



*Marian Sisters  
of Santa Rosa*

Mater Dei Convent  
400 Angela Dr.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403



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**Ex Corde Ecclesiae**

— ALL FOR JESUS, ALL THROUGH MARY —

FALL 2022

Dearest Friends in Christ,

Laudetur Jesus Christus! Salve Regina!

In our daily life, the schedule is ordered in such a way that the Sister may live in complete dedication to God with an undivided heart. Far from narrowing her capacity to love, this dedication expands her heart to love God and all those He loves. She embraces the souls she encounters with God's beauty, goodness, and truth as she faithfully and lovingly lives out her life of consecration.

Beginning and ending our days in the Eucharistic Presence of Jesus, we are given times for silence, prayer, meals, duties, and leisure. As the evening shadows begin to fall, the Community comes together for a time of recreation. One can hear the good natured banter, laughter, and a lively swapping of edifying or humorous accounts from each Sister's day in the classroom, office, or kitchen. Often such anecdotes relay touching and privileged encounters with those we serve in our daily duties. As you turn the page, I hope you enjoy sharing in these joyful exchanges.

Our rule of life reminds us that "our gift of self opens the heart to love and be loved by all those given us in community and ministry, and finds expression in the works of the apostolate as well as in warm and selfless love for others. Like Mary we become Mothers, fruitful in spiritual children through consecrated virginity" (MSSR Constitution).

Know of our abiding gratitude for all the ways you support us that make our life of prayer and good works possible. The Sisters and I carry you in our hearts before our Eucharistic Lord each day and are delighted to share with you a few glimpses into our life.

With deepest gratitude, I commend you to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

*Reverend Mother Teresa Christe MSSR*

Reverend Mother Teresa Christe, MSSR



## *Mater Dei Convent Updates*

We send our gratitude to all who have supported the Sisters through prayers and donations. In the past year, we have been able to work on a variety of projects, both large and small, around the convent and the grounds and wished to give you an update.

On the hill above the Convent, thanks to the incredible vision of a dear benefactor and a whole host of workers, we are creating a Rosary and Stations of the Cross garden. It will be a place where the Sisters and our visitors can walk a path in the design of a Rosary. Pictures will facilitate meditating on the mysteries, and the beautiful flowers planted around the garden express the marvel of God's creation. It has been astounding to watch this masterpiece rise, literally, out of the ashes of the 2017 fire.

We are making progress on the chapel renovations. Our current project is updating and replacing the windows in order to let in more light in the sanctuary, and to contribute to the reverence of the whole chapel with stained glass windows which reflect the style of the Altar and reredos being built for the space.



A new living addition to our Community, thanks to another gracious benefactor, is eight laying hens. The hens provide the Sisters with both the joy of taking care of God's little creatures, and fresh eggs for meals.

On the back 40 acres of our property, we received a generous donation to repair the fencing around the property line. We are grateful to be closer to having an enclosed space for the Sisters' recreation, and hopefully someday, a safe place for livestock.

*Deo Gratias!*

*Like Mary, we become mothers,  
fruitful in spiritual children, through our consecrated virginity.*

The Sisters rise at five each day praying, "I will arise and put on Jesus Christ crucified in Whom my soul loves, and in Whom my heart rejoices!" With her Morning Offering, she offers all that will come in the new day with gratitude to our Spouse for the life He shares with us and the apostolates through which He asks our service. While not all of our Sisters teach in the classroom, all communicate Christ in some way.



In formation, the Sisters are taught to respect and receive what their students offer with attention and a certain *gravitas* after our Lady's manner, a manner breathing the sweetness, grace, and tranquility of divine charity. This religious demeanor is regularly challenged in the catechetical or classroom setting as the following vignettes may illustrate:

A Sister who has carefully presented an age-appropriate class on Creation and the Fall to Kindergarteners asks, "Are there any comments?" (Of course, it is futile to ask, "Are there any questions?" as few of these little ones know the difference between comments and questions!) A hand is raised, "Sister, I LOVE YOU!" Her composure may be challenged, but nothing compares with working with students on the other end of the age spectrum.

A Sister teaching a 9th grade lesson on the Saints notices a hand raised. "Yes?" "Sister, no offense, but why aren't YOU a saint?" And yes, an explanation did follow covering the need for death before canonization.

A Sister has given a riveting class to 4-6 year olds about Constantine's great victory through the Sign of the Cross. A little one stays after class (losing precious moments from snack!) bursting with the importance of needing to tell Sister something. Wide-eyed, he emphatically informs Sister, "God always wins!" "Yes," a smiling Sister assures him, "God always wins." With another even more emphatic, "God ALWAYS wins!" received by the encouraging Sister, the little one is off to snack and play.



In a class of slightly older students, Sister promises as a reward for good behavior a story at the end of class. A hand begins waving wildly. "Yes?" prompts Sister. "Is it from the Holy Bible?!" comes forth from the excited student. A "No" from Sister produces a moment of sorrow, followed by more handwaving. Another "Yes?" from Sister elicits an equally enthusiastic second question, "Is it from the Baltimore Catechism?!" Bypassing the hand waving, another "No" from Sister is responded to with, "Is it from the Psalms?!" There is no question about this little one knowing the best sources for stories (but possibly a little confusion about the books of the Bible)! What Sister did not mention to this precocious class is that the story, *King of the Golden City*, is really part of her curriculum, good behavior or no! While Sister Teacher was constrained by her visibility to the class to maintain her composure, this was not the case for Sister Assistant in the back of class who could grin away with unfeigned delight!



We are grateful for the gift of our charism given to us by the Holy Spirit to serve the Church. This special call to magnify our Beloved Spouse in and with His Mother's spirit and love through evangelization and liturgy drives everything we do. This past year has seen our parish catechetical program more than double! What a blessing it is to strive to bring our students (K-12) closer to Christ Jesus and His Mother through preparation for the Sacraments and ongoing formation in the faith. We were also blessed to be able to add two new Sisters to teaching Religion at the diocesan high school. Now, with three Sisters serving there, the Sisters are able to teach all the Freshman level Religion classes, enabling them to form more than 170 souls. Additionally, we also have three Sisters serving at the Cathedral elementary school this year, touching all the students through their Religion and Music classes.



Our apostolic fervor is fed by our life of prayer and union with Christ, and balanced by a joyful common life. One of the greatest blessings about community life is the unexpected opportunities our Lord presents each Sister. Many a thing a Sister never thought she would do, she does as a Sister!

When our Lord asks, surprising things result. Sisters who, pre-Convent, would have rather died than display their handwriting suddenly discover that calligraphy is their hidden gift. Other of our Sisters entered as accomplished cooks, but imagine how electrifying it can be for a Sister who has never baked in her life to receive the assignment of Main Cook. This has happened to several of the Sisters, each of whom discovered an unknown knack for all things kitchen. (They are, after all, learning to cook for a very appreciative audience.)

Very few Sisters imagined that they would enter the Convent and learn to operate a weed eater or a riding lawn mower, clean a chicken coop, or find themselves with a friendly affection for pickaxes! Yet this is indeed the case. With 40 acres of practically wild land, general upkeep is all hands on deck.

Being from all over the country, our Sisters come from a variety of locations - from the big cities to suburbs and even simple country life. Each has the values and expectations of her specific upbringing, her education, and her experiences. Our combined personal gifts and experiences form a unique shared experience as a family. One of the Sisters expressed, "Being from a suburb and a city where the population is about 225,000 - I never thought I would be able to experience or even taste what farm life is like, or live on a piece of property that was anything more than an acre big. Now here I am, in beautiful Santa Rosa, living on a 40+ acre Convent ground with wildlife roaming and farm-life blossoming. God is never outdone in generosity!"

*As Mary reflected on the divine mysteries in her heart,  
so we seek to anchor the work of our apostolate in contemplation.*

