

Arkansan working to renew dedication to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |

The Sacred Heart Apostolate in the state is continually growing, and it's a mission that Arkansan Janie Calvert has dedicated herself to for the past 15 years.

The apostolate works to promote the home enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"He's always there for us. We just leave him sometimes. I'm guilty of that too. This is a way to come back to him and make him the center of our life and our homes," she said.

Calvert's work in the apostolate has been a blessing, she said, even though in the beginning she wasn't sure if this is what God wanted.

Then-pastor Msgr. John O'Donnell asked her to serve as chairwoman for the Sacred Heart Mission at Immaculate Conception Church in North Little Rock in 1996.

After a chance meeting on a plane with a man who was going to visit Medjugore to discern a call to the priesthood, she asked him to pray for her and he put a medal from Medjugore on her rosary. The chain on the rosary turned gold, and stays that way even today.

"I knew that was a sign. It was very special to me. I went back home and said I would do the mission," she said.

After the mission, she began working with the home enthronement team at the parish.

"I felt after the mission, that was all I was supposed to do. I wasn't supposed to have any further involvement. That's funny now," she said. "I started doing home enthronements and it grew from there."

A couple of years later, her husband Ollie, who was not Catholic, started going to church with her after she returned from a trip to help her daughter in Tennessee following a house fire.

"I remember it clear as day. I walked in and wanted to tell him about the fire and everything. He said 'Janie, I have something to tell you ... I decided to become a Catholic.'"

Ollie Calvert died five years ago.

"Jesus has been wonderful to me. The Sacred Heart has been wonderful. During his illness, it was really hard to see Ollie suffer. I kept getting the message 'I'm going to see you through this. I'm there with you.' I believe he's been with me every step of the way."

Approximately 19 parishes in the state have had a Sacred Heart mission and teams for home enthronement of the Sacred Heart.

The family has the home blessed and then has an enthronement. The family places the portrait in a home altar where they can pray to Jesus.

During the enthronement, the head of the house carries the portrait of the Sacred Heart to each room and the family prays. The family also blesses each other.

"It's a commitment to living out a good Christian life. Jesus said to St. Margaret Mary (Alacoque) that 'I will bless every place where an image of my heart is exposed and honored,'" she said.

Calvert took over the apostolate for the state from the late Sister Yvonne Lerner, OSB.

In 2007, she joined the global mission team. The team is preparing for the first Sacred Heart World Congress, set for Oct. 6-11 in Paray Le Monial, France.

The congress will take place at the place where Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in 1673 and gave her the 12 promises for mankind. The hope is that those attending the congress will return with renewed vigor to spread devotion to Jesus and his Sacred Heart, Calvert said.

“The whole thing has been a blessing to me, to serve on this team with so many wonderful people. It’s amazing to me to do this,” she said. “I hope we can set Arkansas on fire again for the love of Jesus.”