

Hearts changed

# FOREVER

[one million young pilgrims in Madrid]

HE HAS CALLED YOU BY NAME

There are unforgettable moments when we encounter the One who draws us to Himself and calls us to do something great with our lives and our love.

The experience of many at World Youth Day 2011

SISTERS OF LIFE

# LET YOUR HEARTS SING!

## You Have Been Chosen

Whether we know it or not, God has called each of us into existence. He knows you and me better than we know ourselves. He has a plan for our happiness and continues to call us each day, ever so quietly, seemingly imperceptibly. He whispers in our hearts. He draws us through the beauty of creation, lifts us in music, moves us through art. He beckons us in a million ways that we completely miss. He waits for you.

If you desire to hear His voice there is no substitute for silence. Set aside some time to be alone, quiet yourself, seek what is deepest in your heart, and listen. God speaks deep within our heart of hearts.

This past summer the Sisters of Life were able to witness 1 million young people from around the globe respond to the Lord's call to meet Him in the person of His Vicar on earth, the Pope, at World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain. There they encountered the Church universal, and the One who drew them and continues to call them to do something great with their life and their love. And, for many, they will never be the same.

With great joy, on July 16th, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, six of our Sisters answered the call of the Lord of Life to be totally consecrated to Him through the profession of vows. In the profession ceremony each responded, "Lord, you have called me, here I am," placing her life in the hands of the Father.

If that is not enough to make your heart sing, on September 3rd we welcomed a new group of eight postulants: bright, talented young women who have chosen to let go of all that the world has to offer in order to follow the call of the Lord as their one true love.

The Lord continues to call. Listen for His Voice. A simple 'yes' can change the world.

May God bless you,

*Mother Agnes Mary, S.V.*



CNS photo

## What is World Youth Day?

Blessed John Paul II was the bearer of the inspiration and many advised against it, "the youth will not come," they said, but 300,000 showed up in Rome in 1984 to pray, sing, grow deeper in the faith and engage the deep questions of the human heart with the Holy Father. By 1987 one million young people from all over the world gathered to be with the Pope for the third World Youth Day in Buenos Aires.

The phenomenon has continued and grown (5 million gathered in the Philippines in 1999!) and has become a great source of renewal in the Church. This past August the Church of Madrid hosted over one million pilgrims.

The International World Youth Day gatherings, held every two to three years in various countries are actually a week long Catholic Youth Festival including daily catechesis by Bishops, cultural events, opportunities for prayer and confession, and a walking pilgrimage (Polish style) to an overnight vigil with the Holy Father (and hundreds of thousands of your new-found friends). It all culminates with the closing Mass with the Pope and the announcement of the date and location of the next World Youth Day.

It is truly an inspired expression of the new evangelization in which young people from around the globe meet one another, forge friendships, experience the universality of the Church in an unforgettable way, and often have a life-changing encounter with the Lord.

Blessed John Paul II, pray for us!





# TO QUENCH THEIR THIRST WITH CHRIST'S LOVE

The Love & Life Centre

*at World Youth Day 2011*

One sports arena; four days; 90,000 hungry souls: this was the irresistible challenge and unprecedented gift offered the Sisters of Life and the Knights of Columbus during World Youth Day 2011 in Madrid, Spain.

For over a year the Sisters and the Knights worked to prepare the Love and Life Centre, the largest English speaking venue at World Youth Day. As the months unfolded, co-sponsors jumped on board - Holy Cross Family Ministries, Salt and Light television, the Apostleship of Prayer, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), World Youth Alliance, and the JPII Institutes – the making of a potential explosion of the new evangelization was in the works.



August arrived and so did we — 45 Sisters of Life let loose on the sweltering streets of Madrid, teeming with cheering young pilgrims from every corner of the world. As the opening of the Love and Life Centre approached, Sisters switched gears from their usual work of listening to and supporting women in crisis and took up shop in a large sports arena located in the heart of Madrid, looking strangely comfortable decked out with ear pieces and walkie-talkies, assisting production crews and setting up multimedia exhibits. In the midst of all the practical preparations, the real host of the Centre and of World Youth Day – the Lord— arrived with all that He had planned and prepared, and the Palacio de Deportes was transformed into an enormous tabernacle of grace and truth. *(continued on next page)*



Knights of Columbus photo





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*Each morning, the Sisters welcomed the pilgrims waiting to enter the Palacio de Deportes (the Love and Life Centre). Over the course of five days, 18,000 “When we Soar” booklets (testimonies on faith, truth, love and courage) and 35,000 purity prayer cards were handed out and received with great enthusiasm. The thirst and desire amongst the pilgrims to live lives of truth and goodness was awe-inspiring, and bears witness to the tremendous hope found in this new “Benedict Generation.”* ▼

From Tuesday, August 16 through Friday, August 19, the Centre was jam-packed with an estimated 25,000 pilgrims each day, from Africa, Iraq, Ireland, Scotland, England, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, India, Mexico, the Philippines, Malaysia, and the United States among other countries. What did they find? A phenomenal microcosm of the culture of life, and of the Church: opportunities to connect with people already deeply in love with the Lord and given to Him in every aspect of their lives; amazing talks that lit the soul on fire – including Catechesis from Archbishop Dolan of New York, Cardinal Pell of Sydney, Australia and Archbishop Miller of Vancouver, Canada; panel discussions and breakout sessions on the most compelling questions of our day with some of the clearest voices of our time – Archbishop Chaput, Bishop Lori, Carl Anderson, Curtis Martin, Jason and Chrystalina Evert, Helen Alvare and Vicki Thorn; “You and Me,” a powerful and eye-opening exhibit on the power of one choice to change the world and the fathomless gift of human life and love. Such a comprehensive union of love and truth could lead the pilgrims in only one liberating direction, and it is no surprise that the two Eucharistic Adoration chapels were filled to capacity throughout the days; that seventy priests at a time consistently heard confessions of thousands of young people; or that the maternal guidance of our Blessed Mother was discovered anew in an area dedicated to learning to pray her rosary more fruitfully.

In this tabernacle of grace, pilgrims were readied for their encounter with Pope Benedict XVI during the main events of World Youth Day. Thousands of young people heard the transforming message of the Gospel of Life, the dignity of the human person and the call of Jesus to bring his Life to a thirsty world. Thousands learned how to pray and experienced the wonder of having their hearts opened in prayer, thousands went home more confident in the truth of the love of God for them, and with hope that they have a mission, a unique and necessary role to play in the upbuilding of the Church and of the culture of life.

One sports arena; four days; 90,000 hungry souls: this was the irresistible challenge and unprecedented gift offered the Sisters of Life during World Youth Day 2011 in Madrid, Spain. And, as with every challenge and gift the Lord offers us on this pilgrimage that is life, we were left more amazed at His presence, goodness and beauty than we could have imagined, and humbly grateful that we can count ourselves witnesses once again to the Risen Lord alive among us. Join us in praying for those pilgrims who came to the Centre, and for our co-hosts and co-sponsors, that we may all, indeed and forever, be “planted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith.” (the theme of World Youth Day 2011).





# Sisters of Life, the Fransiscan Friars of the Renewal, and a packed arena SINGING IN EPIC HARMONY... A SONG OF LOVE.

by Sr. Bethany Madonna, SV



Standing on the stage of the Love and Life Centre, surrounded by seven jumbo-trons and watching all 12,000 seats in that enormous arena fill, it was clear enough to me that the Lord truly desired to fill the hearts of His children with this message -- they are so sacred to Him, a people He calls His own, who He has marked with His seal and redeemed with His blood. He created our hearts for love alone and as St. Bernard says, "Of all the movements, sensations and feelings of the soul, love is the only one in which the creature can respond to the Creator -- make some sort of similar return however unequal though it be. For when God loves, all He desires is to be loved in return." And was He ever loved!

Eight Sisters of Life, three Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and three band members filed onto center stage and Sr. Mariae Agnus Dei began to teach the pilgrims the verses to her rhapsody -- a musical compomision of irregular form with an improvising character. The men sang to their sisters in Christ: "You are beautiful, you are precious, you are sacred in the eyes of the Lord." The young women returned this word to their brothers in Christ: "I must confess, I look for holiness—a man strong in virtue." A third section of the arena rang out: "My Savior and my God, I lay my life down before Thee. I place my faith in your truth. I trust in your mercy." The final part soared over all of the other parts, bringing it all together: "I thank you Lord for making me. For truth, goodness and beauty. I thank you Lord for your ways do bring me greatest peace and freedom."

The entire arena began to swell with this song of purity and truth. As God's family, we lifted our voices together in this unprecedented epic harmony . . . affirming the truths of our feminine and masculine identities and placing our lives into the hands of the One who made us.

View the rhapsody on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nSI2HI2pyM>

## ◀ The YOU&ME Exhibit

The Centre featured the "You and Me" exhibit, created by the Sisters of Life, which engaged men and women to consider their own sacred dignity, inviting them to the heights of sacrificial love and self giving. Using the MP3 players provided, pilgrims were able to enter into the lives of six people, each faced with a decision that would have a lasting effect on their future. Walking along the life-size banners, they were drawn into the testimonies and given the opportunity to consider their own desires for relationships, freedom, and love. Many opened their hearts to receive and were met with the confirming experience of God's particular knowledge and love for them.

On stage: Knights of Columbus photo

Sr. Bethany Madonna kept the crowd engaged as the MC for the morning Catechesis sessions. A few other Sisters took the stage: Sr. Mary Gabriel spoke to a packed arena on the Charism of Life, Mother Agnes Mary and Sr. Mary Elizabeth spoke on panels on the civilization of love and prayer.





# Grace UPON Grace

by Sr. Maeve Nativitas, SV



The Lord called them from Africa, China, Europe, America, and from all over the world. Most were uncertain of what was to come. Many were searching for something – friendship, a sense of belonging, answers to the great questions of the human heart, a sign of hope, a light to break through the darkness. Then there was the moment- the moment when the wounded soul (and we are all wounded) encountered the infinite mercy of God. The peace, joy and newly found freedom were palpable as thousands returned home to the Father's embrace.

The lines for the Sacrament of Confession at the Love and Life Centre were continuous. At the height of the day over seventy priests found a spot in the VIP boxes, at stations in the hallway, up the stairs, or along the wall to celebrate the Sacrament for the repentant hearts that came seeking forgiveness. The generosity of the priests revealed the personal and particular love our heavenly Father has for each individual.

With every confession the historical event of the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ enters into the here and now- sacramentally made real for each soul. Pilgrims had not been to Confession in six years, ten years, or longer. One said that it changed his life, perhaps it was just for those few moments that the Lord brought him all the way to Spain for World Youth Day.

During Jason and Crystalina Evert's talk on chastity, Jason encouraged the young people to go to Confession at least once a month. He explained that not only does this Sacrament possess the power to set us free from sin, but it also strengthens and fortifies the soul against future temptation. Immediately after their talk the first wave of a seemingly unending line of penitents approached the confessionals.

It is the Lord's greatest desire to heal us so that we might know how much He loves us. It was for our hearts that Jesus cried out "I thirst." One priest said he had the sense that there were many who were "liberated from bondage" and that "there was a lot of healing that took place." It was an experience of the Resurrection where the wounds of sin were transfigured into the revelation of a Love that is stronger than sin and death. No sin is too great for the One who desires to "make all things new."



*"It was a grace for my own priesthood to be a minister of the mercy and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. World Youth Day renews your faith that the Church is alive and is young. There is great hope for the future. So many young people experienced the joy and freedom that is found when we live our Catholic faith vibrantly. For many, I think it was a new beginning, a fresh start that will change their lives forever."*

*-Fr. Justin Cinnante*



# A SEA OF YOUNG PILGRIMS & THE POPE...UNDER THE SPANISH SKY

by Sr. Grace Dominic, SV

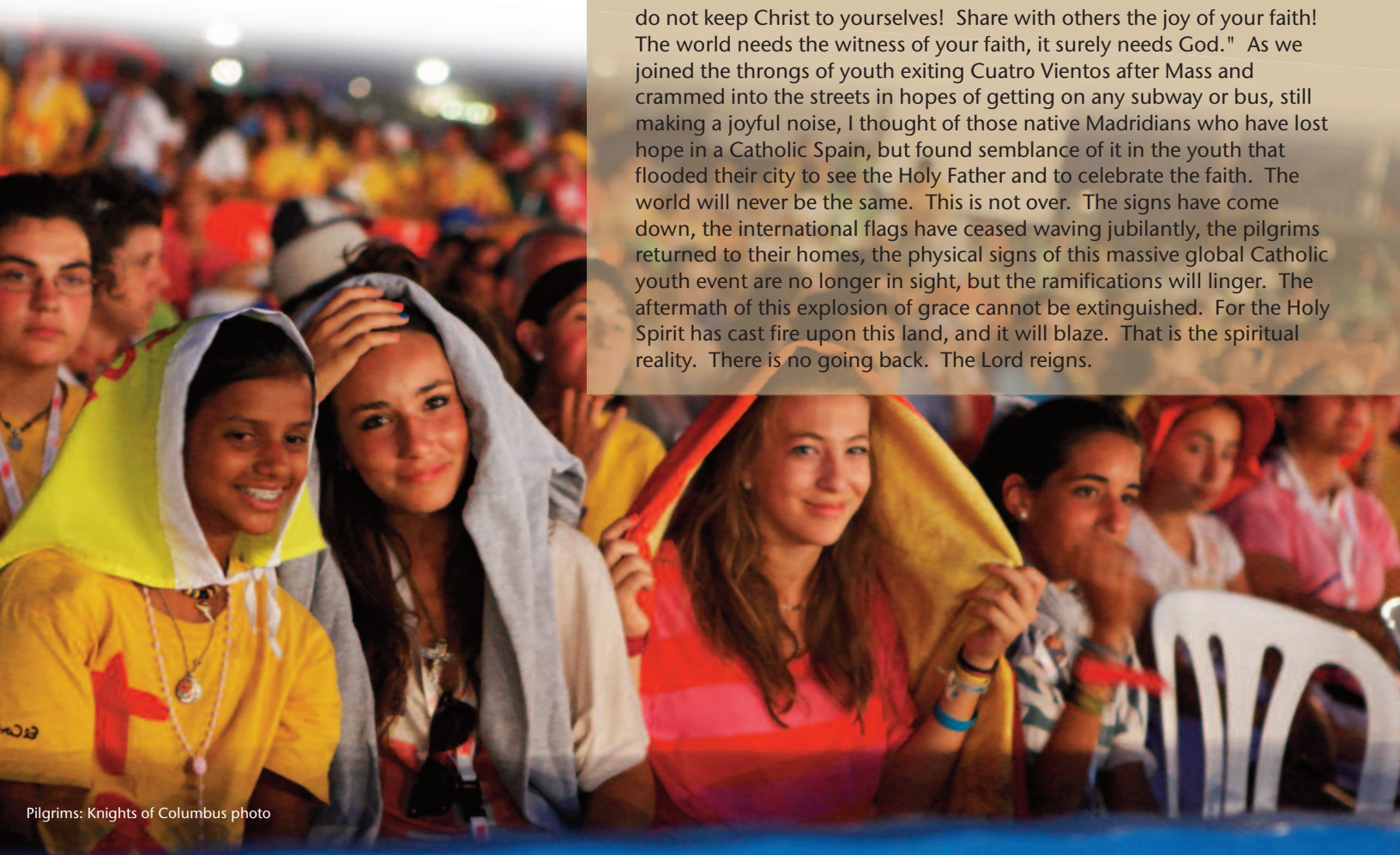


My sleepy eyes opened to the waning moon, the fading stars and a Sister's gentle voice, "Wake up, Sister." Is it morning? I thought, rubbing my eyelids. "The Holy Father might be coming this way, so we have to move." I looked at my watch and smiled. It's 6:30 am, I got 5 whole hours of sleep! I slept through the night! I can sleep through anything, anywhere-- even on a sleeping bag on asphalt, with congo drums beating, people dancing in circles and praising the Lord and the sound of about a million teens. Did I mention I forgot my earplugs?

Saturday night at the Vigil the Holy Father exhorted young people not to be paralyzed by adversity -- to not be afraid! As I looked around at the aftermath of a night of vigil I reveled for a moment in the stillness. The gates of Hell will not prevail, I thought to myself. These young people came from every corner of the globe. They came for Jesus. They came to be strengthened by the words of the Vicar of Christ. When he arrived a couple of hours

later, the million plus crowd rejoiced -- the culminating part of World Youth Day and perhaps the most climactic. The Holy Father reminded this young flock to grow in deeper friendship with Christ.

"Friendship with Jesus will also lead you to bear witness to your faith where you are, even when it meets with rejection or indifference. We cannot encounter Christ and not want to make Him known to others. So do not keep Christ to yourselves! Share with others the joy of your faith! The world needs the witness of your faith, it surely needs God." As we joined the throngs of youth exiting Cuatro Vientos after Mass and crammed into the streets in hopes of getting on any subway or bus, still making a joyful noise, I thought of those native Madridians who have lost hope in a Catholic Spain, but found semblance of it in the youth that flooded their city to see the Holy Father and to celebrate the faith. The world will never be the same. This is not over. The signs have come down, the international flags have ceased waving jubilantly, the pilgrims returned to their homes, the physical signs of this massive global Catholic youth event are no longer in sight, but the ramifications will linger. The aftermath of this explosion of grace cannot be extinguished. For the Holy Spirit has cast fire upon this land, and it will blaze. That is the spiritual reality. There is no going back. The Lord reigns.





# The first step

► TO A NEW WAY OF LIFE

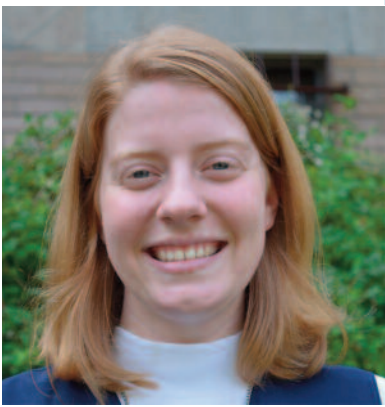
**Michaela (Mikki) Breen**

**Age:** 26

**From:** Fargo, North Dakota

**School :** Minnesota State University Moorhead, Speech/Language/Hearing Science

**Fun Fact:** I enjoy traveling, and have been to 40 of the 50 states. I was a FOCUS Missionary for 2 years at South Dakota State and Georgia Southern University.



**Cathy Churchman**

**Age:** 27

**From:** Christchurch, New Zealand

**School:** University of Otago, Biomedical Science & University of Auckland, Optometry

**Fun Fact:** Recently I travelled to the Holy Land and swam in the Sea of Galilee.



**Stephanie Daudelin**

**Age:** 24

**From:** Milton, Vermont

**School:** Saint Michael's College, Religious Studies & Sociology

**Fun Fact:** The month before entrance was filled with beautiful and exciting firsts: sailing, cliff jumping, driving my car over a covered bridge for the first time.



**Karen Geaney**

**Age:** 28

**From:** Auckland, New Zealand

**School :** University of Auckland, Anthropology & Massey University, MA Social Work

**Fun Fact:** I really love even numbers! Unfortunately, I'm only an even age in an even year for 6 days every 2nd year! (Now you should be able to work out my birthday).



**Maggie McLean****Age:** 24**From:** Toronto, Canada**School :** Queen's University, Astrophysics & Harvard, MA Astronomy**Fun Fact:** I once conducted a polyphasic sleeping experiment where I only slept in 30 minute intervals every 4 hours for 10 days.**Renée Schmitz****Age:** 29**From:** Edmonton, Canada**School:** University of Alberta, Nursing**Fun Fact:** This past summer, my friends and I found ourselves sandwiched between two black bears while hiking the North Coast Trail on Vancouver Island. We quickly learnt how to avoid bear attacks.**Angel Zamary****Age:** 24**From:** Youngstown, Ohio**School:** University of Pittsburgh, Spanish Language and Literature**Fun Fact:** I sleep talk in other languages! Sleep talking is already creepy, but even creepier in Spanish, Italian, or Portuguese. I was a FOCUS Missionary for 2 years at UConn and Temple Univesity.**Megan Zerwic****Age:** 24**From:** Glenview, Illinois**School:** University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, Chemistry**Fun Fact:** I could show you all the best coffee shops in Chicago.

*On September 3rd we welcomed eight new postulants to our Bronx Postulant House of Formation. The Lord continues to call and these young women have set out on the adventure of following Him wherever He leads - even across oceans!*





OUR NEW NOVICES

# stepping into

THE LIFE OF A RELIGIOUS

*I have called you by name...*

***Our new novices:***

***(from left to right)***

*Sr. Regina Maria Immaculada,*

*Sr. Teresita Maria Misericordia,*

*Sr. Maria Theresa,*

*Sr. Monica Marie Therese,*

*Sr. Gianna Maria,*

*Sr. Marie Veritas,*

*Sr. Anne Elizabeth Mary*







# AND YOU ARE MINE

## *P*rofessed life

"I want to invite you to "dare to love." Do not desire anything less for your life than a love that is strong and beautiful and that is capable of making the whole of your existence a joyful undertaking of giving yourselves as a gift to God and your brothers and sisters, in imitation of the One who vanquished hatred and death forever through love."

~Pope Benedict XVI, 22nd World Youth Day

*Sr. Marie-Noel Maximilienne, Sr. Ann Catherine, Sr. Grace Doninic, Sr. Maeve Nativitas and Sr. Mariea Laetitia enjoy a moment with Bishop Lori after professing their first vows on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16th. Consecrated to the Lord of Life they echo Mary's Fiat, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to your word."*



**Sisters of Life**  
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Written and designed by the Sisters of Life.



#### UPCOMING RETREATS AT VILLA MARIA GUADALUPE

October 1st	"I believe in Love" Day of Recollection for teenage girls
October 14-16	Young Women's retreat (for women between 18-35)
October 21-23	"God's Way Be My Ways: Renewing our Prayer Lives" a retreat for men and women of all ages Fr. Joseph Koterski, SJ
October 28-30	"Putting Out Into the Deep of Christ's Heart " a retreat for young adults in their 20s and 30s Fr. Chris Collins, SJ
November 10-13	Come and See (call 718.863.2264)
November 18-20	"To Love Christ Jesus" Retreat for Women of all ages
December 30th-1st	Young Women's retreat (for women between 18-35)
February 10-12	Young Women's retreat (for women between 18-35)
March 2-4	"Seeking the Face of Christ" Retreat for Women of all ages
March 15-18	Come and See (call 718.863.2264)
May 18-20	"Renewed in His Love" Retreat for Co-workers of Life
July 4	Life Fest – All are welcome and bring the family!

To register: [retreatregistrations@sistersoflife.org](mailto:retreatregistrations@sistersoflife.org) or call us at: 203-329-1492

#### SV Directory

**St. Paul the Apostle**  
(Generalate)  
586 McLean Avenue  
Yonkers, NY 10705  
914/968-8094 Fax: 914/968-0462

**St. Barnabas**  
(Postulant House)  
445 East 240th Street  
Bronx, NY 10470  
718/708-6742 Fax: 718/708-6744

**St. Frances de Chantal**  
(Novitiate, Vocations)  
198 Hollywood Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10465  
718/863-2264 Fax: 718/792-9645

**Villa Maria Guadalupe**  
(Retreat House)  
159 Sky Meadow Drive,  
Stamford, CT 06903  
203/329-1492 Fax: 203/329-1495

**Sacred Heart of Jesus**  
(Holy Respite)  
450 West 51st Street,  
New York, NY 10019  
212/397-1396 Fax: 212/397-1397

**New York Visitation Mission**  
to Pregnant Women  
320 East 66th Street,  
New York, NY 10021  
Pregnancy help call:  
212/737-0221 toll free: 877/777-1277  
Co-workers of Life call: 347/843-8900

**Toronto Visitation Mission**  
to Pregnant Women  
St. Catherine of Siena  
1099 Danforth Avenue,  
Toronto, ON M4J 1M5  
Pregnancy help call:  
(416) 463-2722 Fax: (416) 463-1687

**St. Augustine Convent**  
2661 Kingston Rd., Scarborough, ON  
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