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Pope calls for month of prayer to renew missionary outreach

CAROL GLATZ
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis called for an “extraordinary month of prayer and reflection” to reinvigorate and renew the missionary spirit and action of the Catholic Church.

Welcoming a proposal from the pontifical mission societies and the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the pope said the special concentration on mission during the month of October 2019 would help “renew the love and passion” of proclaiming the Gospel to everyone.

The announcement came in the text of a speech the pope wrote, but did not read, June 3 when he met Cardinal Fernando Filoni, congregation prefect, and people taking part in the pontifical mission societies’ annual meeting in Rome.

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(CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING)

Pope’s Pentecost prayer: Forgiveness, ‘unity in diversity’

People sing as Pope Francis leads a Pentecost vigil marking the 50th anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal at the Circus Maximus in Rome June 3. The Holy Spirit continues to give Christians different gifts and to call them to share those gifts with each other in a community marked by forgiveness and “unity in diversity,” Pope Francis said on Pentecost.

Former attorney professes first vows as cloistered Dominican nun

VALERIE SCHMALZ
CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO

Tara Clemens was an Anchorage, Alaska, attorney, and an evangelical Christian who converted to Catholicism during her last months of law school – and on May 28 she made first vows as Sister Marie Dominic of the Incarnate Word, a cloistered Dominican nun at Corpus Christi Monastery in Menlo Park.

With first vows, Sister Marie Dominic received the black veil, replacing the white veil of novices.

“The priest says, ‘Accept the sacred veil by which you may be recognized as a house of prayer for your Lord and a temple of intercession for all people,’” Sister Marie Dominic said. “The center of the contemplative life of the Dominican nuns is the love of God.”

“As a nun inside the cloister, even though I can never leave, I can embrace the whole world with that love and intercede for the whole world,” Sister Marie Dominic said, in a conversation two days later.

First vows are for three years. Those vows will be followed by two one-year renewals as she and the community continue to discern her vocation. At Corpus Christi Monastery, a nun is in formation for a



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Sister Marie Dominic professes first vows as a cloistered Dominican nun at Corpus Christi Monastery in Menlo Park on May 28. Dominican Sister Marie Christine of the Cross, prioress, sits opposite Sister Marie Dominic, with Brother Thomas Aquinas Pickett, OP, assisting.

tal of seven-and-a-half to eight years before professing Solemn vows, that is, vows until death. She has already spent two-and-a-half years in the monastery, first as a postulant and then as a novice. Dominican friars and nuns profess the vow of obedience to God, to Blessed Mary, to Blessed Dominic, to the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, and for the nuns, to the prioress and her successors. The vows of chastity and poverty are included in this vow.

It was a sudden change to Catholicism and a relatively quick decision to discern a vocation to the Dominican Monastery of Corpus Christi that caught Tara Clemens by surprise. A visit to a Friday Lenten Mass with a friend during the last months of Lewis and Clark Law School in Portland led to three months of late night studying of Catholicism, while working full time and completing law school. By Pentecost 2007, two or three months later, she was convicted of the truth of Catholicism.

In Anchorage, she was asked out of the blue about becoming a nun. She responded she had never considered the idea. By November 2008, just months after entering the church at the Easter Vigil, the young attorney was visiting Corpus Christi Monastery.

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SISTER MARIE DOMINIC: Former attorney professes first vows as cloistered Dominican nun

FROM PAGE 1

“When God calls, he is very persistent,” Sister Marie Dominic said.

But with more than \$100,000 of student loans, Tara Clemens was at times close to despairing because she could not enter with outstanding student loans. So, the story of her vocation journey is also the story of how the Laboure Society helped Tara Clemens resolve her student loans and become Sister Marie Dominic, OP.

“She has a dear place in my heart,” said Laboure Society executive director John Flanagan. The Laboure Society, based in Minnesota, is devoted to helping those with a priestly or religious vocation resolve their student loans which is a large obstacle to priestly and religious vocations in the United States. The society enrolls a “class”

of a dozen to 25 people who believe they have a vocation to the priesthood or religious life, and puts them through a “boot camp” on fundraising. The aspirants fundraise for their class, not for themselves. For Clemens, she participated in the program for two years. At the end of her last class, it looked like she would be in for another year until two benefactors made large contributions.

“People all around the country know they have done something to help Tara Clemens become Sister Marie Dominic. She didn’t get there alone,” Flanagan said. And Flanagan said Sister Marie Dominic has not forgotten any of those people. “She has a gift of gratitude.”

“She inspired the heck out of me,” Flanagan said. “She had her own difficulties in her journey but she faced them with great trust in the Lord.”

Dominican sister professes vows as cloistered nun

On the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, Sister Mary Isabel of the Angels, OP, professed solemn vows as a cloistered nun in the Order of Preachers at Corpus Christi Monastery in Menlo Park.

“By the profession of her solemn vows, she gave herself as a spouse of Christ to live a life of prayer, work and sacrifice within the enclosure, for the love of God and the salvation of souls,” the community said.

In a message on their Facebook page, the Dominican nuns said, “The JOY of belonging completely to Christ! Join us in praying that many more souls will give their fiat to God for his glory and for the salvation of souls.”

Sister Mary Isabel began thinking she had a vocation as a school girl in Indonesia but went to college and then worked for a number of years as an accountant in Southern California. She researched religious orders on the Internet and first came to visit Corpus Christi Monastery in 2007, entering the monastery in 2009.



(PHOTO COURTESY FRIARS OF THE WESTERN DOMINICAN PROVINCE)
 Sister Mary Isabel of the Angels, OP, is shown with Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone.

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