

Dear Friends,

I hope that you've all been enjoying the beautiful but hot weather we've been having. This week, I write to you all from Eastern Washington where I'm enjoying some time away in the countryside with my family.

As I look out to the valley I think of you all and pray that you've had an opportunity to have some time to recharge and enjoy what's most important, God, family and friends. As I've mentioned in previous letters, I really enjoy the saints and especially enjoy getting to know these "friends" better as their feast days approach. This gives us a wonderful opportunity to grow closer to Christ as we get to encounter Him through the eyes, experiences and lives of the saints.

We live in difficult times, just last week we had a couple of tragedies in different states involving gun violence. These tragedies caused the loss of many innocent lives. These situations bring forth a lot of emotions and reactions from people, especially anger, blame, and great sadness for the loss of loved ones, just to name a few. In these difficult times, it's most important to pray the hardest, for all affected by these tragedies. To not give into reactions and emotions, but to pray, to reflect and to be spiritually vigilant. The enemy is always seeking to attack and divide in any way possible, we must be strong in our faith and prayer to help support each other so we may be united in Christ. As I mentioned earlier, as we get to know our "friends" a little better, we can identify more with them as we see that they, too, lived through their own difficult times.

I'm really looking forward to this week as we celebrate some wonderful saint friends and have an important day of celebration this week, as well. Sunday, as you read this letter, we will be celebrating one of my most favorite saints, St. Clare of Assisi. St. Clare was born in Assisi, she was born into a wealthy family but was so enthralled by St. Francis' teachings that she renounced her lifestyle, left everything behind and followed Christ. St. Clare has an incredible story, she lived in times when war was just around the corner in Perugia and where everyday was a struggle to stay alive. She went on to work to help the poor and the sick, founding the cloistered Order of the Poor Clares that is active to this day and is one of the first orders founded by a woman. St. Clare followed the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi and always sought Christ when serving the poor and sick. One of my favorite stories about her is an Eucharistic miracle that happened at her convent as it was under attack from thieves. She came out with the Blessed Sacrament and stopped an attack on her and her fellow sisters. She reacted in a peaceful manner and put all of her faith in the Lord and they were safe.



Another amazing Saint we celebrate this week on August 14th is St. Maximilian Kolbe. He died almost 700 years after St. Clare, but he too lived in difficult times. St. Maximilian was born in Poland in 1894, he was a Franciscan brother which means he, like St. Clare, followed the teachings of St. Francis. St. Maximilian was a missionary that spent time in Japan sharing the Gospel and then returned to Poland. He was arrested by the Nazis in 1941 and was sent to Auschwitz death camp where he gave his life to save another prisoner. Here's a few quotes by St. Maximilian to help get to know him better:



- *"The most deadly poison of our time is indifference. And this happens, although the praise of God should know no limits. Let us strive, therefore, to praise Him to the greatest extent of our powers."*
- *"Be a Catholic: When you kneel before an altar, do it in such a way that others may be able to recognize that you know before whom you kneel."*
- *"If anyone does not wish to have Mary Immaculate for his Mother, he will not have Christ for his Brother."*
- *"Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did."*

In the Gospel this Sunday, it reminds us to be ready for the coming of our Lord. To prepare ourselves for the coming of the bridegroom. They loved and saw Christ in those around them. These saints were strong in their faith and persevered in the difficult times they lived in through prayer. Through prayer they strengthened their faith and their relationship with Our Lady which helped them grow closer to Christ and it helped them to "be ready" when situations around them grew more difficult. They sought Christ and Our Lady whom helped them overcome those hard times.

Last, but definitely not least: we have the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This Solemnity is a Holy Day of Obligation. It's the celebration of Our Lady being taken up to heaven in body and spirit, giving us hope to life ever after, far from tragedies, difficulties, anger and sadness. We will have a few options for you to come celebrate with us: we have a multilingual Mass on the 14th at 7pm, on the 15th we'll have a Mass at 8am and 7pm.

I hope to see you at these wonderful celebrations as we continue our Liturgical year, learning together about our saint friends as they help us grow closer to Christ and Mama Mary.

In God's Love,

Handwritten signature of Dulce Casanova in black ink.

Dulce Casanova
PA for Liturgy & Hispanic Ministry