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## **Sister Maria Veronica professes first vows in her Franciscan order**

The feast of St. Joseph, March 19, was especially joyful for the Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen in Hankinson, this year, as the community gathered with priests of the Diocese of Fargo and the family of Sister Maria Veronica to witness her first profession of vows to follow Jesus in holy poverty, holy chastity and holy obedience as a Franciscan in the congregation.

Following her profession and the signing of her vows, Sister Maria Veronica was invested with a black veil, the crucifix used by her order and a ring. The change from the white veil, worn during the novitiate period of initial formation, to the black veil symbolizes her growing desire to pursue the vocation to consecrated life. The ring is the sign of her now spousal relationship to Christ. The crucifix (which has the form of a Tau commonly associated with the Franciscan Order) is a sign of her deeper step into the more penitential life of the consecrated state.

These symbols, bestowed on her by the authority of Sister Donna Welder, provincial superior, and blessed by the presiding priest, indicate the community's belief that God has called her to this consecration in the community and for the church. Though the vows are taken for just three years, they are entered into with the spirit of a lifetime commitment. The temporary state allows the newly professed and the community to continue to test and discern the call up to the day of perpetual profession in the order.

Sister Maria Veronica is the daughter of Michael and Karen Splonskowski of Lake Park, Minn., and is the 10th of 13 children. They and their family are members of the Cathedral of St. Mary Parish in Fargo. Members of the family formed a choir for the liturgy and were accompanied by Father Scott Sautner, organist. Nephews of Sister Maria Veronica served at the altar.

Sister Maria Veronica, 21, is stationed at the Provincial House in Hankinson; she will continue in this third phase of her formation under the direction of Sister Leonida Schmidt.