

# The Franciscan Sisters of Christ the King

1409 E. Meyer Blvd Kansas City MO 64131

<https://ssp.org/franciscansisters>

## Fall 2020

### CONVENT NEWS AND VIEWS...

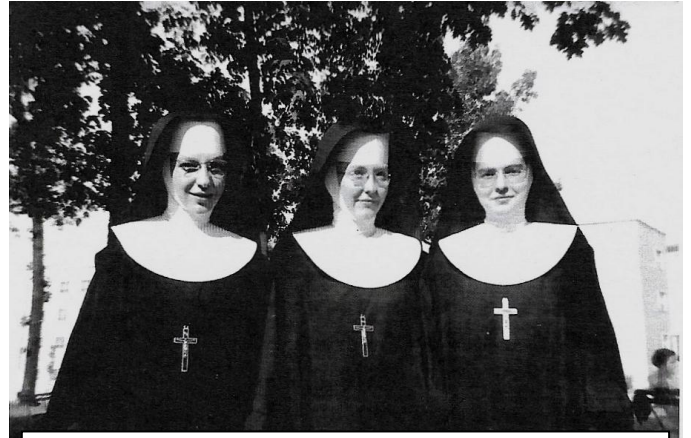
Welcome to Reverend and dear Sister Imelda Marie!

Sister grew up on a farm in Nebraska, and followed her two older sisters into a Franciscan teaching community at the age of 18. Her community, like that of our foundress Reverend Mother Herlinda, was established in America by German Franciscans fleeing the *Kulturkampf*. At its peak, the community boasted approximately four thousand Sisters all over the world. Sister had sixty-eight fellow novices in her class. Classes of novices sometimes topped one hundred, and one novice mistress managed both first and second year classes together, with one assistant. Four-hundred and fifty professed sisters, novices, and postulants lived at the Motherhouse year-round.



**Sister Imelda as a novice in 1947**

Sister's community ran schools under the direction of parish priests. The schools were almost entirely K—8. Sister Imelda has taught all grades from 1st through 8th. She even taught sixty eighth-grade boys...with no assistant. When we asked her how she did it, she demonstrated her special "school face" for us, summarized her method of lesson plans, explained how she managed grading, and described the behavior of the children of the 1950s and early 1960s. Readers who attended Catholic school in those times probably would



**Sister Imelda (right) and her two sisters, all members of the same community (circa 1953)**

say, "We did not dare do anything wrong, because we would get in trouble twice, once at school, and a second time at home."

Grade schools were filled to overflowing in many places. Classes of sixty children with one teacher were common. High schools were difficult to establish for many reasons, and so the community, like a number of other communities of teaching Sisters, did not have many high schools. It is interesting to note that in spite of the staggering number of Sisters in Sister Imelda's community and other large teaching communities, bishops still met in the 1950s to discuss the terrible shortage of vocations. That's food for thought!

The community also staffed hospitals and a sanatorium. They established their own college for the education of Sisters and young women. They had their own farm attended to by local farmers, and that farm supplied the community with much of its food.

We diligently inquired and learned how the Sisters at the Motherhouse managed the dishes, laundry, and scheduling for such a large group. (They did get everyone fed all at once, on time, and quickly. Before the era of commercial dishwashers, they did their dishes at the table using basins, and then the postulants and novices had kitchen duty for pots and pans.) We also asked about classes for novices, postulants, and junior professed Sisters, and details about the operation of daughter houses. Sister still

has a very keen memory for almost all of the details except for the exact times of her previous schedules. She also remembers a number of charming and funny stories, such as the following:

A mother asked her first grade son the name of the Sister teaching him.

“Sister Dish and Towel,” the boy replied.

“What did you say?”

“Sister Dish and Towel.”

“That can’t be her name.”

“It is. She said ‘Dish and Towel.’”

The mother called the convent.

“Could you tell me the name of the Sister who teaches my son in first grade?”

“Oh yes, that would be Sister de Chantal.”

Within eight years after Vatican II, the community dwindled to about nine hundred. Yes, roughly three thousand Sisters left the order. No doubt you have heard many stories about the struggles Sisters encountered after the changes, and Sr. Imelda’s story is no different. That she persevered is astonishing. Her journey to us would be another whole newsletter, but God showed her the way and we are very blessed to have her with us.

We admit that we are in awe of the Sisters of old. Still, we cannot bemoan what we lack; we must simply take our two talents and

courageously “trade ‘til He comes.” In learning how a Franciscan teaching community operated before the changes, we have discovered that while our current situation differs greatly from what we always thought of as “the good old days,” many of the same joys and sorrows have been ever-present in the lives of teaching Sisters. Most importantly, the prayer life was and must remain the center and most critical part of what we do.

Each era offers its own unique trials to religious communities. Without downplaying modern difficulties within the Church, we can still say with honesty that, after the fall, no human situation on this earth has ever been truly ideal. We hope to continue to revive all that was good from the past, strengthen what is good in the present, and improve on all that needs improvement. Thank you to Our Lord for bringing us Sr. Imelda!



**Sister Imelda says “Persevere!”**

## Photo Update



**For the first time since our arrival in Kansas City 18 years ago, we sang the propers of the Mass for our ceremony on August 2<sup>nd</sup> ourselves, led by our schola.**



**Some Sisters tend to the gardens in the summer.**

*With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth from it.*

*– Proverbs 4:23*



**Thank you to our Kansas City Catholic Cadets, who worked on several projects, both indoors and out. Our thanks also to the high school senior boys (and one junior) from Denver who drove out here with other men to finish off Sr. Imelda's quarters and to work on other projects.**



**The grade 7/8 girls volunteered their time on a Saturday to help us with cleaning, gardening, and work in the orchard. They also helped us to make pizza!**



**We have started school. The purchase of a second school building by St. Vincent Academy enabled the school to split the boys and girls above grade 5, with the added benefit of providing enough space to meet the current local requirements and enabling the children to attend school daily. Sister is reviewing some memory aids to help the girls improve their writing.**

## Guatemala Franciscans



**We still stay in touch with our friends the Guatemala Franciscans, whose apostolate it is to take care of disabled children. They are in need of a fence around their property in order to keep the children safe. A benefactor donated the fence, and now for \$11 per foot, they could have the fence installed. The fence will cover 3,000 feet. To donate, you can make out a check to the Society of St. Pius X. Put Foreign Mission Trust Guatemala Franciscans in the memo, and mail it to the Regina Coeli House, 11485 N. Farley Road, Platte City, MO 64079; or, for more information, contact the Sisters directly at franciscanasjm@gmail.com.**

## Emergency Vent Project



Inside the chimney on a makeshift platform, installing the bracket to hold the liner.

New vents tie into a fan controlled by a computer.



The crane raised up each piece of the liner higher in the air so that the next piece could be attached. Finally, the whole thing was "flown" to the chimney for installation.



The custom cap fit perfectly over the top of the chimney and the liner.



Here is the new hot water heater! A friend of the community suggested that we experiment with using the pipes as a water tank, as is done in some large buildings. The design works! We will watch the gas bill over the next few months to decide if we should add a small tank.

After the minor inconvenience of going without hot water for two weeks, we can now announce that our new hot water heater is going, and the boiler flues are being balanced. We should soon return to the boiler flow project described in previous newsletters, and hope to have the problems solved before the start of the current heating season. Our technician may have at last pinpointed at least one of the problems, but time will tell.

**The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered for all benefactors, especially those who helped us with the emergency project.**

**To Make an Electronic Donation:**

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