

World Day for Consecrated Life to be celebrated Feb. 4 in Great Bend

The public is invited to attend a special gathering celebrating the World Day for Consecrated Life.

The Most Rev. John B. Brungardt asks the faithful to “**join with me in demonstrating our appreciation for the women and men religious in our midst by attending a special celebration, Saturday, Feb. 4 at the Dominican Motherhouse in Great Bend, with mass at 10:30 a.m., followed by a special meal.**”

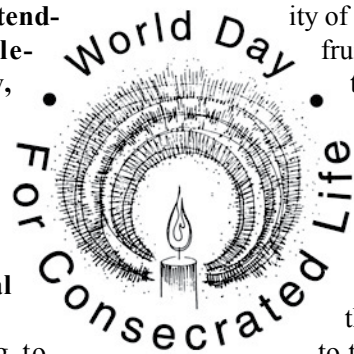
Those wishing to dine must RSVP for the meal by Jan. 20. Call (620) 227-1530 or email bhessman@dcdioocese.org. You can also register online by going to www.dcdioocese.org/vocations, and click on the meal registration form heading. Everyone in the diocese is invited to attend.

The actual 15th World Day of Consecrated Life falls on Thursday, Feb. 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. The celebration is being held on the following Saturday so that more people can take part.

The commemoration was begun by Pope John Paul II in 1997, who explained that the day answers the intimate need to praise the Lord more solemnly and to thank him for the great gift of consecrated life, “which enriches and gladdens the Christian community by the multiplicity of its charisms and by the edifying fruits of so many lives totally given to the cause of the Kingdom....”

“Immersed in a world which is often agitated and distracted, taken up sometimes by the press of responsibilities, consecrated persons also will be helped by the celebration of this annual World Day to return to the sources of their vocation, to take stock of their own lives, to confirm the commitment of their own consecration.”

The World Day of Consecrated Life is held on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the Pope explained, because “the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is an eloquent icon of the total offering of one’s life for all those who are called to show forth in the Church and in the world, by means of the evangelical counsels the characteristic features of Jesus -- the chaste, poor and obedient one.”



What is ‘Consecrated Life’?

The celebration on Feb. 4 in Great Bend will recognize and celebrate the gift of consecrated life by thanking God for the lives and ministry of the religious sisters and priests serving in the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City.

Religious women (sisters and nuns) and religious men (brothers and priests) seek to follow Christ more closely by committing themselves to the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, to prayer and to communal life.

Whereas a diocesan priest typically ministers within a geographic region called a diocese, commits himself to celibacy and promises obedience to his bishop, a religious priest makes a profession of chastity, poverty and obedience within his religious congregation and ministers where there is a need; that is, his ministry is not bound by the geography of a diocese.

SKR: Why did you enter religious life (instead of becoming a diocesan priest)?

Father Maurice Cummings, OCarM (Carmelite): “Deep down, I don’t know. It’s like asking a man why he married a blonde instead of a redhead. The real question is why God chose me for this life. My only answer is that He wants me to be happy because He loves me.”

SKR: What have been your greatest joys?

Sister Catherine Therese Paulie, CSJ (Congregation of St. Joseph): “Probably that would be my ministry. As I look at each of my places of ministry, I would have to describe them as a joy: I loved being an elementary teacher. Definitely my time at St. Mary of the Plains, bitter-sweet now, makes me joyful as I reflect on those memories. ... Each of the parishes in which I have ministered became cherished spots with special people.”

SKR: Why did you enter religious life?

Father Rene Guesnier, OSB (Order of St. Benedict): “In the study of St. Thomas Aquinas in Philosophy I came across his teaching about the religious life. He said somewhere that it was the most perfect way of life. That was my primary reason.”

SKR: What have been your greatest joys?

Father Cosmas K.O. Nwosuh, MSP (Missionaries of St. Paul): “I think one of the greatest sources of my joy as a seminary teacher and formator is being present at the priestly ordination of my students. Each student is as unique as each set or class is. I have never ceased to marvel at the transformative power of God’s grace: transforming young (and sometimes “clueless”) seminarians into ministers of his Word and Sacrament. The experience is simultaneously joyful and humbling.”



Clockwise from far left: Garden City native Sister Mary Pieta (born Kensie Geier) shortly after receiving her new habit. She took her first vow in September 2008. She is currently serving the poor in England.

At left (second from left) is Dominican Sister Francine Schwarzenberger, who is seen working on a Habitat for Humanity house in Great Bend. Sister Francine now serves her community in Denver.

Father Benjamin Dande, MSFS, a priest of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, is a native of India. He came to the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City in December, 2007.

Father Rene Guesnier, OSB, is a member of the Order of St. Benedict. He became a Religious after reading St. Thomas Aquinas, who wrote that it was the “most perfect way of life.”