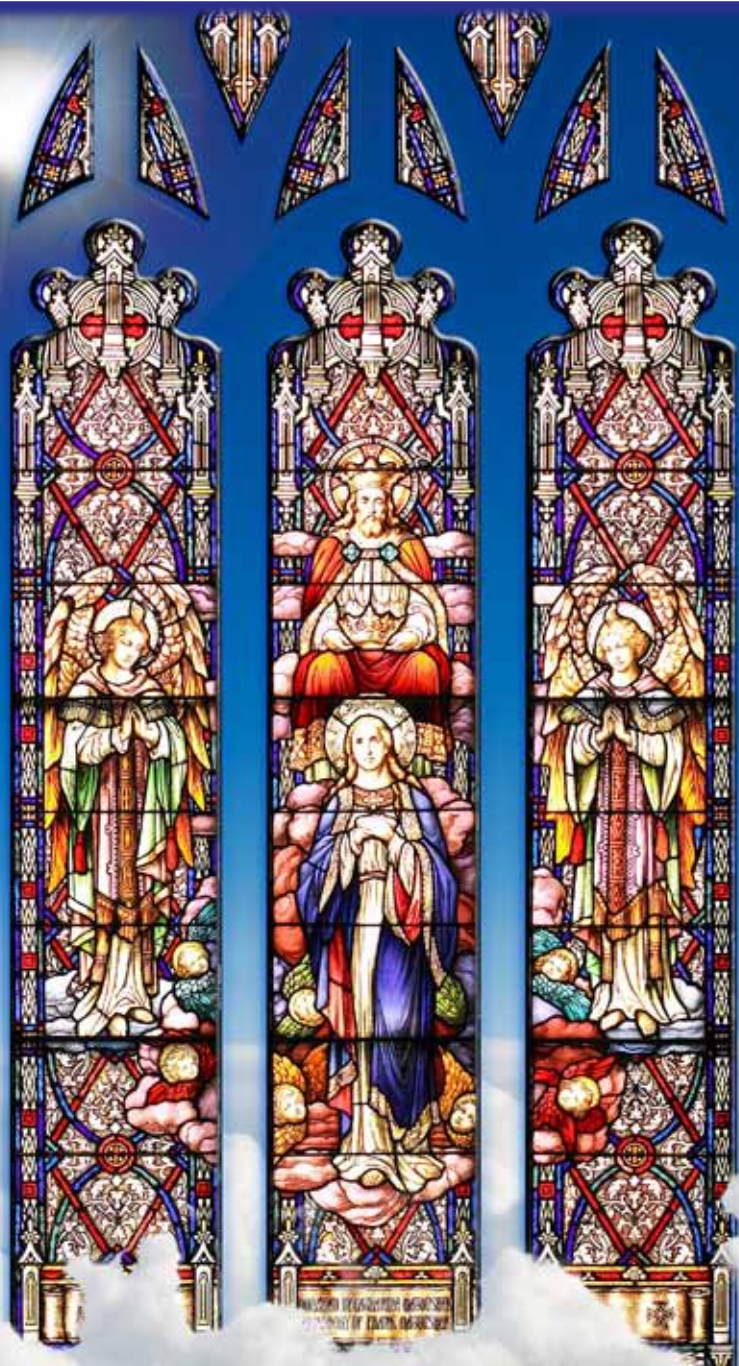


The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY



SUMMER 2010

The **MESSENGER**

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY

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The **MESSENGER**
MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY

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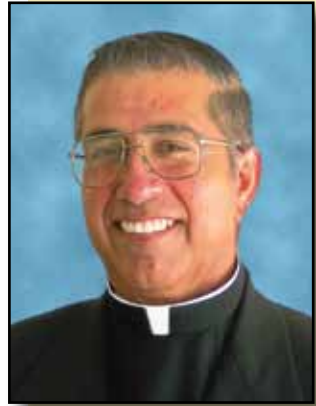
Dear Readers,

I do hope that your summer has been going well in spite of all that is going on in our world. We cannot help but think of the celebration of freedom we have each July in our country: Independence Day. One of those freedoms is the freedom of religion. It is a principle that supports our freedom as an individual or community to manifest our belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. In living our Christian life with integrity, our actions and words are to be filled with Christ-like love, goodness and a sense of justice. Called as Christ's followers of the day, let us not add to the world's brokenness and hurt, but bring it healing and mercy, goodness and not evil. Happy 4th of July and God bless you!

Sincerely in the Holy Family, I am

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HOLY FAMILY LIFE

For Every Marriage Virtue of the Month

Introduction to the “Marital Virtue of the Month” Series

By Archbishop Joseph Kurtz

Couples, like individuals, acquire virtues through the repetition of particular practices and behaviors. They make the virtue their own by freely choosing to act in certain ways, every day.

Over the past several years, as chairman of the Bishops’ Committee on Marriage and Family Life, I’ve had the privilege of listening to many couples reflect on their marriage. Repeatedly, I’ve been struck by how many speak of their sense of helping each other to heaven. They instinctively grasp St. Paul’s call to “a still more excellent way” in which their married love, which is God’s power alive within them, leads them to heaven.

As Christians, we understand this call to growth as a call to a holy, or virtuous, marriage. “Virtue” may sound like an old-fashioned word, but it lies at the heart of spirituality. A virtue is a stable part of one’s character that allows a person to perform good acts and to give his or her best (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1803).

Couples, like individuals, acquire virtues through the repetition of particular practices and behaviors. They make the virtue their own by freely choosing to act in certain ways, every day. The question posed in our radio and TV spots, “What have you done for your marriage today?” is really an invitation to grow in virtue



The Missionaries of the Holy Family Website has Daily Marriage Tips that are provided by “For Your Marriage.org” Here are some samples....

June 14

Are you in a “mixed marriage?” This term has been used for religious mixed marriages but it could mean mixed races, classes, ethnicities, or even technology (PC vs Mac.) How have your differences enriched your marriage?

June 15


One advantage of marriage.. is that when you fall out of love with each other, it keeps you together until maybe you fall in love again.” (Judith Viorst) What stirs you back to your love when it becomes routine?

through a gentle word, a generous deed or an act of self-sacrifice.

No one brings all the necessary virtues into a marriage, and the virtues that spouses do bring need to be developed. So marriage is a “school for virtue,” in which spouses learn such virtues as forgiveness, kindness, and humility. It’s the work of a lifetime.

A holy marriage, one that is a communion of persons and a sign of God’s love, is made up of many virtues. In this series, we’ll look at several virtues that characterize a holy and happy marriage. Each article will consider how the virtue

can be practiced in marriage and offer one or two questions for reflection. I hope that couples will be able to set aside time each month to read and prayerfully discuss these articles.

Love, of course, is the more excellent way that includes all the virtues. As a couple grows in virtue they also grow in love. Hand in hand they walk the journey to holiness. I pray that you may persevere in this journey, knowing the love of God, the encouragement of the Church, and the support of the many couples who are walking this journey with you. 

For more stories on marriage and sound advice from a Catholic perspective go to
www.foryourmarriage.org





YOUTHFUL OUTLOOK

Open to the Call

By Luke D. Jasek

St. James Catholic Church, Seguin TX

J.M.J.

I recently went to a Missionaries of the Holy Family vocational retreat for Altar Servers on April 10, 2010 in New Braunfels, Texas. It was led by Fr. Mario Galindo, M.S.F. who gave the first talk about the duties we have in life now and later on in the life we choose. Fr. Mario explained the three general vocational paths in life, namely the single life, married life and the religious life. To really know what God has planned for us he said that we must discern the calling we have by prayer and silence. He also talked about how we must not be worried because the Holy Spirit will guide us by giving us wisdom and strength. Father reminded us that God does not make “masses” He makes individuals.


The next speaker at the retreat was a seminarian, Jason Martini, from the Assumption Seminary. Jason was an altar server as a boy and this helped him awaken his calling to the priesthood. It was good to know that God can give you graces from being an altar server. And

these graces can help you realize what God is calling you to do. Jason’s story shows that a vocation calling can come at an early age.



The last person to speak at the retreat was Bishop Cantu. The Bishop spoke to us about how each of us is called to become saints in whatever vocation we choose. He also told us about an accident in his youth that helped guide him into his religious vocation.

The Bishop told us that although we are called to be saints, it does not mean being sad and downcast but to be happy and joyful in what God calls each of us to.

Being a priest in today’s world is not encouraged very much as it is mostly frowned upon by the society we live in. If we had no priests, who would bring Christ’s forgiveness in confession and who would bring us the Holy Eucharist? I do not fully realize my vocation, but we all must consider if we are called to become a Priest, brother or sister as these are very special callings from God. 



Luke (2nd from right) is 14 years old and lives near Seguin, Texas with his Dad, Matthew; Mom, Susan; older brother, Jacob; and younger sister, Sarah. He has been home schooled along with his brother and sister since Kindergarten. He will attend John Paul II Catholic High School in Schertz as a freshman in the fall. Luke is a member of the St. James Catholic Church where he enjoys being an altar server. He has also served many Fridays at the MSF Our Lady of Guadalupe parish as well. He enjoys nature, yard work, and taking care of his pets which include a cat, puppy, fish and homing pigeons. Luke also enjoys visiting and helping his grandparents as well as spending time with his friends. Luke belongs to a young men's group, St. Michael's Squadron, in which he participates in daily private prayer time, weekly meetings and monthly retreats. Although he is not exactly sure what his future plans are Luke is interested in science and his Catholic faith.

***Be a gentle inspiration. Consider making a Vocation Nomination:
Copy or cut and mail the completed form to***

***Vocations
Missionaries of the Holy Family
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He has the spark of a priest...

1(888) 4-THY-WILL www.MSF-America.org

Do you know someone who might have the gifts to be a priest or religious brother?
If so, you can encourage that person by *letting us know their name*. We will pray for them, let their parish pastor know and personally contact them.

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Adult
or
Youth

First & Last Name _____

Street Address _____

City ST Zip _____

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APOSTOLATE UP CLOSE

Putting Sunday Mass First

By Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan

Just a week after the awful earthquake in Haiti last January, I was able to visit that suffering island. I was especially eager to meet our 300 Catholic Relief Services staff members who continue the 60-year presence of CRS in that impoverished country. As you can imagine, they were exhausted, emotionally drained, mourning the huge losses and on the brink of discouragement. My visit with them was moving.



without the grace of the Eucharist, without God's help, she would be useless. All over Port-au-Prince she was seeing the dying of Jesus on the cross. She knew she needed the Mass — the renewal of the dying and rising of Jesus — more than ever!

As I got ready to leave them that Saturday afternoon, I asked if there were anything else I could do for them. A young woman raised her hand. I expected her to ask for more medicine, tents, drinking water, food and workers. Perhaps, I thought, she would beg me to “get the message out” here at home about the agony of Haiti.

By now you know I'm “hung up” on Sunday Mass. To be sure, we've

got problems galore in the Church. You don't need me to enumerate them — just turn on the TV or buy a newspaper.

Instead, all she asked was, “Can a priest say Mass for us tomorrow, on Sunday?”

In the midst of all the horror, from out of her exhaustion and helplessness, she simply wanted Sunday Mass!

We won't be able to do anything about them if we do not put first things first. “Seek first the Kingdom of God...” as Jesus exhorted us.

Can you imagine? What a tremendous inspiration she was! In the midst of all the horror, from out of her exhaustion and helplessness, she simply wanted Sunday Mass!

That means, on the first day of the week, the day of His Resurrection, we long for the

same grace that tearful CRS worker in Haiti desired: Sunday Mass.

Those many of you who are faithful to Sunday, and

even weekday Mass know that during this glorious Easter season we often have our readings from episodes in the Gospel when Jesus, just risen from the dead, visits with

His disciples, and also from the Acts of the Apostles recounting the earliest days of the Church.

Notice (like Sunday, April 18's Gospel) that Jesus very often appears to His friends at a meal. He eats with them! He breaks bread with them!

Guess what? That's the Eucharist! Jesus was doing again what He had done on the night before He died, Holy Thursday, at His Last Supper.

Recall that, in the early Church, what distinguished the first followers of Jesus was

...in the early Church, ...they faithfully came together every Sunday to pray, hear His word and "break bread."

that they faithfully came together every Sunday to pray, hear His word and "break bread."

There it is again! Sunday Mass!

People ask me all the time, "What's the major problem in the Church today?"

They're hoping for a juicy answer. They're disappointed when I reply, "Two-thirds of

"Two-thirds of our Catholic people no longer attend Mass every Sunday."

our Catholic people no longer attend Mass every Sunday."

Not long ago, the board of trustees of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., of which I am a mem-

ber, heard a young priest from China share his appreciation for the chance to have studied at the university. He had finished his doctorate and was eager to get back home to China.

Mind you, things for the Church in China are far from rosy. "Where will you live?" we asked the young priest.

"I don't know," he replied.

"Does your bishop have an assignment for you?" we inquired.

"My bishop is in jail," he somberly responded.

"So what will you do?" we wondered aloud.

"I will offer Mass," the young Chinese priest smilingly replied. "I will visit villages and

"I will ...celebrate Mass in barns, around kitchen tables, in garages, in fields and the people will come."

celebrate Mass in barns, around kitchen tables, in garages, in fields and the people will come. They will risk harassment and arrest, but they will come. They will come to Mass because they realize it makes them Catholic, it sustains and strengthens them. They will come to Mass..."

And we don't...

See you at Mass! 

*Reprinted with Permission
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*Photo courtesy of Archdiocese
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*Donations for Haiti through
Catholic Relief Service can be made at
www.catholicrelief.org*



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Holy Family Circle Members are persons, families and organizations who strongly believe in the Apostolates of the Holy Family priests and brothers. Holy Family Circle members graciously share in advance the joyful level of gifts they intend for the coming year. This steady and recurring financial support both sustains and helps expand the Holy Family Apostolates.

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AROUND THE PROVINCE



Chapter Attendees: The Province Chapter is held once every three years. All Province members are invited to attend and a representative from the General Government in Rome also attends. One of the key events of the Chapter is to elect the Provincial for the next three years and the Provincial Government. In attendance at the Chapter this April was:

*(Back Row: L to R) Fr. Jim Beegan, Fr. Mario Galindo, Fr. Alberto Trevino, Fr. David Tonary, Fr. Phil Sosa,
Fr. Andrea Spatatora, Fr. Tomasz Grabara, Fr. Feddy Himawan, Fr. Dan Hawkins.*

*(Front Row L to R) Mary Martin (Admin. Assistant), Bro. John Griffin, Fr. Richard Oberstar, Fr. Ilacir Brassiani, Fr. Joe Lawless, Fr. Jim Wuerth,
Fr. Art Ockwood, Fr. Jim Wasser, Bro. Rolland Kapsner, Fr. Francois Rakotovoavy, Fr. Gene Roman, Fr. Simon Brzozowski.*

AROUND THE PROVINCE

Chapter members ▶
listen to ministries'
report from a member.

Members voting to
accept a financial report.
(below & below right)



The ballots voting for the Provincial are ▶
counted by the 'Scrutineers' of the Chapter.
The Scrutineers for a meeting are the oldest
and the youngest members present -
Fr. Simon Brzozowski (86) and
Fr. Andrea Spatafora (52)



◀ Fr. Phil Sosa is re-elected to a second term as
Provincial. Shown on left is Fr. Itacir Brassiani the Vicar
for the General Government in Rome, then the new
Provincial Government for the North American Province
includes (L to R); Fr. David Tonary – Third Assistant,
Fr. Jim Wuerth – Second Assistant, Fr. Phil Sosa-
Provincial Superior, and Fr. Andrea Spatafora – Vicar.

The Province now has 4 International Priests ▶
(L to R) Fr. Francois Rakotoavoavy (Madagascar),
Fr. Eka Yuantoro (Indonesia), Fr. Tomasz Grabara
(Poland), Fr. Phil Sosa – Provincial,
Fr. Itacir Brassiani – Vicar General Government,
Fr. Feddy Himawan (Indonesia)





PARENTS TIME OUT

Face the World, Kid!

Contributed by Dr. Ray Guarendi

Dear Dr. Ray,

I try hard to keep my kids innocent and to raise them more slowly than their peers. Regularly I hear, "You can't protect them forever. That's a real world out there. They have to learn to deal with life."

– Cautious Mom

"Yes, you can't protect them forever. Yes, that is a real world out there. And yes, they do have to learn to deal with life. What does any of this have to do with raising your children at your pace and not the world's?

What you are hearing makes my top ten list of nonsense notions assaulting good parents today. Mindlessly repeated by so many so often, these notions have assumed the illusion of child-rearing truth. They are "correct" just because everybody is saying they are.

Let's go back a couple of generations when it was considered intrusive and impolite for people to give you their unasked-for opinions about your parenting. Protecting kids – socially, morally and emotionally – was considered a very good thing. Indeed, a prime duty of grown-ups was to shield children from the ugly and immoral stuff of life while morality was being formed.

Keeping kids innocent was a worthy goal, a sign of responsible and wise parenting. Soon enough a youngster would face what was out there beyond childhood.



In the last generation or two, we've taken a step backward toward "enlightenment." It is now more psychologically savvy to help kids deal with seamy reality as it assails them. In fact, if you put this off too long, when the child finally does confront the "real world," whatever that means, he will be shell-shocked emotionally and morally. He'll be overwhelmed or seduced by evil or crushed into

despair. His very innocence will be his undoing.

I have some questions regarding this “real kids know the real world” assertion. Who is better able to navigate the temptations and challenges of life, a mature child or an immature child? Who is more able to cope with life’s ugliness, a moral eight-year-old or a moral eighteen-year-old?


The opposite of innocence is not maturity; it is worldliness. And worldliness does not equip a child to cope with the world. It just makes him more likely to be comfortable with it.

Most parents accused of being over-protective are not “babying” their children emotionally, nor are they running ahead of their kids, bulldozing all of life’s obstacles and frustrations out of the way. Their protectiveness is morally driven. They want to shield their kids from situations and people who could overwhelm their judgment or their young consciences. A good parent’s supervision, caution and vigilance are healthy and wise.

Only when it’s too late do many parents realize that they weren’t protec-

tive enough. Over and over again my experience with families has taught me a real life truth: far more children have trouble as adults not because they grew up slowly but because they saw and learned too much too early.

So stand strong, Mom. Give social freedom later than the peer group gets it. Protect innocence. Lay a strong moral base before you let the world assault it. Your “overprotectiveness” will be rewarded by real life.

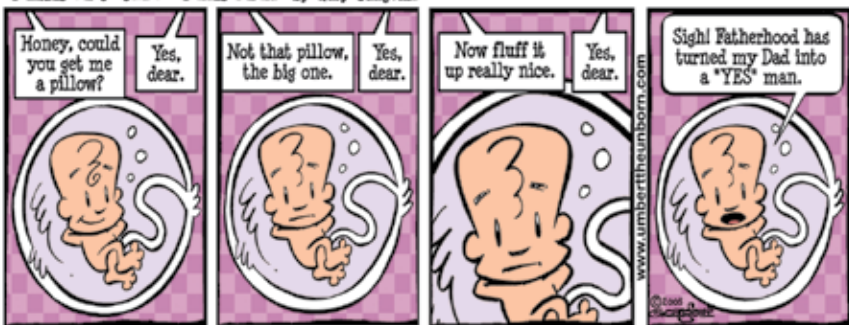
Good Discipline, Great Teens;
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Dr. Ray Guarendi

The father of ten, a psychologist, a popular Catholic radio personality and guest speaker offering parenting advice in concert with Catholic values. More information about Dr. Ray’s books and tapes can be found on the internet at www.DrRay.com

Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi





DEAR FATHER

Ask Father John

By Rev. John Carl Lombardi, M.S.F.

Q: Dear Father, *How long did people in Genesis really live? After reading the Book of Genesis I wondered about the accounts given of the ages of the people and question if they are to be taken literally or symbolically since people live into the hundreds.*

A: To answer your question about the lifespan of the people in Genesis it is important to divide the ages of the people in the first book of the Bible into two separate time frames — one of prehistory that ends with Babel and the other of history that begins with Abraham.

In the time before prehistory and the Great Flood, longevity should be seen in context of such ancient traditions of the Babylonians and the Sumerian primeval kings, where they lived to great ages ranging from 18,000 years to 43,200 years. Let us not forget that the Jews were greatly influenced by these people and borrowed many concepts from them, including the attachment of longevity to the lives of those who commended respect. The Jews, nevertheless, always remained monotheistic.

Look at Adam, who lived 930 years. We can surmise from what was stated above that they attached a lengthy age to him because of his position as the first man.

And Enoch lived precisely 365 years, the same number as that of the days in a solar year. Methuselah's 969 years were meant as shorter units such as months.

According to the Bible, Methuselah died just before the Flood. Except for Noah, the prehistoric period had run its course.

The Patriarchs, Joseph, Moses and Joshua, all lived past the century mark; thereafter, however, men have only the "normal" lifespan. In the biblical view, man's longevity is limited severely at some stage between prehistory and history.

In Genesis 5:3 we see that 120 years will become the ideal life span (Moses lived 120 years), while the expected age of man is reduced to 70. "The days of our years are threescore years and 10. (Psalm 90)" One hundred twenty is the multiple of $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5$ and reflects the biblical predilection for number symbolism.

I believe that keeping in mind the periods of prehistory and that of history will help us put into perspective the lifespan of these people. Let us remember the Bible, although it contains some history, is not a history book.



Father Lombardi, a priest of the Missionaries of the Holy Family, lives at the Little Sisters of the Poor in Saint Louis, Missouri.

Q: *Dear Father,* *From time to time I hear some of my family, relatives and friends who are “cradle Catholics” saying that they are not sure that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist when they receive Communion. Can you help me explain to them this truth about Christ’s presence in the Eucharist?*

A: It is not unusual in our day and age to hear of Catholics who no longer believe in the Real Presence. Some Catholics have bought into the 18th-century philosophy called “The Age of Enlightenment,” which holds that the most reliable guide to knowledge was not faith but human reason.


Let us go back to the 8th century A.D., when, in Lanciano, Italy, the first and greatest Eucharistic Miracle of the Catholic Church took place. A Basilian monk, while celebrating Mass, doubted whether the Body of our Lord was truly present in the consecrated Host and saw it change into flesh, while the liquid in the chalice became clots of blood. This treasure was carefully guarded by monks until 1970-71 when Church authorities gave a team of scientists (Professors Odoardo Linoli and Ruggero Bertelli) permission to study the substances.

After taking samples and putting them through a variety of tests, the scientific team concluded that the flesh was really human flesh and the clots were human blood. They found no trace of any preservative, yet the flesh and blood were just as fresh then as they were 13 centuries earlier. What is even more interesting is that the flesh and blood have the same blood-type: AB (a blood-type identical to that which Baima Bollone uncovered in the Holy Shroud of Turin).

Miracles such as this are few and rare so most of us accept the Real Presence of Christ on faith. We believe it because Jesus, the son of God, revealed it to us. At the

Last Supper, when our Lord said the first Mass and gave us the Holy Eucharist, he took bread and said, “This is my body.” He did not say, “This represents my body,” but rather, “This is my body.” Our Lord also took the cup of wine and said, “This is my blood.” He did not say, “This is a symbol of my blood,” but rather, “This is my blood.” And for nearly 2,000 years the Catholic Church has faithfully taught that Jesus is truly present Body, Soul and Divinity, in the Eucharist.

To demonstrate further this wondrous truth, look at John 6:52 — Jesus said them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.” That Jesus’ listeners took him literally is indicated by the fact that many of his disciples found His words disturbing and “would not remain in his company any longer.” What is interesting is that Jesus did not call them back and say, “Wait a minute; you misunderstood me; that wasn’t what I meant.” He just let them go on their own way. Jesus then said to the Twelve, “Do you also want to leave?” Simon Peter answered him, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:67-69).

For additional reading, I recommend “Life for the World: A Way of Eucharistic Adoration for Today” by Marie Paul Curley, FSP. 



VOCATIONS

St. Joseph's Vocation Awareness Day- April 24

By Youth Director, Agueda Oviedo

Bishop Flores was the guest speaker for a Vocation Awareness talk at St. Joseph's Parish in Donna. In the audience were third graders, junior high, high school and college bound students in addition to adults and parents. The Bishop shared with the audience how his vocation to

eventually he ended up in the seminary. All these experiences and more growing up helped him in his discernment. He has been a priest for 23 years and is totally happy.

Bishop Flores was very gracious and patient as he responded to each person's questions.

Questions such as, "How old was your dog Snoopy?", "What did he die from?", "What were your favorite cartoons?", "Where did you go to college?", "What sports did you play?", "What were your responsibilities at home,?", "What made you become a priest?",



Attendees at the Vocation Awareness Day.

the priesthood grew. He said that growing up he wanted to be a lawyer or doctor. He recalled the chores that he had and the responsibilities he and his brother had to take care of their dog, 'Snoopy'. He recalls how his grandmother used to take him to visit the Blessed Sacrament every time they went to town. He was 16 years old when he was seriously thinking of becoming a priest. He had a mentor that was a priest that helped him out and

How do you know if God is calling you, if you feel in your heart that God is calling you?", "What do you do if you are afraid?", "What do you do to become a Bishop?"

His message to any person that is discerning a religious vocation is prayer. "Learn to talk to God and to find the time for silence. "Silence is the best time to talk to Jesus and to listen to Him." He told them to not be afraid, "you have to

trust God, He will always take care of you." He also spoke to the parents saying that they can nourish their children's vocation by praying together. Families

of a community where they can have a sense that they belong somewhere, that they belong to their parish community. "A parish needs to be a community committed to each other." In Spanish it translates to "Saber como pertenecer". The second thing he mentioned is 'service', he said that it was important to help our youth by inviting them to be generous. By showing them that "the great joy of life is in what you give and not what you take." "You will find your life if you learn how to give it up." Thirdly, he mentioned prayer-Liturgy, "listen and allow the Lord to move within your heart."



need to go to Mass together. "Family life is what we can do for each other." He encouraged all to be helpful to each other.

When asked what his plans for the youth of the diocese were he mentioned three things. One is community, he said that the youth need a sense that they belong, that they are connected and are a part

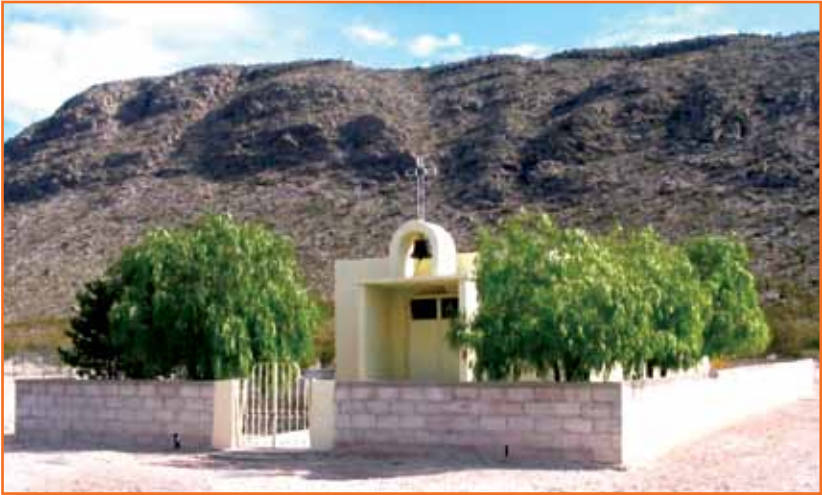
The Bishop summarized three points to the youth present: 1) Try to be helpful at home, 2) Make quiet time to listen to Jesus. "Ask in the silence of your heart." 3) "Live up and be faithful to your responsibilities." [MJ]



MISSION REFLECTION

Adventures of a Missionary Priest

By Late +Rev. James Lienert, M.S.F.
The Chapel in Mulberry



Profile #23 Las Moras



+Fr. James Lienert, MSF was best known as Padre Jaime because of his 33 years of service in Mexico. He served as pastor for Our Lady of Refuge parish in Coahuila, Mexico which was roughly 5,500 square miles! (~50 miles by 110 miles). The main church was in La Esmeralda, but the numerous communities in the parish also needed pastoral care and many did not have a place of worship. During his years in Mexico from 1967 to 2000, Padre Jaime led the construction of numerous chapels. Each chapel, like the community it was built for, has its special endearing attributes. Upon his return to the United States in 2000, Padre Jaime learned the technology of the computer. He was an avid email communicator and documented about the communities he served in Mexico. Samples of these vignettes will be featured in the Messenger Magazine. **+Fr. Lienert entered his eternal reward on January 4, 2010.**

The name Las Moras translates as The Mulberries. I do not remember seeing a single mulberry tree here, but some time in the past when this place got its name, for sure there must have been some of these trees here. Mulberry trees are not commonly grown in this area, but there are some here and there, including La Esmeralda and Alicante. They make a very good fast growing shade



An interactive Google Map is available on our website. It locates the missions where Padre Jaime served. See our website at www.msf-america.org under "About Us" and "Mexico Mission History" and "Vignettes".

tree, but not many people care about eating the fruit because frequently there are already some other embedded things eating it.

At close to seven and a half miles south of San José a road branches off to the northeast, and passing through La Canforada, goes on to Las Moras. The total distance between the road to San José and Las Moras is seven miles.

The hills and mountains in the immediate area are all limestone. Some of these are folded into unusual synclines and anticlines. About a mile from the hill in the picture where the land is rather flat there is an arroyo

where the sharp edge of a slab of limestone eight feet thick and a hundred long is exposed. The material both above and below this slab is alluvial. How did it arrive here? In this arroyo and others there are quantities of silica sand and gravel.

They say that near the top of the hill behind the chapel there is a hole in the rocks which at times, depending on changes in the barometric pressure, out-vents air with noticeable force.

Most of the houses here are down slope from the wells. (There are about four of these hand dug wells.) At one of the wells there



is a windmill that pumps water into a large holding tank, and from there water is piped by gravity flow to the houses. There were about twenty families living here. Now there is less than half that number. All but one of the families is from the neighboring communities, including La Esmeralda. It seems though that few of the original members of the ejido, that is the miners at La Canforada, live here now. So I knew most of them already from other communities. The only one that I know of as from La Canforada is a son of Fermín Contreras. (6 La Canforada) I do not remember this man's name, but he was one of those who were gassed in the mine. He was not severely

affected; only to the extent that he cannot lift anything heavy. He can walk well enough with the aid of a walking stick. He has a small herd of goats that he tends and pastures with the help of a goat dog.

Because this was sort of an out-of-the-way place and at first there were very few people, I did not have a regular schedule for visiting. Another thing was, and still is, that although there are several different roads into Las Moras, all of them have their treacherous spots after a rain. I got myself stuck several times on these roads.

When I first started going to Las Moras, Mass was celebrated in several different homes. There were times when I came that the people where Mass had been celebrated before simply were not at home for some reason. Some of the different homes used were those of Cortés, Segovia, and another whose name, unfortunately, I cannot remember.

It was when finally the community was large enough to build a one room school that we used that room because it was the largest one in the village, and not crowded with home furniture.

The room for the living quarters of the teacher was attached to the school. The roof for both the school and the teacher's room was a mud roof, and it leaked badly. I bought a sheet of heavy plastic large enough to cover the entire roof, and also brought from Química the lime for putting an inch of plaster on top of the plastic to protect it.

In México the books for the students of grade school are provided free by the national government. Because the government at that time was officially anti-clerical, and anti-American, the books took a swipe at the Church and the USA. The priests in the drawings in the books were real mean looking. Uncle Sam was rated along with them. The paper used for the books was only one grade above newspaper print.

Generally speaking, the teachers in the small ejidos have to put up with some very poor accommodations. The teacher at Las Moras was an educador. (19 La Gloria)

It was a lapse of several years between the planning for the chapel and its completion. First of all, the cement blocks for the chapel came from the factory in Hércules. I paid for them there, and also for the trucking of the blocks to Las Moras. The next time when I went to Las Moras I was dismayed. Ninety percent of the blocks were of poor quality. Some were so bad that literally one could crumble a piece of a block by crushing it with one hand. These were reject blocks that either did not have enough cement, or were not sprayed with water when they were curing. They responded with a dull thud to a sharp rap. I went to the block factory and complained, but the owners lived in Camargo, and the ones in charge of the factory said they could do nothing about it.

I sorted out the best blocks, and told the people that they could have the rest of them. Some of the rejects were good enough to use, but they

were never going to last as long as I wanted the chapel to last.

I was undecided about what to do and told my problem to Mario Agüirre in Hércules. (18 Hércules) Mario took recourse to a law for when there is a dispute. He went to the county offices in Sierra Mojada and put an embargo on all the equipment of the factory, including their trucks. They were not permitted to move a single thing until the dispute was settled. Mario did give them permission to use the trucks to haul new blocks to Las Moras. So my problem was solved very quickly. This course of action though on the part of Mario did not set well with the people of higher positions in the offices of the mine. They were the ones who had sponsored the cement block plant in the first place. By law they could not fire Mario without paying severance, but their treatment of Mario convinced Mario that Mario had no future in Hércules.

You may have noticed that the crosses on many of the chapels are almost identical. I knew from a long time before that these chapels were going to be built, and so had these crosses made. All of them are made using old drilling rods used in air hammers at the mines in La Esmeralda. The bottom of the cross is welded to a 1/8" piece of steel plate four inches square. Below the plate is welded a length of 1½" rod as long as is the thickness of the arch. Onto the rod is welded a piece of 1½" bolt long enough for two nuts, one being used as a lock nut. To the bottom nut was welded a stout closed hook onto which the bell was hung. Thus the

assembly below the cross served to both hold the cross in place and hang the bell.

It was a couple of years later that the wall around the chapel was built. At first I thought that we could build it with field stone. There is an excess of them just a short distance away at the foot of the hill. One of the members of the ejido, Mata by name, had an old flatbed truck. He said he would organize the men to bring the rocks needed down to the chapel, and then agreed, for a price, to go to Química to bring back several loads of lime. The actual building of the wall was to be done by Ramón Maldonado, a brother of Ricardo whom we met in La Gloria. Ramón was even better than Ricardo with a trowel. Ramón had built himself quite a nice house in Las Moras. The agreement though with Mata was that he would not go for lime until the stone was in place. There was no indoor place to store the lime. It was only a couple of weeks later when Mata come into La Esmeralda with a small load of lime, and for his pay. I asked him if the rocks were already in place. He replied that the men had already agreed to get them. I remarked to him that the load of lime was quite small. He said that it was windy in Química and he was getting all choked up inhaling the lime. That could be very true.

Because there were fewer people in Las Moras I always went there for Mass during the day. Only one or the other of the men left off work to attend Mass. One of them who did come was Pedro, and at times Mata. At the next visit there were


only women in attendance. I knew by this time not to count on a field stone wall, so I told the women that they (their husbands) were perfectly welcome to take the lime. They too could use it for plastering or whitewashing. The houses were always whitewashed; paint was too expensive. I do not know why, but right away the women started making excuses for not wanting to take it. Evidently some problem had arisen about it. Like mentioned above, there was a lot of infighting in Las Moras. Some three months later the lime was gone, but only after some of it was lost to a light rain.

Eventually I got the cement blocks from Hércules, and Ramón built the wall. The chapel is built on a slope, and the rains, with the water coming from farther up, were already starting to erode the ground around the chapel.

When the Sisters were in La Esmeralda they made their weekly visits to Las Moras, too. They would drop one of the Sisters off here; the other two would go on to San José and Alicante, and then on the way back would pick up the one in Las Moras.

Of all the people in Las Moras, Pedro Cortés was the one who cooperated most in the construction of the chapel. He told the people that they should choose the patron of the chapel. I do not know how they came to the agreement, but it was decided to dedicate the chapel to Santo Niño de Atocha. This is a much venerated small statue in Plateros, Durango. Pedro went there to buy at his own cost a statue



about twenty inches tall. The picture above is quite like the statue. Santo Niño de Atocha means Holy Child of Atocha. Devotion to Santo Niño de Atocha is very ancient. Tradition has it that Mary lived with St. John in Antioch. It is thought that after her death St. Luke promoted a devotion that first asked Holy Mary to present one's petition to her Son. Atocha is the corruption of the Spanish word Antiochía. The Child is represented as a pilgrim. For that reason he wears a broad rimmed hat. In his left hand he holds a walking staff at the top of which hangs a water gourd. His right hand holds a basket for carrying bread as he goes about looking for needy people to help. His pilgrimage is to the poor and needy. He is also venerated as patron of prisoners. Even though he is a pilgrim, he is for some reason always represented as seated! 

Explore the Mexico Missions... From the comfort of your computer.



+Fr. Lienert worked diligently to share the joy of his years in the Mexico Missions. He wrote 28 vignettes which captured the spirit and challenges of the places and peoples where he ministered. In 2008 he undertook a final effort to map the locations of these mission buildings and communities. A pinpoint marks the locations to each of the missions. You can access this map from our website www.MSF-America.org under "About Us" then under Mexico Mission History" then finally under "Vignettes"

By clicking on 'View MSF Mexico Missions in a larger map' - is an interactive way to tour these missions. In some locations you can actually see the roof of the chapel if you use the satellite view and zoom in!

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The Missionaries of the Holy Family Perpetual Mass Association provides spiritual support for the living and many of life's journeys, and is also a support for the souls of the deceased. Since June 2009 the following persons have benefited from enrollment in the Perpetual Mass Association.

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Continues on next page

Perpetual Mass Association

... continued from previous page

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- +Marcos Flores
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