



Anima Mariae

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Sisters of Mary Immaculate Queen

Requiescat in Pace: Sister Mary Gemma

On January 31st just before noon, Our Lord and Our Lady came for our dear Sister Mary Gemma after a long struggle with ill health.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Sister was one of our “older” Sisters, having entered religious life in the summer of 1970. When she knocked on the convent door, it was evident that she was filled with an intense willingness to serve God as a religious Sister. She never lost that enthusiasm through the years as she fulfilled her various duties during her nearly 46 years of religious life.

Sister Mary Gemma spent years of devoted work as a catechist in several of our missions, including Canada, Nebraska and Colorado. But the duty that she is most remembered for is her work in our bookstore here at Mount Saint Michael. Her radiant smile and spirit of helpfulness touched many hearts and proved to be a source of long lasting friendships. She was lovingly known as “the smiling nun at the bookstore.”

Sister was gifted with a wonderful childlike spirit that gave her a way of reaching children and adults alike. One special duty she cherished through the years the privilege of instructing a young disabled child and to prepare her for her First Holy Communion. Truly Sister’s spiritual motherhood was evident.

Frail from childhood, Sister suffered from ill-health throughout her religious life. Her condition deteriorated in the last few years, leaving her unable to fulfill the duties she so loved. Her great devotion to the Passion of Christ helped sustain her

throughout her long illnesses. In difficult moments she would look to the inscription on her final profession ring and repeat, “To Jesus my heart, my all, forever.”

Some time in January, Sister Mary Gemma suffered a stroke. She never fully recovered after that. When it became evident that she was not long for this life, the Sisters at the Motherhouse kept an hourly vigil at her bedside. These were special hours to each of us, and we carried away precious memories, especially of her smile. One of the Sisters brought her a crucifix, and for days she clasped it tightly to her heart; it remained in her hands to the end. When the time came for her to depart this life, she was surrounded by Sisters and passed from this life to the next during the prayers for the dying. May she rest in peace.

In closing I am reminded of the words of St. Bernard on the advantages of the religious life. *Moritur confidentius* — “A religious dies more confidently...” In other words, religious die contentedly because they are assisted by their holy companions who continually speak to God, who pray for them, console them and encourage them in their passage to eternity. The saint reminds us of the promise of Our Lord: “Every one that hath left house

or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or lands for my sake shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.” And we are certain that God keeps His promises.



Sister Mary Gemma was known to many as “the smiling nun in the bookstore.”



Sr. Mary Gemma in the church for the very last time, surrounded by her Sisters who had the privilege of singing her Requiem Mass.



Sister shared a special understanding with her pupil whom she prepared to receive Jesus for the first time.



"Ye ice and snow, bless the Lord." During our Christmas break, a trip to the City of Mary provided hours of recreation. Above left, Sr. Mary Veronica, OSB, pulls two Sisters on a sled.

"A light of revelation to the gentiles." The Sisters chant while waiting to join in the Candlemas day procession.



The Sisters joined the staff and students of St. Michael's Academy in a rosary procession to the Lourdes' grotto at Mt. St. Michael on February 11.

On the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Sr. Mary Evangeline renewed her vows for three years. Here, she receives the Brown Scapular.



Sr. Helen Marie and Sr. Mary Cabrini check on Mt. St. Michael's ever-variable maple sap flow. Hours of boiling sap yielded a half gallon syrup.

A young student watches as his Sister-teacher receives ashes on Ash Wednesday.

A Sister takes a break in her busy day to make a Lenten visit at the shrine of Our Mother of Sorrows.



Meet "Lily" the Novitiate's new milk cow! Isn't it fitting that she came with the name of the emblem of good St. Joseph, who has done so much for the farm?



Sr. Maria Providencia directs Mary Immaculate Queen High School choir in the Mass of the Shepherds on the Feast of the Epiphany.



The students at Holy Guardian Angels Academy include the outdoor Stations of the Cross among their Lenten observances.



Sr. Mary Bernadette and Sr. Maria Ines join in some festive Christmas singing on mission in New England. The Sisters have been busy moving to their new convent in New Hampshire.



The staff, sodality and students of St. Mary's Academy in Tacoma join parishioners in a procession on the feast of Our Lady's Purification.



Sr. Madeleine Marie takes her students outside to enjoy their class and the beautiful spring weather in Tacoma. Hopefully nature wasn't too distracting.

Our Apostolate of Prayer

Are you or someone you love in need of special prayers? Send your intentions to the Sisters to be remembered in our daily prayers, Masses and good works.



Devotion to Our Mother of Sorrows

To derive the most spiritual fruit from the abundant graces of Lent, certainly there is no better means than devotion to our Mother of Sorrows. From her tender heart, plunged in an ocean of grief, we learn to grow in union with Christ Crucified.

Most tender heart, no floods of grief thy love could ever drown.

The sorrows which once pierced thee through are now thy fairest crown.



During Lent we usually think of our Sorrowful Mother in relation to the Passion of Christ, but her Sorrows actually began much earlier. When she spoke the momentous words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord...", she accepted wholeheartedly all that was encompassed in the role of the Mother of the Messias. Although she did not know perfectly all this would entail, she knew from Scripture that her Son, as the Redeemer of the human race, would be subjected to unparalleled suffering.

"Thy own soul a sword shall pierce..." The infant Jesus, offered as the first-born in the Temple forty days after His birth, brings joy to heart of the holy old man who has waited long to see his Savior. Simeon in turn sinks the first sword of sorrow into Mary's heart by his prophecy of rejection. Years of exile in a pagan land follow, avoiding the cruelty of a selfish and bloodthirsty tyrant. And then, just as Jesus reached man's estate according to the Law, He stayed behind in Jerusalem when His parents left after Passover. What agony and distress rent Mary's heart at this first separation! More because she knew not where He was nor what had befallen Him. "*Mother of God, He broke thy heart that it might wider be...*" By these painful experiences during the Childhood of her Son, Mary shared many of the sufferings that befall us, her other children, in this our exile.

But Redemption had scarcely begun as yet. After His three short years of teaching, there was compressed into three days, a sea of sorrow no other human heart could have endured.

Anima Mariae is the free quarterly newsletter of the CMRI Sisters.

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The Congregation of Mary Immaculate Queen
St. Michael's Convent • 8504 N. Saint Michael's Road • Spokane, WA 99217-9333
www.CMRI.org/sisters-news.shtml • Sisters@CMRI.org

Calendar

March	4	Sr. Maria Kazimiera's feastday
	9	Mother Mary Dominica's feastday
	19	Feast of St. Joseph; Sr. Mary Josephine's feastday
	27	Easter Sunday
April	6	Sr. Mary Julianna's feastday
	26	Feast of Our Mother of Good Counsel
	28	Feast of St. Louis Marie de Montfort Sr. Louise Marie's feastday; begin preparation for renewal of Total Consecration to Mary
May	12	Sr. Mary Imelda's feastday
	20	Sr. Bernardine Marie's feastday
	25	Sr. Madeleine Marie's feastday
	30	Sr. Marie Janae's feastday
	31	Feast of the Queenship BVM Renewal of Total Consecration to Mary Sr. Maria Regina's feastday
June	1	Sr. Mary Angela's feastday
	3	Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Sr. Corinne Marie's feastday
	13	Sr. Mary Antoinette's feastday
	23-26	Sisters' Annual Retreat
	27	Feast of Our Mother of Perpetual Help; Sisters' vows ceremonies
	29	Sr. Mary Petra's feastday
	30	Sr. Mary Paula's feastday

How Mary must have suffered when news first reached her that Jesus had been apprehended. In company with St. John, she strove to follow her Son that she might be as close to Him as she could during the long night and early morning hours of that fateful Friday. Her will was one with His, offering all for the redemption of fallen mankind. But what grief to the heart of the Mother to see her Son so mistreated. What pangs at the sight of Him beaten, weary, struggling and falling beneath his heavy load! To watch as the hands and feet, flesh of her flesh, were pierced and pinioned to the Cross, to stand quietly bearing the overwhelming sorrow of watching Him die slowly for the sake of her other sinful children! And then the numb and wordless agony as His dead body is laid in her lap. It is consummated! Her heart stays with Him in the tomb. Sweet sorrowful Mother! How small our trials seems compared to yours, yet to comfort our small woes is the mercy of your mother-heart. Would that we could compassionate your sorrows as they deserve!

Our Lord once said to Veronica of Binasco:

"My daughter, the tears which you shed in compassion for My sufferings are pleasing to Me, but bear in mind that on account of My excessive love for My Mother, the tears you shed in compassion for her sufferings are still more precious."

Most valiant Heart that 'neath the cross of Jesus didst not quail,

It was thy mighty love for Him that would not let thee fail.

*Teach us thy self-forgetting love and make us strong like thee,
then ask thy Son that we may stand upon Mount Calvary.*