



CONGREGATION OF BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION

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News Release

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Sister Maria Victoria Cutaia makes First Monastic Profession

CLYDE, Mo.— In the words of Father Xavier Nacke, OSB of Conception Abbey it was a day of gratitude, hope and determination.

After two years of discernment as a novice, Clarisa Cutaia made her First Monastic Profession as a Benedictine Sister of Perpetual Adoration and became Sister Maria Victoria on Dec. 4, 2010.

In his homily, Father Xavier called Sister Maria Victoria “a gift,” one to be grateful for; spoke of hope because it was God’s love that called her to monastic life; and said it was the determination of a God who has done good work to bring her calling to eternal fruition.

Leading up to the big day, Sister Maria Victoria said she was excited and “at peace with the ‘Yes’ I was about to make.”

With the Benedictine Sisters’ Adoration Chapel temporarily closed due to monastery renovations, the ceremony took place in the chapel of Our Lady of Rickenbach (the Sisters’ healthcare facility).

The origins of this beautiful ceremony are rooted in the Rule of St. Benedict. During the rite, a novice is presented to the prioress general and to the community after fulfilling the requirements of formation. Then the novice officially seeks admittance to the Congregation after which the Sisters say, “We accept her. We welcome her. Thanks be to God!”

In a voice that shook with emotion and joy, Sister Maria Victoria made her vows of stability, *conversatio* and obedience to the Rule of St. Benedict.



Prioress General Sister Pat Nyquist (left) and Sister Maria Victoria Cutaia shortly after the Rite of First Monastic Profession. Sister Maria Victoria has opted to wear the veil as part of her habit, a choice granted her by the Congregational constitution.

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Receiving a new name

One who makes profession can request a new religious name. The name – if approved – is kept secret until it's revealed during the ceremony. So the days leading to the ceremony are usually filled with speculation of what the new name might be, and the novice gets more than a little joy in keeping the secret from everyone.

So when Prioress General Sister Pat Nyquist, OSB finally shared Novice Clarisa's new name it was met with surprise and delight, especially considering the name was chosen to honor the new Sister's grandmother.

"I chose Maria Victoria (her first and middle names) because ever since I was very young (before the age of 3) in her own way she introduced me to my Catholic religion," Sister Maria Victoria said. "At that time, neither my grandmother nor I knew that the seed she had planted within my heart would be an introduction to my vocation. Not only did I honor my grandmother with my name, I chose to honor Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as well. With Our Lady of Victory (eventually known as Our Lady of the Rosary) as my patron, I added Victoria to my name. Between Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and my grandmother I became to know God's abundant love."

Receiving the habit and emblem

After making her petition, Sister Maria Victoria placed it upon the altar as a symbol of offering her life to Christ in community. She was presented with the Congregational habit then excused herself to change into her new clothing.

Changing from secular clothing to the black and white of the Congregation is an ancient Benedictine custom, ritualizing dispossession, conversion, simplicity and incorporation into the community. Upon her return, Sister Pat placed the emblem of the Congregation around Sister Maria Victoria's neck. The emblem symbolizes the bread and wine of the Eucharist, inspiring the Sisters to always prefer nothing whatever to Christ and to live a life generous of love and humble service.

For the next three years, Sister Maria Victoria will settle more deeply into monastic life and determine whether or not this is the path she wishes to dedicate herself. If so, she can be received as a perpetually professed sister.

"My goals for the next three years are to continue to grow deeper in my relationship with the Lord and to serve him in whichever way he desires me to and to grow in a deeper relationship with my Sisters," she said.

"She joins ranks of those who have gone before us," Sister Pat said. "She will stand shoulder to shoulder with those of us still carrying the banner of faith that has been passed down from one generation to another in this Congregation. (Today) is evidence that a new generation will take it up and carry it forward."

To read Sister Pat's admonition to Sister Maria Victoria, go to <http://www.clyde monastery.org/StoneStories/?p=985>

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Vows according to the Rule of St. Benedict

- ◆ Stability is a commitment of lifelong fidelity to God and our Congregation.
- ◆ Conversatio is a commitment to embrace all of monastic life as a path to holiness and conversion. This includes poverty or simplicity of life and chastity.
- ◆ Obedience is a vow of listening, responsive love to the voice of God as it comes to us through prayer, the Rule of St. Benedict, Scripture, the Prioress and Sisters.