Sr. Maise Ng, OSF
9/4/24
First Profession
Immaculate Conception Church
Fayetteville, NY

Thanks be to God!!! Thanks be to God indeed! We have much to rejoice about today. Maisie pre-congratulaions on your first profession of vows. It is a privilege and honor to be here. On this day, September 14, 1852, 172 years ago, the first group of Conventual Franciscan arrived in Galveston, TX to minister to the German Immigrants after about a 2 month and 9 days trip from Le Harve (Lu-hav-ra), France. After a brief time in Brooklyn, NY and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, some of those friars moved to Syracuse, NY in 1858 which was the diocese of Albany at the time and on March 10, 1859 the motherhouse of the American mission was established in Syracuse at Assumption Parish. Soon to follow would be the Franciscan Sisters on March 14, 1860. And Saint Mother Marianne Cope came to the Sisters of St. Francis two years after that.

And here we are 172 years to the day the Conventual Franciscan Friars came to the US, that I, a Conventual Franciscan is privileged, honored and blessed to preside at the Mass for the First Profession of a Sister of St. Francis. Thanks be to God.

When people often tell me “you are a Franciscan, right, I say yes.” Then people often say so St.. Anthony or St. Maximilian is a part of your group. I say no no no, I am a part of their group. I joined their order. Sister Maisie; you and I and all Franciscans stand on the shoulders of some great saints who have gone before us: Saints Francis and Clare, St. Anthony, St. Angela of Foligno, St. Mother Marianne Cope, St. Padre Pio and St. Maximilian Kolbe. Hold those names for a moment.

Today is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Jesus was obedient to death even death on the cross. As we heard in our second reading from the Philippians. In the Gospel we heard that Jesus would be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. This is John’s first time in his Gospel John, to use the term “eternal life” and here it is not duration like forever and ever with God, but rather about quality of life.

Sister Maisie today you are professing to enter into a deeper relationship with God and the Sisters of St. Francis; not only to have a great quality of life but to give others quality of life as well. Again, may you have a great quality of life with God and the Sisters of St. Francis and give that same quality of life to those to whom you minster. Jesus didn't die on the cross that we celebrate today just for fun, he did it to grant us a better quality of life. And thanks be to God that he did.

In the Gospel of John, the cross that the Son of Man is to be lifted up on, is not a moment of suffering, rather the Crucifixion the hour of Jesus' glory. For the Cross is the meaning of "glory": the outpouring of love. We most clearly see how much God loves us when we gaze at the Cross: God loves us so much God loves us to death.

Sister Maisie, when you carry your crosses in life, may they be moments of glory, for when you are willing to carry your crosses, you die to yourself, so as to die and rise with Christ.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe once said "The Cross is the school of Love." - "The Cross is the school of Love." Sister Maisie, learn from the cross how to love.

Saint Padre Pio once said "Our Lord sends the crosses, we do not have to invent them." Sister Maisie, don't look for crosses, they will come naturally.

Your own Saint Mother Marianne said "Let me make best use of the fleeting moments. They will not return." Sister Maisie, treasure each moment, you never know if it will be our last.

Saint Angela of Foligno once said, "This world is full of God." Sister Maisie, you are surrounded by God always. Everything outside of the convent is present and can be found inside of the convent.

St. Anthony, one of my favs said, “Attribute to God every good you have received. Otherwise, you will be guilty of theft.” Sister Maisie, when in doubt or unsure how to pray, think of things you are grateful for and thank God for them. Don’t be guilty of theft!

Our holy mother St Clare said “We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become.” Sister Maisie, love the cross, may it shape who you will continue to become.

Lastly but not least, our holy father St. Francis said: “Each of you should love and nourish one another as a mother loves and nourishes her child.” Sister Maise, may you do the same: be loving and kind to yourself, be loving and kind to your sisters and be loving and kind to those lives to whom you will minister. Sister Maisie may you have a great quality of life and give that same quality of life to those to whom you minister with and beside.

I know I gave a lot of quotes, too many I think, but I told you I would go back to those names. And if you forget everything I said today - that is okay but remember “The Cross is the school of Love.” Please accept this small gift of the San Damiano Cross that has that quote written on it. “The Cross is the school of Love.” Saint Max Kolbe.

I invite you Sr. Maisie to look upon the Christ who is in royal glory on the cross you were just given. Everyone else look at the cross above me/beside me. One last quote by Saint Clare: “Gaze upon the Lord; Gaze upon His face; Gaze upon the One who holds you in His embrace. Gaze upon His life. Gaze upon His love.” Thanks be to God.

So I lied earlier….I actually have one more quote from St. Clare for our dismissal: “Go forth without fear, for He Who created you has made you holy.”