

THE CECILIAN

A NEWSLETTER TO HONOR ST. CECILIA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR
AND A CHRONICLE OF MICHAELA SASSE'S DISCERNMENT AS A CONSECRATED VIRGIN LIVING IN THE WORLD

ISSUE NO. 4 | MAY 13, 2026 | MEMORIAL OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

In April, I had the honor of attending a Jubilee Mass celebrated by Bishop Vincke at the Basilica of St. Fidelis in Victoria, Kansas, to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi. Sixty Capuchin friars (including one Padre Pio look-alike) gathered in fraternity and thanksgiving to honor their brother who modeled their way of life. It gave me immense happiness to see the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters who have become my friends in attendance. I sat with Heather, my employer, and her family, and I thought, "This must be what Heaven is like!" Such. Joy.

The friars profess three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, known as the evangelical counsels, which are symbolized by three knots on a cord worn around their waists. I have been reflecting on the evangelical counsels (named such as they are represented by Jesus in all four Gospels), and how it is imperative for anyone who desires to be conformed to the image of Christ to live out the counsels.



In his apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, Pope Saint John Paul II wrote, "In fact, all those reborn in Christ are called to live out, with the strength which is the Spirit's gift, the chastity appropriate to their state of life, obedience to God and to the Church, and a reasonable detachment from material possessions: for all are called to holiness, which consists in the perfection of love." Practically speaking, what does living out the evangelical counsels mean for a layperson?

Some considerations regarding the evangelical counsels:

Poverty:

- Do I embrace opportunities to deny myself, thereby increasing my capacity to rely on God and better serve my neighbor?
- Do I live within my means or purchase things unnecessarily?

Chastity:

- Do I recognize that the Lord alone will satisfy me? Do I spend time daily with the Lover of my soul?
- Do I avoid movies or other media that compromise the dignity of the human person?
- Do I strive for purity and modesty in speech and dress?

Obedience:

- Am I willing to surrender to the will of God, especially when His plans are different than mine?
- Do I honor the Lord's day by prioritizing rest?

This month we honor Mary, who throughout the course of history appeared to those who were poor, innocent, and obedient to the will of the Father. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death!

PRAYER INTENTIONS

- For those confirmed to be attuned to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
- Vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life
- In thanksgiving for my new role as Director of Consecrated Vocations for the Salina Diocese

ST. JACINTA

Visionary

When St. Jacinta was canonized with her brother Francisco in 2017, the two children became the youngest non-martyrs to be canonized. Born in Portugal in 1910, Jacinta was the youngest of the three visionaries at Fatima. She was known as a joyful and well-liked child, who loved her cousin Lucia very much. In order to spend more time with Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta were permitted to shepherd with Lucia.

Even before the apparitions at Fatima took place, Jacinta was known for her deep love for the Lord. In her memoirs, Lucia recounted the time in which she told Jacinta about the sufferings of Jesus. Jacinta responded to Lucia, "Our poor dear Lord! I'll never sin again! I don't want Our Lord to suffer any more!" (Fatima in Lucia's own words, 40).

On May 13, 1917, when Jacinta was just 7 years old, Our Lady appeared to Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta for the first time. These apparitions continued between May of 1917 and October of 1917. At Fatima, Our Lady asked the children to pray the rosary every day for peace in the world and an end to the war, and to make sacrifices for the conversion of sinners.

While all the children followed Our Lady's instructions, Jacinta particularly was drawn to making sacrifices for sinners. This was particularly evident when Jacinta and her brother contracted influenza in 1920. While sick in bed, Our Lady came to visit Francisco and Jacinta again. Of this experience, Jacinta said, "Our Lady came to see us. She told us she would come to take Francisco to heaven very soon, and she asked me if I still wanted to convert more sinners. I said I did" (Fatima in Lucia's own words, 59). Furthermore, when Francisco was near death, Jacinta told him, "Give all my love to Our Lord and Our Lady, and tell them that I'll suffer as much as they want, for the conversion of sinners and in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary" (Fatima in Lucia's own words, 60). On February 20, 1920, at the age of 9, Jacinta died. Sts. Jacinta and Francisco are celebrated on the date of Jacinta's death, February 20th.

St. Jacinta's example of holiness is a powerful one for children and adults alike. She reminds us of Jesus' words, "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike" (Mt 11:25). How we are to turn to Mary with everything.

As St. John Paul II said at the beatification of Jacinta, "I tell you that 'one makes more progress in a short time of submission and dependence on Mary than during entire years of personal initiatives, relying on oneself alone' (St. Louis de Montfort, *The True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, n. 155). This was how the little shepherds became saints so quickly" (Homily of His Holiness Pope John Paul II Beatification of Francisco and Jacinta Marto Shepherds of Fatima).

REFLECTION

"If men knew what eternity is, they would do everything to change their lives." - St. Jacinta

What is the Lord asking you to leave behind to follow Him more closely? Recently, I listened to a *Pints with Aquinas* episode where Matt Fradd interviewed the Sisters of Life. They said that often times when people think about religious life, they only contemplate what is given up. How paradoxical it is to surrender everything to gain eternity. What joy there is in giving everything to Jesus!

St. Jacinta, pray for us.

