexico and Peru also had Lay Associates represented. A representative group of “Associates”, as anyone who works in the many Congregational ministries is called, were also in attendance. This was an experience that was both grounding and deeply reflective. The first day focused on introducing the many International Ministries connected to the CCVI Sisters. We were invited to consider two guiding questions: *Which part of the sisters' ministry speaks to me?* and *How am I being called, with God's grace, to do things differently?*

The ministries were compared to a constellation, each one unique like an individual star, yet purposefully linked and supported through their relationships. The CCVI Sisters serve as sponsors, with sponsorship understood as governance & influence. Remarkably, they began planning for these sponsorships more than 30 years ago, ensuring the ministries would remain faithful to their values while adapting to changing needs. These sponsorships include Healthcare, Education, and Social Services, each reflecting a shared commitment to service, justice, and compassion.

Fr. James Martin, SJ, joined us via Zoom and offered a powerful reflection on the stories of Mary and Martha. He explored their personalities, approaches to faith, and the tensions they faced. He concluded by challenging us with a profound question: ***How can we go forth like Lazarus, allowing God to remove what binds us, limits us, or holds us back so that we may live more fully into our call?***

Conference speakers challenged us with essential questions:

Why do we do what we do? To what end? For whom are we doing this work?

The central message was clear: if we want our mission to be truly great, it must be humanized. A great mission is grounded in clarity, one that is understood by all, and reflected consistently in our decisions and actions. This clarity should guide how we communicate, how we practice discernment, how we recruit, and how we move forward together.

I encourage us, as associates, to consider what improvements or insights we might offer the Core Committee to help ensure our ministry continues to grow, flourish and more fully embody Incarnational Spirituality.

The Conference also highlighted three essential skill sets for meaningful mission-driven work:

- **Passion** — being fully filled and energized by our purpose.
- **Courage** — sharing the gifts God has given us, moving beyond simply “maintaining” and stepping into active, faithful leadership.
- **Generosity of Spirit** — approaching our call with humility and offering ourselves generously to others.

We were encouraged to remember the moment we first felt called to God’s ministry. We were invited to recall how it felt, how it changed us, and how it summoned us to respond to God’s call with trust and faith. (submitted by Laura Grewing, Jeanne de Matel, Jefferson City, MO)

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For reflection and community sharing: Re-read Fr. Jim Martin’s two challenging questions. What do they say to you? Are you a Lazarus? In what way in relation to your commitment as an Associate of the Incarnate Word? What do you do to live your commitment? Why? And for whom?

Do passion, courage and generosity of spirit define you? Your community members? Do you go beyond the monthly community meetings?

Reading the article above may illicit a response from you, but that must be shared and lived out in community. Can you step up and be a leader?

FEAST OF THE MONTH: Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11.....

Through all the years since Our Blessed Mother appeared to Bernadette Soubirous in the small town of Lourdes in southern France, the devotion has only grown and grown. There were 18 apparitions to Bernadette delivering messages centered on prayer, conversion, and humility. Following the apparitions, Lourdes rapidly became one of the most important pilgrimage destinations in the Catholic world. The spring revealed at the grotto has been associated with numerous accounts of physical and spiritual healing, carefully examined over time by Church authorities.



The liturgical feast of Our Lady of Lourdes commemorates the first apparition and highlights the deep spiritual significance of this Marian devotion. The date has also been associated with prayer for the sick, reinforcing the strong connection between Lourdes and compassion for human suffering. .(excerpts from Wikipedia)