

The Franciscan Sisters of Christ the King

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<https://ssp.org/franciscansisters>

Lent 2021

CONVENT NEWS AND VIEWS...

It is the month of St. Joseph already. We like to keep flowers in front of a statue of him in the hallway as much as possible, because we cannot get ourselves to follow the practice of turning his face to the wall! We do not have to wax eloquent with him. He knows our petitions very well; a pleading look at the statue is like a pleading look into his very eyes, and it suffices. We are the spouses of his foster Son; he is a kind of father-in-law to us, but more. We know we can turn to St. Joseph to help us have confidence in God in the midst of our human weakness. When we find ourselves facing impossible situations, not knowing what to decide, St. Joseph understands and intercedes.

A pious belief tells us that God cleansed St. Joseph from original sin just after the moment of his conception. This is, of course, not dogmatic; but it is fitting to think that St. Joseph had a privilege similar to that of St. John the Baptist. We know from Scripture and Tradition that he was not exempt from the struggles and uncertainties of life. Imagine him toiling to prepare a dwelling for his cherished bride-to-be. He loved her, and he trusted her unquestioningly as he saw her off to visit her cousin Elizabeth. When she returned some time later, he could not help noticing that she was expecting.

Authors have written different accounts to explain the agonizing struggle within his heart referred to in Matthew's Gospel: *Whereupon Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost...And Joseph, rising up from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife.* (Matthew I 18-20, 24)

We like the explanation which assures us that he never questioned her virtue. Knowing the prophecies and knowing her great holiness, he would surely conclude

that Mary was the chosen Virgin who would bear the Messiah. It is hard to comprehend the depths of humility that resulted in this painful trial. She believed that she should not reveal this mystery of God, and he believed that God did not wish for him to be a part of it, and did not want to cause her the pain of having to say so. He had



to think of what to do. The situation seemed impossible, for to free her by separating from her legally in the usual manner would lead to a very public and undeserved disgrace for her. He resolved to take the best possible action he could think of, to put her away privately. He would, wrote the author of *Joseph the Silent*, take on the disgrace himself, appearing to abandon her and the Child all would think he fathered.

God sent an angel to clear up the matter. He told Joseph not to fear to take Mary as his wife. God did want him to be a part of the plan. Now, we could think to ourselves that God does not send *us* angels to clear up *our* dilemmas. If He had to, He would. If necessary, He would do for us what he did for St. Joseph if only we imitated St. Joseph in his confidence in God. (Although for us, God generally uses more ordinary means since our decisions are much more mundane!) St. Joseph certainly did not make a snap decision just to have the pain of making a choice out of the way. He did not fear public opinion, either. He reflected, he prayed, and then, with an eye only for the things of God, he decided. We, too, must have faith that even in our human frailty, after careful reflection and prayer, we simply must make the best decision that we can. Then, like St. Joseph, we have to proceed in the light of Faith, imitating St. Joseph's confidence in God, and trusting that. God will show us the way!

Photo Update



Welcome to our new postulants, Monica Nienaber (left, from Kansas City) and Marie Schwambeck (right, from St. Mary's) Our number now totals fifteen.



Prayer and study



The girls from the school have been over to help us. Our teaching apostolate at St. Vincent's has been able to continue.



Because we cannot afford a maintenance man, volunteers have showed us how to help ourselves when something breaks in between monthly volunteer days, or when they can only complete a project halfway due to time constraints. Right now, we are making due without a mid-kitchen sink. We fill a bucket from the hot water supply line underneath the sink!

We also do the hiring and interacting with contractors for larger projects such as the ongoing boiler improvement project, and prioritize projects for the restoration of our convent. The dilapidated northeast fence has been on the volunteer "wish list" for over 18 months, and we finally had to make it a #1 priority due to an increase in trespassing occurrences. To make electronic donations please go to:

<https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1297193>



Speaking of fences, the Guatemala Franciscan Sisters gratefully report that they have funding for their fence. An engineer has discovered some areas on the property that will also need retaining walls, and they beg your help for another \$30,000 for this project.

They would like to share some options for assisting them, so please contact them at franciscanasjm@gmail.com if you can help. You can still send checks to the US District. Please specify Foreign Mission Trust Guatemala Franciscans in the memo, and mail to Regina Coeli House, 11485 N. Farley Road, Platte City, MO 64079. The community was founded to help disabled children.