

# The Flame



CONGREGATION  
of Our Lady  
of the Cenacle  
North American Province

NEWS & EVENTS FROM THE CENACLE (3800 W. PETERSON AVE. CHICAGO, IL 60659)

WINTER/SPRING 2025

Hello! I am delighted to have this time with you! For Cenacle Sisters and members of our Cenacle Family, February is a special month. Together, we celebrate the birth and the baptism of a woman who desired only to love and serve her God. Join me as I recall moments in her life that continue to impact everyone who embraces the mission of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Retreat in the Cenacle.

Marie-Victoire Couderc was born in a remote mountain village in southern France on February 1, 1805. The following day, she was baptized in the small country church near her family's homestead. Her birth was a ray of hope, bringing joy and gladness to all. Using our imagination, we see her laughing, playing and running in the yard of her family's home. As she grew older, we see her carrying wood for the fire, water from the "Source" and fruit and vegetables from the earth.

Marie-Victorie is a strong mountain girl, aglow with love and vitality. She is gentle and sweet, singing lullabies as she cradles her younger siblings to sleep. So young is she. So wise! She knows the secret of life. God is All! Together, we see her leave the only world she knew. She embraces a new life. Marie-Victoire no longer, Thérèse is her new name. A valiant woman is her patron. Saint Teresa of Avila will teach her the ways of the Lord. All for the greater glory of God!

Sister Thérèse longs to make her God known and loved. She works wholeheartedly at her desk, in the garden, alone or with the sisters in her growing community. She journeys up and down rugged mountain roads to spread the Good News to folks yearning to know God whom she loves. No matter the weather, she is filled with zeal to make Jesus known and loved. Ever so humbly, she serves her good God. She ages gracefully. She grows in wisdom. Called to serve her community as "superior," Mother Thérèse fulfills her responsibilities humbly, quietly and carefully. As she ages, Mother Thérèse spends hour after hour in prayer, surrendering to God all that she is. She accepts her failing health quietly. During her final days, "Jesus, have mercy on me!" is her prayer. Her Beloved hears her cry. He is with her, hand outstretched to bring her home. He lifts her broken body and carries her over the threshold from earth to eternity.

Mother Thérèse, better known as Saint Thérèse Couderc, is now enjoying the eternal Banquet of Love. Her gaze is forever on her Beloved God. Her gaze is on us as well. We are her family on earth, her family gathered in the Cenacle. Though we see her not, she walks with us. She intercedes for us even when we are unaware. She is mother, sister, friend, and companion to all who embrace their spiritual journey as women or men of the Cenacle. All for the greater glory of God! I hope you enjoyed this brief preview of Mother Thérèse's life. More facts of her life can be found on our websites: [www.cenaclesisters.org](http://www.cenaclesisters.org) or <http://cenacle-gen.org>.



Remembering every reader in my prayer

*Susan Arcaro, rc.*  
Sr. Susan Arcaro, rc — Atlanta, GA

## SAVE THE DATE

On **Saturday June 7, 2025** the Cenacle Sisters will celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of the Cenacle. This will be a joyous and hybrid event to which **you** are invited! Those in Chicagoland are welcome to attend in-person; friends across the US and beyond are welcome to the live-stream. More information will be provided on our website and sent via e-mail to those on our virtual mailing list. We hope to see you there!



Above: The Province grounds on a wintery morning.

## Prayer Card Ministry



CONGREGATION  
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of the Cenacle  
North American Province



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First Communion  
Valentine's Day  
Mother's Day  
Sympathy

# New Online RETREATS & PROGRAMS

e-mail [ministry@cenaclesisters.org](mailto:ministry@cenaclesisters.org) or visit [cenaclesisters.org](http://cenaclesisters.org) for more information and all online listings.

## Lenten Retreat: Choose Christ Tues. March 11 at 10:00 - 11:30 AM Central Facilitator: Sr. Roselle Haas, rc

Houston-based Cenacle Sister Roselle Haas is providing an online Lenten Retreat, focused on Choosing Christ. Sr. Roselle is an engaging, interactive, and well-prepared facilitator who wishes to help you till the spiritual soil in your heart in this season of personal growth we call Lent. More information and registration is on our website.

**COMING SOON: A brand new online program created by Judith Valente to debut with the Cenacle in 2025, with the tentative title "Contempl-aging". Visit our website for updates!**

## CENTERING PRAYER

Sister Mary Peters, rc facilitates a calming online Centering Prayer group for 50 minutes, Monday mornings (10:00 - 10:50 Central) seasonally. The free-will offering **Lenten/Spring Session** begins Feb. 10 and continues for 10 consecutive weeks. You need not attend all 10 sessions. All are welcome! Register online.

## Cenacle Sisters Gathered In France

There were 44 sisters who came from all "the ends of the earth" for the international meetings in France this past November. The purpose of the Enlarged Enlarged General Council (EEGC) was to take stock of what is happening in the Congregation in order to consider its future. It helps the Superior General in her mission of watching over the identity of the Congregation, and to update its apostolic mission.

An international finance meeting, which preceded and overlapped the EEGC was also held in France. As one family, we put all our resources together, in imitation of the first disciples of Jesus (Acts 2:44-45). This requires a certain cohesion in the ways of doing things, collaboration between us and ongoing training.

An international meeting is always an event, one of "those family celebrations that we like to be part of" (Mother Thérèse Couderc, October 23, 1867), in person or in spirit. It is what allows us to strengthen the bonds between us, to get to know each other, to give each other common directions. It was also an opportunity to live a beautiful experience of interculturality. This requires approaching exchanges "with a large and generous heart" (Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius No. 5).

At this international meeting there were seven different mother tongues, but fortunately this did not prevent us from sharing the same language of the Goodness of God and of the love of our common mission for the Church and for the world [adapted & paraphrased from the General Government <http://cenacle-gen.org>].

## Online Prayer Groups

with Sr. Anelie Arao, rc



### Christian Meditation

Sr. Anelie leads Christian Meditation at 7:00 PM Central every Tuesday evening. It consists of three essential elements: time for the teaching; half-hour of meditation in silence; time for questions or sharing.

### Sister Circles

This Sister Circle is affiliated with the Gather the Women Global Matrix. GTW is a worldwide sisterhood that connects women through Circles, creating a safe space to share our true selves. In Circles we find our voices, reclaim our power and remember our self-worth. Sr. Anelie leads the Cenacle's offering of this on the second and fourth Monday of every month at 6:30 PM Central. Zoom information is found at [www.cenaclesisters.org/retreats-programs](http://www.cenaclesisters.org/retreats-programs)

## New St. Patrick Prayer Card

Saint Patrick Apostle of Ireland icon (on right) is used by permission of Christine Thum Schlessler, Classical Iconography Institute, Marylhurst, Oregon



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### CENACLE SISTERS NAP

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Last year, the Cenacle Sisters updated/changed their database for friends and donors. This mail list was created by the Ministry Office with the new database. If you receive multiple copies or previously indicated you did not want a mailed copy of these newsletters, we apologize! Just let us know and we will correct the issue. Please e-mail [ministry@cenaclesisters.org](mailto:ministry@cenaclesisters.org)

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Image of St. Thérèse (at right) © Reg Silva  
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