



VOCATIONS

SISTER OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD ENTERS NOVITIATE

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DAYTON — Amid smiles and hugs, Francisca Belarmina (Bela) Mis Guamuche entered the novitiate of the Sisters of the Precious Blood on Jan. 15 during a prayerful 40-minute ceremony at Salem Heights, the congregation's central house in Dayton.

As a novice, Bela wears the congregational insignia and holds the title "sister." Though not professed, she will live poverty, chastity and obedience in community as she further discerns her calling to religious life.

In reflecting on the evening's gospel reading from Matthew in which Jesus called his first disciples, Sister Joyce Lehman, president, likened Sister Bela's experience to that of Peter, Andrew, James and John. They left everything they had to follow an uncertain path.

"This call is the same as we whom you are choosing to join have heard," Sister Joyce said. "Jesus no longer physically walks by and calls us, but we know the call and recognize the caller as clearly as if we heard his actual voice. He has called each of us to leave all and follow, to trust and to hope, to be joyful and to reach out, and to companion — each other as well as those we evangelize and to and with whom we minister."

A native of Guatemala, Sister Bela was raised in a Precious Blood parish there and got to know several Sisters of the Precious Blood who are ministering in Guatemala. She came to Dayton in 2013 to study English at the University of Dayton and began her initial religious formation. Sister Bela holds a bachelor's in social work from the Universidad Mariano Galvez de Guatemala.

During the 2-year novitiate, Sister Bela will live in the congregation's novitiate community and take part in all aspects of community life. During her canonical year she will participate in the intercommunity novitiate program, and will study the history and constitutions of the congregation as well Precious Blood spirituality. The second year will be spent in ministry.

"You are not alone," Sister Joyce told Sister Bela during the entrance ceremony. "We will encourage you in the difficult times, and urge you to keep going if you become disillusioned or disappointed; we will support or challenge you in the decisions you make along the way; we will rejoice with you in both the little and big victories of life



Precious Blood Sister Francisca Belarmina Mis Guamuche. (Courtesy Photo/Precious Blood Sisters)

and living and we will hold you in prayer at all times."

Sisters Ann Clark, novice director, and Marita Beumer spoke of Sister Bela's readiness to enter the novitiate.

"I think she is very much in touch with the God who is calling her to this life," Sister Ann said.

Sister Marita described Sister Bela's determination to follow God's call. Despite leaving Guatemala and her family, difficult winter weather and the challenges of learning a new language, Sister Bela continued to say "Si Señor," Sister Marita said.

Sister of the Precious Blood Joyce Langhals, director of initial formation, was the presider at the ceremony. Other participants were Sisters Della Mae Meyer, Paula Gero, Berenice Janszen, Rosemary Lindeman, Gerri McGeorge, Nancy Recker, and discerner LaKasha Church.