

The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY



SUMMER 2009

The **MESSENGER**

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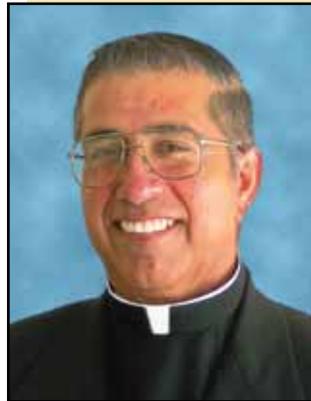
Dear Readers,

We are now in Ordinary time. Liturgically, green is the color of the season and is the color of hope in the Catholic Church. It is my hope that this summertime is a time to relax, spend more time with loved ones and be ready for another challenging tomorrow. But, we cannot forget about our relationship with our God. God, in his goodness and love, reveals himself to us in numerous ways, such as through the beauty of creation and the hunger and yearning in our hearts for fulfillment. We not only have to look at our human history to see how God has acted to reveal himself, God's work of revealing himself still goes on. We need only open our hearts more fully to him, love him more completely, live in greater unity with him, understand ourselves more fully and live in greater love and unity with others. This involves us in being people of prayer and leading lives that are rooted in faith and love. May the Holy Spirit help us to give witness to our belief in God through the way we live. God bless you with his presence and grace this summertime.

Sincerely in the Holy Family, I am

Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.

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HOLY FAMILY LIFE

Hooked on Football

Contributed By Diane Green and
www.ForYourMarriage.org

Our first home, an old ranch house, needed remodeling from the door-stops to the ceiling trim. We decided to do the job ourselves. Friends warned us of the dangers ahead.

- *"The quickest way to divorce court is to hang wallpaper together."*
- *"It was the biggest fight we ever had."*
- *"I love my wife, but I don't remodel anything with her."*

***Despite the warnings,
we wallpapered, painted
and replaced everything from
switch-plates to moldings.***

Despite the warnings, we wallpapered, painted and replaced everything from switch-plates to moldings. We had an advantage over our friends. Long ago we bridged a chasm that threatened to divide us forever.

I was twenty, a college junior, optimistic, and ready to take on the world at a moment's notice. Joe was easy going and had a wonderful sense of humor. I expected flowers, candlelight dinners, and romantic foolishness under a full moon. Joe was a penniless student working his way through college. On his own for

five years, he didn't have time for girlfriends, but loved sports, especially football.

I enjoyed going to the college football games with him. I visited with my friends, cheered, sang, and occasionally asked him who had the ball and which team was winning. Joe watched the pigskin gladiators on the field. He was an expert on the plays, rules and strategies. At the end of a game, I could tell you what went on in the stands, and he could tell you what happened on the field.

For me, Saturday games were a chance to socialize and enjoy the autumn weather. Sunday games, however, meant staying inside with the TV blaring. He sat on the couch, drank beer, ate popcorn and yelled at the TV like a crazed maniac. I stared longingly out the window at the autumn sunshine.

As our love grew and we talked of marriage, I spent the New Year holiday at his family's home. Joe had four brothers, all as football crazy as himself. For three days, we ate, drank, and slept football bowl games. Half way through the third day, my frustration peaked.

"Joe, I have to get out of here."

"But sweetheart, the Giants are on next," he said, puzzled.

"This is the third game today. You watched football all day yesterday," I snapped.

"Diane, I only see my family twice a year. I enjoy watching football with my brothers, and I really like it that you watch with me." He smiled, then kissed me.

Thinking he had solved the problem with a kiss, Joe joined his brothers to watch the next game. I stomped upstairs. His mother, Ann, noticed me pouting at the table. When she tried to console me, I unloaded on her.

"I hate football. It's mindless garbage. How can anyone sit for that long and do nothing? The worst part is, he expects me to sit there and do nothing with him."

Ann said, "Maybe you could read a book."

"No, the TV distracts me," I whined.

"Well, I crochet or cross-stitch while I watch TV. I'll teach you," she offered.

"No thanks," I choked out. The very suggestion conjured up visions of a little old lady in a rocking chair. When my mother suggested hooking a rug, I reconsidered.

I bought a hooked rug wall hanging, 4.5 feet by 2 feet. It was a pretty scene of a sailboat at sunset, and large enough to last a football season. Next game, I dragged it out and worked on it. Joe didn't comment. The second game he said, "I could help you with that. Do you have another hook?" I smiled and bought another hook the next day.

All that football season, we cuddled close and hooked the rug. I started at the bottom and he started in the middle. Soon we met and worked on

the top together. While we hooked, the rug warmed our laps, stimulated conversation and bridged the football chasm in our relationship. I almost looked forward to our Sunday afternoons together. While I was out of town for a week, Joe finished the rug.

"I wanted to surprise you," he laughed. "The more exciting the game, the faster I hooked. Let's get another one." I couldn't find another big rug so I bought two small ones. Ten years later, they are still unfinished, buried in the back of a closet. It just wasn't the same. We weren't working together. The shared project produced more than a rug. It produced intimacy and communication.

Now we have a two-year-old boy and a four-year-old girl. Joe still watches football, but limits himself to New York Giants games. He explains the rules and strategies to the children. On game day, we all dress in Giants sweat suits, share popcorn, and cuddle on the couch. Joe and I both yell at the TV like crazed maniacs. To everyone's amazement, even mine, I learned the game and can debate strategy with anyone, including my four brothers-in-law.

That old hook rug decorates our remodeled hallway. It represents the way we conquered the challenges in our lives. I start at one end, Joe in the middle and together in love, we reach the top. 


FOR YOUR
MARRIAGE

For more stories on marriage and sound advice from a Catholic perspective go to

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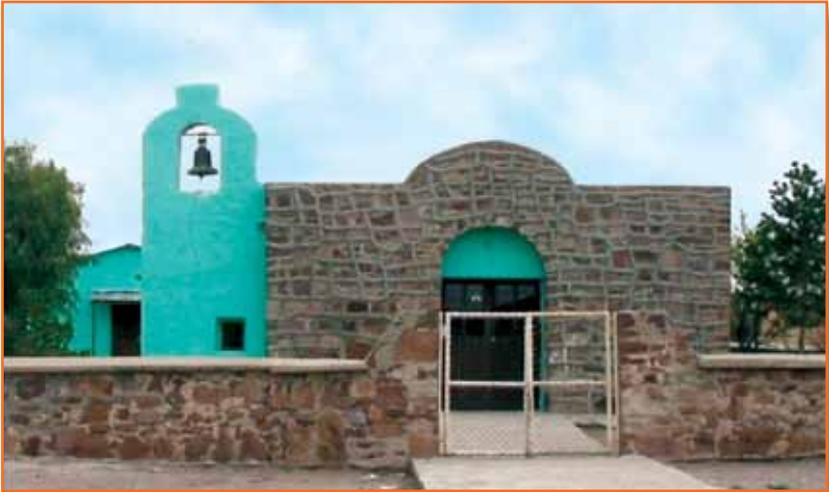


MISSION REFLECTION

Adventures of a Missionary Priest

Contributed by Rev. James Lienert, M.S.F.

A Mission in a Snake Town



Profile #13 Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Alicante



Fr. James Lienert, MSF is best known as Padre Jamie because of his 33 years of service in Mexico. He served as pastor for the parish of La Esmeralda 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 Jamie led the construction of 28 chapels. Each chapel, like the community it was built for, has its special endearing attributes. Since his return to the United States in 2000, Padre Jamie has learned the

technology of the computer. He is an avid email communicator and now has documented about the communities he served in Mexico. Samples of these vignettes will be featured in the Messenger Magazine. Full versions are available at our website along with an interactive Google Map that locates each mission location.

Alicante - from where does this place get this name? There is a snake in this area which the people call 'alicante', and according to the belief of some, this snake milks cows! I always scoffed at the idea, but once a man whom I always considered serious and trustworthy assured me that he had actually seen it happen. I sort of suspect that he was testing my gullibility. At some time long past did someone think he saw the snake

would be runners up. On the road there are some very steep hills, and in other places the road is over rough bedrock. Close to the south side of the road there are hills and low mountains out of which the water cascades when there are heavy rains. Many times the road is washed out and one has to find a way around. There are places where the water ponds are deep and the water will last for weeks. There are stretches where one must accelerate to hat-squashing speed because if one loses momentum in some water filled pothole, one can never 'climb' out again. I was stuck on this road just once, and that was because the water was so deep that the spray from the fan shorted



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".



milking a cow here, and so gave the place this name? In the Spanish dictionary the word 'alicante' is not recognized as the name of a snake. The dictionary does state that there is a city in Spain by that name. The founder of this hacienda, Armendáiz (sic), was from Spain. It could be that he was from Alicante, and named this outpost in memory of that. For some reason many people pronounce the word as 'Alicantre'.

Alicante is eight miles to the north-east of San José, and if those eight miles are not the worst eight miles of road in the entire county, they

out the ignition. Fortunately, there just happened to be someone there who was going to his little field of corn.

Alicante, a community of a little more than a hundred souls, sits in sort of a shallow bowl, edged on one side at the back by a low volcanic hill, and on the other side by a low rhyolite cliff partially fractured in such a way that blocks of rock can be split off. To the front there are some low hills which hide a view of the same wide plain as seen from San José and Zenzontle. Alicante, too, is in the county of Ocampo, and so not within

the parish of Sierra Mojada.

In the center of the bowl are three of the old hand dug wells with an unlimited supply of water at a depth of fifteen feet. The government drilled another well and equipped it with a diesel driven pump to lift the water to a large holding tank above the rhyolite cliff, and from there pliable plastic pipe carries the water to all the houses of the village.

The chapel was built the year following the construction in Zenzontle, about the year 1972. The people made the adobe bricks, and the same man who built in Zenzontle also did the work here. I was not happy with the man's manners in Zenzontle, and it was the same thing here. But at the time he was the best available. The plans for the chapel called for the walls to be two feet higher, but there were unusual problems with rains and hail damaging the adobes, and we went for the roof while the going was still good. When it is a matter of building a small house, it can be accomplished in a much shorter time, and so, less danger of rain damage.

For the first few years only the sanctuary had a cement floor. Later when new pews were made for La Esmeralda, half of the old ones came to Alicante. These were really not enough, and so later a dozen or more simple benches were made.

To the left and to the back of the chapel can be seen another little building. This is a room for catechism and general use, identical to the one in San José. The cement blocks were made on the spot.

It was at this chapel that we installed the first solar panel with acid battery for a 7/24 sanctuary light. The bulb was a simple 12v bulb used in dashboards. It was a brother-in-law in San Diego who sent us the solar panel. Later the same system was installed in almost every other rural chapel, again with the help of the same brother-in-law.

In the picture it looks like the gate is no more than just the frame. The fact that the cyclone fence wire on it does not show is just another fault of a poor picture. It was almost completely cloudy all that day.

I suggested to the people that we dedicate the chapel to THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS. (Sagrado Corazón de Jesús). The suggestion was warmly received.

Here in Alicante there were (are) two devout middle aged ladies remarkable in their devotion and in promoting devotion. They lead a small group which prays the rosary every afternoon, or the Way of the Cross during lent. On Sundays they hold the para liturgical celebration with Holy Communion. This was also the practice in other chapels of the larger rural communities.

These same two ladies promoted the catechism classes to prepare the children for their first Holy Communion and Confirmation. Since the feast of the Sacred Heart always falls in late spring or early summer, this day was always selected for the reception of these two sacraments. For many years, because the parish was so remote, I was appointed by the bishop to administer the sacrament

of confirmation in the entire parish. Also this was a day for many baptisms. The people could request a baptism at any time during the year, but many postponed it until the parish feast when family members and friends living in other places would be coming for the celebration. Many times the godparents would be among those coming. Too, it was common for couples to have their marriage convalidated on this day.

Again, these two ladies played the principal role in preparing for the festivities; like decorating the chapel with ribbons of varied colored crepe paper, and even balloons. They organized singing the *mañanitas* at day-break. They organized the Indian dances which were sometimes performed by locals and in other cases by invitation extended to more experienced groups. Whatever the case, the dancers always expected that they would be well fed and provided with soft drinks. Late in the afternoon there would be a procession around the village. Sometimes several men would carry the statue of the Sacred Heart; other times it would be put on the back of a decorated pickup. During the procession the rosary would be prayed. Then around dark the final Mass of the day would be celebrated for those who were unable to attend during the day.

One year during the days of the celebrations a man was processing the *candelilla* (wax is made from the leaves of the *candellia* shrub) and his leg, up to his knee, slipped into the boiling hot wax vat. He needed to be taken to the clinic in Hércules, but neither he nor any of the fam-

ily had a pickup. They were asking for donations to pay for someone to take him, but never came up with enough. Those who have a pickup charge a stiff amount for a trip, but it really is not an unreasonable price because the maintenance of a pickup is costly, especially for one that is old. So after the last Mass I took the man to Hércules. It was about forty miles out of the way, and two hours longer back into town. He would need money for medicine, and so I left him the 'receipts' of the day. He was appreciative because he was one of the few "separated brethren" in Alicante. The man did recover fully, but it took well over a year.

When I went to Alicante to celebrate Mass, I usually arrived late in the afternoon. Once I was a little earlier, and took the opportunity to go over to take a look at the mines. All the workers had gone home, and one of the watchmen showed me around. At one shaft he went down with his miner's pick and carbide lamp and a few minutes later emerged again and gave me a few-ounce-sample of ore. I took it to the assay lab in La Esmeralda, and it assayed at a very high grade of silver.

These exploratory studies at Santa Elena progressed to the point where a dozen or so gasoline powered winches were installed above some of the shafts. Before this all of them were manually operated. This created some very favorable speculations as to the future of the mines --- and employment.

Jesusita was a widow from the time I first knew her. One married son and daughter, with their spouses

and children, lived with her in an 'extended' house. Jesusita, to help along with the expenses, had a little cupboard of non-prescription medicines, needles and thread and the like. She would pay someone to buy them in La Esmeralda and bring them out to her. Yes, you could buy as little as one aspirin or one cigarette.

One day three of her preteen grandchildren, boys, were in another room of the house. One was over in a corner, and the other two were at a Dutch door watching a thunder and rain storm. A bolt of lightning struck at the door killing the two boys instantly; the other was knocked unconscious and when he finally came to was for some days quite confused. Practically all the houses in these ejidos have the Dutch door because very few houses have glass windows.

Jesusita was, as sort of an elder, well respected by everyone. When I first went there Mass was celebrated in her house. But as the group became larger, a house with larger accommodations was used. Finally, we were often using the school until the chapel was built.

The population of Alicante has remained pretty much the same. For the most part the younger people have gone to Hércules to work in the iron mine. Since the restructuring of the ejido some of those living in Alicante have built a second dwelling place on their particular plot of land, so as to better attend their cattle and the fields, when the rains give them a chance to plant. But they still keep their home base in Alicante. They still process the candelilla in Alicante. 



*Family
Forever
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Where there is a Will... there is a Way to make a Difference.

Having a will is important. It provides you the opportunity to have your decisions today help care for your loved ones in the future. It also provides you the opportunity to support the Missionaries of the Holy Family with a bequest to enable our mission into the future. Legacy gifts are so special that we have the **Family Forever Society**. To receive a booklet on preparing your will and to learn more about the **Family Forever Society**, please write us at: Missionaries of the Holy Family, 3014 Oregon Avenue, Saint Louis, MO 63118 or call us at (314) 577-6300.

*If you are remembering the Missionaries of the Holy Family in your estate plans please remember us as: **Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Family – North American Province***

Family Forever Society

Thanks for Asking...



Fr. Joseph Lawless, MSF with Jerome and Audrey Hennek.

To say Jerome and Audrey Hennek are active laity for the Church would be an understatement! For decades they have graciously given of their time, talent and treasure by serving the poor, visiting nursing homes, teaching the faith and defending the lives of the unborn. “One would be hard pressed to find a lay couple who has been a more vibrant example of Christian service than Jerome and Audrey”, says Fr. Phil Sosa, MSF, Provincial Superior for the North American Province. Jerome credits their spark to serve others to Fr. Joseph Lawless, MSF and +Fr. Herman Defler, MSF. Jerome recalls that it was back in 1986 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Harlingen , Texas when they were drawn into Christian service. He still has the hand written note from Fr. Joe Lawless that “Thanked” them for offering to become involved in lay ministry. Jerome says, “There is a special joy waiting for people who reach out to help others. To physically be there and see the face of Jesus in the poor and those in need”. Jerome and Audrey are grateful to Fr. Lawless and +Fr. Defler for starting them on a path of Christian service. They are so grateful in fact that they are remembering The Missionaries of the Holy Family in their estate plans with tribute gifts honoring the work of Fr. Joe Lawless, MSF and +Fr. Herman Defler, MSF.

Note: The Missionaries of the Holy Family express their gratitude to Jerome and Audrey for allowing this story to be shared with our readers. Jerome and Audrey are private supporters. Sharing their story publically was not natural, but they agreed at the request of the Missionaries of the Holy Family knowing that it might inspire giving in others.



THANK YOU

We, the priests and brothers of the Missionaries of the Holy Family, extend our deep gratitude to all our supporters. You are remembered in our prayers.



Family Forever Society

Where there is a Will...there is a Way to Make a Difference

Members of the **Family Forever Society** have remembered the Missionaries of the Holy Family with a Legacy Gift, typically a Bequest or Trust. This Legacy Gift is a way Benefactors make a difference that reaches into the future beyond their years. Benefactors sometimes share in advance about their estate plans through a letter (*Living Members*). In other situations a Legacy Gift first becomes known after one's passing (*Eternal Members*).

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Holy Family Circle continues on the next page



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AROUND THE PROVINCE



▲ Trustees and guests of the Missionaries of the Holy Family Retirement Trust Fund held their annual meeting in April and also celebrated Mass together. The Trust fund is intended to provide for the needs of the Holy Family Priests and Brothers in their senior years. It is currently significantly underfunded, but with prayers and continued generosity this fund will continue to grow as it has for the past couple of years.



▲ Members of Saint Joseph's Mission, Redwood Texas, worked hard to add several beautiful stained glass windows to the mission. St. Joseph's has been growing and thriving for more than 10 years as a mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Seguin.

Members of the Lay Apostolate Board met in ▶ April to discuss and plan support for the key efforts of the Holy Family Priests and Brothers including; Vocation efforts; the International Priest Co-op, Spiritual Programs and more.



◀ Fr. Phil Sosa was requested to join the Mission Commission for the Missionaries of the Holy Family. A meeting was recently held in Rome to discuss future plans for the missionary locations of the Congregation. Front row L to R are: Br. Motacir (*S. Brazil*), Fr. Patrice (*Generalate-Rome*), Fr. Fernando (*Spain*), Fr. Itacir (*Generalate-Rome*), back row L to R are: Fr. Phil, (*North America*), Fr. Edmund, Fr. Paulinus and Fr. Santiago (*Generalate-Rome*).

AROUND THE PROVINCE



◀ Fr. Arthur Ockwood ▶ celebrated 50 years of priestly service on May 30, 2009. A celebratory Mass and reception were held at St. Martin de Porres parish in Ottawa Canada on that weekend. Fr. Ockwood's autobiography was published in the last issue (Winter 2009) of the Messenger Magazine.



▲ A Holy Family Gathering was held in San Antonio this past April. The evening was a relaxing and enjoyable opportunity to see good friends and reconnect with friends from long ago. Thank you to all who were able to attend.



▲ (L-R standing) Gracie Mirabal, Walter Lukaszek, Fr. Mario Galindo, MSF, (seated) Bobby Mirabal and Bro Roland Kapsner, MSF all attended a conference on Religious vocations and as a team planned out special efforts to promote religious vocations.



▲ The leadership of the Missionaries of the Holy Family North American Province met in April at the Council of the Province.

Mass is celebrated daily at the ▶ MSF Formation House located in San Antonio near the Oblate School of Theology.

Visitors are always welcome to join in the celebration of the Mass.

Call Fr. James Wasser, MSF at (210) 344-9146 for Mass times.





PARENTS TIME OUT

Listening Stamina

Contributed by Dr. Ray Guarendi

Dear Dr. Ray,

My thirteen-year-old daughter complains that I don't listen enough before giving her my opinion. How can I listen longer?

– Listening

A remarkable coincidence (or maybe some farsighted linguist planned it so) is that listen and silent contain the same letters. Good listening begins with silence. The fewer words we interject while someone is voicing her thoughts, the more thoughts we'll hear.

Alas, holding your tongue is much easier to talk about than do, especially as it becomes worrisomely clear that what we're about to hear we're not about to like. Sometimes the kids are talking on impulse: "Mom, I think I'm going to move to the South Pole when I'm eighteen. The solitude will help me find myself." Sometimes they're sounding foreboding: "Dad, you may be getting a letter from school tomorrow." Sometimes their words are pure fancy: "You know, schools should offer swing shifts, like factories do. I'd get better grades on midnights."

Whatever the gist of the message, after hearing about six words, most of us are ready to unleash a torrent of parental commentary. We're driven by the fear that if Watson's elementary reasoning continues unchallenged for more than a few minutes, it'll take root.

To prolong your listening stamina, start with this thought: nothing is made worse by listening. Even if Perry already has mapped out his itinerary to the South Pole, he hasn't left yet. There's still time to explore the full details of his excursion. Who knows, as he talks about his plans, he may raise the same questions you would. Similarly, if Stanford already has skipped the classes that generated the letter from school, he can't be skipping any more while he's standing in front of you, not unless he's incredibly creative.

In essence, as long as your daughter is talking and you're listening, nothing bad is happening. One parent said she felt fully secure only when her son was talking to her. Whatever he was saying, he wasn't out somewhere doing it.

A personal gag order is another way to listen longer. Resolve not to utter one comment or opinion for, say, one minute. Watch the clock if you have to. If one full minute of silence for you would be comparable to running a marathon race the first morning you take up jogging, gradually build up your listening stamina. Begin with

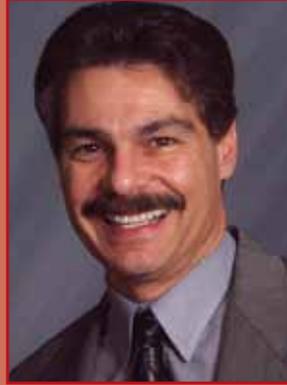
twenty seconds or roughly the amount of time your daughter takes to walk into a room, look at you and say, "Mom, if I tell you something, promise you won't get mad?"

Quiet attentiveness does more than passively permit communication. Sometimes it can compel kids to talk. Our silence creates a word void they're not accustomed to, and they may feel the urge to fill that void with their own words, thus giving us a deeper look into their thoughts.

Good listening begins with silence and then moves to understanding. One father would say little until his son finished talking, whereupon Dad would paraphrase what he heard to make sure he heard it correctly. A mother preferred the "five w" approach with her ten-year-old: who, what, where, why. Only when she knew all five answers would mom offer an opinion or advice or mete out discipline.

There's an old saying, it is better to keep your mouth shut and let someone think you're dumb than to open it and remove all doubt. This has relevance for raising kids. The longer we listen, the more likely we are to speak with credibility and authority when we do speak.

"Good Discipline, Great Teens" Pages 23-24 Copyright 2007, Ray Guarendi Servant Books 

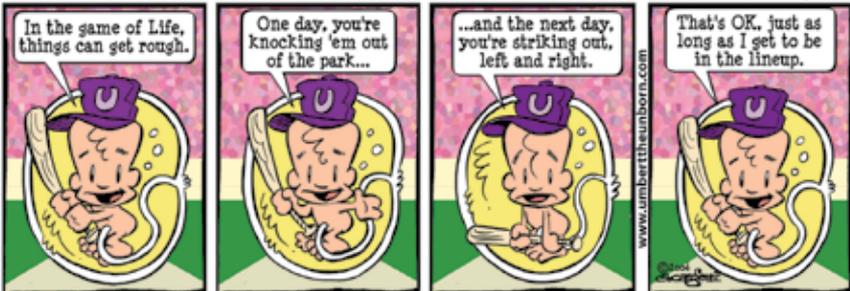


Dr. Ray Guarendi

is 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





A PROFILE OF SERVICE

Fr. John Charles Kilburg, M.S.F.

An Autobiography

Another true story from one who chose at age 43 to work in the great Vineyard of the Lord; through membership in the North American Province of the Missionaries of the Holy Family.

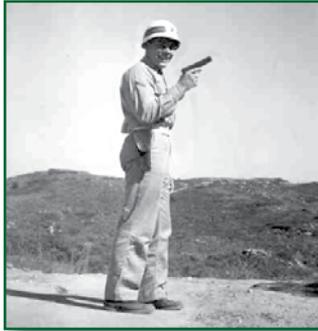
I was born on our family farm, 90 miles west of Madison, Wisconsin, and the first-born of the nine children of Alfred and Irene Kilburg. At age 13, I graduated from the small rural grade school which was a one mile walk from my home. By small, I mean one room and one teacher for all the students. Without hesitation, I continued my education at high school which was an eight mile ride by bus. I graduated at 17 years of age in 1947.

After working on the family farm for a few years, I hired myself out to another farmer for two years. I was then called into military service and became a Marine for two years, serving in the artillery during the Korean War in 1952.

During this time I entertained a desire to enter the Catholic Priesthood. My capable and helpful pastor at St. Wenceslaus in Eastman, WI, kindly supported me in



Jack with his brother Richard on his knee.



Jack while in Marine Corps training.

my discernment, especially after I returned to civilian life. In the fall of 1954, I was admitted to the seminary in LaCrosse, WI, which is about 60 miles north of Eastman on the east side of the Mississippi River. Things went quite well until 1959 when I was informed that I was not approved to go on to the Major Seminary.

My dad became quite angry at the situation. My good pastor Msgr. Urban Baer knew and felt that this was a mistake and very unjust. He encouraged me to go with him visiting some religious orders to see if they would accept me, but after being turned down by several of them we just went back to life as usual, where I ran the home

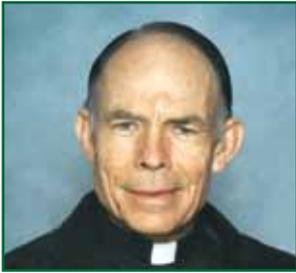
farm with dad for a few years. I had always liked helping my dad on the farm, but some of my ideas for improving soil conservation were not easily accepted by him. Eventually he adopted some ideas, a little at a time and he saw the improvements.

During this time Vatican II brought about a new excitement in our church and the world. I was invited by my diocese to join the Papal Volunteers, a new lay missionary organization. Friction and disagreements at home motivated me to apply for this new missionary opportunity. My dad wanted me to stay, but it was time for me to move on. Due to the situation my mother had a breakdown, but I still went ahead, taking a six week course in Washington, D.C. with about 30 men and women preparing for the same mission being done in Latin America's various countries. In August 1966 we returned to our homes and waited to be sent by our respective dioceses to the countries assigned to each of us. I would be going to Brazil, which I had chosen from the many countries in Latin America. By Christmas 1966 I had completed the course for learning Portuguese. I also received a nice letter from my mom, who was back to normal again. I sometimes wonder what would have happened if I had buckled under the pressure and stayed home with dad and mom, and lived close to my two

brothers and four sisters. A thought seemed to say that with my decision, "God won, Satan lost."

I was sent to Brazil and worked in the equatorial northern area of Belem. Initially I worked with a group of young men who were discerning whether to become priests. After less than a year at this location I chose a more rural location where I would help a small community in both a spiritual and agricultural way. Here I had the opportunity to learn much from them and they could also discover some worthwhile things from me. This rural community was named Cristolandia and was near a river with plentiful fish and an island that produced wild pigs for food. One young man in the community was quite prepared to help and preach at the small chapel where we all prayed. A Monsignor, who was almost blind, occasionally came to offer Mass. During his visits his guidance helped me to choose Cristolandia as the location for my last two years in Brazil.

In September of 1969 after three years of



Rev. John Charles Kilburg, M.S.F.

30 years of Priesthood

Born: September 23, 1929

Age: 79

Hometown:
Wauzezeka, WI

Home Parish:
St. Wenceslaus Church

Patron Saint:
Saint Padre Pio

Ordained:
May 26, 1979

Education:
Dunne School (1-8)
Wauseka H.S. (9-12)

Seminary:
Holy Cross Seminary
La Crosse, WI
Kenrick Glennon Seminary,
Saint Louis, MO

Hobbies:
Gardening, Biking



Fr. Jack with his family at his Diaconate ordination pictured from Left to Right are his brother Richard, youngest sister Linda, sister Carolyn, his Mom Irene and Dad Alfred, sister Inez, brother Michael and sister Priscilla.

mission work in Brazil, I was flown back to the USA. At Chicago, IL, I was put on a train which took me to Prairie de Chen, Wisconsin, where I had the pleasure of living for a short time with my sister Priscilla and her husband, Larry, and their two young sons. Then I moved back to the family farm where now my youngest brother, Michael, was raising his family and where my mom and dad were now retired. After a year of helping my brother I was invited to another farm to work for a year.

One day it dawned on me that I should not continue this life any longer. I heard the voice of the Lord say quite distinctly to me, "You don't belong here while the Church of God needs and calls for more workers in His vineyard." Not only did I notice a definite lack of religious growth in so many aspects of life, but also a severe drop in vocations to the priesthood.

I visited the Seminary from which I had

been dismissed. There I found former seminarians who were now ordained as priests, but to my dismay had a serious lack of interest in their priestly vocation. Many priests were leaving their Holy Priesthood, including the priest who had flunked me on the courses I had at the seminary in 1959. The diocesan seminary was about to close. When I visited with the bishop, he suggested the local Brothers of St. Pius. I listened for a bit but was not interested in his suggestion. I still felt an attraction to the priesthood.

I wrote to three different religious orders about my situation and desire to enter the priesthood. The Maryknolls told me that I was too old (40 years) for acceptances into their order, but the other two were willing to take me. The one named Missionaries of the Holy Family attracted me the most and I was received into their Seminary in Saint Louis, Missouri in January of 1972.

I completed the necessary courses at Saint Louis University and four years of Theology at Kenrick Major Seminary, Saint Louis. It was one of my proudest moments when I was ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal John Carberry on May 26, 1979, four months before my 50th birthday.

My first assignment was as associate pastor at St. Joseph's in Corpus Christi from 1979 to 1981, followed by service as the chaplain of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Granite City, Illinois until 1983. My next major assignment was an exciting 15 years in Mexico which began in September of 1985. During these years I served as pastor for three different parishes. It was a very meaningful and special time. I left Mexico with wonderful memories.

Upon returning I served briefly at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in New Braunfels, and then came as associate pastor to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Seguin. There is an abundance of ministry here because the parish is so large and vibrant. In particular I enjoy work at the parish mission in Redwood, Texas – St. Joseph Mission. With our Pastor, Fr. David Tonary, MSF, Associate Pastor Fr. Tomasz Grabara, MSF, Bro. Rolland Kapsner, MSF and myself the Missionaries of the Holy Family have a strong presence here and we can serve the needs of this large parish in a personal and friendly way. With my turning 80 years old this September, I am in my semi-retirement years and pleased to continue my priestly work at Our Lady of Guadalupe. 



Fr. Jack (l) a local priest (c) and the Bishop of Sotillo celebrating Mass at a mission in Mexico.



Fr. Jack with friends outside Saint Joseph Church in Cuatro Ciénegas, Mexico.



Fr. Jack smiles at the completion of a building project at the mission in Ocampo, Mexico.



Fr. Jack helping a family with a ride in Ocampo, Mexico.

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Chosen?

by Fr. José Mario Galindo, M.S.F.

Jesus called his first disciples at the Sea of Galilee (Mk 1:16-20) and later said to them: “you did not choose me; no, I chose you and commissioned you to go out” (Jn 15:16). Jesus Christ, Lord of all creation, continues his salvific work in our own time through the priesthood who are privileged to share in his work.

But are men distracted and therefore not recognizing that they have been chosen? This is very possible because we live in a country that has many great and wonderful opportunities. The technologies in our society, such as televisions, telephones, computers, including all kinds of games have caused many to be insensitive to the call and choosing of God for a special life in the Church: a life which is a continuation of the work started by Jesus Christ.

Families should recognize that just as the life of Christ was consecrated to the loving will of his Father; families have sons who have been chosen by God; to be consecrated, in the name of Christ. These young men need to be encouraged and nurtured by their families.

Since priests are called to assist the Bishop in his threefold responsibility of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling; the priest must be a teacher of the Word, a minister of the sacraments, and a Pastor of his flock. Pope John Paul II reminds us: “Without priests the Church would not be able to live that fundamental obedience which is at the very heart of her existence and her mission” (Dabo Vobis, 1).

In general, as faithful members of the laity, Catholics have a duty to support priests and encourage vocations to men “chosen” for the priesthood. Pope John Paul II encourages this important work, “The Church... is called to safeguard this gift [the priesthood], to esteem it and love it,” he says. “She is responsible for the birth and development of priestly vocations” (Dabo Vobis 41).

All of us are called to be attentive to the vocation, or “state of life”, which God has chosen for each one of us. Most Christians are called by God to the married state, and some are called to the state of life as single lay persons living in the world. But Jesus chooses certain men to act in His Person through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and the other sacraments for: “*Yahweh called me before I was born. From my mother’s womb He pronounced my name*” (Is 49:1). JM



Fr. Mario Galindo, MSF.
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APOSTOLATE UP CLOSE

Church's Mission In Madagascar

by Fr. Ralainirina Francois Rakotovoavy, M.S.F.

My name is Father Ralainirina Francois Rakotovoavy. Everyone calls me Fr. Francois. I am from Madagascar and



Fr. Francois Baptizing

belong to the Congregation Missionaries of the Holy Family. My native language is Malagasy with French as my second language. I have been studying English in the United States since January of 2008, living at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

Have you seen the movie Madagascar? It is a fun movie, but Madagascar is very different. Madagascar is a very big Island - larger than the state of California. It is located in the Indian Ocean about 300 miles off the east coast of Africa. The Catholic Church came to Madagascar two hundred years ago. The Missionaries of the Holy Family arrived 50 years ago, in 1958, and they were the first to bring the Gospel to my family. Today 25% of the population is Catholic, 20% are other Christian faiths and 5% are Muslim. The remaining 50%

are animists. Animists believe in the spirit which moves or animates all of nature.



The first challenge for the Church in Madagascar was and still is evangelization. Most people in America know something about Christ. But in my country, that is not the case. Therefore, preaching the good news is the first duty of the Church and all missionaries. But before people will listen to us preach the Gospel, their basic need for food and water must be met.



One of the major tools used by the Church that can conquer poverty is an education. By education, I mean schools for children but also teaching about hygiene and sanitation for adults. Many children die each year because of poor sanitation. Clean water is essential, but too often clean water can not be found. So providing them with clean water, teaching them how to clean it and use it is an important

goal. Madagascar is a sanctuary of nature and has many unique plants and animals. Unfortunately the animals are endangered and deforestation is a major problem. Because of extreme poverty, people use natural resources around them to survive. In fact, most people cook their breakfast, lunch and dinner over wood fires, and this accentuates the problem of deforestation. The Church also helps the sick by building health clinics for the poor.

The population in Madagascar is very young. More than 60% of the population is less than 25 years old. These young people need an education if the future of the Church and the country is to be assured. That is why the Church spends a lot of time, energy and resources on schools.

Formation of candidates for the priesthood is a special challenge. Because of poverty, most parents can't pay the tuition for their sons to become priests. So they either find someone to help or their vocation is lost. In some cases when a young man shows signs of a real vocation, the Missionaries of the Holy Family can pay much of his tuition. I am a priest today because of the Holy Family Missionary fund. There are many persons like me who want to join us in spreading the Word of our Mighty God.

Let me share with you a bit about my life as a priest in Madagascar and how it has made a difference. In my nine years of priesthood, I spent the first three years as a

Pastor at St. Joseph Church in Befandriana Atsimo in the Morombe Diocese. The parish territory was quite large. Besides my main parish church, I also had 24 mission churches in the surrounding area. With the 24 mission churches there were also 20 schools. Classes were held in the mission church buildings.

Traveling to the missions was a challenge. The roads are bad and I often walked 30 miles in a day to reach a mission church. The schools at the missions have about 35 students with one or two teachers.



The classes at the missions go from first to third grade; in the larger towns the schools can reach the ninth grade. Only half of the children from rural areas pursue an education to the

ninth grade because most parents can't afford it. One family typically has 4-8 children. It costs approximately 200 dollars per year to send one child to school in town. Many of the students in these upper grades live at the school because it is too far to travel every day from their home into town. During my three years as Pastor in this area, I can say that many people were baptized through our work. Often school children would be baptized and then their parents would become Christians, too. Currently there are five (5) men and three (3) women from the parish who have chosen the priesthood and religious life. They are attending classes at the seminary. God guides our daily activities. God is indeed the source of our success. 

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