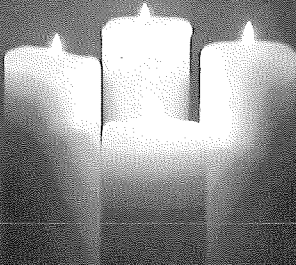


December 2007, A.D.

# Mission of Divine Mercy

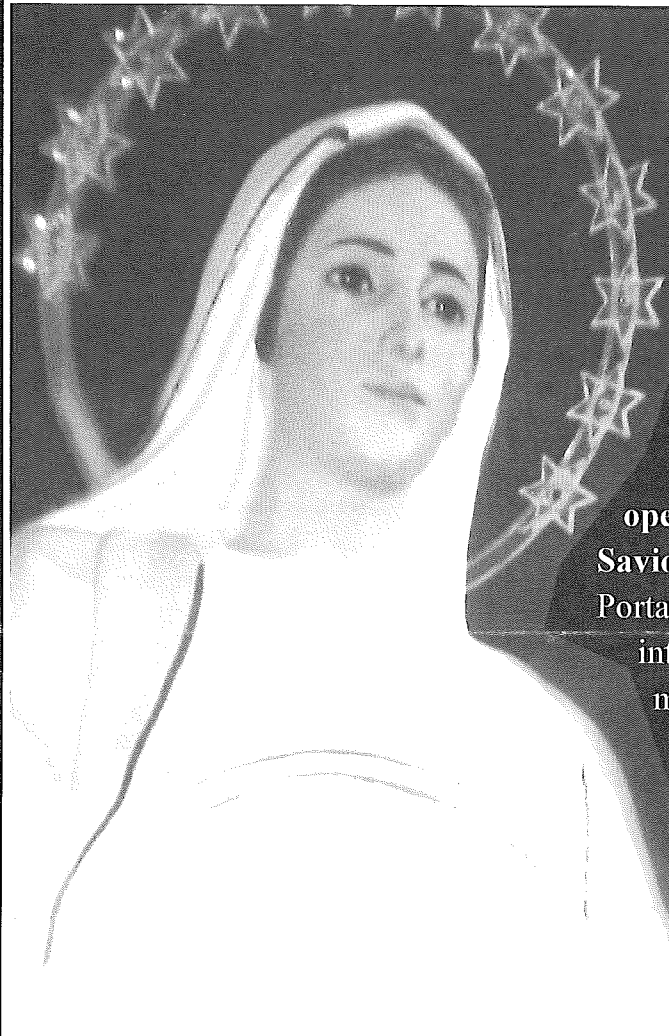


**Advent is the Season of Mary. It is the season of hope. It is the season of vocation.**

On the eve of the Third Millennium our great John Paul cried out, **"Open wide the doors to Christ."**

With Her YES Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, opened the doors of Salvation History so that the Savior might enter. With Her YES She became the Portal through which the Word -made-Flesh might come into our own individual hearts. With Her YES She made possible all the "yes"s that would flow into His Heart down through the ages .... Please God, even unto the 'yes' that each of us will utter.

This Advent we hope to be more and more deeply united with you in the Heart of Mary as we travel this Rosary of days to Him. ♦



*"Be it done unto Me  
according to thy word...."*

In our Advent Newsletter we feature, among other things, a group of young men who are dedicating a special semester to the Lord and to discerning His Will in their lives. They are striving to say their own Yes. We present to you on pages 5-7 the 'pioneers' of the St. Gabriel's Institute. ♦

- Inside:**
- ❖ Advent Reflection on pg. 3
  - ❖ Project Update on pg. 8
  - ❖ Calendar on pg. 9

- ❖ Picture Gallery on pgs. 10-11

Photo of Our Lady of Grace from Tihalijsna, also known as "Our Lady Queen of Peace," taken by Kathryn Lamke.

Exactly six years ago on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception — Saturday, December 8, 2001 — Brother Moses first took the name of Brother Moses of Jesus and received the habit. We had barely arrived in New Braunfels and were still living out of suitcases as we planned his simple ceremony. Now it seems like a special gift from Our Lady that his ordination date has been set for that same Feast.

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*[Please note the request for modest dress in effect at the Mission. Also, no matter the weather, the First Mass will take place at our outdoor Chapel; please come prepared.]*

## Ordination



ON SATURDAY,  
DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>, AT 9AM,  
AT SAN FERNANDO CATHEDRAL  
ARCHBISHOP JOSE GOMEZ  
WILL ORDAIN BROTHER MOSES  
TO THE PRIESTHOOD OF  
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>  
— THE FEAST OF ST. JUAN DIEGO —  
AT 10:30 AM,  
AT ST. JOSEPH'S CHAPEL  
AT THE MISSION  
FATHER MOSES OF JESUS  
WILL OFFER  
THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS  
FOR THE FIRST TIME.  
We hope you can join us.

## A Sabbath Year

*The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, <sup>2</sup> "Say to the people of Israel, When you come into the land which I give you, the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruits; <sup>4</sup> but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD." [Lv. 25, 2-4]*

This Thanksgiving marks the beginning of our seventh year since we arrived in New Braunfels, and since the MDM was "born". Intense years of much work, many challenges and many blessings. But now we begin this "Sabbath Year" for us. We feel the Lord wants us to temporarily diminish some of the other activities we've had, in order to focus on some other areas, such as:

**Formation of new members.** Having a new group of young men living with us is a little like a family with a new child. It both constrains one, demanding a great deal of time and energy, and at the same time brings a new dimension of grace, joy, and activity. It is important that we attend to their formation, but also that we just spend time with them over meals or playing sports or just catching up on how the day went.

**Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist.** We want to make some improvements and changes to our celebration of the Mass and the Divine Office, and that takes time. More on this later.

**Dwellings for our Community at the Mission.** In order to receive vocations (especially for the women) it is more and more urgent that we establish living quarters for the Community at the Mission. We are also badly in need of an all-weather Chapel and want to provide quarters for visiting priests.

Because of these very good but also very time-consuming developments we will be restricting our apostolic activities next spring to our regularly scheduled events. Pray for us! Please God, we are laying a foundation materially and spiritually that will permit Jesus' Mercy to flow out into the Hill Country for years to come... ♦

# A Reflection for Advent

*A friend of ours felt that she received the following reflection in prayer. We offer it to you as an Advent Gift. It reminds us that the celebration of the Incarnation is not limited to December 25th.*

My daughter;

I, the Word of the Father, the Only-Begotten Son of God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, was conceived in the most pure womb of the Most Holy Mary, the Virgin Mary, My Mother and your Mother, here on earth and for all eternity.

I, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, became man, a mortal man, through love of you, for love of the human race, fallen because of sin.

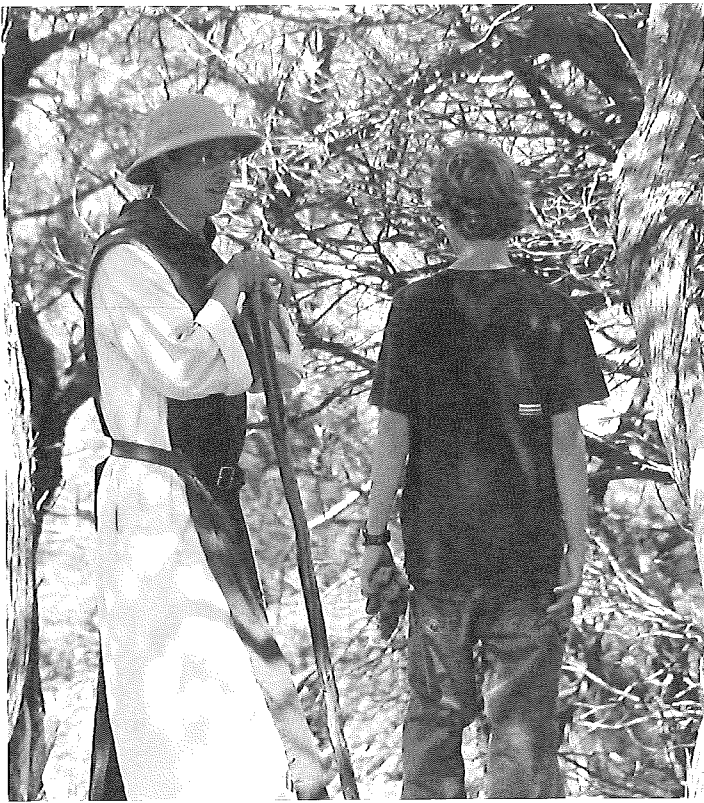
Daughter, no one can appreciate fully what was and is My Incarnation. The Word burst forth in the most pure womb of the Virgin Mary and found in Her and made Her the true Ark of the Covenant. Heaven and earth were joined together to rescue man from original sin, to justify him before God; and to rescue him from his personal sin, so that he might obtain by that means, that is to say through My Incarnation, the right to be redeemed.

Daughter, adore My Incarnation. There are so few persons who remember to do that! And I am not referring to those who remember the day and the date of the Feast of the Incarnation. No, daughter, I am referring to those who remember it during the year, at all hours, every day. Daughter, through My great Mercy, I have given you a constant and great love for My Incarnation. Adore the Incarnation, daughter. May all of you adore it. That was the greatest thing that could happen to the world; the bursting forth of the Word in time and space to divinize you through grace.

Adore, adore My Incarnation. ✠

et VERBUM • CARO • FACTUM • EST





## New Program for Home-schooled Boys

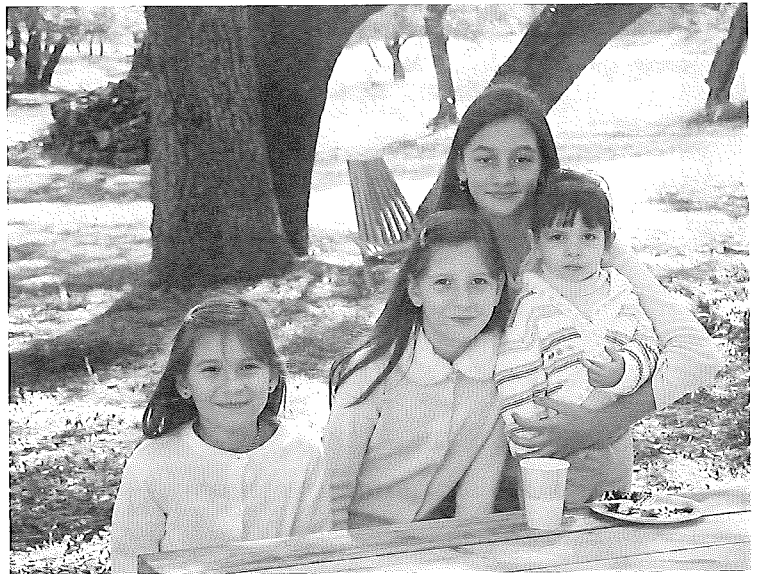
**FOR:** 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade home-schooled boys of the St. Michael's Squadron.

**WHEN:** Every Thursday, beginning January 10<sup>th</sup>, from 8AM to 8PM at the Mission.

**WHAT:** Will include Mass, study, lunch, work, sports, supper, and Holy Hour.

For more information contact  
now-Brother (then-Father) Moses. ♦

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, Sister Magdalene received the title of **Mother Magdalene**. ♦



## JUNIOR QUEEN OF PEACE

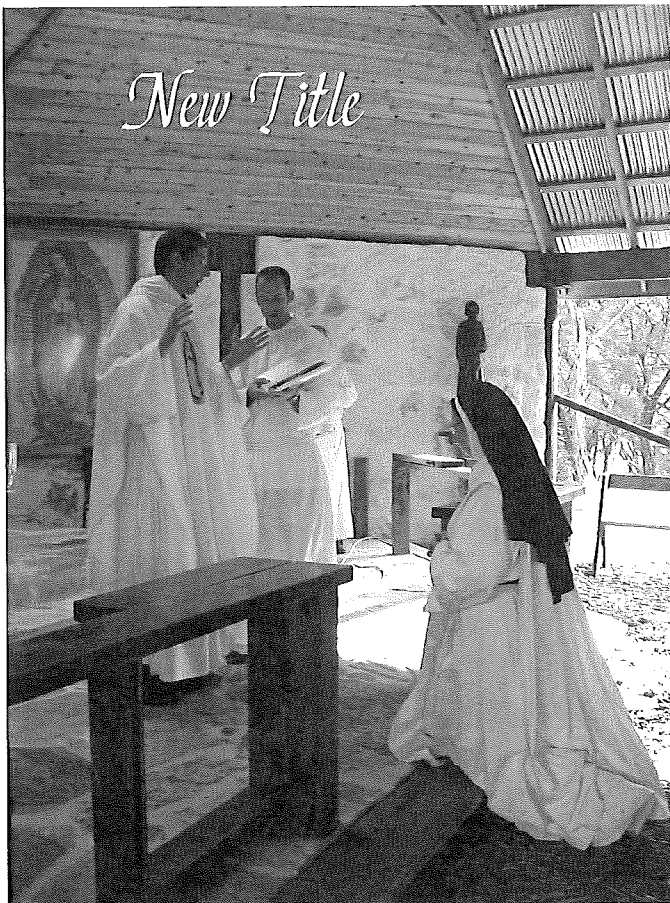
It took almost a full year of insistent prayers and eager requests on the part of a few young middle school girls (and the encouragement of Fr. John Mary) to finally bring about the first meeting of the **Junior Queen of Peace Prayer Group**.

There were several signs of God's blessing upon this new endeavor — the perfectly beautiful Saturday afternoon we had, the excitement of the girls, the sense of peace — and at the same time, the usual attacks from the enemy trying to disrupt matters.

I think that Jesus and Our Blessed Mother were very happy with the response from the girls and *that* in turn made *me* happy.

Please pray for this group, that its members may truly be docile to Our Lady's work in them as She helps to make them beautiful and holy for Her Son. ♦

*Sister Amapola de Jesús*



# The St. Gabriel Institute



FROM FATHER JOHN MARY:

**T**he Saint Gabriel's Institute [SGI] is a response to two needs that we've sensed for a long time.

**First**, young people need a chance to discern what their own calling is in life. Especially, they need to be able to discover **God's unique will** for them in their life. He is the only One Who really knows what they were created for. But that is not easy to do in the situation most of them find themselves in. As a priest, how often do I meet people who deeply regret not having had some more guidance before they made certain decisions that altered their lives.

**Second**, young people need to prepare themselves spiritually and morally for their future and for eternity. There are great spiritual challenges awaiting them, whether as married or single persons working in the world, or in religious life or in the priesthood. That takes serious spiritual formation. And rarely do they get it. Often the focus for young men is on academics or a career. But the formation of the soul is sorely deficient. And that is the most necessary.

The SGI gives young men a chance to **dedicate a semester to the Lord**; to discern His Will; and to be formed to better carry out their own mission.

In the articles that follow we've let our SGIs speak for themselves about their experience so far. ♦



**told that the definition of success** is to go to school, get a high paying job, get married, and have kids. Then, and only then, will I be successful. SGI has given me an avenue to explore other options.

Even though I am only part time this semester and commute from St. Mary's University on the week-ends, it has been great living with Rafa, Joe, and Antony and **their individually weird personalities**. I've never lived with anyone who **continually sings Latin songs stuck in his head**, or lectures me on **how High Fructose Corn Syrup can be spiritually damaging**, or enjoys cleaning the bathrooms with such fortitude naming the task a "sacrifice."

Ever since I stopped working and started living with MDM I have felt like I am in a week long prayer. I find myself taking a step back and enjoying life and

*(Continued on page 6)*

**Matt:** The past two and a half months with the St. Gabriel Institute and the Mission of Divine Mercy has been a true answer to my prayers of the last few years. **For about two years I have had a desire for "something more."** Both the unity amongst the men of the Institute and the personal spiritual growth, in union with MDM, have filled this void.

The St. Gabriel Institute has allowed me to venture out of the herd of material success that this world has convinced me to follow. **I have always been**

**Rafa:** For a long time, ever since I graduated from high school, I had been thirsting for a deeper relationship with the Lord. When Father John Mary told me about St. Gabriel's Institute during the St. Michael's Camps, **instantly I felt an incredible joy** that I had not felt for a long time. In my heart I knew that dedicating a semester to the Lord away from the "normal" college environment was something that God really wanted me to do, and that's why He gave me such a joy on that day....

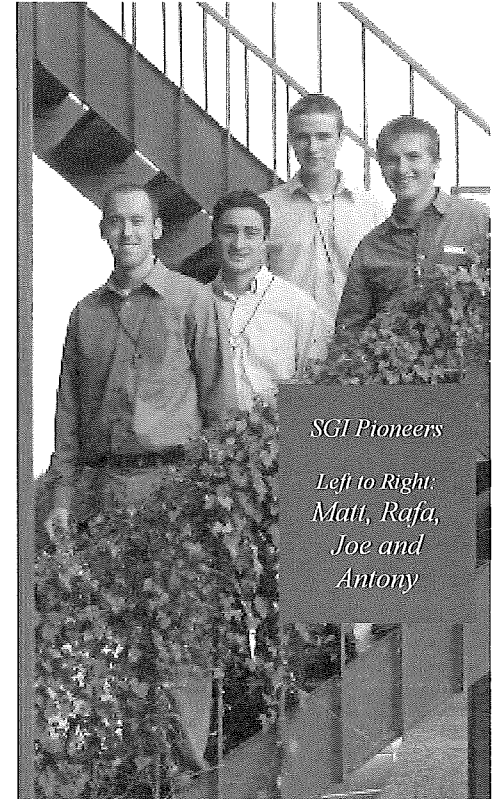
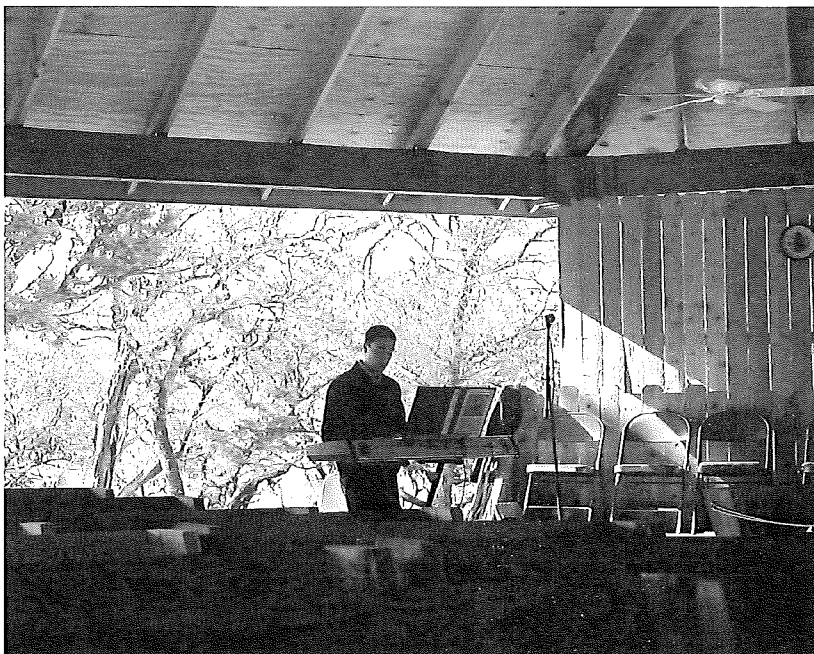
My experience during these two months has been amazing!! Not only has my relationship with the Lord strengthened but I have learned to appreciate the simple things in life that often I used to take for granted. I have learned that God is present in every single simple task, **even in cleaning toilets**, that being one of my duties at St. Gabriel's Institute.

One of the purposes of the SGI was to discern what God's will is for us. So far I am not sure where God wants me, but I have noticed that I am more at peace with my life, **I tend to worry less and I have learned to trust more in Him**, even though sometimes it is really hard.

Another important aspect about my experience here at the SGI is **the friendships that I have built** with the other guys. I have been able to know the guys very well and really value their company. Some Saturdays each of us shared our testimony. Their testimonies really had an impact on me and made me respect them more and love them like they were my brothers.

I can say that it's only been two months and I can see very clearly how God is shaping me to be a better person and a better Christian. So far my experience here at the SGI has been one of the best decisions that I have ever made in my life. ♦

*Rafael Veraza*



**Antony:** This semester three other young men and myself have decided to devote our lives to God. To do this we took time away from school, family and friends and have been living with the Mission of Divine Mercy. You may wonder how we were able to tear ourselves away from the world, but I can't answer that question. I have no idea how we were able to do it; the only logical possibility is that God has showered us with graces. This is what I think has happened.

**The average college student is not longing for a semester of prayer, theological study and manual labor. Neither was I** at the beginning of this summer. I realized, though, that I needed to finally quit putting God off and really listen to what He wants me to do. By taking this chance, He has been able to work wonders in me and the guys around me. (Just the fact that we haven't strangled each other yet is a miracle) One



concrete thing I have been able to see this semester is **the power of prayer**. I spend a lot of my time praying for my friends and family and through this I have been told about and witnessed my prayers being answered.

During this semester I have been able to slow down and begin to appreciate a simpler life. I am not always worried about where I need to be or what I should be doing. **Simple manual labor, daily exercise, eating right, actually sleeping—and three other guys doing the same thing—has been extremely beneficial.** Never before in my life have I not complained about waking up at six o'clock, then—without someone telling me—gone to pray for an hour, then gone to Mass, all in silence.

The St. Gabriel Institute will definitely have a lasting impact upon me. From now on I will look at my life as before the Institute and after the Institute, for one reason. Before I was always thinking of myself and what I wanted to do. **Now I am trying to put God first** and ask Him what I should do. With this mindset I hope I will follow His Will and go wherever he wants me. ♦

*Antony Frater*

*(Continued from page 5)*

the wonderful people and things God has given us. On the weekends when I come back from the “real world” I find myself at total peace and free of countless temptations or of my peers judging me. **I can't find greater joy than in randomly sparking up a conversation about various Catholic topics with a bunch of guys my age and with the same goal – doing the Lord's Will.** ♦

**Joe:** I'm from Wheeling, West Virginia. **Two years ago I returned to the Church** through the grace of my Mother's prayers and my Father's suffering. Soon after something very deep inside me surfaced, and I felt a call to the priesthood. At that time I was still very far from the Lord and reacted to that realization with great fear and anxiety. The priesthood as I knew it seemed so sad and lonely. I was ashamed of this call and did not want anyone to know. I went on with my life trying to grow closer to God, yet hoping He had other things in store for me. Around that time my uncle, Fr. John Mary, had

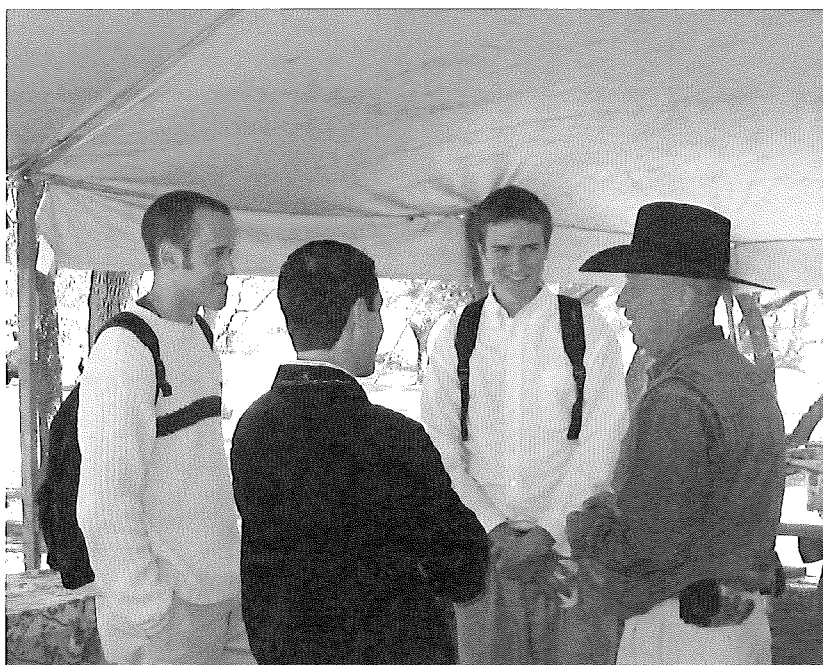
mentioned to me his idea of starting a program that would give young men a semester or two to seek God's Will for their lives. **Since my only plans for post-high school education involved riding a motorcycle across the country** I thought I could make time for it.

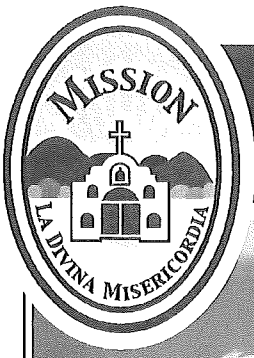
I matured through my senior year and by its end felt that nothing else had any true worth but a life for God. This feeling did not change my anxiety over what people

would think or my dim view of the priesthood. I was scheduled to attend the St. Michael summer camps in July, and the days leading up to them were the height of the anxiety. But the first day out at the Mission I was filled with awe and peace and had no memory of all my previous feelings. This continued through the three weeks. I went home trusting in Jesus like never before.

I arrived for the SGI this September with a longing to give my life to Christ. **Living with the Mission has allowed me to give God the time needed to reveal to me His call and plans.** Here we live intimately with the Lord and have a chance to discover what is deepest in us. The joy that will become of our lives on earth and eternally is priceless and a gift that can only be found in the Lord. Here in this time the Lord has revealed to me His gift of a religious vocation and I am truly happy. ♦

*Joe Jebbia*





# Project Update



## LANDMARK EVENT:

After a year and a half of planning, struggling, and trusting, trusting, trusting, **Dave and Yvette Sommers** and Dave's sister **Pat Jones** have finally been able to **take up residence at our newly completed St. Francis House**. Having them there brings us a giant step closer to the Mission being able to realize its full-time vocation.

The first Feast which they celebrated in their new home was, appropriately enough, **THANKSGIVING**. ♦

## ST. RAPHAEL'S RISES...FINALLY

We'd hoped last April that the new St. Raphael Center might be available by the time the summer camps began. Then came **five months of setbacks**: The site had to be re-located; the building plan had to be revised for the new site; the new site proved challenging for the placement of the septic tank (it **always** comes down to the septic tank); and once that challenge was resolved the permit had to travel **the labyrinthian ways of county approval**. This makes Frodo's quest look like child's play. ...

And the unprecedented rainfall this summer in the Hill Country meant delay after delay with regard to pouring the slab.

Finally, in desperation, we made a **special plea to our Mission Congregation**. The

third week of September - with just a

novena of days before the great Feast of the Archangels on the 29<sup>th</sup> - we asked for a concerted effort of prayer to Them on behalf of St. Raphael's. Within the week everything began to fall into place. Obstacles disappeared, permits were granted, and by the end of the first week of October they were beginning to frame the building. By now the stucco is on, the roof is being tiled, and we're hoping to begin using it in January.

How grateful we are to **those Holy Archangels** who run interference for us; and how grateful we are for **those Holy Friends** who bring us through time and time again with their prayers. ♦





# CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

*All dates are tentative. Please check our website to confirm them.*

## DECEMBER 2007

- December 17 - 22 **Community retreat**
- December 24 **Midnight Mass** 10:00 p.m.  
(Refreshments will follow)
- December 25 **Christmas Day Mass** 10:30 a.m.  
(Refreshments will follow)
- December 31 **New Year's Eve Vigil**  
10:30 p.m.-12:00 a.m.  
(Refreshments will follow)

## JANUARY 2008

- January 12 **Amici Christi Day for Newcomers**  
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- January 13 **Amici Christi Meeting** 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- January 19 **Junior QP Meeting** 2-7 p.m.
- January 25-27 **SMS Weekend**

## FEBRUARY 2008

- February 9 • **Study Session with  
Deacon Bob Gorman** 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
• **Junior QP Meeting** 2-7 p.m.
- February 10 **Amici Christi** 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

## MARCH 2008

- March 1 **Study Session with  
Deacon Bob Gorman** 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- March 8 **Junior QP Meeting** 2-7 p.m.
- March 9 **Amici Christi Meeting** 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- March 20 - 24 **Paschal Triduum Retreat**  
(Program to be announced)
- March 30 **Divine Mercy Sunday**  
(Program to be announced)

## APRIL 2008

- April 12 **Junior QP Meeting** 2-7 p.m.
- April 13 **Amici Christi Meeting** 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

## MAY 2008

- May 10 **Junior QP Meeting** 2-7 p.m.
- May 11 **Amici Christi Meeting** 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

## JUNE 2008

- June 3 - 9 **Junior SMS & Senior SMS  
End of year Encounters**
- June 8 **Amici Christi Meeting** 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- June 14 **Junior QP Meeting**
- June 17 - 23 **QP Camp** (Tentative date)
- June 24 - 30 **Junior QP Camp** (Tentative date)

## JULY 2008

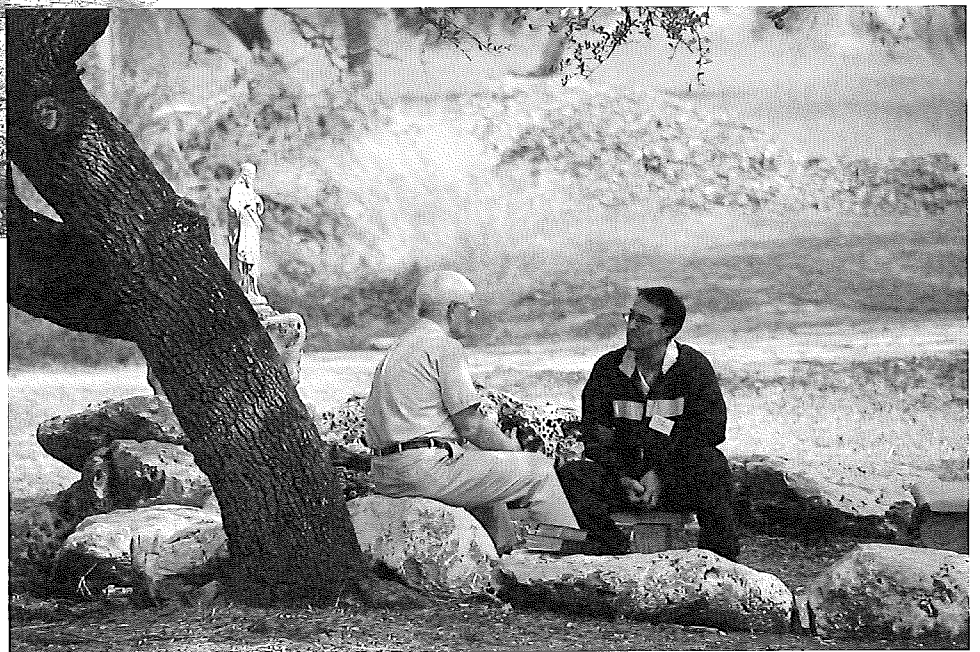
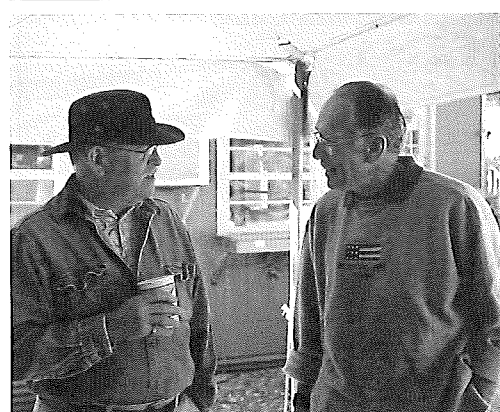
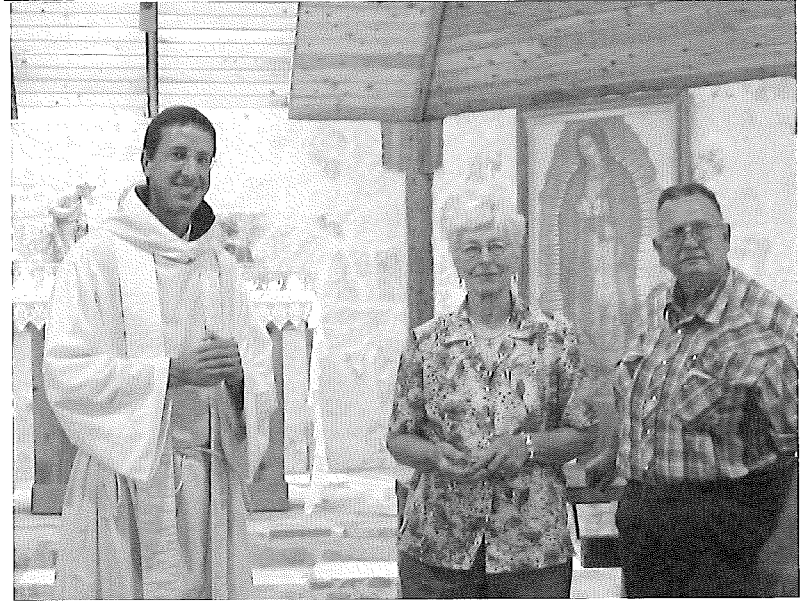
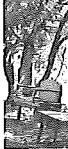
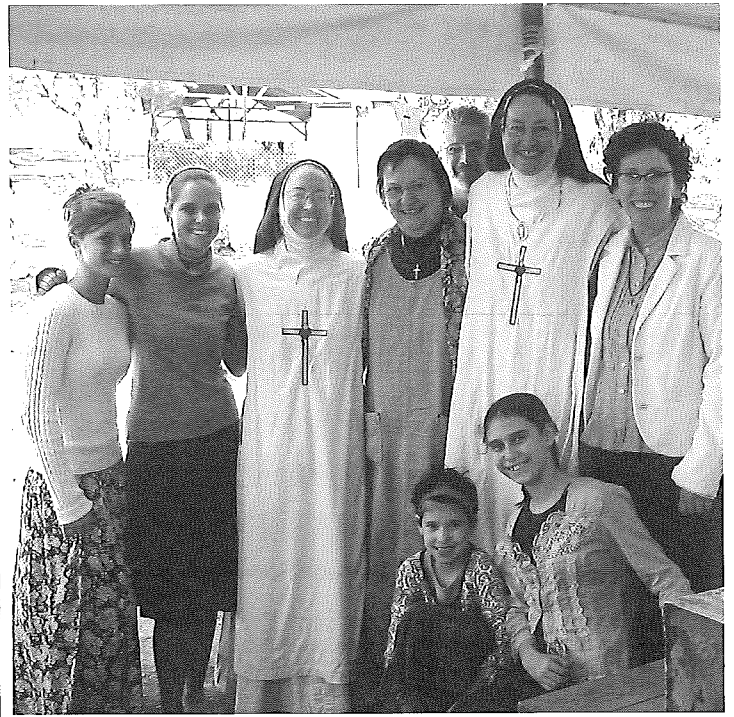
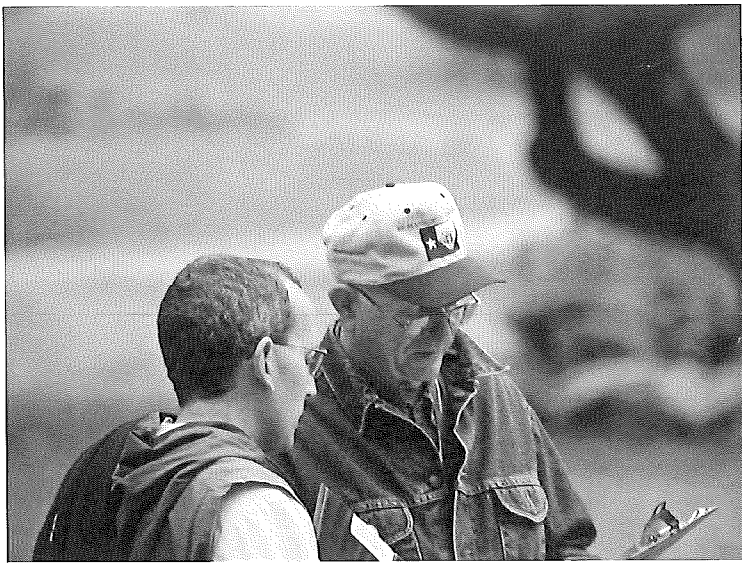
- July 13 **Amici Christi Meeting** 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- July 25 - 28 **SMS Camp Team Preparation**
- July 29 - Aug. 4 **Senior SMS Camp**

## AUGUST 2008

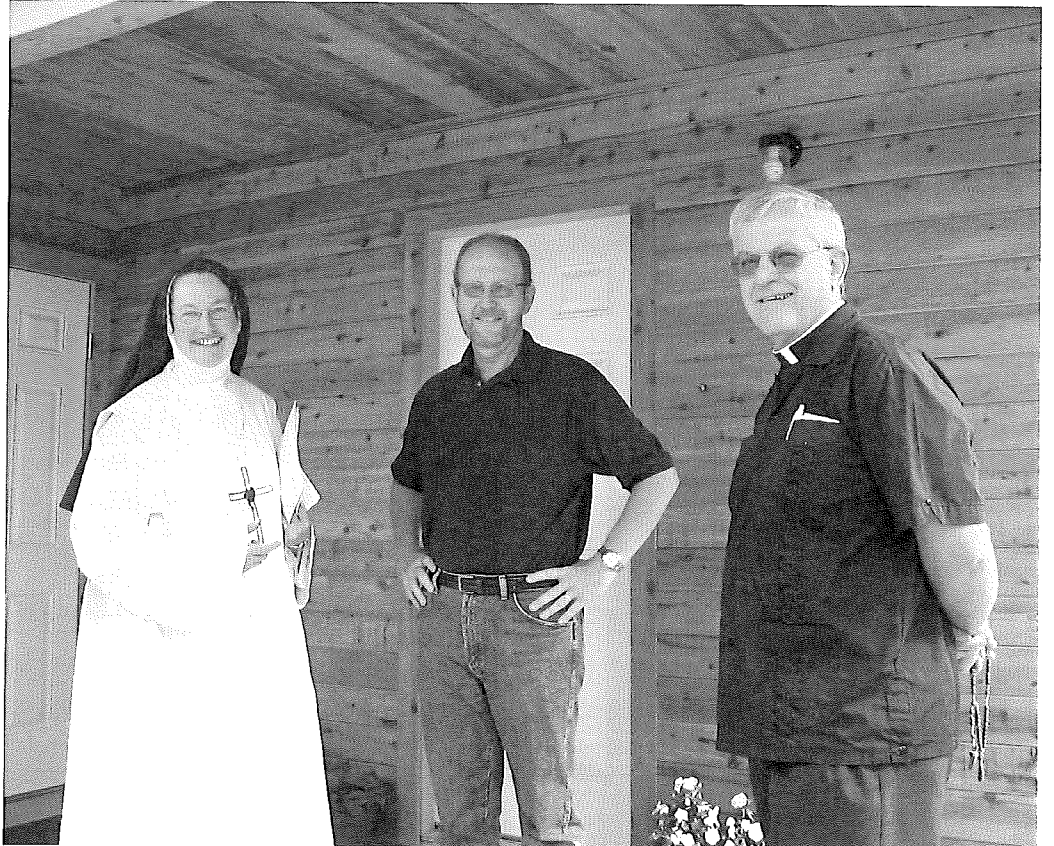
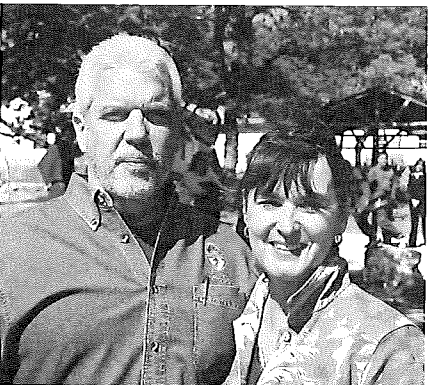
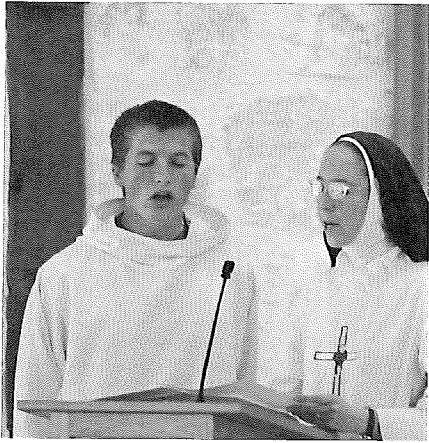
- August 05 - 11 **SMS Mission Camp**
- August 10 **Amici Christi Meeting** 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- August 12 - 18 **Junior SMS Camp**

## REGULAR ACTIVITIES

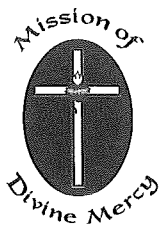
- Saturday Mass** 8:00 a.m.
- Sunday Community Mass** 10:30 a.m.
- Thursday Holy Hour** 7-8 p.m.





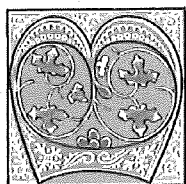






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By singing praise to your maternity, we  
all exalt you as a spiritual temple,  
Mother of God! For the One Who  
Dwelt Within Your Womb, the Lord  
Who Holds All Things in His Hands,  
sanctified you, glorified you, and taught all men to  
sing to you:

Hail, O Tabernacle of God the Word!

Hail, O Holy One, more holy than the saints!

Hail, O Ark that the Spirit has gilded!

Hail, Inexhaustible Treasure of Life!

Hail, Precious Crown of rightful authorities!

Hail, Sacred Glory of reverent priests!

Hail, Unshakeable Tower of the Church!

Hail, Unbreachable Wall of the Kingdom!

Hail, O you through whom the trophies are raised!

Hail, O you through whom the enemies are routed!

Hail, O Healing of my body!

Hail, salvation of my soul!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Glory to You, O Christ, our God and our hope:  
Glory be to You! May Christ our true God have Mercy on us  
and save us, through the prayers of His Most Pure Mother ...  
for He is gracious and loves mankind!

*Last stanza or chant of the great Akathistos Hymn to the Blessed Virgin Mary.*