



RE:ONLINE
THE PLACE FOR EXCELLENCE



Young Nuns

Text & Design: Jon Mayled and Sam Pillay

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Introduction:

These resources have been created to support the Jerusalem Trust and BBC film *Young Nuns*. The film is also available on the RE:Online website.

There are resources designed for KS2 (8-11), KS2 (11-14), KS4 (15-16), KS5 (17-18) and adults.

In order to use this resources it is necessary for students to watch entire film. In addition sections may be re-shown in relation to each topic. The topic Programme Outline & Synopsis contains the timings for each part of the film.

Teachers can select all or any of the resources and activities as suitable for the course they are pursuing. Although closely related to film there are additional 'Stretch and Challenge' topics as well as cross-curricular materials. Additional topics include:

This pack contains all the resources for free photocopying together with printouts of the PowerPoints which accompany some of the resources.

Additional versions of resources have been created:

- Dyslexic (D) wherever appropriate;

Many of the materials are also suitable for

- SEN – special educational needs;
- EAL – English as an additional language. To avoid confusion the letters in parentheses are coded as appropriate in the bottom left-hand corner of each page.

We hope you find these resources useful.

Jon Mayled & Sam Pillay

On behalf of the Jerusalem Trust and RE:Online



Young Nuns

Introduction

Programme Outline



- Create diary entries for Clare and Katherine
 - Positive days
 - Negative days
 - Then compare and contrast the two women's experiences and feelings



Programme Outline

00:25	Clara's graduation
01:10	Catherine
01:28	Clara finds it hard to leave everything behind
01:48	Clara talking about joining an enclosed order
02:55	Clara – drinks party with friends – it is going to be hard not to meet people
03:50	Farewell dinner
04:35	Katherine modelling for a charity fashion show
06:18	She had dreams of becoming a nun
07:06	Clara at home with her family for the summer
07:36	Her mother is putting her leaving to the back of her mind
08:30	Clara is going to St Cecilia's – explaining what her life will be like
10:00	Playing with her brothers – explanation of life
10:54	Mother – will she be happy and able to cope
11:33	Franciscan Sisters of Renewal
12:00	Sister Jacinta talking about becoming a nun
13:04	Sisters going to work in a soup kitchen
14:55	Sisters at worship and explaining vows
15:31	Katherine travelling to visit the convent to help her decide
16:09	Katherine arrives at St Dominic's Priory
16:36	Sister Hyacinth – Novice Mistress – explains that women have to be 'vetted' by the community
17:45	Katherine explains that she wants to join
19:02	Franciscans visit a secondary school explaining what nuns wear
22:24	Clara shopping with her mother for the things she is allowed to take with her
23:50	She will become a postulant – trying on a veil
25:12	How does a mother cope?
25:57	Katherine has a night out in London at a bar and discotheque – Has she made a firm decision – split between the world and the convent
27:56	Leeds – nuns at prayer – explaining that they have given their lives to Jesus
29:15	Jacinta's final vows
30:23	Clara – getting ready for the convent – getting rid of possessions and packing – mother worrying
33:03	Day Clara is leaving – emotions
36:00	Arrives at the convent – first letter after two weeks – mother's reaction
37:55	Katherine returns to the convent to talk about her decision



39:05	Talking with the Novice Mistress – the community does not think she is ready and she has to wait a year
41:12	Admits she was not 100% sure
42:00	Clara's letter to her mother after Christmas – she missed her family
42:40	After five months Clara is home on an indefinite break – she is struggling with living in an enclosed order
44:20	Leeds – sisters explaining that it is hard to be sure that joining a convent is the right thing to do

Executive Producer: Lucy Hillman

Twenty Twenty in association with Jerusalem Productions for BBC





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Origins of Nuns

The institution of nuns who devote themselves to the practice of a life of perfection, dates from the early years of the Church. Women may claim with pride that they were the first to embrace the religious state for its own sake without missionary work and other tasks which were more suitable for men.

St Paul writes about widows, who were called to certain kinds of church work:

Let a widow be put on the list if she is not less than sixty years old and has been married only once; she must be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. (1 Timothy 5:9)

and virgins whom he praises for their celibacy and devotion to the Lord:

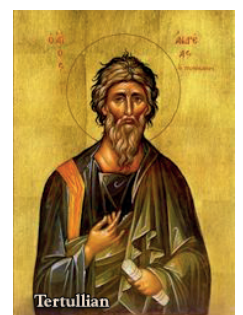
Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. This I say by way of concession, not of command. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind.

To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am. But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion. ...

Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that, in view of the impending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin. Yet those who marry will experience distress in this life, and I would spare you that. I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 7: 1-9, 25-35)

From the earliest times virgins were called the spouses of Christ. Tertullian (160-220) distinguishes between virgins who took the veil publicly and others known only to God.





At first these virgins who had taken vows to God lived with their families, but as early as the end of the third century there were community houses known as partheuones (the home of virgins: παρθένοσ. Even at the beginning of the third century virgins were considered a special group in the Church, receiving Holy Communion before the laity. This grouping still exists in the Good Friday liturgy and the Litany of the Saints.

When third century persecutions drove many Christians into the desert, the monks began to live in monasteries and there were also communities of women.



St Pachomius (292-346) built a monastery at Tabennisi, Egypt and a convent in which a number of religious women lived with his sister.

St Jerome (347-420) made famous the monastery of St Paula at Bethlehem which had been founded by St Paula (347-404).

St Augustine (354-430) wrote a letter to the nuns which later became his rule. There were monasteries of virgins or nuns at Rome, throughout Italy, Gaul, Spain, and the West. The nuns of Egypt and Syria cut their hair which did not happen until later in the West.

The monasteries of women usually at a distance from those of men. This was insisted upon by St Pachomius and St Benedict (480 - 543 / 547). However, there were common houses, one part for women and the other for men. The Emperor Justinian (482-565) abolished these double houses. He appointed old men to look after the temporal affairs of the convent, and a priest and a deacon who performed their duties, but were not allowed any other communication with the nuns.

In the West there were double houses up to the twelfth century. In the eighth and ninth centuries some clergy chose to live in communities and to observe a fixed rule of life. This canonical life was also founded by some women, who retired from the world, took vows of chastity, dressed in black, but were not bound to give up their property. Continence and a certain religious profession were required of married women whose husbands were in Sacred Orders, or even received episcopal consecration.

So, by the ninth century the classes of women vowed to the service of God included: virgins, nuns, deaconesses, and wives or widows of men who were in Sacred Orders.

The nuns sometimes occupied a special house but this type of enclosure, strictly observed in the East, was not considered essential in the West. Other monasteries allowed the nuns to go in and out. In Gaul and Spain the novitiate lasted one year for the cloistered nuns and three years for the others.

In early times the nuns provided a Christian education for orphans, young girls brought by their parents, and especially girls intending to embrace a religious life. As well as those who took the veil of virgins of their own accord, or decided to embrace the religious life, there were others who were offered by their parents before they themselves were old enough to be consulted. In the West for several centuries, these oblates were considered as bound for life by the offering made by their parents.

A nun's profession might be expressed or implied. A woman who put on the religious habit, and lived for some time among the professed, was considered as professed. Besides the taking of the veil and simple profession there was also a solemn consecration of virginity which took place much later, at twenty-five years.



In the thirteenth century, the Mendicant Orders adopted a more rigorous poverty, which excluded not only private property, but also the possession of certain kinds of property in common. Under the direction of St Francis of Assisi (1181/1182–1226), St Clare (1194–1253) founded in 1212 the Second Order of Franciscans. St Dominic (1170–1221) had given a constitution to nuns, even before he had instituted his Friars Preachers, which was approved in 1216. The Carmelites and the Hermits of St Augustine also had orders of women as did the Clerks Regular from the sixteenth century, except for the Society of Jesus.

From the time of the Mendicant Orders, founded specially for preaching and missionary work, there was a considerable difference between the orders of men and women, which arose from the strict enclosure to which women were subjected. This enclosure was now imposed on all nuns in the West, first by the bishops and particular councils, and later by the Holy See. Boniface VII (1294–1309) in his constitution *Periculoso*, inserted in Canon Law made it an inviolable law for all professed nuns; and the Council of Trent confirmed that constitution. Hence it was impossible for religious to undertake works of charity incompatible with the enclosure. The education of young girls alone was permitted to them. It was also impossible for them to organize on the lines of the Mendicant Orders, by having a superior general over several houses and members attached to a province rather than to a monastery. The difficulty could be avoided by having tertiary sisters, bound only by simple vows, and dispensed from the enclosure.



The Breviary recalls the services rendered to the Order of Mercy by St Mary of Cervellione (1230 – 1290). St Pius V (1504–1572) by his constitution *Circa pastoralis* (1566) insisted on the observance of the constitution of Boniface VIII (1230–1303) and the decree of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) compelled the tertiaries to accept the obligation of solemn vows with the pontifical enclosure. For nearly three centuries the Holy See refused all recognition to convents bound by simple vows, and Urban VIII (1568–1644) in his constitution *Pastoralis* (1631) abolished an English teaching congregation, founded by Mary Ward in 1609, which had simple vows and a superior general.

This strictness led to the foundation of associations which were called secular because they had no perpetual vows, and where the women led a common life intended for their own personal sanctification and the practice of charity, e.g. the Daughters of Charity, founded by St Vincent de Paul (1581–1660) in 1633. The constitution of St Pius V was not always strictly observed and some communities existed which were approved by bishops and tolerated by the Holy See. New communities ones were formed with the sanctions of the diocesan authorities. The services rendered by these new communities to the poor, the sick, the young, and even the missions, were so great that the Holy See expressly confirmed several constitutions, but for a long time refused to confirm the congregations themselves, and the formula of commendation or ratification contained this restriction *citra tamen approbationem conservatorii* (without approbation of the congregation). Political difficulties rendered the observance of solemn vows more difficult, especially for women, and from the end of the eighteenth century the Holy See declined to approve any new congregations with solemn vows, and in Belgium and France, abolished all solemn professions in the old orders of women.



The constitution of Benedict XIV (1675–1758), *Quamvis justo* (1749) about the Congregation of English Virgins led to the legislation of Leo XIII (1810–1903), whose constitution *Conditae* (1900) laid down the laws common to congregations with simple vows, dividing these into two classes, those under diocesan authority, subject to the bishops, and those under pontifical law.



Daughters of Charity



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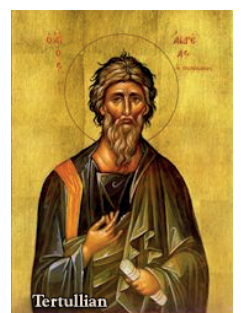
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Daughters of Charity



Young Nuns

Origins of Nuns

Origins of Nuns



- Write an essay explaining:
 - What things in your life would you be prepared to sacrifice?
 - What things in your life would you not be prepared to sacrifice?
 - Give an explanation for your answers
- Do you think that nuns should be celibate?
 - Give reasons for your answer
- Create a timeline of the dates on the information sheet



What is a Nun?

There are nuns in the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant Churches.

Roman Catholic

A Catholic nun is a woman who has taken religious vows. A major distinction between a nun and a religious sister is that nuns are members of enclosed religious orders and take solemn religious vows, through which they renounce all property, including inheritances, while sisters have 'simple' vows which, for example, allows them to inherit property.

Nuns are committed to the daily recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours throughout the day.

In the Roman Catholic Church there are many religious institutes of nuns and sisters, each with its own special character.

Usually, when a woman enters a convent, monastery or abbey, she undergoes a period of testing or trying the life a period of six months to a year called a postulancy. If she, and the other nuns, accept that she may have a vocation to the life, she receives the habit of the order. This habit is usually different from that worn by the other nuns, perhaps a white veil rather than a black one. For the next one or two years she is a novitiate. She lives in the community without taking the vows. She then often takes temporary vows and continues to live there for another two to three years. After this she petitions the other nuns to make her 'perpetual profession' and takes permanent, solemn vows.

In some Benedictine communities (see *Orders of Nuns*) the three permanent vows are 'stability' (to remain a member of a single community), 'obedience' (to an abbess or prioress), and 'conversion of life' (this includes poverty and celibacy). Franciscan and Dominican nuns take the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

'Cloistered' or 'Enclosed' nuns observe 'papal enclosure' rules. These convents have walls which separate the nuns from the outside world. Usually these nuns will not go outside the walls except for medical treatment. They are allowed visitors but only in specially built parlours with a grille or half-wall separating them from visitors. These nuns are usually self-sufficient and earn money by selling goods or liturgical items e.g. candles) by mail order.

A nun who heads her religious house is called an abbess if the house is an abbey, a prioress if it is a monastery. They are often referred to as 'Mother Superior' and addressed as 'Reverend Mother'.



A Carmelite nun in the parlour behind the grating and also wearing a special grate veil to cover her face.



Traditional dress for nuns is a tunic, tied around the waist with a cloth or leather belt. Some nuns wear a scapular over the tunic. This is a long wide piece of woollen cloth worn over the shoulders with an opening for the head. Some nuns wear a white wimple, which surrounds the face and a veil. In some orders nuns wear a large rosary on their belt.

Nuns in traditional habit with scapulars, wimples and rosaries

Following the second Vatican Council (11 October 1962 – 8 December 1965), many religious institutes chose not to wear the traditional habit and the adoption of a religious name.



New Order Roman Catholic nuns





Eastern Orthodox

In the Eastern Orthodox Church there is no distinction between a monastery for women and one for men. They live in monasteries and are called ‘monastics’. Orthodox monastics do not have the distinct ‘orders’ as in Roman Catholic Christianity. Monks and nuns lead identical spiritual lives. Generally, Orthodox monastics have little or no contact with the outside world, especially their family. The family whose child decides to enter a monastery understands that their child will be ‘dead to the world’ and cannot be visited.



Orthodox nuns

Anglicanism

Most religious communities in England were destroyed by King Henry VIII. This is known as the Dissolution of the Monasteries (from 1534 onwards) when the King separated the Church of England from papal authority during the English Reformation. Monasteries and convents lost all their lands and possessions.

The structure and function of religious orders in the Anglican Church is basically the same as in the Roman Catholic Church.

The 19th century Catholic Revival and the Oxford Movement revived interest in the ‘religious life’ in England. Between 1841 and 1855, several orders for nuns were founded. These included the Community of St Mary at Wantage (1848) and the Community of St Margaret at East Grinstead (1855).

The Community of St Mary at Wantage has always had strong links with schools in India





The Community of St Margaret East Grinstead now runs a nursing and care home

Anglican Religious Life recognises four categories of community.

‘Traditional celibate Religious Orders and Communities’: nuns take a vow of celibacy (amongst other vows) and follow a common Rule of life. They may be enclosed and contemplative or open and engaged in apostolic works.

‘Dispersed Communities’: In these orders members, whilst taking vows (including celibacy), do not live together in a community. Most of them are self-supporting and live alone, but follow the same Rule of life. Some members share a common life in very small groups of two or three.

‘Acknowledged Communities’: In these communities a traditional Christian life is lived. Vows are taken but are often adapted or changed. Many of these communities accept both single and married people as members. They may also allow personal possessions, but members must give generously to the church and the community.

‘Other Communities’: These contain ecumenical communities or members of non-Anglican churches.

In some Anglican orders, there are sisters who have been ordained and can celebrate the Eucharist.



What is a Nun?

There are nuns in the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant Churches.

Roman Catholic

A Catholic nun is a woman who has taken religious vows. A major distinction between a nun and a religious sister is that nuns are members of enclosed religious orders and take solemn religious vows, through which they renounce all property, including inheritances, while sisters have 'simple' vows which, for example, allows them to inherit property.

Nuns are committed to the daily recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours throughout the day.

In the Roman Catholic Church there are many religious institutes of nuns and sisters, each with its own special character.

Usually, when a woman enters a convent, monastery or abbey, she undergoes a period of testing or trying the life a period of six months to a year called a postulancy. If she, and the other nuns, accept that she may have a vocation to the life, she receives the habit of the order. This habit is usually different from that worn by the other nuns, perhaps a white veil rather than a black one. For the next one or two years she is a novitiate. She lives in the community without taking the vows. She then often takes temporary vows and continues to live there for another two to three years. After this she petitions the other nuns to make her 'perpetual profession' and takes permanent, solemn vows.

In some Benedictine communities (see *Orders of Nuns*) the three permanent vows are 'stability' (to remain a member of a single community), 'obedience' (to an abbess or prioress), and 'conversion of life' (this includes poverty and celibacy). Franciscan and Dominican nuns take the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

'Cloistered' or 'Enclosed' nuns observe 'papal enclosure' rules. These convents have walls which separate the nuns from the outside world. Usually these nuns will not go outside the walls except for medical treatment. They are allowed visitors but only in specially built parlours with a grille or half-wall separating them from visitors. These nuns are usually self-sufficient and earn money by selling goods or liturgical items e.g. candles) by mail order.

A nun who heads her religious house is called an abbess if the house is an abbey, a prioress if it is a monastery. They are often referred to as 'Mother Superior' and addressed as 'Reverend Mother'.



A Carmelite nun in the parlour behind the grating and also wearing a special grate veil to cover her face.



Traditional dress for nuns is a tunic, tied around the waist with a cloth or leather belt. Some nuns wear a scapular over the tunic. This is a long wide piece of woollen cloth worn over the shoulders with an opening for the head. Some nuns wear a white wimple, which surrounds the face and a veil. In some orders nuns wear a large rosary on their belt.

Nuns in traditional habit with scapulars, wimples and rosaries

Following the second Vatican Council (11 October 1962 – 8 December 1965), many religious institutes chose not to wear the traditional habit and the adoption of a religious name.



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Young Nuns

What is a Nun?

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- Create a table for Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Churches
 - Compare and contrast similarities and differences between these three denominations in relation to nuns
- Research the rules for three orders of nuns
 - Is it reasonable to expect women to live according to these?



Brides of Christ

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that all nuns are mystically betrothed to Jesus Christ. In this actual marriage ceremony, a young woman dressed in white, makes a public vow to the Church. After this public profession, the young woman is told that she has become the bride of Christ and must consecrate herself to God “until death”. A wedding ring is commonly placed on her finger. The Roman Catholic Church is offering the young woman a substitute for marriage to a real man. Although the concept of the ‘Bride of Christ’ is found in Scripture, it is difficult to see who is being called the Bride of Christ.

The Catechism Says:

§923 “Virgins who, committed to the holy plan of following Christ more closely, are consecrated to God by the diocesan bishop according to the approved liturgical rite, are betrothed mystically to Christ, the Son of God, and are dedicated to the service of the Church.” By this solemn rite (Consecratio virginum), the virgin is “constituted . . . a sacred person, a transcendent sign of the Church’s love for Christ, and an eschatological image of this heavenly Bride of Christ and of the life to come.”

The Bible Says:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron. They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by God’s word and by prayer. (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

So, the Roman Catholic understanding of a nun being the bride of Christ is not found in the Bible. Rather the Bible states that the Bride of Christ or Body of Christ is comprised of those who are born again into a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. (1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

These individuals are taken into an invisible union with Jesus Christ. His body consists of many members throughout the ages and throughout the entire world. The Bible refers to this union as the ‘Church.’

The Paul says that the Church is presently under going transformation, being purified and washed by the teaching of the word of God (the Bible).

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

The apostle is comparing the relationship between husbands and wives to that of Christ and the Church. When the end of the age is culminated, Jesus Christ comes to claim his precious Bride or Church.



Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.” (Revelation 19:7-9)

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” (Revelation 21:9)

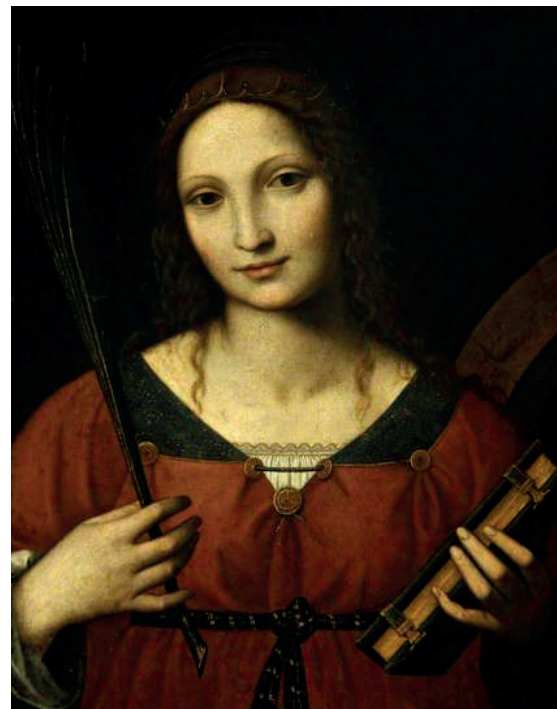
Mystical Marriage

In the Old and New Testaments, the love of God for humanity and in particular his relationship with his chosen people (whether Jews or Christians) is frequently described as the form of the relations between a bridegroom and bride. Similarly, Christian virginity has always been considered as a special offering made by the soul to its spouse, Christ.

This is what appears to be meant by the accounts of the mystical weddings of St Agnes of Rome (291– c.304) and of St Catherine of Alexandria (287–c.305).



St Agnes of Rome



St Catherine of Alexandria



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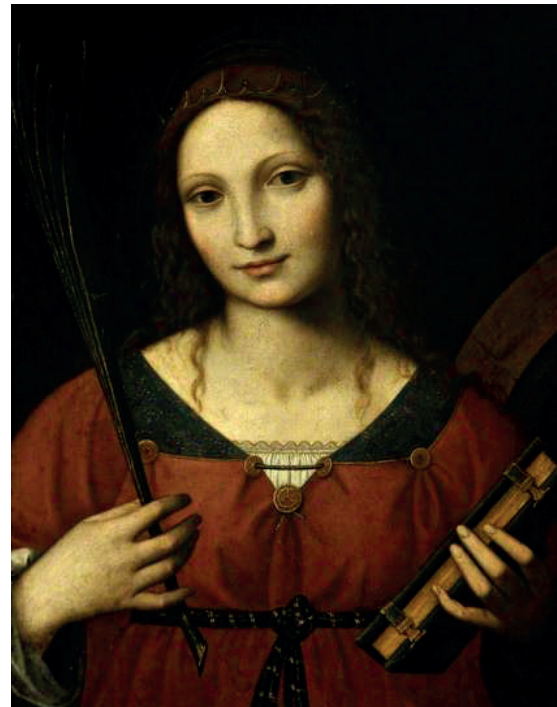
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St Agnes of Rome



St Catherine of Alexandria



Young Nuns

Brides of Christ

Brides of Christ



- How does being a 'Bride of Christ' link with God's command in Genesis 1:28a
 - God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it."



Origins of Nuns

The institution of nuns who devote themselves to the practice of a life of perfection, dates from the early years of the Church. Women may claim with pride that they were the first to embrace the religious state for its own sake without missionary work and other tasks which were more suitable for men.

St Paul writes about widows, who were called to certain kinds of church work:

Let a widow be put on the list if she is not less than sixty years old and has been married only once; she must be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. (1 Timothy 5:9)

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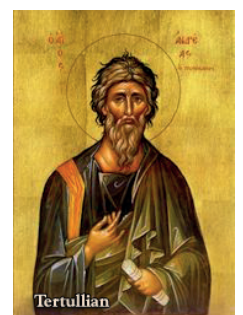
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To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am. But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion. ...

Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that, in view of the impending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin. Yet those who marry will experience distress in this life, and I would spare you that. I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 7: 1-9, 25-35)

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When third century persecutions drove many Christians into the desert, the monks began to live in monasteries and there were also communities of women.



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The monasteries of women usually at a distance from those of men. This was insisted upon by St Pachomius and St Benedict (480 - 543 / 547). However, there were common houses, one part for women and the other for men. The Emperor Justinian (482-565) abolished these double houses. He appointed old men to look after the temporal affairs of the convent, and a priest and a deacon who performed their duties, but were not allowed any other communication with the nuns.

In the West there were double houses up to the twelfth century. In the eighth and ninth centuries some clergy chose to live in communities and to observe a fixed rule of life. This canonical life was also founded by some women, who retired from the world, took vows of chastity, dressed in black, but were not bound to give up their property. Continence and a certain religious profession were required of married women whose husbands were in Sacred Orders, or even received episcopal consecration.

So, by the ninth century the classes of women vowed to the service of God included: virgins, nuns, deaconesses, and wives or widows of men who were in Sacred Orders.

The nuns sometimes occupied a special house but this type of enclosure, strictly observed in the East, was not considered essential in the West. Other monasteries allowed the nuns to go in and out. In Gaul and Spain the novitiate lasted one year for the cloistered nuns and three years for the others.

In early times the nuns provided a Christian education for orphans, young girls brought by their parents, and especially girls intending to embrace a religious life. As well as those who took the veil of virgins of their own accord, or decided to embrace the religious life, there were others who were offered by their parents before they themselves were old enough to be consulted. In the West for several centuries, these oblates were considered as bound for life by the offering made by their parents.

A nun's profession might be expressed or implied. A woman who put on the religious habit, and lived for some time among the professed, was considered as professed. Besides the taking of the veil and simple profession there was also a solemn consecration of virginity which took place much later, at twenty-five years.



In the thirteenth century, the Mendicant Orders adopted a more rigorous poverty, which excluded not only private property, but also the possession of certain kinds of property in common. Under the direction of St Francis of Assisi (1181/1182–1226), St Clare (1194–1253) founded in 1212 the Second Order of Franciscans. St Dominic (1170–1221) had given a constitution to nuns, even before he had instituted his Friars Preachers, which was approved in 1216. The Carmelites and the Hermits of St Augustine also had orders of women as did the Clerks Regular from the sixteenth century, except for the Society of Jesus.

From the time of the Mendicant Orders, founded specially for preaching and missionary work, there was a considerable difference between the orders of men and women, which arose from the strict enclosure to which women were subjected. This enclosure was now imposed on all nuns in the West, first by the bishops and particular councils, and later by the Holy See. Boniface VII (1294–1309) in his constitution *Periculoso*, inserted in Canon Law made it an inviolable law for all professed nuns; and the Council of Trent confirmed that constitution. Hence it was impossible for religious to undertake works of charity incompatible with the enclosure. The education of young girls alone was permitted to them. It was also impossible for them to organize on the lines of the Mendicant Orders, by having a superior general over several houses and members attached to a province rather than to a monastery. The difficulty could be avoided by having tertiary sisters, bound only by simple vows, and dispensed from the enclosure.



The Breviary recalls the services rendered to the Order of Mercy by St Mary of Cervellione (1230 – 1290). St Pius V (1504–1572) by his constitution *Circa pastoralis* (1566) insisted on the observance of the constitution of Boniface VIII (1230–1303) and the decree of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) compelled the tertiaries to accept the obligation of solemn vows with the pontifical enclosure. For nearly three centuries the Holy See refused all recognition to convents bound by simple vows, and Urban VIII (1568–1644) in his constitution *Pastoralis* (1631) abolished an English teaching congregation, founded by Mary Ward in 1609, which had simple vows and a superior general.

This strictness led to the foundation of associations which were called secular because they had no perpetual vows, and where the women led a common life intended for their own personal sanctification and the practice of charity, e.g. the Daughters of Charity, founded by St Vincent de Paul (1581–1660) in 1633. The constitution of St Pius V was not always strictly observed and some communities existed which were approved by bishops and tolerated by the Holy See. New communities ones were formed with the sanctions of the diocesan authorities. The services rendered by these new communities to the poor, the sick, the young, and even the missions, were so great that the Holy See expressly confirmed several constitutions, but for a long time refused to confirm the congregations themselves, and the formula of commendation or ratification contained this restriction *citra tamen approbationem conservatorii* (without approbation of the congregation). Political difficulties rendered the observance of solemn vows more difficult, especially for women, and from the end of the eighteenth century the Holy See declined to approve any new congregations with solemn vows, and in Belgium and France, abolished all solemn professions in the old orders of women.



The constitution of Benedict XIV (1675–1758), *Quamvis justo* (1749) about the Congregation of English Virgins led to the legislation of Leo XIII (1810–1903), whose constitution *Conditae* (1900) laid down the laws common to congregations with simple vows, dividing these into two classes, those under diocesan authority, subject to the bishops, and those under pontifical law.



Daughters of Charity



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The nuns sometimes occupied a special house but this type of enclosure, strictly observed in the East, was not considered essential in the West. Other monasteries allowed the nuns to go in and out. In Gaul and Spain the novitiate lasted one year for the cloistered nuns and three years for the others.

In early times the nuns provided a Christian education for orphans, young girls brought by their parents, and especially girls intending to embrace a religious life. As well as those who took the veil of virgins of their own accord, or decided to embrace the religious life, there were others who were offered by their parents before they themselves were old enough to be consulted. In the West for several centuries, these oblates were considered as bound for life by the offering made by their parents.



A nun's profession might be expressed or implied. A woman who put on the religious habit, and lived for some time among the professed, was considered as professed. Besides the taking of the veil and simple profession there was also a solemn consecration of virginity which took place much later, at twenty-five years.

In the thirteenth century, the Mendicant Orders adopted a more rigorous poverty, which excluded not only private property, but also the possession of certain kinds of property in common. Under the direction of St Francis of Assisi (1181/1182–1226), St Clare (1194–1253) founded in 1212 the Second Order of Franciscans. St Dominic (1170–1221) had given a constitution to nuns, even before he had instituted his Friars Preachers, which was approved in 1216. The Carmelites and the Hermits of St Augustine also had orders of women as did the Clerks Regular from the sixteenth century, except for the Society of Jesus.

From the time of the Mendicant Orders, founded specially for preaching and missionary work, there was a considerable difference between the orders of men and women, which arose from the strict enclosure to which women were subjected. This enclosure was now imposed on all nuns in the West, first by the bishops and particular councils, and later by the Holy See. Boniface VII (1294–1309) in his constitution *Periculoso*, inserted in Canon Law made it an inviolable law for all professed nuns; and the Council of Trent confirmed that constitution. Hence it was impossible for religious to



undertake works of charity incompatible with the enclosure. The education of young girls alone was permitted to them. It was also impossible for them to organize on the lines of the Mendicant Orders, by having a superior general over several houses and members attached to a province rather than to a monastery. The difficulty could be avoided by having tertiary sisters, bound only by simple vows, and dispensed from the enclosure.

The Breviary recalls the services rendered to the Order of Mercy by St Mary of Cervellione (1230 – 1290). St Pius V (1504–1572) by his constitution *Circa pastoralis* (1566) insisted on the observance of the constitution of Boniface VIII (1230–1303) and the decree of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) compelled the tertiaries to accept the obligation of solemn vows with the pontifical enclosure. For nearly three centuries the Holy See refused all recognition to convents bound by simple vows, and Urban VIII (1568–1644) in his constitution *Pastoralis* (1631) abolished an English teaching congregation, founded by Mary Ward in 1609, which had simple vows and a superior general.

This strictness led to the foundation of associations which were called secular because they had no perpetual vows, and where the women led a common life intended for their own personal sanctification and the practice of charity, e.g. the Daughters of Charity, founded by St Vincent de Paul (1581–1660) in 1633. The constitution of St Pius V was not always strictly observed and some communities existed which were approved by bishops and tolerated by the Holy See. New communities ones were formed with the sanctions of the diocesan authorities. The services rendered by these new communities to the poor, the sick, the young, and even the missions, were so great that the Holy See expressly confirmed several constitutions, but for a long time refused to confirm the congregations themselves, and the formula of commendation or ratification contained



this restriction *citra tamen approbationem conservatorii* (without approbation of the congregation). Political difficulties rendered the observance of solemn vows more difficult, especially for women, and from the end of the eighteenth century the Holy See declined to approve any new congregations with solemn vows, and in Belgium and France, abolished all solemn professions in the old orders of women.

The constitution of Benedict XIV (1675–1758), *Quamvis justo* (1749) about the Congregation of English Virgins led to the legislation of Leo XIII (1810–1903), whose constitution *Conditae* (1900) laid down the laws common to congregations with simple vows, dividing these into two classes, those under diocesan authority, subject to the bishops, and those under pontifical law.



Daughters of Charity



Young Nuns

Orders of Nuns

Orders of Nuns



- Read the information on the three orders of nuns
 - If you chose to be a nun, which order would you wish to join and why?



Young Nuns - Articles

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Clare is not alone in choosing poverty, chastity and obedience over careers, relationships and motherhood. She is one of a small but growing number of young women entering religious life. The trend is the subject of a BBC documentary, *Young Nuns*.

Producer Vicky Mitchell spent six months filming women such as Clara, 24, as they prepared to become nuns. A language and philosophy graduate, Clara, from the north-east of England, was raised a Catholic. "We've always taken our faith seriously. It's not just one aspect of our life, it frames our whole worldview," she says. "I've always been encouraged to foster my relationship with God." She was 18 and about to leave home for university when she began thinking about her future. "I was thinking about marriage and what God wanted me to do with my life. I got a niggling feeling that maybe God wanted me to be a nun. That feeling never left me." In the programme, Clara is seen graduating, socialising, praying and shopping for long-sleeved, blue nightdresses and slippers that won't squeak in the convent's corridors.

She visited the cloistered community, staying there a few times as a way of helping her to decide if she was ready to become a nun. There are an increasing number of ways young people can dip their toes into religious life, such as discernment weekends, taster courses and retreats. A festival, Invocation, was launched last year to attract 16- to 35-year-old men and women into monasteries, orders and seminaries. And Youth 2000, a five-day retreat for Catholics aged 16 to 30, was held at Walsingham last year, with around 1,000 attendees.

The Catholic church's National Office for Vocations (NOV) says the age range of people showing an interest in entering the priesthood or becoming part of a religious community is getting younger. They are now 16-18, but 10 years ago they would have been 30 or 40. NOV's Sister Cathy Jones has witnessed this change: "There seems to be a momentum but it's quite difficult to get to the bottom of what's motivating it. There are lots of young women inquiring. At Invocation they were as young as 16, going independently, saying they thought God was calling them. Of the 40 young women, 20 were very young."

Before she researched *Young Nuns*, Mitchell assumed that the current generation of women would be looking for a more "relaxed" and "modern" style of religious life. "What was surprising was that most were actively seeking something much more traditional. They wanted a lifestyle radically and distinctively different to everyday life." But, she adds, they didn't meet the pious stereotype. The women had friends, strong family bonds and active social lives. They dated and had career prospects. "What surprised me was how much like me they were."

Sister Jacinta Pollard, 37, who joined St Joseph's Convent in Leeds nine years ago, also features in the programme. She understands why people struggle with the idea of a young woman entering religious life: "It seemed so radical and so different to what a lot of my peers were doing and all those who I'd gone to college with."

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Swaffham, Norfolk, founded by the Daughters of Divine Charity, an apostolic order that performs social work in the wider community. Although Clare leaves the convent to fulfil her duties, she has taken vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.

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Ainsworth has not led a sheltered life. She is not running away from anything. But she has had a mixed experience of religion and faith, experiencing “dark times” as a teenager. An only child, she was raised a Catholic but was never passionate about it until high school: “A lot of people frowned on me for practising my faith, they labelled me but that made me cling on to it more. When everything falls apart you realise what’s important to you, I know God helped me through the difficult times.”

She didn’t discuss entering religious life with her dad, she says, but “he must have had an idea. I was always asking him to take me to convents or talking about sisters.” From the age of 16 she embarked on a spiritual journey as well as a literal one, volunteering with apostolic orders from Kenya to Kendal, and joining retreats offering time for reflection and prayer to help her decide whether she was suited to religious life. She has been to Lourdes five times, four of them as a helper.

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The youngest sister in the convent, apart from her, is 33, the next is 42. In all the other convents she visited, they were mostly in their 50s. “I did find it hard; there weren’t that many young women to talk to,” she says. “It can be quite isolating. The convent hadn’t had an English-born candidate for 40 years. It was quite a rocky start. There was learning from both parties about what young people need today. Now I’m here as a young person I want to attract other young people. Young people bring life and energy.”

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The Guardian 20 October 2011

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2011/oct/20/young-nuns-life-vow> (Accessed 27/01/2016)



The growing number of young women becoming nuns

Each year in Britain a small but growing number of young women are giving up careers, boyfriends and everything they own to devote themselves entirely to God.

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Like many of her contemporaries, the 25-year-old has spent the last few years travelling, partying and studying for a degree in languages at King’s College in London.

She also worked as a model, but for her it was an unfulfilling experience and left her thinking again about devoting her life to God.

“I went to castings, they always wanted me to do catwalk shows,” she says. “I remember after my first professional paid show, going home and feeling really empty. Feeling like ‘is that it?’ ‘That’s not great as I thought it would be.’

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Last year there were just 20 women training to become a nun - known as formation - in the UK, according to the Conference of Religious, which represents the majority of religious communities in England and Wales. But of these 14 were in their 20s or 30s.

Over the last five years, the number of women under the age of 40 in formation has risen from 42% in 2006 to 70% in 2010, according to figures from the National Office for Vocation.

The Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal are based in the heart of Leeds and are one of Britain’s most youthful religious communities. Their average age is 30. They work with homeless people and also visit schools and parishes.

‘It has to be a decision that comes before everything else the world has to offer.’ Sister Hyacinthe

Sister Jacinta grew up in Northampton. Before joining the Franciscan Sisters in her late 20s, she worked full time as an occupational therapist. Her initial desire to become a nun was tempered by fear of how it would change her life.

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Sister Jacinta had been a nun for eight years before taking final vows and has now made a lifelong commitment to Christ.

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The only thing holding Catherine back from joining a convent is the thought that she might be missing out on marriage and motherhood.

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Young Nuns

Articles about *Young Nuns*

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- Write a review of the documentary *Young Nuns*
 - How informative is it?
 - How well does it handle the subject matter?
 - What are its strengths and weaknesses?
 - What are your personal views about it?



Community of Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal

St Clare's Convent Leeds

Mission

The Community was Established in 1988 under the auspices of John Cardinal O'Connor of New York, with Fr. Andrew Apostoli, CFR, as Founding Father. The aim of the Community is to live the Gospel values in simplicity according to the ideals of Saint Francis as handed on by the Capuchin tradition. The spiritual values uniting the sisters are personal and communal commitment to Jesus Christ through contemplative and liturgical prayer (daily Mass and Divine Office), daily Eucharistic adoration, Fridays as a special day of prayer, a time set apart for solitude each month, devotion to our Lady, imitation of Saint Francis and Saint Clare, love for the Church and loyalty to the Holy Father. The sisters' apostolic mission is work with the poor and homeless and evangelization. The sisters work with a parallel community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in many works of their apostolate. The age limit for entrance is 35 years old; no college degree is necessary.

"Consecrated persons will be missionaries above all by continually deepening their awareness of having been called and chosen by God, to whom they must therefore direct and offer everything that they are and have, freeing themselves from the obstacles which could hinder the totality of their response." - *Vita Consecrata*, 25

Prayer For Guidance

"Most high, glorious God
enlighten the darkness of my heart
and grant me, Lord,
a correct faith,
a certain hope,
a perfect charity,
sense and knowledge,
so that I may carry out,
Your holy and true command."





Daily Schedule

6:00 AM: Office of Readings

6:20 - 7:30 AM: Meditation

7:30 AM: Morning Prayer

7:45 AM Mass

Followed by Work, Instruction or Apostolate

12 Noon: Midday Prayer

Lunch

Followed by Work, Instruction or Apostolate

5:00 PM: Eucharistic Holy Hour

6:00 PM: Dinner

7 - 8:40 PM: Free Time, Study or Apostolate

8:40 PM: Rosary & Night Prayer

Community of Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal

Newsletter – Summer 2015

“He who has so greatly loved us is greatly to be loved...” – *St. Francis*

Dearest Friends,

The Holy Father has dedicated this year as the “Year of Consecrated Life” which gives me the opportunity to reflect on the great gift that we, religious, have been given in our holy call. So many times people go through their days without being aware of the God Who loves them. But, He does! He loves each person individually! God has a particular plan for each one of us. For us, as religious, we have been given the role of proclaiming God’s presence by our witness wherever we go. It’s like we are living billboards exclaiming, “God exists!” We are meant to be like neon signs saying, “God is here and He loves you!”

Because we have experienced His transforming love in our own lives we want everyone to know that Jesus is alive and seeking to reveal Himself to every person. Jesus is the One we desire to bring into the darkness, the dangerous neighborhoods, the places where hope has been lost.

Many years ago, as I was walking through a rough section of the Bronx, a young woman came running up to me, obviously afraid and fleeing from someone. She saw me in my habit and said, “Sister, can you bless me? Can you pray for me? I’m in trouble.” God was making His presence felt – He was reminding her that He has not abandoned His people. God exists and He is looking for each one of us. He especially reveals His love to little ones. How many times we hear the voices of the school children next to our novitiate whisper to their parents, “Mommy, look, there’s Mary,” or as children from “the projects” point in our direction they excitedly shout out to one another—“Look, here come the Sisters from Jesus!” Everywhere we go, God is searching for each beloved soul He has created. On airplanes, at gas stations, on street corners and everywhere in between, He wants to tell us of His love. And it’s our pleasure as religious to be His signpost, and even sometimes His



voice, telling the world about the God Who loves us and has shown us the way to love one another on earth and to look forward to one day living together with Him for all eternity.

It is our prayer that each one of us come to know the merciful love of God more deeply in this special year of grace. In all things, may He be praised!

Sr. Lucille and All Your Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal

“We are called to know and show that God is able to fill our hearts to the brim with happiness; that we need not seek our happiness elsewhere.” – *Pope Francis*

As a college student, I allowed my imagination to tiptoe cautiously into the foreign, sacred land of Religious Life – every now and then. What if God was calling me to be a sister? Could I do it? Would I do it? And if I did do it, would there be happiness waiting there for me? This question about happiness was a stumbling block for me. Could poverty, chastity and obedience be the ingredients of a happy life? The idea that Almighty God had an interest and a plan for my life – a will for me, was dawning on me like the rising sun during my college years. In a way, this was an unsettling idea. What if His plans did not correspond to my own ideas for my life? On the other hand, there was a light and warmth to this dawning idea too. His will (whatever it was) was the right thing to do. But the hang-up for me was the question of happiness, of joy. Will this “right thing” bring fulfillment? Would the thing my head was telling me was “right” be able to convince my heart?

True discernment must flow out of a trusting relationship with God. Trust is what was missing for me. But as my prayer life was growing throughout my college years by daily Mass, daily prayer times and regular Eucharistic Adoration, I got in touch with some of my deepest desires and my deepest fears. These desires seemed to be in conflict. I really wanted to get married and I really wanted to belong totally to God.

The wrestling match within, the swirl and whirl of conflicting desires, hopes and dreams mixed with fears and uncertainties finally settled into tranquil peace. Total credit for the resolution to my discernment dilemma must be given to Our Lady. When I finally turned to her for help, when I finally had the humility to realize that I could not figure this out on my own, nor did I have to, the answer came. It was at Mass on Pentecost Sunday in 1998, the year dedicated to the Holy Spirit. At the elevation of the Blessed Sacrament I looked up at our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and I

knew (I am describing the indescribable now). I knew with clarity and with certainty that Jesus Himself was the only One who would satisfy my heart. Further, I somehow now knew that He could and He would fulfill all the desires of my heart. It was the answer to my perennial question, it was a promise and it was an invitation all at once. This filled me with a joy beyond anything I had yet to experience. I knew He wanted me for Himself and there was nothing I could want more than to be His as a Religious Sister. Three months later I entered the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal and my heart is “filled to the brim with happiness” and I can only be grateful and pray for the grace to be able to show it to all who still search for the Source of this happiness.

Sr. Clare, CFR





Community of Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal

St Clare's Convent Leeds

Mission

The Community was Established in 1988 under the auspices of John Cardinal O'Connor of New York, with Fr. Andrew Apostoli, CFR, as Founding Father. The aim of the Community is to live the Gospel values in simplicity according to the ideals of Saint Francis as handed on by the Capuchin tradition. The spiritual values uniting the sisters are personal and communal commitment to Jesus Christ through contemplative and liturgical prayer (daily Mass and Divine Office), daily Eucharistic adoration, Fridays as a special day of prayer, a time set apart for solitude each month, devotion to our Lady, imitation of Saint Francis and Saint Clare, love for the Church and loyalty to the Holy Father. The sisters' apostolic mission is work with the poor and homeless and evangelization. The sisters work with a parallel community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in many works of their apostolate. The age limit for entrance is 35 years old; no college degree is necessary.

"Consecrated persons will be missionaries above all by continually deepening their awareness of having been called and chosen by God, to whom they must therefore direct and offer everything that they are and have, freeing themselves from the obstacles which could hinder the totality of their response." - *Vita Consecrata*, 25

Prayer For Guidance

"Most high, glorious God
enlighten the darkness of my heart
and grant me, Lord,
a correct faith,
a certain hope,
a perfect charity,
sense and knowledge,
so that I may carry out,
Your holy and true command."



(D)



Daily Schedule

6:00 AM: Office of Readings

6:20 - 7:30 AM: Meditation

7:30 AM: Morning Prayer

7:45 AM Mass

Followed by Work, Instruction or Apostolate

12 Noon: Midday Prayer

Lunch

Followed by Work, Instruction or Apostolate

5:00 PM: Eucharistic Holy Hour

6:00 PM: Dinner

7 - 8:40 PM: Free Time, Study or Apostolate

8:40 PM: Rosary & Night Prayer

Community of Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal Newsletter – Summer 2015

“He who has so greatly loved us is greatly to be loved...” – St. Francis

Dearest Friends,

The Holy Father has dedicated this year as the “Year of Consecrated Life” which gives me the opportunity to reflect on the great gift that we, religious, have been given in our holy call. So many times people go through their days without being aware of the God Who loves them. But, He does! He loves each person individually! God has a particular plan for each one of us. For us, as religious, we have been given the role of proclaiming God’s presence by our witness wherever we go. It’s like we are living billboards exclaiming, “God exists!” We are meant to be like neon signs saying, “God is here and He loves you!”

Because we have experienced His transforming love in our own lives we want everyone to know that Jesus is alive and seeking to reveal Himself to every person. Jesus is the One we desire to bring into the darkness, the dangerous neighborhoods, the places where hope has been lost.

Many years ago, as I was walking through a rough section of the Bronx, a young woman came running up to me, obviously afraid and fleeing from someone. She saw me in my habit and said, “Sister, can you bless me? Can you pray for me? I’m in trouble.” God was making His presence felt – He was reminding her that He has not abandoned His people. God exists and He is looking for each one of us. He especially reveals His love to little ones. How many times we hear the voices of the school children next to our novitiate whisper to their parents, “Mommy, look, there’s Mary,” or as children from “the projects” point in our direction they excitedly shout out to one another—“Look, here come the Sisters from Jesus!” Everywhere we go, God is searching for each beloved soul He has created. On airplanes, at gas stations, on street corners and everywhere in between, He wants



to tell us of His love. And it's our pleasure as religious to be His signpost, and even sometimes His voice, telling the world about the God Who loves us and has shown us the way to love one another on earth and to look forward to one day living together with Him for all eternity.

It is our prayer that each one of us come to know the merciful love of God more deeply in this special year of grace. In all things, may He be praised!

Sr. Lucille and All Your Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal

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Young Nuns

Community of the Franciscan Sisters of the Resurrection

Community of the Franciscan Sisters of the Resurrection



- Create your own daily schedule
 - Compare this with these nuns
 - Explain whether you would be able to live the daily life of these nuns



Dominican Sisters of St Joseph

St Dominic's Priory - Lymington

Our community was founded in England in 1994 as Roman Catholic Religious Congregation of diocesan rite, under Bishop Crispian Hollis, of Portsmouth. We belong to the Dominican Order, the Order of Preachers.

We were formed out of a little group of sisters originally belonging to the Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena, Oakford. Our congregation started out of a desire for renewal and deepening of Dominican life. We currently number 11 sisters, 4 of whom are in formation. We serve the Church through a unique balance of contemplative prayer, monastic observances (enclosure, habit, silence), sung liturgy, and study together with an active work of proclamation and teaching of the Catholic Faith in the light of the New Evangelisation. It is from our strong fraternal life of contemplation and observances that we are enabled to carry out our apostolate as a community.

Our community, offering a unique balance of action and contemplation, is wholly engaged in the contemplation and the proclamation of the Word of God to the world, mainly through the catechesis of adults, teenagers and children, and the formation of catechists.

All our actions are directed to the teaching and preaching of the Catholic Faith, in any way possible and through any means available.

In doing so, we conform ourselves ever more to the mission of the Order of Preachers:

“We also undertake, as sharers of the apostolic mission, the life of the Apostles in the form conceived by St. Dominic, living with one mind the common life, faithful in the profession of the evangelical counsels, fervent in the common celebration of the liturgy, especially of the Eucharist and the divine office as well as other prayer, assiduous in study, and persevering in regular observance. All these practices contribute not only to the glory of God and our sanctification, but serve directly the salvation of mankind, since they prepare harmoniously for preaching, furnish its incentive, form its character, and in turn are influenced by it. These elements are closely interconnected and carefully balanced, mutually enriching one another, so that in their synthesis the proper life of the Order is established: a life in the fullest sense apostolic, in which preaching and teaching must proceed from an abundance of contemplation.” - *Fundamental Constitutions of the Order of Preachers, IV*

We live together under one roof, pray together, eat at one table and share everything in common so that we have nothing that we can call ‘our own’. The source of our communion is the Eucharist, celebrated daily. Charity is the purpose of our life as religious sisters. The love of God we have received is lived freely in the love we have for one another in community.

“Like the Church of the Apostles, our communion is founded, built up and made firm in the one Spirit. It is in the Spirit that we receive the Word from God the Father with one faith, contemplate Him with one heart, and praise Him with one voice. In Him we are made one body, share in the one bread, and finally hold all things in common.” *Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph, 3,1.*

“In order that each community be a centre of true communion, let all accept and cherish one another as members of the same body, differing in native qualities and functions, but equal in the common bond of



charity and profession.” *Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph, 4,1.*

St Dominic included study, ordained to the ministry of salvation, as an essential part of his plan for the Order. *Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph, 78.*

“Before all else, our study should aim principally and ardently at this that we might be able to be useful to the souls of our neighbours.” Primitive Constitutions of the Order of Preachers, prologue.

Study is an essential part of our Dominican life. We study primarily the truth of the Catholic Faith, as it is revealed in the Church through Scripture and Tradition, and all that is true and helpful to our ministry of evangelisation, catechesis and doctrinal formation. We have a minimum of 2 hours of daily study. All sisters engage in study all their lives, and most are currently working to obtaining various certificates and degrees in Religious Science and Catechetics.

Study is for us Dominicans a means to seek and come to contemplate God who reveals himself through his Word to our intelligence illumined by Faith. The gifts of the Holy Spirit also help us to raise the eyes of our mind to God.

Study is also a means to love our neighbours. We do not study for ourselves, but for the sake of those we are called to serve and help discover the treasure of the Catholic Faith.

Prayer, our personal and communal union with the Father, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, is the living center of our life.

We pray together in different ways throughout the day:

the Sacrifice of the Mass is the heart of our lives and of our day. Everything we are and have, everything we do, finds its origin and its finality in the sacrificial offering of the Son to the Father, and in the Father’s gift to us of his Son, in the Holy Spirit. That offering, that gift of Jesus’ own life is made present for us at Mass.

We start in the morning with 30 minutes of quiet meditation and Lectio Divina (prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture)

We read and sing together the Divine Office, the prayer of the Church, which is composed of psalms, scripture and intercessions. We pray and sing together the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer, Midday Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline everyday. If we are away on various apostolates, either as a group or alone, we carry out our prayer wherever we may be, in union with the sisters who are praying in the Priory.

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As well as those times of community prayer, we hold the remembrance of God in our hearts and minds throughout the day, and seek him in the secret of our personal prayer. The monastic observances of silence and the enclosure help us to achieve this.

The Horarium

Our daily timetable

05.45 Rising Bell

06.30 Silent prayer

07.00 Office of Readings & Lauds

08.00 Study

10.00 Work

12.00 Angelus & Midday Prayer

12.15 Holy Mass (Sunday 11:00)

13.00 Lunch

14.30 Work

17.00 Rosary & Evening Prayer

18.20 Supper

19.45 Recreation

20.15 Adoration & Compline (19:30 on Sundays)

The Grand Silence follows Compline until after Morning Prayer the next day





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18.20 Supper

19.45 Recreation

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The Grand Silence follows Compline until after Morning Prayer the next day





Young Nuns

Dominican Sisters of St Joseph

Dominican Sisters of St Joseph



- Using their daily timetable create a storyboard of the life of one of these nuns



St Cecilia's Abbey

O Lord, I love the beauty of your house, the place where your glory abides (Psalm 25:8)

A monastery is like a window opening onto God; it helps us turn our gaze towards God and allows the full light of God to penetrate everyday life.

*The Benedictine nun, like Our Lady in Hopkins' poem, has "this one work to do – let all God's glory through."
(The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe – Gerard Manley Hopkins)*

The monastic life is about a way of looking, the gaze turned in the direction of the things of God.

St Cecilia's Abbey, Ryde, is an abbey of Benedictine nuns in the Isle of Wight, England.

The Abbey was founded in 1882 and dedicated to the Peace of the Heart of Jesus. It belongs to the Benedictine Order, and the Solesmes Congregation of Dom Prosper Guéranger.

It is devoted 'entirely to divine worship in the contemplative life' and places principal emphasis on the solemn celebration of the liturgy, with Mass and the Divine Office sung daily in Gregorian chant.

Because of the French anti-clerical laws of 1901, the nuns of the Abbey of Ste-Cécile de Solesmes had to leave France. Eventually they bought Appley House near Ryde. Here, the Solesmes nuns erected cloisters and a church, designed by Edward Goldie (1856–1921). The Church was solemnly dedicated to St Cecilia on 12 October 1907.

When the nuns of Ste-Cécile returned to France in 1922 after 20 years of exile, the community of Pax Cordis Jesu at Ventnor acquired the property at Appley that came to be known as St Cecilia's Abbey, Ryde. In 1950, after more than half a century of close contact with that congregation, St Cecilia's Abbey itself became part of the Solesmes Congregation.

Daily Life

The nuns live a traditional monastic life of prayer, work and study in accordance with the ancient Rule of St Benedict. At the heart of their life is the praise of God, expressed through the solemn celebration of the sacred liturgy. This hidden life of prayer is a gift of God:

Love flourishes in silence and hidden actions have a particular efficacy. If we have come apart from the world, it is in order to share in sanctifying the world, in union with the Lord who alone sanctifies. We are to be convinced of the apostolic fruitfulness of our willed hiddenness and our prayers said in secret. Here is matter for the faith, hope and love which constitute our life in the Heart of Christ. (Mother Abbess)



The Community supports itself mainly through its production of altar breads, as well as in intellectual and artistic work (calligraphy, candles, etc.). Also their manual work includes garden, orchard, and beekeeping.



In 1974, when Pope Paul VI issued *Jubilate Deo*, a selection of plainchant pieces, to every bishop in the Church to encourage the singing of Simple Gregorian melodies in parishes, the Community recorded the chant to support this endeavour, in what was the first recording of nuns in the UK. Between 1980 and 1992, the Community produced nine more recordings of their chant.

Timetable

4:45	Rise
5:15	VIGILS
	Half an hour of private prayer follows Vigils; Angelus rung as bell for Lauds
	LAUDS
	Breakfast (c. 7.35-7.50) Church bell for PRIME
	Lectio Divina
9:30	MASS with TERCE
	Novitiate: lesson then work
Community: work	
12:43	Angelus
12:50	SEXT
	Dinner
	Washing up/vegetable preparation
	Recreation
2:40	NONE
	Novitiate: Office preparation, work, study
Community: work	
4:45	Tea
5:00	VESPERS
	Lesson and/or lectio
6:25	Private prayer then Angelus
7:00	Supper
	Washing up
	Recreation
8:00	COMPLINE followed by the Great Silence
	Lectio Divina
9:20	Curfew

The monastic timetable is part of the way we live a balanced life. It is made up of the three elements laid down by St Benedict: prayer, lectio divina (the slow, prayerful reading of Scripture and other books) and manual work. These three elements interpenetrate and mutually enrich each other, making our whole life a prayer and leading to a wholeness of being.

<http://www.stceciliabbey.org.uk/>



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Young Nuns

St Cecilia's Abbey, Ryde

St Cecilia's Abbey, Ryde



- Research the life of a Benedictine nun
 - How do you think you would cope with life in an enclosed community?
 - What do you think would be the most difficult aspect of this life?
 - What do you think are the positive aspects of this life?



Singing Nuns

Convents and abbeys have a long tradition of singing and creating music.

Gregorian chant is the main tradition of Western plainchant. It is unaccompanied sacred music consisting of just one melodic line. It had its origins in the 9th and 10th centuries and so was probably not created by Gregory the Great (c. 540 – 604) as legend would have it.

Gregorian chant is traditionally written using neumes, an early form of musical notation from which the modern four-line and five-line staff developed. It was sung traditionally by choirs of men and boys in churches, or by men and women of religious orders in their chapels. It is the music of the Roman Catholic Mass and the monastic Office. The Roman Catholic Church still officially considers it the music most suitable for worship.

<p>Christe leyson</p>	<p>Christe leyson</p>
<p>Christe</p> <p>leyson xre</p>	<p>Christe leyson</p>
<p>leyson</p>	<p>leyson</p>

Christe eleison (Christ, have mercy) in Gregorian chant. written with neumes on the left and modern staff notation on the right



Hildegard of Bingen

One of the earliest and most famous musical nuns was Hildegard of Bingen, O.S.B. (1098 – 1179). She is also known as Saint Hildegard and Sibyl of the Rhine. She was a German Benedictine abbess, writer, composer, philosopher, Christian mystic, visionary, and polymath

On 7 October 2012, Pope Benedict XVI named her a Doctor of the Church.

Hildegard's parents presented her as an oblate (a child dedicated by his or her parents to a monastic life and placed in a monastery to be trained) to the Benedictine monastery at the Disibodenberg, in the Palatinate Forest. Hildegard and Jutta (who professed her) were enclosed together at the Disibodenberg, and formed the core of a growing community of women attached to the male monastery.

When Jutta died in 1136, Hildegard was elected *magistra* by her fellow nuns and founded the monasteries of Rupertsberg in 1150 and Eibingen in 1165.

In recent years there has been a great deal of popular interest in Hildegard's music. In addition to the *Ordo Virtutum* (Play of the Virtues) c. 1151, sixty-nine musical compositions, each with its own original poetic text, survive, and at least four other texts are known, though their musical notation has been lost. This is one of the largest repertoires among medieval composers.

In addition, Hildegard composed many liturgical songs that were collected into a cycle called the *Symphonia armoniae celestium revelationum*. Her music is monophonic, consisting of just one melodic line. Its style is one of soaring melodies that push the boundaries of traditional Gregorian chant.

There are many recordings of her works.

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nPaljFIbmc>





The Singing Nun

Jeanne-Paule-Marie Deckers was born on 17th October 1933 at Laeken, Brussels, Belgium.

She was thinking about becoming a nun even when she was young woman, however, she trained and then worked as a teacher.

In September 1959 she entered the Missionary Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of Fichermont, in Waterloo, Walloon Brabant, Belgium where she took the name Sister Luc-Gabrielle.

In the convent, she wrote, sang and performed her own songs. These were so much liked by the other nuns and visitors that her superiors encouraged her to record an album to raise money for the convent.

The album was recorded in Brussels at Philips in 1961. The single Dominique became an international hit, and the album sold nearly two million copies in its first year. Sister Luc-Gabrielle took the stage name Sœur Sourire ('Sister Smile') and became an international celebrity

She increasingly disagreed with the Catholic Church and left the convent in 1966, in order to follow a life as a lay Dominican. Later she said that she had been forced out because of a personality class with her superiors.

The recording company then demanded she give up her professional names of 'Sœur Sourire' and 'The Singing Nun'. She tried to continue her music career using the name 'Luc Dominique' and also did social work.

Her music career was not successful and she had a nervous breakdown followed by two years of psychotherapy.

She shared an apartment with Annie Pécher (b. 1944). They had first met when she worked as a counsellor in a seaside camp in her youth. A close relationship developed between them in 1980.

She then became involved with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. She was asked to write songs for the movement this resulted in a brief but successful return to the stage.

She had given all her royalty payments to the convent under the terms of her vows but in the late 1970s the Belgian government demanded about £45,000 in back taxes. The convent refused to help and she and Annie Pécher now had into serious financial problems.

In a suicide note she and Pécher cited financial difficulties and died from an overdose of alcohol and barbiturates on 29 March 1985. In their suicide note. THEY were buried together after a church funeral in Cheremont Cemetery in Wavre, Walloon Brabant where they had lived. The tombstone reads "J'ai vu voler son âme / A travers les nuages" ("I saw her soul fly across the clouds").



Albums

- The Singing Nun 1963
- Soeur Adèle 1963
- Soeur Sourire 1963
- Chante Pour Les Petits 1971
- Dominicaine 1977

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10mMDtpfcQM>



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The Singing Nuns are Catholic Sisters, members of the Congregation of Mary Immaculate Queen. Their motherhouse, St Michael's Convent, is located at Mount St. Michael, just north of Spokane, Washington, USA.

St Michael's Academy, their private school in Spokane, is staffed by religious Sisters. However, maintaining a private school and an ever-growing convent, is a challenge. Therefore, in 1979, they set out a-singing in hopes of bringing in much needed support.

Music, especially hymns and Gregorian chant, had always been an integral part of their lives. Now they viewed it as a way for them to share with others the joy of loving and serving God.

"But Jesus said to them: Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."— Matt. 19:14

The Sisters have been making recordings since 1979.

- Exultate Deo: Five Gregorian Masses
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- At the Foot of the Cross
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- In the Quiet Summer Morning
- At the Rainbow' End: An Irish Collection
- O Come Emmanuel
- What Child is This
- A Special Night
- Christmas in the Heart
- Peace on Earth (Live Christmas Concert)





Cristina Scuccia

Cristina Scuccia was born in Vittoria in 1988 and is a Maltese citizen. In 2009 she became a novice in and worked with poor children in Brazil for two years. She then joined the Ursuline order as Suor Cristina.

Her first television appearance was in June 2012 on the programme *Dizionario dei sentimenti* (Dictionary of Feelings) on Gold TV in Rome.

In 2014, Suor Scuccia applied to *The Voice of Italy* singing competition and, for her audition, she sang *No One* by Alicia Keys. Throughout the contest, she wore a simple crucifix around her neck, black shoes and ankle-length black religious habit. She won the final, with 62% of the Italian votes. After winning, she thanked God for her victory, reciting the *Our Father* to the organizers and audience.

Album

- Sister Cristina 2014

Includes Madonna's *Like a Virgin*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpaQYSd75Ak>





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- Cantus Ecclesiae – selections from the liturgical year
- Easter Liturgy
- Spiritus Domini – the whole Mass of Pentecost
- Adorate Deum – selections from the liturgical year

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYr3X6hXqI4>





Singing Nuns

Convents and abbeys have a long tradition of singing and creating music.

Gregorian chant is the main tradition of Western plainchant. It is unaccompanied sacred music consisting of just one melodic line. It had its origins in the 9th and 10th centuries and so was probably not created by Gregory the Great (c. 540 – 604) as legend would have it.

Gregorian chant is traditionally written using neumes, an early form of musical notation from which the modern four-line and five-line staff developed. It was sung traditionally by choirs of men and boys in churches, or by men and women of religious orders in their chapels. It is the music of the Roman Catholic Mass and the monastic Office. The Roman Catholic Church still officially considers it the music most suitable for worship.

<p>Christe eleison</p> <p>Christe</p> <p>eleison xre</p> <p>eleison</p>	<p>Christe eleison</p> <p>Christe</p> <p>eleison, Christe eleison</p> <p>eleison</p>
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Christe eleison (Christ, have mercy) in Gregorian chant. written with neumes on the left and modern staff notation on the right



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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYr3X6hXqI4>





Young Nuns

Singing Nuns

Singing Nuns



- Listen to the examples of music given in the information sheets about the different types of music which nuns have recorded
 - Which type of music do you prefer?"
 - Explain why you prefer this type of music
 - Do you think that Sister Cristina Scuccia was right to sing on television?
 - What effect do you think that Sister Cristina has had on the way people think about nuns?