



(from top, left to right)  
 Sr. Mariana Benedicta  
 Sr. Avila Marie  
 Sr. Virginia Joy  
 Sr. Cecilia Rose  
 Sr. Annunciata Maria  
 Sr. Faustina Maria Pia  
 Sr. Mary Sophia

### Our new novices!

Seven young women, called publicly by their religious name for the first time, clothed as religious for the first time, welcomed into the community as “Sister” for the first time: it is no wonder that in the hush of the chapel one could almost hear the rush of joy that came over the new novices. Why such joy? Because, at some point in the otherwise ordinary life of each, something changed. A Person came, made everything new, and captured her heart. Nothing would be the same, and yet, for a time, everything outwardly seemed the same. The habit and religious name reveal her interior transformation into a consecrated soul. She is different. She is for God, for Christ; she belongs to the Church and therefore to all in need. The word ‘habit’ comes from the Latin ‘habitus’ – to dwell. The habit reminds a Sister and all who see her that she has left everything to dwell in the courts of the Lord. It visibly unites Sisters in community, identifying each with the whole, and with the purpose to which the Lord has called them. Thus, once in habit, the novice is called “Sister” and takes a new name, which tells of a claim, and identifies something of the person who bears it. Now, this woman is oriented and dedicated exclusively to Jesus Christ. She has a mission, which has been given her by Him. Indeed He has said to each: “I have called you by name, and you are mine.”

## LIFE FEST SUMMER 2010

at Villa Maria Guadalupe



Left: Children's Holy Hour at Life Fest Below: Families enjoying the entertainment.



### Villa Maria Guadalupe Fall Retreat Schedule

**Sept. 10-12** St. Joseph's Working Men Retreat

A retreat with conferences and spiritual and physical labor.

**Oct. 1-3** Theology of the Body Retreat with David Hajduk

**Oct. 8-10** Frassati Fellowship Retreat (for 18-39 yrs old)

**Oct. 16** - Day of Recollection:

“Dignity and Vocation of Marriage” with Fr. Joseph Koterski

**Oct. 22-24** Young Women's Retreat (call 718.863.2264)

**Nov. 5-7** Praying with Scripture with Msgr. Turro

**Nov. 11-14** Come & See (call vocations at 718.863.2264)

**Nov. 19-21** Feminine Genius with Mother Agnes Mary

**Dec. 12** - Fiesta Guadalupe

**To Register:** [retreatregistrations@sistersoflife.org](mailto:retreatregistrations@sistersoflife.org)  
 or call us at 203.329.1492

Beauty will save the world.



# Life is beautiful.

The Visitation Mission is privileged to walk with over 700 women every year, during their pregnancy and after, by way of telephone and personal meetings. There are different events held throughout the year that allow the Sisters and women to spend time together. Many find the ongoing support and encouragement invaluable. Over the years, the Sisters are able to witness the heroic “yes” lived fully by these courageous women, and with joy watch as their little ones grow and flourish.

The Mother’s Day “Get-Away-Weekend” at Villa Maria Guadalupe is one such event. This year, the grassy lawn was filled with running toddlers and squeals of delight over the petting zoo and trays of cupcakes made by devoted volunteers. As car after car arrived, over thirty mothers and their children were received into the beautiful surroundings, marked by blooming flowers and a picnic spread. Our co-workers had traveled to each of the five boroughs of New York to bring them to Stamford, CT, making it all possible. The Sisters and mothers chatted on benches beneath the shady trees. The young women began meeting one another and forming new friendships.

The picnic lunch was followed by a time of prayer in the chapel. The mothers went to a Holy Hour just for them, and the children had their own “Praise and Worship Hour” of clapping and singing. There was special entertainment with dinner, including rapping religious brothers, a skit from our postulants, and a troop of high school jugglers.

On Mother’s Day, the women enjoyed a spectacular brunch, with gifts at their place settings, vases of flowers and soft violin music played by Sr. Concepta. It is a grace to express to these beautiful women, who have given themselves in love, who have changed the world by their self-gift, what an inspiration they are for us.

At the end of the weekend, all gathered in the chapel for the closing Mass. I had a squirming two year old in arms, who was playfully reaching out to touch the little boy seated in the pew in front of us. Two girls donning tiny braids and pastel clips had discovered a game that seemed

to be a cross between tag and hide-and-seek and were scampering up and down the aisles. One boy, who wasn’t a day over three, caught sight of the incensor and decided that this Mass needed an altar boy and he was the one called to the task. A Sister in front scooped him up just before he could give it a good swing and then comforted him over the disappointing turn of events. It was all so wondrously noisy and wild.

The priest began to recite the words of consecration: “This is my body, given up for you. **\*\*Ring\*\*Ring\*\*Ring\*\*** Every child stopped in his tracks. The toddlers stood on kneelers and the infants turned round in their mother’s arms, each one looking to see what the sound could mean. All eyes were on the altar. “This is the cup of my blood...shed for you and for all...” **\*\*Ring\*\*Ring\*\*Ring\*\*** And for the briefest moments, there was silence. It was as if the chapel bells were saying, “Jesus is here. Look at him! He came to be with you.”

I was struck by the impact of those simple chimes. If only those bells would ring with every encounter with Jesus, right there in the midst of our busy and at times chaotic lives: the cashier at the checkout, a co-worker, a child, a passenger on the subway. Each person bears a unique reflection of Divine Beauty, one that has never existed before and will never be duplicated. We are daily struck by the noble beauty of the women we encounter and serve who emerge from incredibly difficult life circumstances, transformed, changed through the beauty of Motherhood. They find their true and best self, revealed by the love and innocence of their children.

Sarah shared her experience as a mother, “My daughter is such a blessing to me. She allows me to enter the world through a child’s eyes, renewing my vision. Because she has such a fresh vision of the world, she brings that back into my life and simplifies things. When I forget myself, when I realize it’s about her, caring for another being...that’s beautiful. I think being able to recognize inner beauty is so valuable, and having Violet has made me feel very beautiful inside.”



■ The Gift of Angelo Pio: Gina delighting in the innocence and beauty of her son’s face.





Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation* (c. 1430)

## THE DIVINELY INSPIRED WORK OF

# Blessed Fra Angelico

Humble and prayerful  
he gave all Glory to God.  
Claiming nothing for himself,  
he knew he was merely  
an instrument in the hands  
of the Divine Potter.



## Fra Angelico: Meeting Truth and Beauty

Guido di Pietro was born near Florence, Italy around the year 1386. After studying under several notable artists while still in his teens, Guido gained a reputation as a gifted illuminator and painter. Early in his twenties, he entered the Monastery of San Domenico at Fiesole and became a Dominican monk. There he took the name Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, (and was later nicknamed "Fra Angelico") and over the next two decades he painted some of the most stunning works to come out of the early Renaissance.

Living a holy and self-sacrificing life, Fra Angelico would often comment that "the man who occupies himself with the things of Christ should cling to Christ." Gentle and temperate, he painted only sacred themes with unceasing diligence, never retouching or altering his work. It is known that before handling any brush he would fervently pray. He wept when he painted the Crucifixion.

In 1436 Angelico moved to the monastery of San Marco in Florence, where he completed a number of murals. His frescoes were done on wet plaster, with clay colors, making it difficult to see any exact color relationship until the wall had dried. Despite the difficulty of this method, his colors were so exquisitely blended, that they still glow with a lovely brilliance after six hundred years.

After some time spent in Rome painting frescos in the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament of St. Peter for Pope Eugenius IV, Fra Angelico returned to Fiesole in 1450 as prior of the Monastery of San Domenico. During this time he executed a cycle of thirty-five paintings depicting scenes from the life of Christ and other figures and witnessing to his abilities as a theologian and a splendid Scripture scholar.

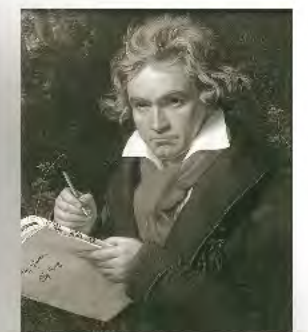
One of his most frequently painted themes was the Annunciation. Here, Angelico reveals to us Mary, carrying the Son of God beneath her heart, and overflowing with contentment and the inner glow of a pregnant woman. The space around her is transformed into brilliant light and this light bursts forth with grace.

At Fra Angelico's death in 1455, he seemed to disappear behind his paintings. Yet, upon closer look, we find that it is precisely through his paintings that we meet him. And in truth, not only him, but we come in contact with all that is good, true and beautiful in each of us. And ultimately, we are drawn to Beauty and Goodness Himself, Who is God.

# Letter to Artists

Art must make perceptible  
the world of the spirit, of the  
invisible, of God...It has a  
unique capacity to take one  
or other facet of the message  
and translate it into colours,  
shapes and sounds which  
nourish the intuition of those  
who look or listen. It does so  
without emptying the mes-  
sage itself of its transcen-  
dent value and its aura of  
mystery.

-Pope John Paul II  
Letter to Artists



## Ludwig van Beethoven 1770-1827

Beethoven, one of the greatest musical composers in history, began performing at the age of six and composed his first symphony in his twenties. Blessed with musical genius, Beethoven also suffered a life long cross. Despite thirty years of gradual hearing loss, he continued to bring beautiful music to the world, with determination and passion.

At the end of his life, though completely deaf, Beethoven conducted the premiere of his famous ninth symphony. With tears in his eyes, he had to be turned around to silently witness the thunderous applause of the audience.

Even through our limitations,  
the Lord desires to transmit  
his most glorious beauty.



## **Sisters of Life**

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[hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org](mailto:hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org)

“The saint is the  
person who is so  
fascinated by the  
beauty of God and  
by his perfect truth  
as to be progressively  
transformed by it.  
Because of this  
beauty and truth,  
he is ready to  
renounce everything,  
even himself.”

*Pope Benedict XVI*