



# Magnificat House e-Newsletter



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## Mary Visits Elizabeth: Hospitality at Magnificat House

Mary visits Elizabeth.

I imagine Mary offers with great zeal to help Elizabeth since Elizabeth is now six months pregnant with John the Baptist. I also imagine that Mary wonders to Elizabeth, "Did you ever have questions or doubts? How did you know that Zechariah's vision was for real? And, finally, "Are you happy?"

I imagine Elizabeth welcomes Mary into her home, listening to her questions. Their conversations take place gradually, while cooking meals and taking walks, reading a novel or sweeping the house. Elizabeth listens, smiles, and without hesitation shares wisdom from her own life experiences. She tells Mary about her own joys and struggles. Understanding grows over the course of three months while they anticipate John's birth. When the time comes, Mary returns home strengthened and reassured in her own call to bring Jesus into the world.

Like Elizabeth, at Magnificat House of Discernment, we welcome many visitors. Some stay for a short time, others for several months. A mutual sharing of meals, stories, work, and prayer contributes to a greater understanding of how each of us is called to bring Christ into our world.

This fall, we welcomed many short-term guests, including two of our past discerners, Mmmm day participants, Catholic Relief Services personnel, Sisters from various communities, and even my parents. While we enjoy our guests and extend our hospitality, our primary purpose is to welcome those who seek a longer stay: women who desire to come for several months to work and pray, to study and discern, to enter more deeply into prayer regarding their own life and God's call. If this sounds like you or someone you know, please click the link for a discerners' application or call or e-mail us for more information. Applications for Spring 2017 are due on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

May God, who places all good desires in our hearts, bring them to birth!

-Sister Theresa Pitruzzello, CSJ, Mentor

## Upcoming Events

*Follow us on Facebook to stay updated on activities and future events!*

**December 17** 5PM Advent Vespers and Christmas Party!

**January 12-14** Check out our table at the *Gulf Coast Faith Formation Conference*

**Tuesday January 24<sup>th</sup>** Mmmm... Introduction to Discernment in the Christian Life

**Saturday Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>** World Day for Consecrated Life celebration for the Religious of the Archdiocese

**Thursday Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>** (Evening) Attend a Parade with Magnificat House! (details to follow)

**Wednesday March 8-14<sup>th</sup>** National Catholic Sisters Week

**Thursday March 16<sup>th</sup>** Mmmm... 6PM-9PM "So You Think You've Been Called"

**Saturday March 25<sup>th</sup>** Check out our table at *Abbey Youth Fest!*

**Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup>** 9 AM-3:30 PM Lenten Day of Prayer



Sr. Theresa Pitruzzello, CSJ, with two sisters from Canada who were among several visitors that recently enjoyed the hospitality of Magnificat House of Discernment.



## Magnificat House of Discernment e-Newsletter

### Magnificat House Goes to Visit With Friends

In the spirit of our "Magnificat" House – we spent the last few months "visiting" with some of our New Orleans friends. Today, like Mary, we sing our gratitude to God for the joy-filled experiences of our visits.

#### We Visited Universities and Shared About Upcoming Mmmm... Days

Many Sundays we enjoyed the welcome of the students and the wonderful singing by the gospel choir at Xavier University as we participated in the Eucharistic celebration with them.

Our fellowship and meals with the Tulane students, which takes place right after the 6 pm Mass on Sunday, were certainly a highlight of our fall experience. The Ignatius Chapel of Loyola University is a wonderful place to celebrate a late Sunday evening Mass. We usually arrive a little early to experience the joy of the students as they come together to praise God and to prepare for their long week of studies.

#### Celebrations and Gatherings

The Serra Club always manages to serve the most delicious catfish, and this annual luncheon for religious was no different! In fact we even enjoyed left overs! At the luncheon we heard from guest speaker, Cheryl Mrazik, from Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Cheryl spoke about the many ways CRS is fostering compassion and dignity among the world's most marginalized people. Sr. Theresa and I also enjoyed a New Orleans style meal and snowball with Cheryl before she returned home. To the Serra Club, thank you all for kindness and generosity to all of us.

Knights of Columbus, thank you! In October we joined many religious of the archdiocese at St. Stephen Church where the Knights treated us to the annual gathering which also featured a delicious meal. The evening was filled with wonderful fellowship as we reunited with old friends, made new ones, and shared about the wonderful ministries of each religious community.

The first week of October I attended the monthly "Christ in the City" Eucharistic Adoration at Notre Dame Seminary with local young adult Catholics. Thank you to our young church for making this opportunity available to everyone in the archdiocese! For me it was a blessing to enter "Holy Ground" and experience Christ with our young church.

Once again this year, Magnificat House participated the in gathering of World Youth Day at the Convention Center in October. We enjoyed visiting with the other Religious Communities and of course basking in the presence of the youth which recorded the largest number of participants in the history of World Youth Day New Orleans. We are grateful to Archbishop Aymond for concluding our day with Mass and for his inspiring message to our teenagers.

In early November, we attended a blessed Housewarming Celebration of the Sacred Heart Sisters which included Mass, a delicious lunch and enjoying their cultural fellowship. What Christ-filled joy there was in their home: laughter, gratitude, and memories of their journey in becoming permanent members of the religious of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Welcome, Sisters!

-Sr. Gloria Murillo, STJ, Mentor



Sr. Gloria and Sr. Theresa visit and share a meal and conversation with Tulane students.



Sr. Cecilia and Sr. Theresa, and seminarians Paolo Taffaro and Nathaniel Peters shared their vocation stories with youth during National Catholic Vocations Week at St. Luke Church. The youth seemed to enjoy the evening and asked many good questions. Special thanks to Fr. Patrick Wattigny, Pastor, and Fr. Francis Offia, Parochial Vicar.



Mentors, Sr. Beth and religious from many different congregations celebrate with Sr. Cecilia Dimaku, SSH and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart as they move into their first home in this country. Fr. Peter Akpoghiran celebrated Mass and all enjoyed the festivities. Congratulations!

## Magnificat House of Discernment e-Newsletter

### A Holy Darkness



*Holy Darkness, blessed night, heaven's answer hidden from our sight. As we await you, O God of Silence, we embrace your Holy Night.*

—Dan Schutte, *Holy Darkness*

These words express well the hope in which fifteen women religious and laywomen gathered at Magnificat House on the Sunday evening preceding Election Day. These last twelve months have been filled with angry political rhetoric; the women of Magnificat House hoped to provide a space to listen in silence to God's Spirit that we might act more fully as God acts: justly, truthfully, and lovingly.

We simply sat in a silence for an hour, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, beginning and ending the silent prayer in song. The silence was palpable and deeply healing. I found myself remembering the words of my Carmelite ancestor, St. John of the Cross: "The Father spoke one Word, which was his Son, and this Word he speaks always in eternal silence, and in silence must it be heard by the soul." (John of the Cross, Sayings, 100) The Word made Flesh did indeed dwell among us that evening.

Prayer, particularly silent prayer, is at the heart of religious life. To be able to share silent prayer with other women is a gift of Magnificat House of Discernment. There can be no genuine discernment without a willingness to sit in the darkness, waiting in silence for the Word, who is Light and Truth and Love. To paraphrase the last stanza of Dan Schutte's hymn, "When silence stills your spirit, will God's riches fill your soul." Come join us sometime for quiet prayer, that God's riches may fill your soul.

—Sr. Beth Fitzpatrick, O. Carm.  
Vicar for Religious, Archdiocese of New Orleans

## Magnificat, Mass, Meal and More!

### Introduction to Discernment in the Christian Life

When I face a major life decision, how do I decide what is best? When there are many good choices, what will make me truly happy? How do I know if I'm hearing God's voice, or is it my own thoughts? What does it mean to seek confirmation of a decision? And when I meet difficulties, how do I know whether to change the direction or stick with my original decision?

These and questions like it will be addressed at our next Mmmm.... Night on **January 24**. Following Mass, we will enjoy supper and learn about basic principles of discernment. With practice, we learn to recognize the whispers of God's Spirit, to be aware of "hooks" that can catch us by surprise, and to go forward in confidence and faith as we make our decisions.

### So You Think You've Been Called?

Deacon Pedro says, "Everybody's called...to go out and be church,...to love. What do you tell people who challenge you and say you don't need to be a religious [Sister or Brother] to do that?"

Sr. Celia Ashton, OCD, responds, "That's absolutely right!... You don't have to be a religious to do that. But for some of us, it's the deepest expression of how we can be a disciple, that we are called to this particular life... I'm living this life because I believe that this life is incredibly relevant to our world and it's what's right for me."

Join us for our **March 16<sup>th</sup>** Mmmm... to hear more of their incredible journey of faith, love, and prayer in the NRVC/Salt and Light Presentation, "So You Think You've Been Called?" Learn more at <http://saltandlighttv.org/nrvc/>

If you (or someone you know) is seriously considering a call as a Religious Sister, consider Magnificat House!

Click [here](#), email [magnificathouse@arch-no.org](mailto:magnificathouse@arch-no.org), or call 504 861-6281 to request an application.