



Love Cannot Wait

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

Artwork and Writing by:
Mary Ann Osborne, SSND

Artist Statement

I was so excited when I first heard the title of our directional statement, "Love Cannot Wait," which was given to us by our 23rd General Chapter. I knew that Blessed Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger (1797-1879), the foundress of our congregation, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, had written those words. What I did not know was that she had written them already in 1822, eleven years before the congregation began on October 24, 1833.

During her lifetime, Mother Theresa wrote over 5,000 letters to various people. Communication was important to her, and her letters are still a vital source and inspiration.

I began to think about how our backgrounds can weave the direction of our thinking. As a child, Karolina Gerhardinger grew up witnessing hardship and realizing the importance of the family and education. She had an unwavering disposition of directing her life toward God, and she saw the lack of education for girls. Even though contrary to the times, she wanted to be part of doing something about this lack. She had a concern for the whole person.

I thought I knew a fair amount about her life because I had visited her hometown in Stadtamhof, Bavaria, six times. I thought about writing a story and envisioned the discovery of a few more letters or perhaps diary entries from her childhood in a secret pocket in the trunk that I had seen in Neunburg vorm Wald where she started the congregation. My story would have begun with the sisters recently airing out the trunk and discovering the letters.

As I began working on it and placed more and more accurate dates and stories into her imagined diary, I discovered that

Karolina actually did write some early letters to various people. She shared her discoveries in life and thoughts on living in community, all the while explaining why love could not wait.

I began to see a correlation of my own artwork with segments of Karolina's formative years and the context of her writings about how "love cannot wait." Focusing on her mission and message as a faithful servant of God, I worked on my imagined diary of the young Karolina and added new wood sculptures based on themes in her actual writings. I attempted to show that she, like us, was an ordinary person who did ordinary things in growing up, but God's hand was in it all. She wove what she was given into a remarkable story.

I invite the viewer to enter into the visual language of sculpture and the imagined diary of Karolina Gerhardinger and look for the connections. My hope is that what brings truth to us – her writings, the imagined diary, and the accompanying images – will inspire us to act in some way in order to make a better world. The received message will be different for each of us, but when taken to heart, it will form a bond. "United and content with little, we go out into the whole world," Blessed Theresa wrote. "Love cannot wait!"

Mary Ann Osborne, SSND

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

September 15, 1803

Dear Diary,

I am so excited to wake up each morning and go to school. I love my teacher, and the other girls in my class are very nice. My parents and teachers talk about the importance of a Christian family. I really have been taught by my family so many things already. My mother, Maria Franziska Gerhardinger, is teaching me needlework right now, and I only hope someday to be able to do it as well as she does. My father, Willibald Gerhardinger, is teaching me all about his trips and the people he meets on the Danube.

Today in church we heard in the Gospel about five wise and five foolish virgins. Our priest talked about the need to be awake and live a life connected to the Beatitudes. He explained how the reading of the Parable of the Five Wise and Five Foolish Virgins connects with the reading of the Beatitudes. I think the oil that the virgins burned is a sign of the hope that we are called to hold out to others.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Be Awake
Linden Wood, Copper, 2013
23" h x 16" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

March 20, 1804

Dear Diary,

It is very sad around our home these days. My brother Ignatius died. He was born in November and lived only four short months. I surely liked having him in our family. I try to be extra good around the house so that my mother and father can have a bit more time together. I can tell that they are also very sad.

In my mind I imagine Ignatius being taken up to heaven by an angel. He joins the other saints who already live in God's presence. I remember the day Ignatius was baptized. The priest poured Holy Water over his head, and we celebrated with many other family members. It was a happy day.

My brother is now in heaven with God and all the saints and can help me with what God wants me to do in life. I want to stand with all those who have gone before me. Surely someday I will see Ignatius again.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Saints of God
Linden Wood, 2001
47" h x 33" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

June 10, 1804

Dear Diary,

Father, I am going to write to you in my diary today. I missed you so this week while you were gone to Vienna. I hope that the trip is going well for you and that you can come back soon.

I miss you asking me at night about my day in school, and I miss our time together when it gets dark and we look at the stars. God put so many in the sky for us to study. It has been great to learn some of the constellations from you. My favorite is the Little Dipper. When I see it tonight, appearing so brightly, I know that you are probably looking at it and thinking about me, too.

I look forward to the next time you are home at night because you promised to show me where Orion is. It would really be fun to see the stars from your boat on the water. When you first told me the story about the Wise Men following the star that led them to Jesus, I, too, began to hope that I will always follow the star in me that leads me to Jesus.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Holy Exchange
Linocut Print, 2012
12" h x 9" w,

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

July 16, 1804

Dear Diary,

For over a week, I was looking forward to today. Father taught me how to fish! We went down to the river by the Old Stone Bridge in hopes of catching something for supper. I was so excited. It was so pretty down there, and it was wonderful to spend the afternoon with my father. He knows all about fish from his work on the river so he will be a good teacher.

We were sitting on the buckets that we brought along to carry back the fish. I started telling him how much I loved learning and going to school. He again reminded me of how proud he is of me. He told me that I needed to listen hard in school so that when I grow up, I will be able to help others with my knowledge.

He then started talking about some of the people that he sees as he passes by towns on the river. He spoke about our need to help those who do not have enough of what they need to live happily like our family does. He told me about some of the children he sees who look very hungry, how God wants us to help when we can, and how we should work to find solutions for their hunger.

All of a sudden, I got a bite on my line. My father showed me how to get the fish off gently, and then we knew for sure we would have something to eat that night for supper. I am learning how important it is to always think of others.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



The Invitation
Linden Wood, Glass, 1998
60" h x 29" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

September 18, 1805

Dear Diary,

I stayed after school today and helped my teacher tidy up the classroom a bit before I walked home. This afternoon, so many people greeted me on the way. I think it is because they know my father and mother. It made my walk home so enjoyable. I felt so grown up when they called me by my name and were kind to me.

I began to think about how not everyone experiences joy when they walk home like I did. Some people have to sneak over borders to find a safe place to live. Even Joseph and Mary had to sneak Jesus into Egypt so he would not get hurt.

Everyone's journey in life is different. Thank God that we each have been given an angel to guide and protect us. Sometimes people have only the moon and the sun to guide them. Sometimes they also have barbed fences to cross and desert heat to walk through.

One thing I discovered today is that our journey is always easier when we are accompanied by someone we love.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



The Flight
Linden Wood, Acrylic, Wire, 2009
29" h x 33" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

March 25, 1806

Dear Diary,

Mother and I were praying the rosary this evening. I love the things she teaches me about the rosary. I especially like the Joyful Mysteries. They tell me about how Jesus lived with his parents.

I also like to think about the Annunciation. In my mind I can just see Mary in a dancing position, stepping both in and out of the space she was standing in as she heard the Good News. I think she held the angel's announcement close to her heart.

I think that when she heard the angel, she was being kissed on the cheek by God's Spirit. What is exciting to me is that this same Spirit calls each of us through our Baptism.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Annunciation
Linden Wood, 1993
59" h x 20" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

April 6, 1806

Dear Diary,

We celebrated Easter today. I got to wear the new dress that mother made for me. It was blue, one of my favorite colors. It was so thrilling to have Father home from his trip to Vienna. I am hoping that he will take me along the next time he goes. We walked to church at St. Mang and after Mass, I asked my mother about the word Rabbouni, which we had heard in the Gospel.

She started to explain to me that the word was spoken in the garden by Mary Magdalene when she was the first to hear Jesus speak after the Resurrection. The word means teacher. Mary Magdalene knew instantly the sound of Jesus' voice, and in that moment she recognized the depth of what she was witnessing.

Mother told me that when we take on the character of Jesus, who is resurrected, we become transparent. When we imitate the angels, we help to direct the comings and goings of lives we encounter.

By passing through our grief as Mary Magdalene did, we identify creativity bursting forth. Mother said we discover that we have been changed and we can no longer hide our heart on the inside. As we enter more and more into the roles she explained to me — Mary Magdalene, the angel, and Jesus — we start to renew and set in motion what we have learned from the Teacher.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Rabbouni
Lindy Wood, 2013
25" h x 12" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

June 20, 1806

Dear Diary,

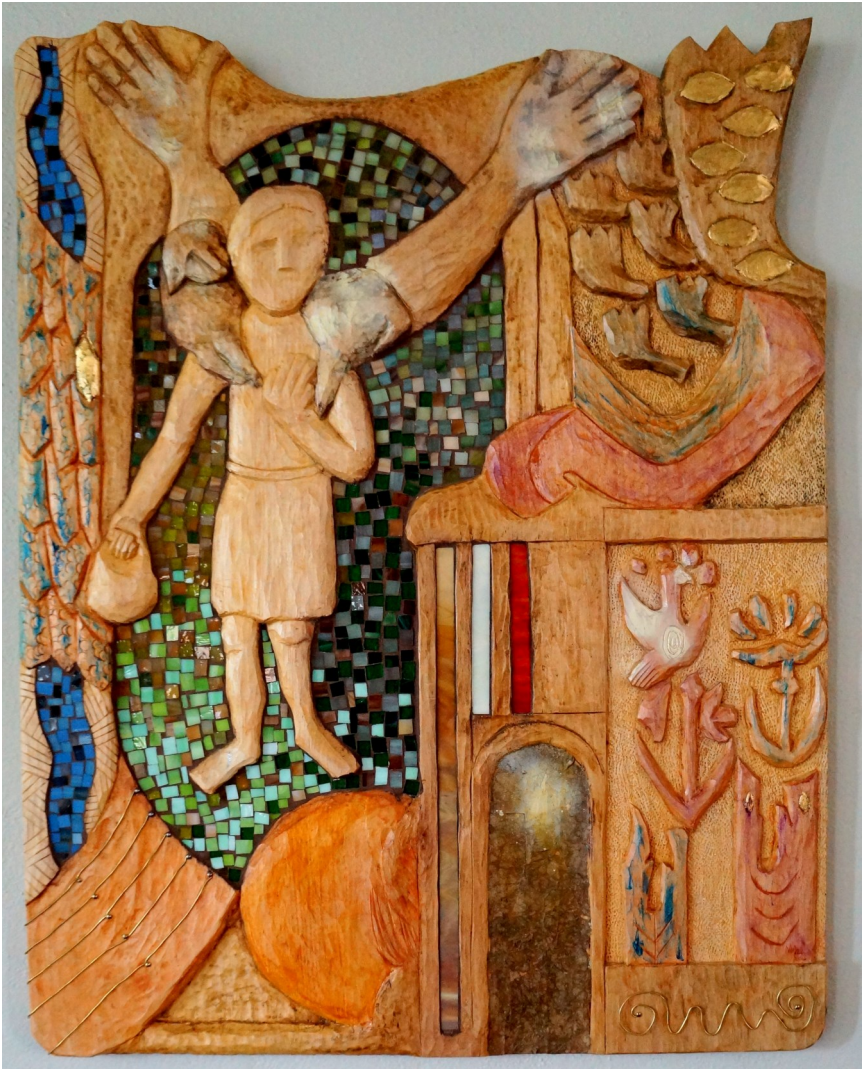
It is my birthday today and I am nine years old. I asked my mother if I could help prepare the meal tonight. My father will be home later this evening from one of his trips on the river. We are going to have vegetable soup, one of my favorite dishes. I helped mother wash and peel the vegetables. The soup will cook most of the afternoon, which will make it extra good, and the whole house will smell wonderful.

As I was peeling the vegetables, I started daydreaming about a shepherd. I think shepherds are very peaceful people. I always try to be peaceful and often pray for that cause. My parents also help me to learn ways of peace, and for this I am grateful.

I picture the hands of the shepherd raised above his head in a praying position to petition God. I also see the shepherd shouldering each of us like he shoulders his sheep. I know that for each of us, the way we approach peace will mean something different. It will bring about a new life for the world when we all promote ways of peace.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Paths of Peace
Linden Wood, Glass, Acrylic, Wire,
Gold Leaf, 2005
36" h x 28" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

November 16, 1806

Dear Diary,

Today my family walked to church and we had to go through quite a bit of snow. It has been piling up on the streets for the past week. At school, it has been fun building things with the snow at recess.

I am happy that I made my First Communion this year. It really was three years early, but I was glad. Now our whole family can go to Communion. Mother says we come to the Lord's Table to be nourished for our life's journey.

In school we learned the importance of the Eucharist and how it calls us to act in our lives. We drew pictures of the symbols used for Eucharist like wheat, grapes, chalices and bread. We learned that it is important to be like Eucharist to one another.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Taste and See
Linden Wood, Copper, 2010
37" h x 27" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

March 8, 1807

Dear Diary,

One of my favorite times of the day is when we have religion class. Right now, Sister is teaching us about the martyrs and saints and reading us stories about their lives. I am not sure that I could have been as brave as so many of them were. Many sacrificed so much for their love of God.

I especially like the stories of the ones who came from Bavaria. I feel that I can know them better because they lived in my land and spoke my language.

Sometimes I feel there is not a big difference between what they did with their lives and how we are living today. The saints and martyrs were so brave in how they responded to what God wanted of them. We all have experienced much brokenness in our worlds. I hope that when I am older, I can continue to remember these stories and live my life more like the saints and martyrs.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Martyrs

Linden Wood, Acrylic, 2012

14" h x 12" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

April 17, 1807

Dear Diary,

We have been studying many things in school and are learning about the Mohawk Indians who lived in New York and in Canada. I was especially interested in learning about Kateri Tekakwitha, also known as the Lily of the Mohawks. She lived from 1656 to 1680. She survived smallpox and was left with scars on her face and body. She became an orphan at the age of four and was then adopted by an uncle who succeeded her father as chief. At age nineteen, she was baptized by Jesuit missionaries on Easter Sunday.

Kateri was powerfully moved by God's love for human beings and saw the dignity of each of her people. Three years before she died, she ran away and went into hiding in Canada. She gave herself totally to God in long hours of prayer and took a vow of virginity. Kateri died at the age of twenty-four. After her death, the scars on her face from smallpox cleared, and she became known as one of the most beautiful women in her tribe.

The other girls in my class and I enjoyed learning about a young person who gave herself to God. She spent much time in nature and certainly loved all of God's creation. I am eager to learn more about other good people who lived in other parts of the world and showed their love for God.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Kateri Tekakwitha
Linden Wood, Wire, 2013
41" h x 7" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

May 17, 1807

Dear Diary,

We had a big celebration in church today for the feast of Pentecost. Father George Maurer used lots of incense, and he had extra candles on the altar. Mother also prepared a special meal for us when we got home from church, and we celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit.

I like to envision the Spirit coming and helping me not only to speak but also to listen to the word of God. I imagine a sort of orchestra where the Spirit is conducting all the people so that they listen and say the right thing. I think we are also called to be conductors as we receive God's words in our ears and speak them with our tongues.

While in church today, I prayed that the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit would find a home in me so that I can hear God's word for me and speak accordingly.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Through the Power
Linden Wood, Copper, Glass, 2005
43" h x 24" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

July 1, 1807

Dear Diary,

I took a walk this evening and saw the most beautiful sunset. Just as I was going over the Old Stone Bridge, I looked up and the sky was filled with the most amazing colors of reds and oranges. The sky looked like it was on fire. The sun glowed like a ball as it disappeared over the Danube River. The sky remained beautiful for a long time.

It reminded me of the image of the Sacred Heart. I think it also glows, just like the setting sun. This thought brings me closer to Jesus and the love He has for me. I am challenged each day to see who it is that I will hold in my heart. Each day I try to show forth God's presence to those that I carry there.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Wondrous Love
Linden Wood, Glass, Brass, 2009
22" h x 22" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

October 27, 1807

Dear Diary,

My friend Anna Hotz and I had a great day playing today. We always use our imagination and have so much fun together when our parents do not need us to help them. I am glad that she lives so close so we can do things together.

Sometimes we just find a sunny spot to watch the clouds and talk about things. Today I showed her a card that I found in the back of church with the Corporal Works of Mercy written on it.

We talked about how we could live the Corporal Works of Mercy and the ways we could be people of light and people who share that light. We are still small, but the light will shine through us for others to see. As we grow up, we will take up the causes of others. This light will be obvious for all to see and will be the energy that marks us with our truth.

It is wonderful to be able to share things with Anna and know that she will not make fun of me. There seems to be a great need in our world to follow these works of mercy and to show light to all.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Corporal Works of Mercy
Linden Wood, Tile, Metal, 2009
38" h x 21" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

April 26, 1808

Dear Diary,

My friend and I went over to Regensburg to get a pail of fresh water today. Usually when we go to St. Erhard's Well, we visit the crypt and say a prayer. Most of the time, of course, I just go out in our backyard and pump some water, but sometimes I like to hike over to Regensburg to see if I meet any of my schoolmates.

Today we also stopped in the cathedral and said a prayer. I noticed a poster up on the bulletin board advertising a retreat with the theme of the Wedding Feast of Cana.

I thought a bit about that story and how happy the wedding couple and their guests must have been to have Mary and Jesus at their feast. I pictured the scene when the wine ran out and Jesus blessed the water and turned it into wine.

As I thought about the story, it suggested to me that we can dig deep into ourselves and pull forth our best to serve others. Mary was the only one with her eyes open to see the needs... and she asked Jesus to help. I, too, know that I can call on Jesus when I need help.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Water Into Wine
Linden Wood, Copper, Beads, 2002
37" h x 19" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

August 5, 1808

Dear Diary,

I helped my mother clean the house today. We did much work and got the house smelling very fresh and clean. Once a year we like to go over everything and clean out all the drawers and cupboards. It was really hot today. We took some breaks and drank some extra water.

My mind kept wandering and thinking about Our Lady of the Snows, whose feast day is today. Maybe it was a way for my thoughts to cool off. I learned about her life in school when the Sisters talked about the different feast days of Mary.

Mary had quite the solution for showing the generous nobleman and his wife where to build the church in her honor. On August 5 she made it snow on the hill in Rome where she wanted the church to be built. The people always referred to the church as Our Lady of the Snows, but eventually they named it St. Mary Major.

Mary, Our Lady of the Snows, silently embraced her child and presented Him to those who were looking for warmth and comfort. Our teachers reminded us that the cold of winter can be dispelled by the warmth of another person.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Our Lady of the Snows
Linden Wood, Metal, 2013
43" h x 18" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

December 12, 1808

Dear Diary,

Today we have another feast day of Mary. We celebrate the day in 1531 when the Mother of Jesus appeared to Juan Diego, a humble man in Guadalupe. The bishop would not believe him and wanted a sign. Mary sent signs — roses, an uncle miraculously cured of a deadly illness, and especially her beautiful image, Our Lady of Guadalupe, on Juan Diego's mantle.

I think that God chose Mary to lead us to Jesus. She came and spoke to Juan in his own language. This helps me remember that Mary and God accept all people no matter where they are. God's love is for the poor with whom He identifies.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Guadalupe
Oak Wood, Glass, Metal, 2012
38" h x 25" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

December 25, 1808

Dear Diary,

What a beautiful sunny day to celebrate Christmas! It is exciting to see some decorations around town. Mother has been getting ready for weeks by baking special cookies and making some different foods that we have only once a year on this special occasion. Father is getting a few days off from his travels, so it will be great to have him around the house for awhile.

I wasn't sure what I would get for Christmas, but I was hoping for something for school or a book to read. I received a book and some cloth. Mother has been showing me how to embroider so I will use the cloth for new pieces of needlework.

As I think back over the past Advent season leading up to this Christmas, I remember the story about Mary going to visit Elizabeth after she found out they were both pregnant. They were cousins and shared news that would change their lives—and others' lives — forever. Our teacher said that Mary went in haste. She must have been really excited to share the news. I think we should also go in haste to tell others!

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Visitation
Walnut Wood, 1995
42" h x 14" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

January 6, 1809

Dear Diary,

It is Epiphany, the day that we celebrate the Magi coming to the stable in Bethlehem. My family has a custom for Three Kings Day that marks the end of the Christmas season.

My father goes around to each of the doorways in our home and marks them with the year and the initials of the three kings, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. This year he wrote 18†C†M†B†09. The crosses represent Christ. The letters CMB also stand for a Latin phrase, *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which means “May Christ bless this home.” I love this custom! It turns our home into a sacred space, a sanctuary space. I know a sanctuary is a special area, a place set apart. Besides the sanctuary we share, like our church, each of us has our own sacred space in our hearts.

I learned from my parents about the value of holding people close to my heart, especially those struggling for justice. Cathedral Pastor Wittmann teaches me to see the outcast, the victim, the poor and marginalized. I am learning that this is a lifelong mission. We are called to risk comfortable attitudes to become one with others seeking for justice.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Sanctuary
Linden Wood, 2000
39" h x 13" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

February 2, 1809

Dear Diary,

Today is the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the temple. I know that Mary and Joseph were proud to take Jesus to the temple to offer Him to God. Simeon and Anna were two people who really spent their life in the temple waiting to see the Messiah. They were happy to lift Jesus up to God.

My parents told me about the day of my baptism. They took me to the church and I was blessed and received as a member of God's family. In a way they presented me to God as an offering.

We are called to follow in the steps of Simeon and Anna and everyday people who open their hearts and share. Someday I hope this same action will inspire a community where the rich will gather and wait for the offerings of the poor to nourish them.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Offering

Linden Wood, Ink, Acrylic, Metal, 2012

43" h x 22" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

March 21, 1809

Dear Diary,

I have such a close connection with my mother and I like to compare it with Mary and her son, Jesus. I know that much of what I learned in life has been taught to me by my mother. I love to go with her when she does errands and visits with people. Some people tell me that I am tied to her apron strings.

Mother taught me to treat those I encounter with respect. I like to do what she says because I feel wrapped in her love when I am with her. I think this love can then spread to others.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Clothed With the Sun
Walnut Wood, Acrylic, 2012
19"h x 14"w x 2"d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

March 31, 1809

Dear Diary,

Today was a wonderful day that I spent with my mother. My father was away from home, as he often is. He is a shipmaster and transports goods on rafts on the Danube River. As she often does, my mother wanted to visit the sick and poor people in our town. I asked if I could go with her and she agreed. We stopped by a rather gloomy home for the elderly. I saw in my mother someone who brought much cheer to the people that we met that day. She really knew how to brighten their day.

While we were walking home, she told me about why she thought it was important to visit people when they were not feeling well. As she spoke, I realized my mother called forth the Spirit within each of the people we encountered today.

I saw that my mother was open to the Spirit. Just as on that first Pentecost when the Spirit descended on those present, she was teaching me what it meant to be baptized in that same Spirit and to call on that Spirit to bring special gifts to me and those I meet.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Calling Forth Spirit
Linden Wood, Glass, 2013
16"h x 13"w x 1"d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

April 23, 1809

Dear Diary,

What I saw today was very scary. The French armed forces were within sight of our home because Napoleon ordered the bombing of Regensburg with fireballs. It was terrifying to see the balls of fire flying through the air...The light of the burning city came through the windows and illuminated our house. With a dreadful roar, the Austrians crossed the Stone Bridge close to our house.

My father went up to the attic to see what was happening. I soon crept up behind him. When, all of a sudden, he saw me standing next to him, he was astonished and asked me what I wanted. I said that I also wanted a better view of the tumult. My father did not send me away, and I saw more than 100 buildings burned to the ground and St Paul's church tower collapse in flames.

I know that we must be in solidarity with the people from Regensburg and Stadtamhof now more than ever. We need to feel what it is like to be on the inside reaching out. More than ever we need to have strong mothers to help families reach out to those who are overlooked. A mother always protects her children and enfolds others in love and protection. This will give us the support that we need to rebuild again. I believe that service to others will be our rebuttal to the suffering that is being inflicted.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



In Solidarity
Linden Wood, 2000
37" h x 20" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

August 1, 1809

Dear Diary,

What an awful day it was! The Canonesses of St. Augustine who taught us all this while were forced to leave our school, and the convent will be closed. The government is hoping to take away the influence of the Church on education.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina

August 14, 1809

Dear Diary,

Today Cathedral Pastor Wittmann spoke to my parents about a plan he had for two of my friends and me to teach at the school for girls in Stadtamhof, Bavaria. Now that I have reached the age of twelve, I am no longer obliged to attend school, so I would rather do something more interesting. But my parents think it is a good idea and think that it is God's will that I would do this.

So, together with Anna Hotz and Anna Praun, I will be prepared for teaching by Father George Mauerer. I will teach about twenty of the smallest children, age six. It will be hard.

I often like to think of the Parable of the Sower, and now I think it can be a model for us as we become teachers. Even if we are very young, if we cultivate in good ground, we can bring to maturity the seeds of the Divine Word sown in us. I learned from Mother that sowing involves throwing and pulling back, and my hands must continue in one uniform movement until all is distributed for growth. The sower steps out into the field where most will not go.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



The Sower
Linden Wood, Glass, Metal, 2001
48" h x 16" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

September 25, 1809

Dear Diary,

I had some questions for Father George Maurer who is instructing us on how to teach at the school. I really do not understand how he can teach 120 girls in one room while I am having a difficulty with just 20. The children seem to like to come to school, but it is hard for me to keep ahead of them.

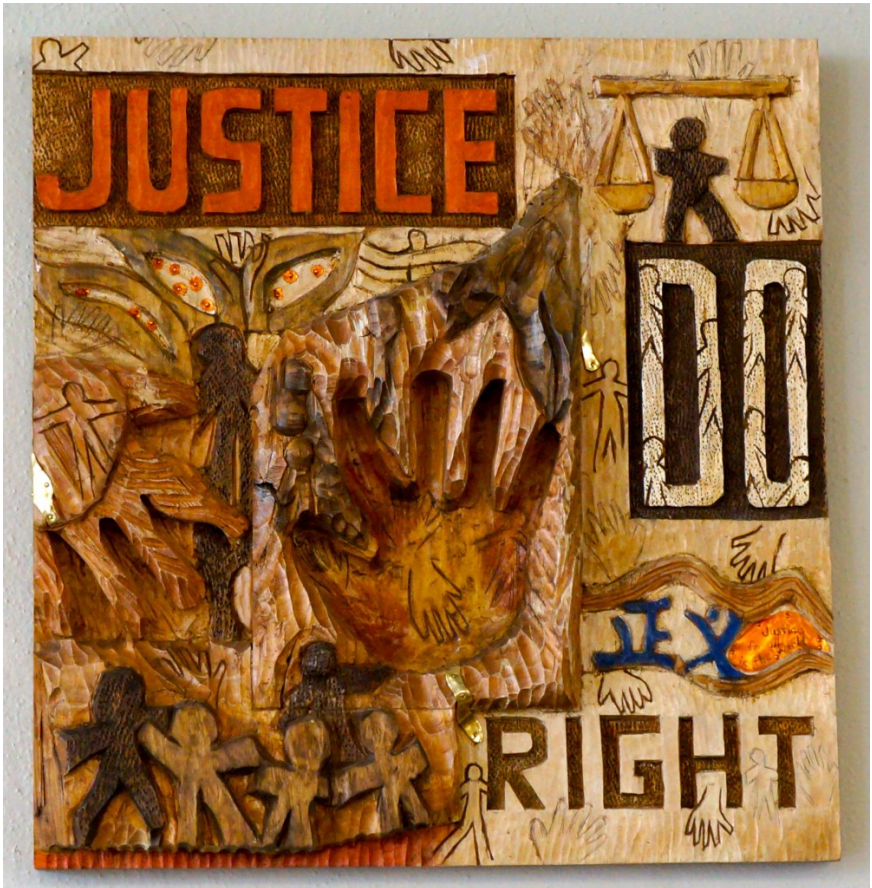
My parents continue to tell me that it is the right thing to do and that they believe I am capable of handling it, but it surely was not what I was planning. I was hoping for some adventure with my life. I have so enjoyed going with my father on some of his river trips, and I am learning many skills from my mother. I seem to have a natural way with homemaking. I really prefer the busy life at home where people are always coming and going to that of a classroom teacher.

When I finally did get to see Father Maurer, he gave me all his attention and was very encouraging about how I have been teaching. I just know that it is a big responsibility, and I hope that I can teach others as well as I have been taught.

I know this is early to decide if I am doing the right thing, but I will try to give it all I have and see how it goes.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Justice Will Flourish
Linden Wood, Copper, Ink, 2012
20" h x 9" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

February 2, 1810

Dear Diary,

Today is Candlemas Day. We talked in school about this being the day that we celebrate Jesus being presented in the temple. Father Maurer also told us that today is the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring equinox.

Tonight I am going to pray by one of the blessed candles in my room. I like how it flickers in the dark and yet lights up certain parts of the room. It is good to take some time and just be alone and pray. I like to think about the small miracles that I witnessed today.

At night I like to look out of my window and see the stars and moon from my bed. I look for the constellations that I know. Then in the morning, the sun captures my attention, and I marvel at how bright it glows. I think people have a certain glow about them, too. I see people using their hands, eyes, and smile to let their inner light shine forth. I see so many people showing compassion at Cathedral Pastor Wittmann's soup kitchen. They are like angels to the people. I am going to ask him if I can help there sometimes.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Inner Light
Linden Wood, Ink, Copper, 2013
24" h x 24" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

August 23, 1810

Dear Diary,

As I was walking outside today in Regensburg, I heard beautiful music coming from the cathedral. I decided to go in and make a visit and listen for a while to the organ music. I closed my eyes and was transported into another world.

While in the cathedral, I felt like those who were present on the mountain for the Transfiguration. I wanted to stay there. It was so calming and nourishing to be able to listen to the music and think about the greatness of God.

I know that I did not experience the dazzling whiteness of the light as the disciples did, but I began to see a new vision to carry on my purpose in the classroom. Like the disciples, I need to have my eyes open to realize my own moments of transfiguration.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Transfiguration
Linden Wood, Glass, 2005
31" h x 26" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

December 16, 1811

Dear Diary,

I love singing the Advent songs in church each Sunday before Christmas. I especially like the melody of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” Soon we will start the Advent Novena, the nine days of praying the psalms with references to the promised Redeemer and listening to readings from the Old Testament.

I can imagine a finger labyrinth with the O Antiphons on it. It would highlight a title for the Messiah and also Isaiah’s prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. On this Advent labyrinth we could travel with our eyes or fingers through the path, praying the ancient prayers that have been offered for centuries. We would feel with compassion the many areas of our world that call out for light and relief. Drawn to this light, we would seek our center and all it holds for us. As we travel, we would pray:

O Jesse, from the genealogy of Christ... a sign for all people.

O Sapientia, wisdom... show us the way to live.

O Oriens, light... shine on darkness.

O Adonia, Lord... set us free.

O Rex Gentium, king of the nations... save us.

O Clavis, key... break walls, lead captives.

O Emmanuel, God with us... come.

May our prayers break open all that binds us.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Finger Labyrinth
Linden Wood, Copper, Tile, 2013
67" h x 21" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

August 3, 1812

Dear Diary,

Waking up early this morning, I quickly said good bye to Mother and headed out with Father on another of his trips to Vienna. I had gone with him before, but I never tire of seeing all the sights and I still enjoy seeing the places I had been to before. The churches and palaces are so magnificent. I love to go to the marketplaces and look at the wares that are being sold. Many things that I see are new to me, and I enjoy learning about them.

Father made this trip many times, but each time that I go along with him, the landscape always looks different to me. I never tire of seeing the beauty that God has given us to admire.

I remember my first voyage with Father and how the craft tilted dangerously. Everyone was crying for help, but I stood calmly by his side and tried to encourage the others. I knew that he would have complete control over the boat, and I was not worried. In that way, he reminds me of our God who takes complete care of us and provides for us the shelter that we need.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Shelter of Love
Linocut Print, 2013
10" h x 8" w

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

May 2, 1813

Dear Diary,

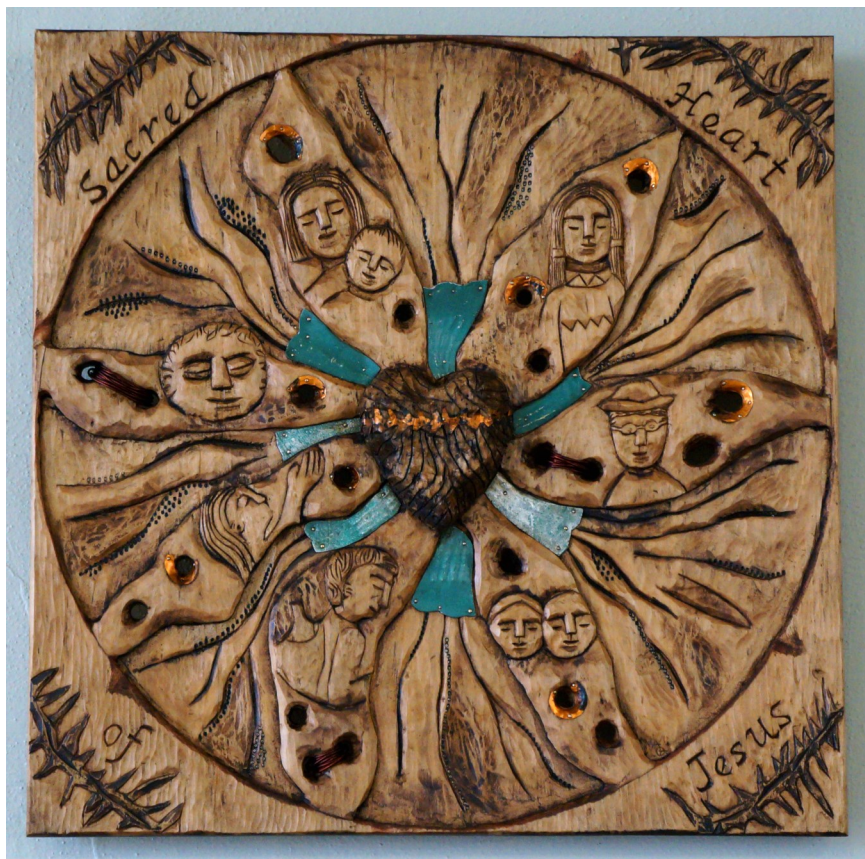
Father was home today, so together we went for a walk to the Danube River. He told me about some of the royalty he met on his journeys up and down the river and about some of the poverty he witnessed. As I reached down to touch the water, it cooled my hand, and I thought about how refreshing water can be. I almost felt a pulse beat in it.

Our talk today led me to think about the many different people and situations we encounter where we feel the pulse, the rhythm of life's flow. There will be hardships in our lives, but we are always able to call on the love of Jesus to remind us that we are royalty.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, we implore you.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



One Pulse
Linden Wood, Metal, Copper, Beads, 2013
25" h x 25" w x 3" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

March 31, 1816

Dear Diary,

We have many poor girls in our school who come each day with nothing much to eat. We, the teachers, make soup for them daily during the winter. Father Wittmann often comes to distribute it himself.

We also make various articles of clothing for the children. Father Wittmann sent us his fur coat and told us to see if we could make it into winter gloves for the children who had none to wear. I do admire his loving care for the poor children and hope that someday it will be a part of my character.

It reminds me of Jesus choosing to wash the feet of those present at the Last Supper. By doing so, he chose to be one with them instead of setting himself apart.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Washing of Feet
Linden Wood, Ink, 2011
13" h x 9" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

October 4, 1816

Dear Diary,

After teaching in the former convent building for three years, we heard about the order that it would be turned into a barracks. We had to move our classrooms to St. Catherine's Home for Poor and Elderly People, where my classroom was the large sitting room of one of the elderly women who lives there. One corner of the room was fenced off for a goat, and sometimes the goat finished my sentences with a bleat. It was rather difficult to teach this way, but we did our best until conditions improved. After four years, our prayers were answered.

Yesterday we transferred all our things into a separate school building. We each have our own classroom and things are going much better. We are beginning to teach drawing and music now. I think we are inspiring our students with our enthusiasm for learning.

I am noticing that after the girls finish their studies, more and more of them cannot find work. I am going to ask some of my friends to teach the girls to sew and do needlework. Father Wittmann says he will provide the materials that we need. When the clothes are finished, we will give them to poor people of our town. And when the girls leave our school, they will be able to clothe their own families and earn some income.

It is easy to find teachers for wealthy and talented children from noble families, but our task is to follow Jesus' example by giving preference to poor children and by being mothers to orphans and neglected children. Each day at Mass, I am reminded of the command given to us at the Last Supper, "Do this in memory of Me." I picture Jesus washing his disciples' feet and then sharing the Eucharist with them. I find teaching to be a way of remembering and following His example, and I see an awakening in many young women.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Do This In Memory
Linden Wood, Brass, 2001
18" h x 31" w x 2" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

October 23, 1818

Dear Diary,

The longer I teach with “the two Annas” in Stadtamhof, the more the thought of religious life keeps coming to me. I am meeting regularly now with the Cathedral Pastor, Michal Wittmann, and he is guiding me.

As a result of the government’s Secularization Decree, church property was taken, and religious communities that provided education and religious instruction were banned. There is really no thought of being a religious. Even so, I am not going to give up on my idea of becoming a religious someday.

Father Wittmann is allowing the three of us to live together in community under the direction of Anna Praun, who is the oldest in our group of teachers. We have long periods of silence and many hours of prayer in common, sometimes even during the night.

I think the situation with our government is making me a stronger person, and I am discovering the blessing that this time of waiting is providing for me. It reminds me of Pentecost when those present each discovered their own wounds and came to realize that those wounds were their blessings.

Within our hearts we know our own weaknesses. When shared together, they become our strength. We can then go beyond what we think will hold us back and see that it is the very fuel for our vocation.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Wound Sanctifier
Linden Wood, Glass, Metal, 2000
49"h x 47"w x 1"d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

September 5, 1819

Dear Diary,

I have been living in community now for almost a year. It has brought me to a new level in wanting to be a religious. All good begins small. We have a daily order that Father Wittmann helped us set up.

I think the key for us is that we are living in community. There is strength for me in being with the others. I know that I could be off doing the same practices as an individual, but the opportunity to do them in a community is changing my world. I see it as God's work. Through our self-denial and penitential practices, we are preparing ourselves to discern God's cause. Let us not shrink from the dear cross which shines before us. Love gives everything gladly, everything, again and again, daily.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Copper Cross
Linden Wood, Copper, 1992
24" h x 24" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

March 16, 1822

Dear Diary,

I know it is late, but I just returned from St. Mang Church and had to make an entry in my diary about what I reflected and prayed about tonight. I like to go over there at night when it is quiet, and often I go behind the altar and pray. If I want to read something, I can use the light from the sanctuary lamp to see. Many times, though, I just remain still and allow myself to feel the love that God has for me. One of my favorite prayers has become, "*Now I am in Jesus.*" I just repeat it over and over, trying to make it part of who I am.

When I pray, I picture the image of Christ on the cross and I like to think of Jesus embracing me. His hands are open wide, reaching and enfolding all of us in His love. Sometimes I picture Him breaking forth from the cross and stepping into my daily life, offering resurrection as my guiding energy. My time behind the altar in prayer energizes me to invest myself in the cry of others.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



The Embrace
Linden Wood, 1997
37" h x 36" w x 6" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

May 5, 1825

Dear Diary,

Today my father died of encephalitis at the age of fifty-five years. I have lost a wonderful friend and mentor. He taught me so much by who he was. I loved to see him deal with other people and I appreciate the gifts he passed on to me. I am going to miss him so much.

I have not lived at home since I was eighteen, but it is still hard to think that I will never see my father again. Mother and I will have to make some decisions about the house, father's business and our land.

My hope is that someday I can pass on to those I teach some of the virtues that my father taught me. I believe that when I do, these virtues will only increase in me. Usually, what we give away comes back to us doubled.

These next days will be hard, but Ignatius has his father with him now, and Mother is still with me. Someday we will all be reunited.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Gather Up the Fragments

Linden Wood, 2013

12" h x 12" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

June 5, 1825

Dear Diary,

Things seem so different now that my father is not around. It is hard to go to school and keep my mind on things, but I need to keep up a climate of joy and achievement in our school. My students need to develop into good mothers who not only keep house but accept the tasks of the formation of their families. I know this is the only way to change society.

I plan to sell my inherited property so that I can use the money to help those who are poor. I think I can convince Mother to move into the school building and help our small group of teachers manage the household here.

This year our new king, Ludwig I, will begin to allow religious congregations and orders to come to life again. He seems very religious and is openly opposed to the Enlightenment. I am still holding on to my dream of someday being a religious sister.

I am very privileged to be working with Father Wittmann. He has led me in the ways of the Spirit. For almost twenty years, I have felt his support. Our school is certainly being blessed in that we can educate young women under his guidance.

We have many guardian angels watching over us and making all this possible. I am gradually learning when to be silent and when to step back. Sometimes it is hard to contain myself.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Guardians
Linden Wood, Copper, Ink, 2012
22" h x 23" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

February 17, 1830

Dear Diary,

Cathedral Pastor Michael Wittmann became Auxiliary Bishop of Regensburg. He is very busy now with other matters, but he continues to be such a support and guide for me.

Last September, I proposed the idea of reopening the convent school. I was very disappointed by the citizens of Stadtamhof who rejected the idea of a convent school. We received royal permission to open, but the townspeople would not allow it because they believed that we already have a well-functioning school and they would not support the plan.

I realize that, in God's time, it will come to be if it is meant to be. We cannot stop the birthing of Jesus in new and unexpected places if it is God's will.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Out of Darkness
Linden Wood, Ink, Metal, 2013
34" h x 30" w x 1" d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

August 10, 1830

Dear Diary,

St Augustine, who lived from 354 to 430, had a vision for religious life centered in love. The community lived together, witnessing to the Gospel ideal of “one heart and one soul.”

In the early 17th century, St Peter Fourier developed a constitution rooted in the Augustinian tradition of a group of consecrated teachers dedicated to the education of girls. I was fortunate to be educated until I was twelve by some of these Canonesses of St Augustine right here in Stadtamhof.

Recently Barbara Weinzierl and Maria Blass indicated to me their desire to share in religious life. I am hoping that we can live as Augustine envisioned in his constitution. He saw in the Trinity the basis, source and goal of all community.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Saint Augustine
Linden Wood, Copper, Ink, 2011
11"h x 9"w x 1"d

Conversations with Karolina: A Diary Imagined

October 17, 1833

Dear Diary,

In a week I will join Barbara Weinzierl, Maria Blass and a poor deaf girl in Neunburg vorm Wald. Father Siegert, whom Bishop Wittmann assigned to help us as our guide, is traveling with me. We are visiting several convents to see how the sisters live. Court Chaplain Francis Sebastian Job from Vienna arranged everything for this journey.

Bishop Wittmann died last March, but he had given Father Job his preliminary work on a rule for the new foundation. Father Job, who was in close contact with Bishop Wittmann the last weeks of his life, offered to guide us now. Father Job thinks it would be a good idea to have a new religious community in his hometown of Neunburg vorm Wald and is going to provide the necessary foundation fund for us.

In February, the city council approved his plan to support a new community here. The other teachers did not want to leave Stadtamhof so there will be just three of us to start out.

I can only trust in God now. I know now more than ever that this cause is from God.

Love cannot wait,

Karolina



Love Cannot Wait

Linden wood, Ink, Acrylic, Metal, 2014

28"h x 17"w x 1"d