



Dear Mission Partners:

Blessings galore to each of you as we enter the second week of classes at Immaculata! Hopefully, the first week went well for you and there were not too many adjustments needed. There is something both fresh and challenging about a new day, a new semester, a new year, even with a power outage on a rainy day!

Here is some good advice as we move gently through these early weeks! Luke 21:36 exhorts us to “Stay awake.” We are urged to be awake to see clearly the “who” and “what” of our daily surroundings!

While on the topic of “new” I also am new in this ministry at Immaculata. I have met a sizable number of you already and reveled in your warmth and hospitality. I look forward to serving here with joy! I know that there are quite a few faculty and staff members who I have not yet had the pleasure of encounter. So, I ask you to please stop by my office, Room 128 in Villa Maria for a little chat (no agenda) at your convenience. I am most eager to get to know you and get a glimpse of your ministry from your perspective– whether it is teaching, or a wide range of service here.

Awakening leads to awareness and in the early pages of his book *Prayerfulness, Awakening to the Fullness of Life*,<sup>i</sup> Dr. Bob Wicks gives “awareness,” as a synonym for prayerfulness. Although this is a short book, it is definitely worth the read!

Prayerfulness is a skill that is freely given to us when we are awake and aware! Prayerfulness is an awareness of God in our lives and in the lives of every gift of creation.

The interrelatedness that Pope Francis developed in *Laudato Si, On Care for our Common Home*, his Encyclical Letter of 2015, provides us with ways to be aware. We read: “St. Francis helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology and take us to the heart of what it is to be human... His response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection.”

How does this relate to our IU mission? We read in our Mission Statement, the phrase “**empowerment of all to seek truth.**” In this year of grace, we hope to unpack the meaning and effectiveness of that phrase. Some helpful tools will include “stay awake, be aware, and bring a spirit of prayerfulness to our encounters with God, others and the gifts of creation that surround us.

May God bless you as you continue the mission you have received!

Sincerely, in the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

Sister Antoine Therese, IHM

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<sup>i</sup> Robert J. Wicks, *Prayerfulness, Awakening to the Fullness of Life*. Sorin Books: Notre Dame, Indiana. 2009.