



Conversations at the Assumptionist Center - Feb 1, 2015 (Sunday)

As the Church begins to celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life, the Assumptionist Center in Brighton has begun hosting three Sunday "Conversations... this semester around the distinct forms and traditions of consecrated life in the Catholic Church.

At our first session, which focused on the cloistered contemplative tradition, the community, residents and guests welcomed two Poor Clare nuns who shared what it means to them to be contemplatives in today's world.

As expressions of their cherished vow of poverty, the sisters are being challenged with the need and prospect of moving out of their present monastery to a smaller residence, as their numbers have diminished. They continue to depend on their faithful benefactors who also share deeply in the daily prayer and liturgies of the sisters. The works of the sisters include: a phone ministry wherein folks share their needs and intentions, the production of altar breads, spiritual bouquets and the creation of liturgical vestments.

Another contemporary reality for the sisters has been the increase of more time set aside for meetings and gatherings which have offered them more opportunities to get to know one

another better. In the past, communication took place primarily between the Abbess and the individual sister.

When asked about the role of penance in their simple way of life, one of the sisters replied, “Our penance takes the form of living in harmony together. It frees us to be open.” Consequently the sisters also build in time for reflective reading, quiet time with the Lord and the opportunity to reflect on experiences. Of necessity, this takes time and discipline. Befriending silence is a journey.

As a result of this way of life, the sisters are very much aware of the sufferings of our world. They give a powerful witness to folks, the promise of prayer and a message of hope and love.

When someone asked about the challenges of today’s world that have affected them, they cited the high level of noise in our society, the breakdown of family life and the loss of a parish centered life for our people which fostered religious vocations in past generations. The good is however is that Poor Clare vocations are growing in the Philippines, Mexico and Africa.

Lastly and on an even more hopeful note, the sisters reminded us that for all of us, we must keep our goal in mind – heaven!

Truly, contemplatives are at the heart of the Church!