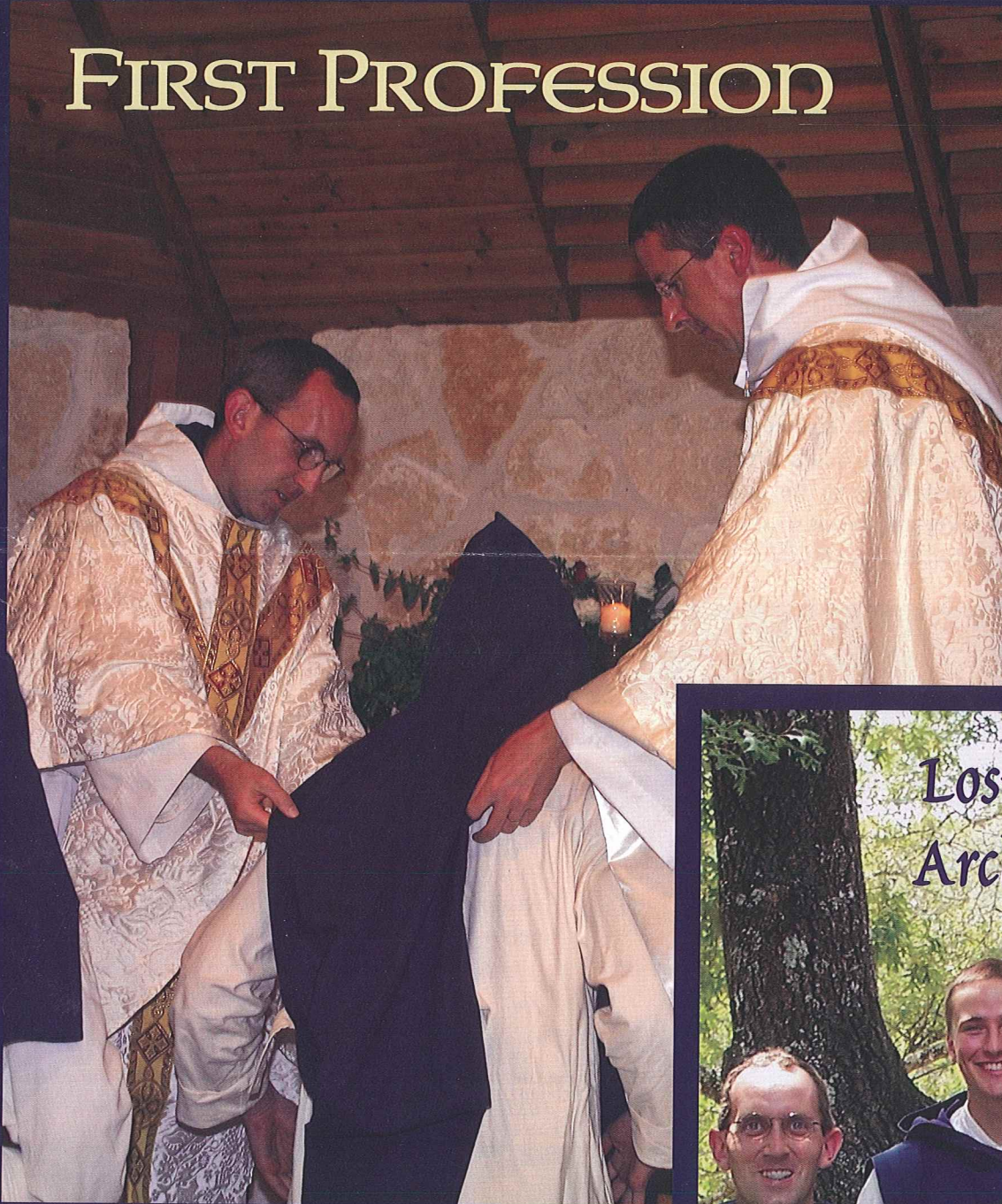


Mission of Divine Mercy

September 2010, A.D.

FIRST PROFESSION



*Br. Mikael is invested in his new
Scapular that bears the sacred Emblem
of the Mission.*

Sept. 14

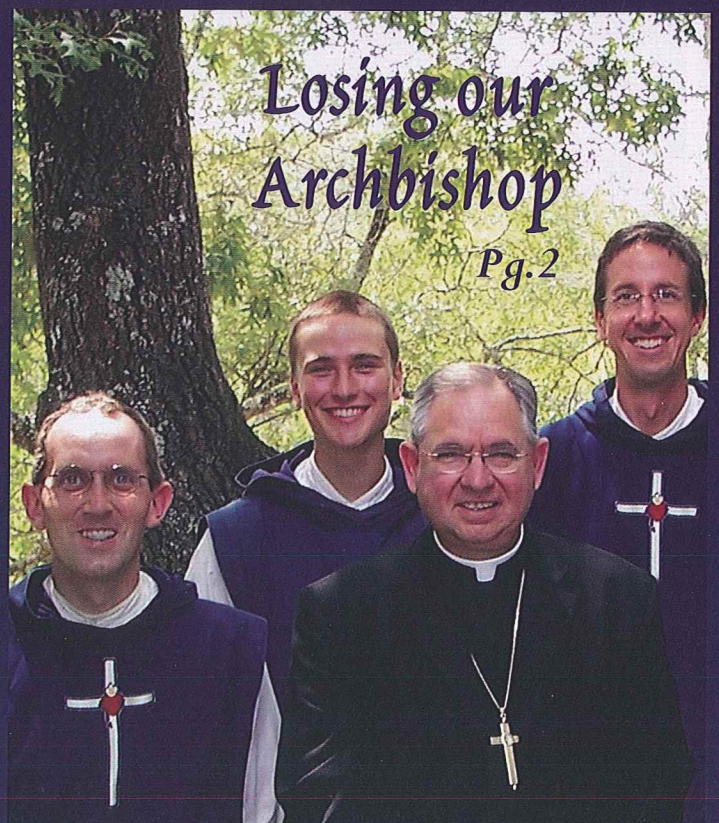
Feast of the Triumph
of the Cross



Lift high the Cross!

*This is the Sign which
Satan's legions fear
And Angels veil
their faces to revere.*

*From farthest regions
Let them homage bring,
And on His Cross adore
Their Savior King!*



Losing our
Archbishop

Pg. 2



"I ask the Lord to bless MDM's efforts to spread His Mercy. And I assure them of my prayerful support in this worthy and important mission."

Archbishop José Gomez

Losing Our Archbishop

Our fall Newsletter of 2007 featured an article entitled *"No Longer San Antonio's Secret."* It was about our Archbishop of only two years at that time, *Archbishop José Gomez.*

It spoke of our growing affection, respect and gratitude for him. And it noted the fact that the low-profile, little known auxiliary Bishop from Denver was becoming increasingly recognized in the larger Church - a cleric whose presence and input was being sought at both national and international levels.

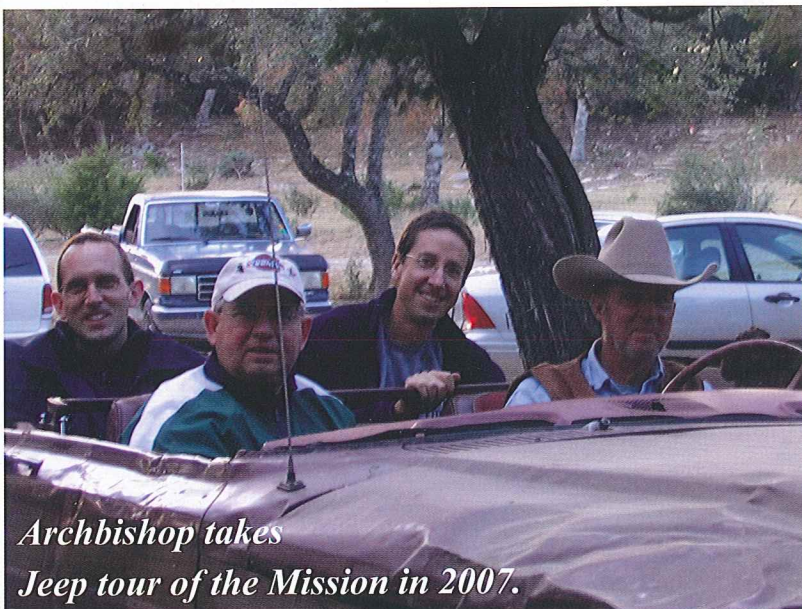
This past spring the Archdiocese of San Antonio was both honored and saddened (mostly saddened) to see that our own Archbishop had been chosen as *Co-adjutor for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles*, the most populous and, according to some, the most challenging and high-profile Archdiocese in the nation.



The depth of his own emotion and his attachment to the Church of San Antonio were evident at the final ceremonies before his departure, as was the sadness of his people seeing him leave.

We entrust Archbishop Gomez to Our Lady of Guadalupe and we ask Her to be his wisdom and his strength in the City of the Angels. ♦

(We publish here the warm and encouraging letter we received from the Archbishop in May on the occasion of the approval of our revised statutes.)

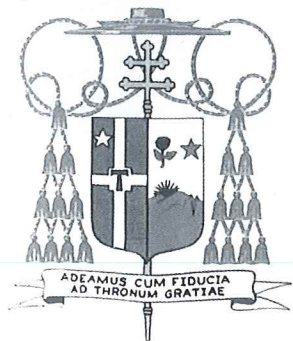


Archbishop takes Jeep tour of the Mission in 2007.

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Office of the Archbishop

Archdiocese of San Antonio

P.O. Box 28410 • San Antonio, Texas 78228-0410

Phone (210) 734-2620

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May 19, 2010

Dear Friends in Christ:

On the occasion of my official approval of the Mission of Divine Mercy's statutes, I commend them for their efforts and heartily encourage them in their vocation. This year they will begin their 10th year in this Archdiocese. In my ministry as Archbishop of San Antonio I have gotten to know their community through numerous contacts with them including several visits to *Mission la Divina Misericordia*, the land that they are developing as monastery, retreat center, and sanctuary. I had the special joy of ordaining Fr. Moses of Jesus Pillari to the priesthood, after he completed his formation at Assumption Seminary, and assigned him to a "special ministry" with the Mission of Divine Mercy.

The Mission of Divine Mercy is a community of priests, religious men and women and consecrated laity. As with each religious community, their presence enriches our archdiocese with the graces and fruits of the special life to which they have been called. In the case of M.D.M., they are called to live a life of faith in Jesus, the eternal Mercy of God, revealed in the Gospel and providentially recalled through the revelations given to Saint Faustina. This faith leads them to a trusting abandonment to the Will of the Father. With our Blessed Mother, they are called to a contemplative life of prayer and recollection, of "abiding in His Love" and interceding for the world. This contemplative life can be hard to understand and harder to find in our busy and restless society. But this life, dedicated to "the one thing necessary," permits an action of God's grace beyond any merely human possibilities.

In the M.D.M. life and apostolate, a priority is given to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. M.D.M. seeks to carry out its apostolic dimension by sharing their spirit with others – in their different ministries. They wish to help all to discover the Holy Spirit's invitation to a deeper union with Him. The lay branch, the *Amici Christi M.D.M.*, are men and women, single or married, who endeavor to bring this spirit into the world where they live.

Mission la Divina Misericordia is the primary location of their apostolic activities. There, the community plans to develop two monasteries, one for men and one for women, which will help them live their contemplative life. The Mission is a retreat center and a sanctuary of Divine Mercy where others can come to take part in their community prayer, participate in the various retreats and spiritual formation activities or simply come to experience God's Mercy amidst the trials of our world today.

"Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My mercy" said our Lord to Saint Faustina. His Mercy is our great hope and needs to be widely promoted. I ask the Lord to bless M.D.M.'s efforts to spread His Mercy. And I assure them of my prayerful support in this worthy and important mission.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ José H. Gomez

Most Reverend Jose H. Gomez, S.T.D.
Archbishop of San Antonio

Introducing Emily

By Mother Magdalene

Nepotism is an old and venerable tradition within the Church. And if it worked for the Borgias, why not for us?

Last summer we had the pleasure of welcoming our mother **Margaret O'Connor Foster** and our sister **Emily Foster Jebbia** (mother of Brother Mikael) to Texas.

This summer we welcomed **Emily** to the official Mission Staff roster where she took up the position of **Director of Communications and Development**.

Emily's husband died two and a half years ago, and after that Father John Mary began to recruit her to work for the Mission.

"Her love for and faith in this Mission," he said, "combined with her professional skills and experience were just what I felt this position needed."

Ever since she arrived Emily has been helping out in a variety of ways. In addition to baking, singing, and mopping up rainwater on the Chapel floor, she has **written copy for the Newsletter**, stuffed envelopes for various mailings, brainstormed with friends of ours about communication and fundraising, and helped to implement the new donor software program.

(She has also been instrumental in organizing the **Texas Two-Step outings** that are beginning to

catch on with some of the Mission folk.)

Graduating from Notre Dame with a degree in English, she went on to work with a public relations and marketing firm in Pittsburgh; to initiate and head up the Office of Evangelization for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston; and then to direct the Office of Development for the Wheeling Symphony.

For the last seven years of his life, until his death in 2007, Emily was increasingly absorbed by the care of her husband John who died of Alzheimer's. "**Loving John, Raising Joe**" is a manuscript that she has written about the experience of those years.

It's a tremendous help to have someone taking on the lion's share of responsibility for development, communication, and fundraising for the Mission. **And if you have an idea that could bring in a few million dollars for our housing, don't hold back.**



Her contact information is

Emily@missionofdivinemeracy.org..

Back to you, Em! ♦

*I asked Emily to explain this life-changing move in her own words.
See page 12 for her response.*

Inanimate Object?

by Emily Foster Jebbia

One of Father John Mary's recent homilies has helped me to receive the Eucharist with new love and awareness.

Father began by calling to mind the accounts of people who had been diagnosed as being in a coma or perhaps showing no brain activity.

According to appearances - and even medical authority - this person should have no awareness of their surroundings; and yet in the instances when the person regains consciousness, they are often able to recount the actions and conversations that took place around them. They appeared oblivious to their surroundings but in fact were very aware.

Immediately my mind went to the amazing experience of Ellen.

A few years before I met her Ellen had been in a car accident that left her in a state described by doctors as having no brain activity. She remained in this state for about four months.

But, according to Ellen, during those months when she apparently had no brain activity, she was often intensely aware of what was happening around her. Later she could repeat some of the things that were said about her or about others within her hearing. She could also tell you which nurses and doctors had shown compassion, and which ones had treated her as an inanimate object.

Ellen was fed through a feeding tube at regular intervals. She said that she experienced the arrival of the liquid nourishment as a cool sensation in her stomach; and in her supremely limited environment it was an event to which she looked forward. But sometimes the cool sensation never came; the feeding tube that came from somewhere at the top of her bed would develop a kink in it. Instead of reaching her stomach, the liquid would come out at the top and, if not corrected, would begin to form a glob in her hair. Those times when the coolness didn't arrive, she said, were very hard.

(Continued on page 11)

The significance of a First Profession

When a young man discerns a call to religious life and approaches a specific Community, he is received as a postulant. Postulancy designates the initial period when he and the Community are both getting to know each other. It is a time for mutual discernment with regard to the authenticity of his potential vocation.

During this period Brother Mikael was still addressed by his Baptismal name "Joseph." He wore a short white hooded tunic which set him apart as a postulant but did not yet mark him as a formal member of MDM. He participated in the basic prayer, work and daily life of the Mission. He did not, however, attend House Chapter meetings nor have a formal voice in Community decisions.

At the end of his postulancy, if both parties discern a potential religious vocation, then the young man enters into the novitiate. Br. Mikael did this in April of 2008. At this point he received a religious habit but with a plain scapular, one without the sacred emblem of the Mission. He also took his religious name and title, "Brother Mikael of Mary."

Having taken on the external identity of a religious, during the coming two-year period the novice enters more fully into the interior spiritual consecration of his vocation, as well as into Community life. He is still not a professed member of the Community and attends Community meetings according to the discretion of the Superior. He is completely free to leave at any point during this period.

Throughout postulancy and novitiate he will be taking classes that ground him in the theological and historical foundations of consecrated life. His participation in apostolic activities is tailored to, and may be limited by, his position as a novice.

First Profession: At the end of this two-year period if both Novice and Community have discerned an authentic call - and if there appears to be the physical, spiritual and psychological health to live it out - then he will publicly profess that commitment. ♦

Our first

When you are a new young Community there are a lot of "firsts" in your life. Not, perhaps, of global significance; but, to a small demographic, important nonetheless.

One of these *firsts* occurred at the Mission this past April when approximately four hundred people gathered to celebrate the great solemnity of **Divine Mercy Sunday**, and to witness **Brother Mikael's First Profession of Vows**.

The first five of us had all intersected at Catholic Solitudes in south Texas. (Three of us had already lived in other religious communities.) We had then come north to the Hill Country to begin the Mission of Divine Mercy.

But Brother Mikael is the first one of us to begin his religious life in the Mission. He is our *first* First Profession.

After the homily on Divine Mercy Sunday Fr. John Mary called Br. Mikael to come forward and kneel before the Altar.

First, Father publicly questioned him about his willingness to embrace religious life. **Like marriage, a religious vocation has social as well as personal consequences, and must be publicly proclaimed and witnessed.**

Brother Mikael then declared his intent to commit his life to the Lord through religious profession, and formally became a vowed member of MDM for a period of one year. (First Vows are, by their very nature, temporary; at least, from the viewpoint of canon law.)

At this point his old scapular was removed and he received a new one with **the sacred emblem of the Mission**.

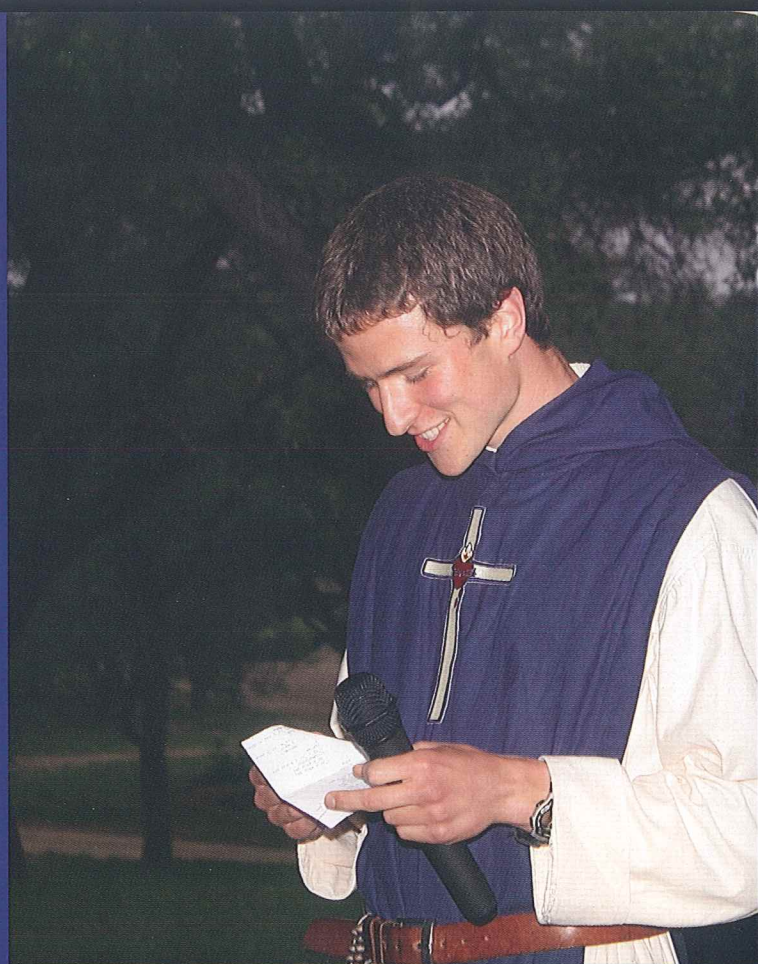
Finally, the rest of the Community joined him before the Altar where we, too, renewed our consecration, and the members of the Amici Christi MDM renewed their annual commitment. ♦

First Profession

At the reception afterwards Brother Mikael spoke about his own struggle with personal conversion, and about the significance for him of this profession:

“My vows made me think of the Eucharist; of how everyday Jesus offers His entire Self to me.

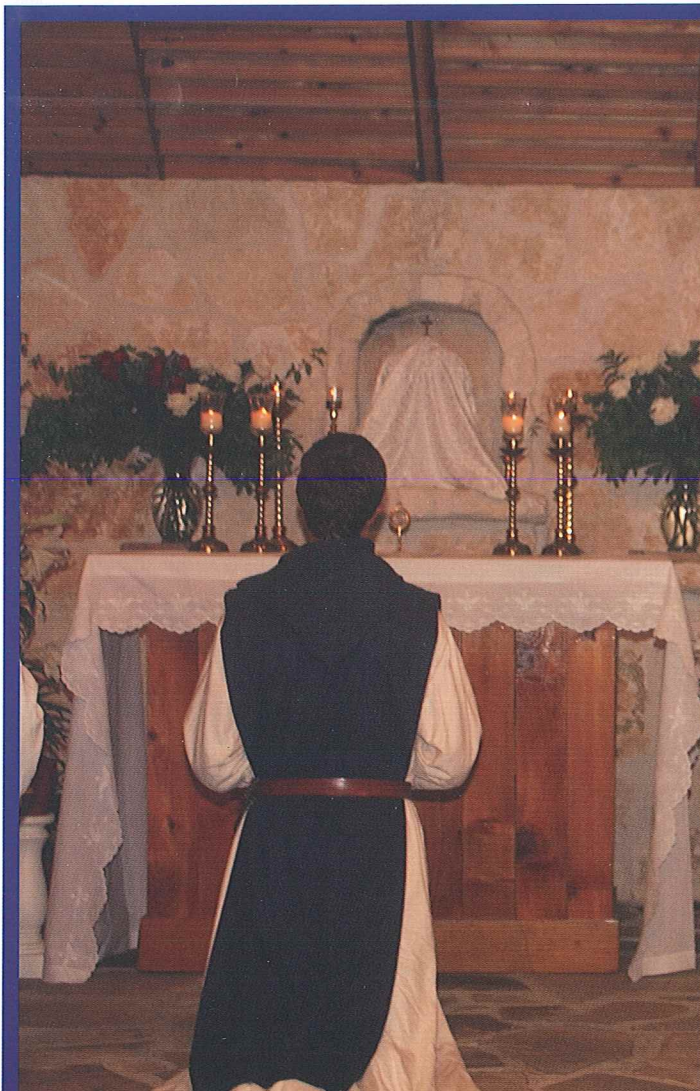
Making these vows seemed like an opportunity to make a return to Jesus with my own life, my own self. To be a little Eucharist for Him. I asked the Holy Spirit to help me make this offering.”

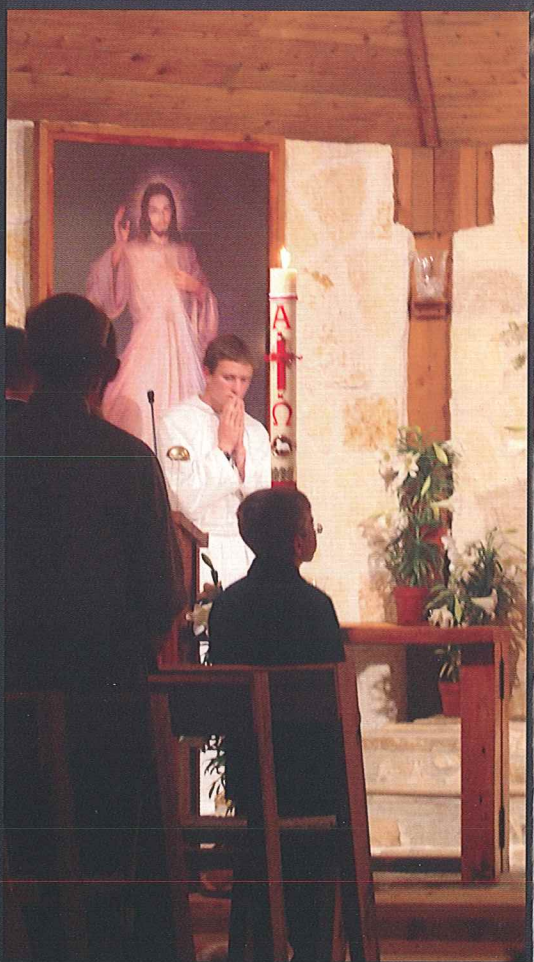
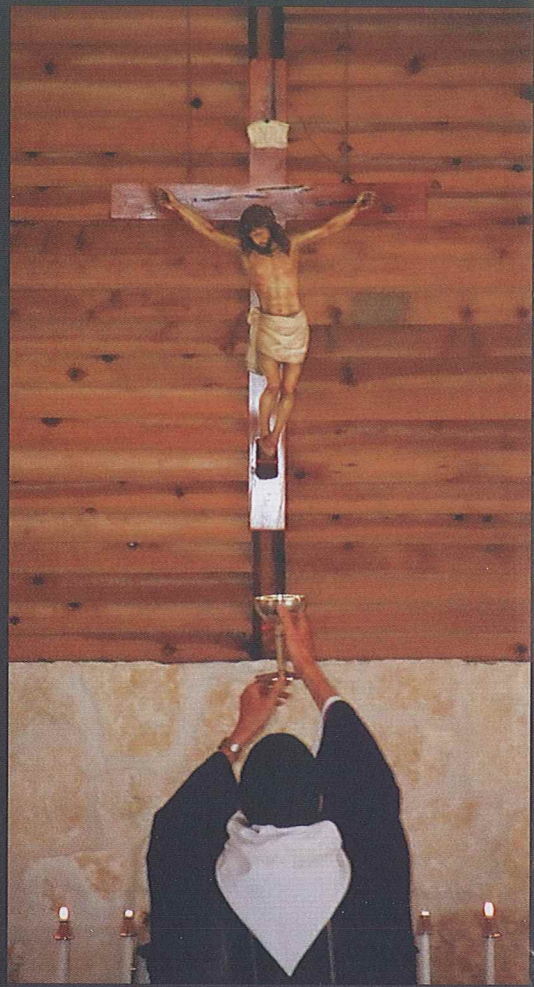


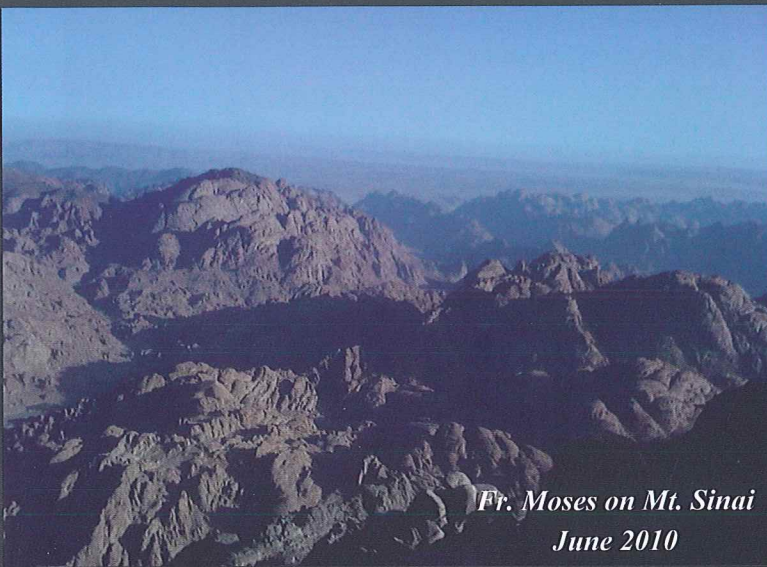
From Father John Mary:

“We thank the Lord for Brother Mikael's vocation. It is a striking manifestation precisely of God's Mercy. As he himself testifies, he was far away from the Lord, lured away by the temptations that draw so many young people. But God in His immense Mercy, and with the faith and love, prayers and sacrifices of his parents, has called him. And he, after some resistance, responded to that call.

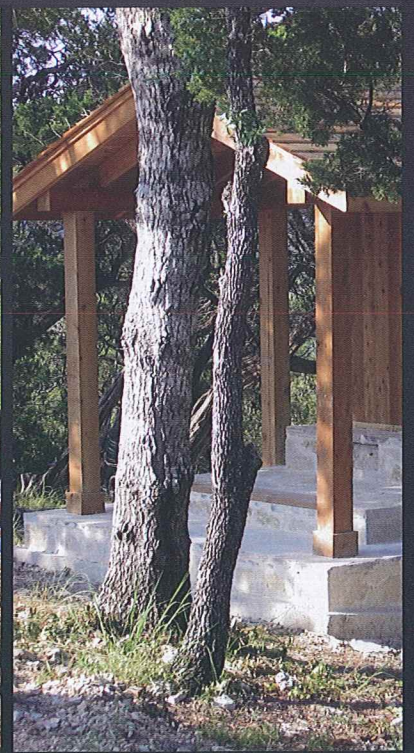
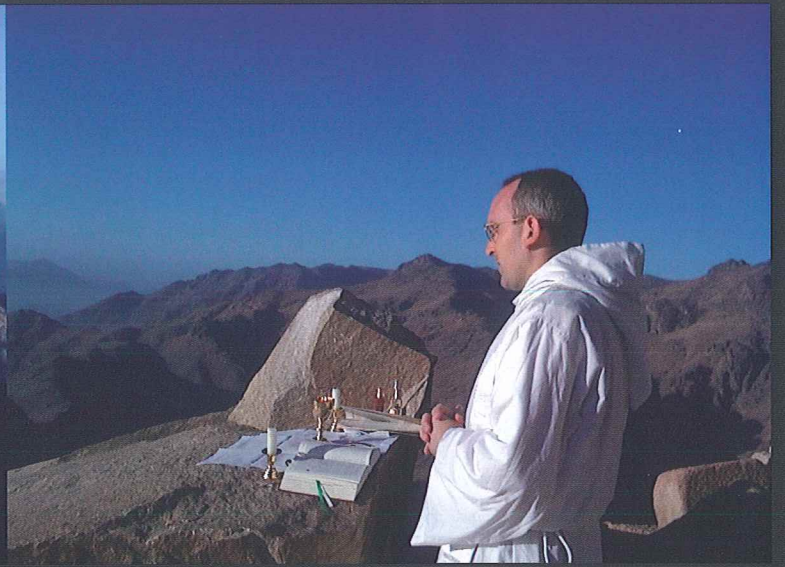
“But this conversion is still very recent in his life. Please pray for him, and for all of us, that we will be faithful.” ♦







*Fr. Moses on Mt. Sinai
June 2010*



Updates...



The St. Michael
Squadron

The St. Michael Squadron is looking forward to resuming their activities in September after a short break for the summer. The SMS offers a Junior Squadron for middle school boys, and a Senior Squadron for those of high school age. The purpose of the SMS is to help young men deepen in their faith through prayer, teachings, and community with each other. The first PUSH retreat meeting of the new year will be Saturday, September 18th. Team meetings are held on the 3rd weekend of each month. Anyone interested in joining the Squadron is welcome to contact Mr. Tim Drolet at 210-410-1622 for details. ♦

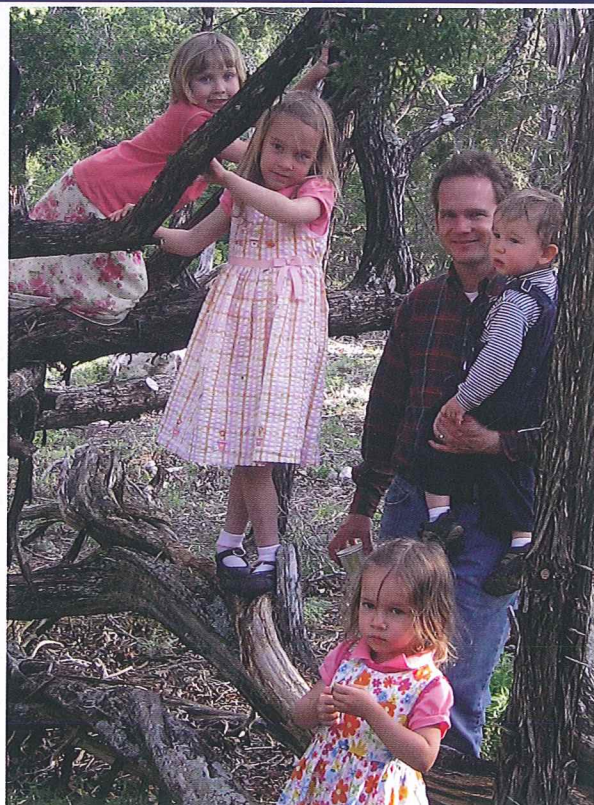
Though MDM continues to help with the spiritual formation of these groups, they are now run by the Families Seeking Divine Mercy (FSDM) rather than MDM.

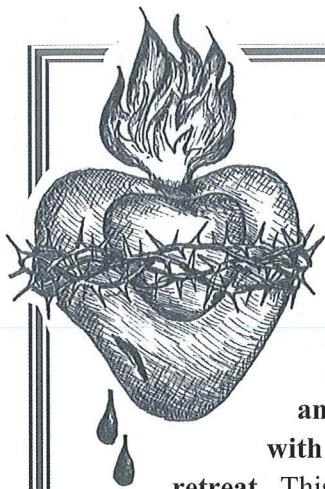
The Kerubim Program

Home-schooling families in the greater San Antonio-New Braunfels area are welcome to participate in the Kerubim Program which takes place on Fridays this year at the Mission. While the emphasis is on children, the program offers spiritual training for everyday life for the whole family as they study, work, relax and pray together.

The day includes a morning celebration of the Mass, and this year Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be available throughout the day.

For more information, please contact David and Marilyn Reed at gloria.tibi.christe@gmail.com. ♦





COR JESU RETREAT

Forty Hours in the Desert with Jesus

Many of you who have made an *Encounter with Jesus* retreat with us have requested a follow-up retreat. This is a response to that request. It is designed for those who have already made an EWJ.

The schedule will be very different from the EWJ. The emphasis will be on quiet personal prayer and Eucharistic adoration. The atmosphere will be simple and relaxed with most of the time spent in silence. The few group activities will be optional.

The *Cor Jesu Retreat* provides a weekend for an individual to simply be with the Lord, whether by spending time before the Blessed Sacrament, by finding a quiet place for Scriptural meditation or spiritual reading, or by extended times outdoors in the natural setting of the Mission.

Oct. 29-31 for WOMEN — Nov. 6-8 for MEN

The weekend will also offer opportunities for spiritual direction and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

~Minimum age of 18 unless accompanied by parent or legal guardian.

~Lodging options: at the Mission in the dormitory; off-site in your home or a motel, or a tent or RV at the Mission.

~All meals provided.

~Begins with registration and dinner Friday from 6-7pm; ends with 10:30 Sunday Mass.

~Spaces limited. To register call Yvette at 830-899-3444.

Inanimate Object? *(Continued from page 5)*

During those months she couldn't move or give any indication whatsoever of her awareness. How frustrating and frightening that must have been, almost unbearably so. Or it would have been if at the same time she hadn't been having an intense experience of the presence of God. According to Ellen, God was with her in a very close and personal way. He was speaking to her, and she could speak to Him. Because of this, it was also a time of intense joy for her. She recalls that she told God on several occasions that she wanted to open her eyes, but He told her that it wasn't yet the right time.

After about four months with no apparent change or improvement, the decision was made by her doctors to remove the feeding tube and bring about her death. From the doctors' point of view she was

already as good as dead, merely a human vegetable. But before the order could actually be carried out, God told Ellen that it was time to wake up. And she did, to the astonishment of the hospital staff.

Ellen's story flashed through my mind as FJM began his homily. But I was also wondering what *comas* had to do with that morning's readings? His next statement gave me an indication.

"I was thinking about these people who appear lifeless and yet are so keenly aware, and it made me think about Jesus' experience in the Eucharist. Here is an apparently lifeless wafer, and yet within it beats the most sensitive Heart that has ever existed. But how many of us make the effort to go beyond the appearance and to connect with that Heart? How sad it must be for Jesus to be so intensely aware, and yet to feel no response from us."

(Continued on page 14)

Emily Responds

“My mother and I have followed the progress of the Mission of Divine Mercy from afar since its inception. For years I looked forward to the phone calls from Mom in which she would pass along any and all news from Texas. It seemed very clear to us that God wanted this little Community to be formed and that He was blessing it by bringing so many good people to help and be part of the larger community that supported them.

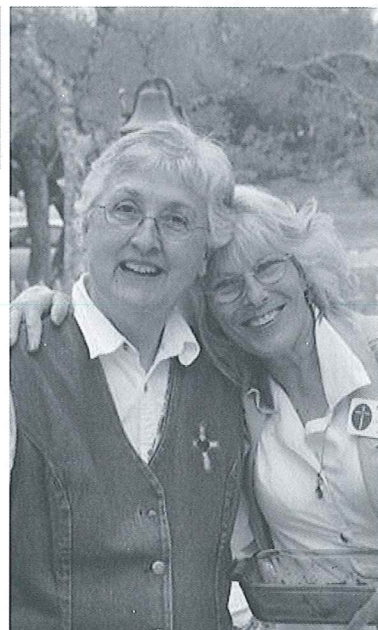
“Our father died in 1999 and not long after that Mom began talking about possibly moving to Texas to be near the Community. Then my husband became ill and Mom put off thoughts of moving in order to be an emotional and financial support to me as I cared for him.

“When my husband died suddenly in 2007 I was faced with my own decisions about the future. I had lived in Wheeling for over twenty-five years and I had many good friends there. But it seemed to me that if I stayed in Wheeling to be with my friends I would just be marking time, with no real purpose. I kept feeling that God was moving me in the direction of Texas. But what

would I do down there, I wondered? Just work in another office somewhere? To what purpose?

“Without knowing all that was going through my mind, Father John Mary approached me with the idea of working for the Mission. Having worked with the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in West Virginia and with experience in development and communications, he thought that I had the background that would be helpful to them. The idea appealed to me immediately. It wouldn’t be just another office job. To be able to be of service to the Mission of Divine Mercy seemed like a blessing, something that I felt would give my life a real purpose.

“Father John Mary always says that his primary work is to get out of God’s way and allow Him to do the work He wishes to have accomplished. I came to this job believing strongly that God brought this Community into being, and that He has a mission for them to fulfill. I ask God to show me the ways He wants to use me in order to help the Community accomplish His Will.”



Fr. Moses recovering from foot surgery.



The Elderly Priest

“Excuse me, Ma’am, but could you tell me the name of that Priest in there?”

The woman had just left the small Adoration Chapel at **St. Peter and Paul’s Parish** in New Braunfels.

The man who approached her was neither a Parish member nor a local resident. He was a ‘Winter Texan’ down from the north with his wife to enjoy a few months of milder weather.

But now his wife was seriously ill in a nearby hospital. And the Pastor of the Protestant Church that they attended in town had spoken to him about the importance of praying for his wife. It was this Minister who’d directed him to the Adoration Chapel which was open twenty-four hours a day.

When he entered the Chapel and began to pray there was only one other person there - a woman. After a while he had a sense of another presence, and he began to feel comforted and at peace. As he got up to leave he noticed **an elderly Priest** a few chairs away who smiled at him.

Out in the hallway he wandered down to the drinking fountain and then stood gazing at the portraits on the wall. A few moments later a couple entered the Adoration Chapel, and the woman who’d been in there with him came out into the hallway. That’s when he asked her who the Priest was.

“Sir, there wasn’t any Priest in there with us.”

“Yes, there was! I passed him when I walked out.”

“But we were the only two people there.”

“I saw him. He was in the row behind me, just a couple of chairs away. He smiled at me

when I was leaving.”

Suddenly he pointed to one of the priestly portraits that lined the hallway and said, **“That’s him! That Priest right there. That’s the Priest I saw.”**

“Are you sure?”

The man nodded and the woman was silent for a moment, gazing at the photo. Then she turned to the man and said,

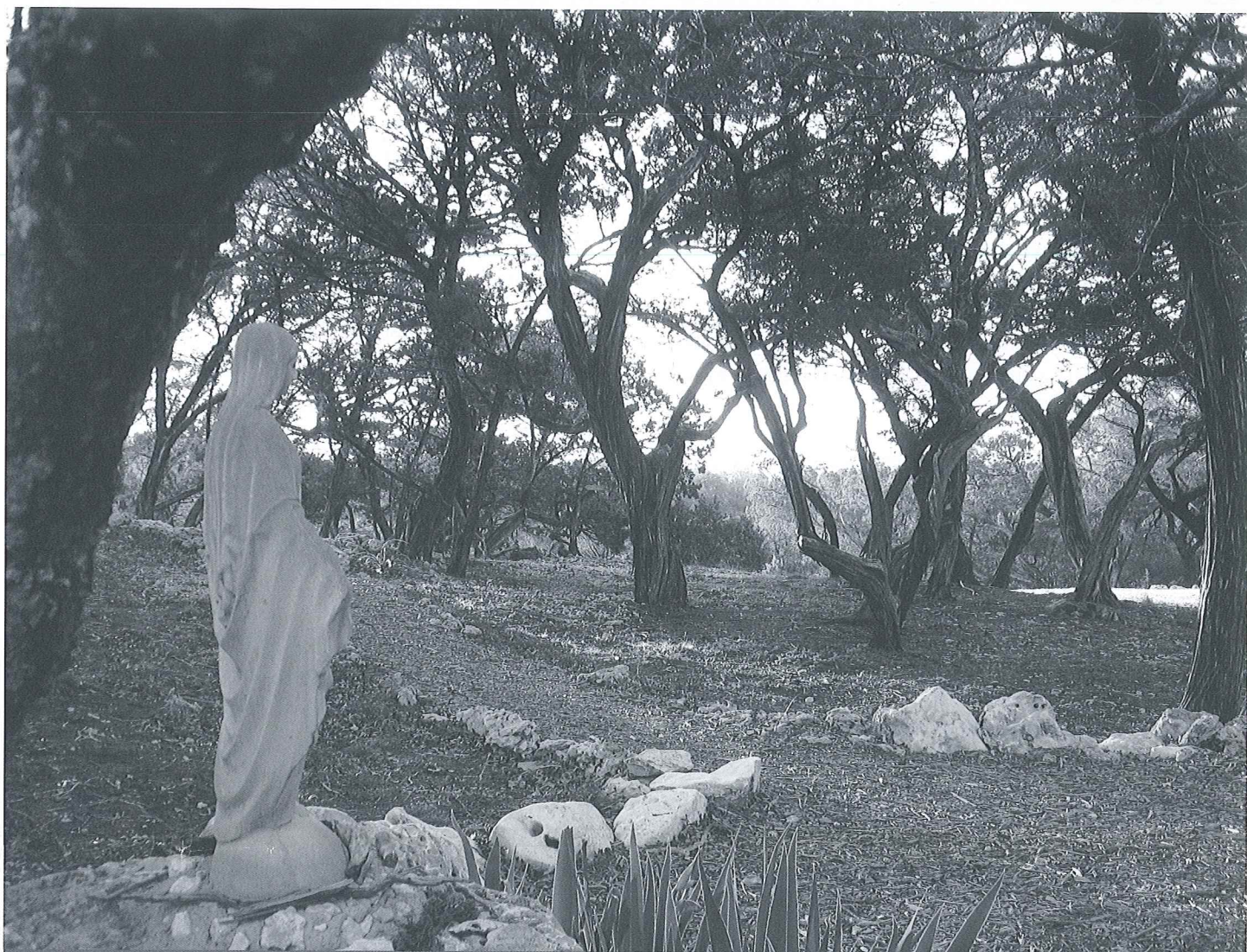
“That’s Monsignor Bily. He was the Associate Pastor here for over a decade and a half.

“He died four years ago this Spring.” ♦

(With gratitude to Deacon Rusty Brandt and Secretary Mary Kay Williams of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, who helped us to verify this story.)

M.M.





Inanimate Object?

(Continued from page 11)

Father John Mary went on to say that one of the most difficult actions for him as a Priest, is to place the Body of Christ in the hands of someone who shows supreme indifference to the Person they are about to receive.

Wow. Those sentences pierced *my* heart. With Ellen's experience so vividly in my mind, I was picturing her - so acutely aware while seeming all but dead. And then I thought of Christ in the Host, Whom we refer to as the Real Presence.

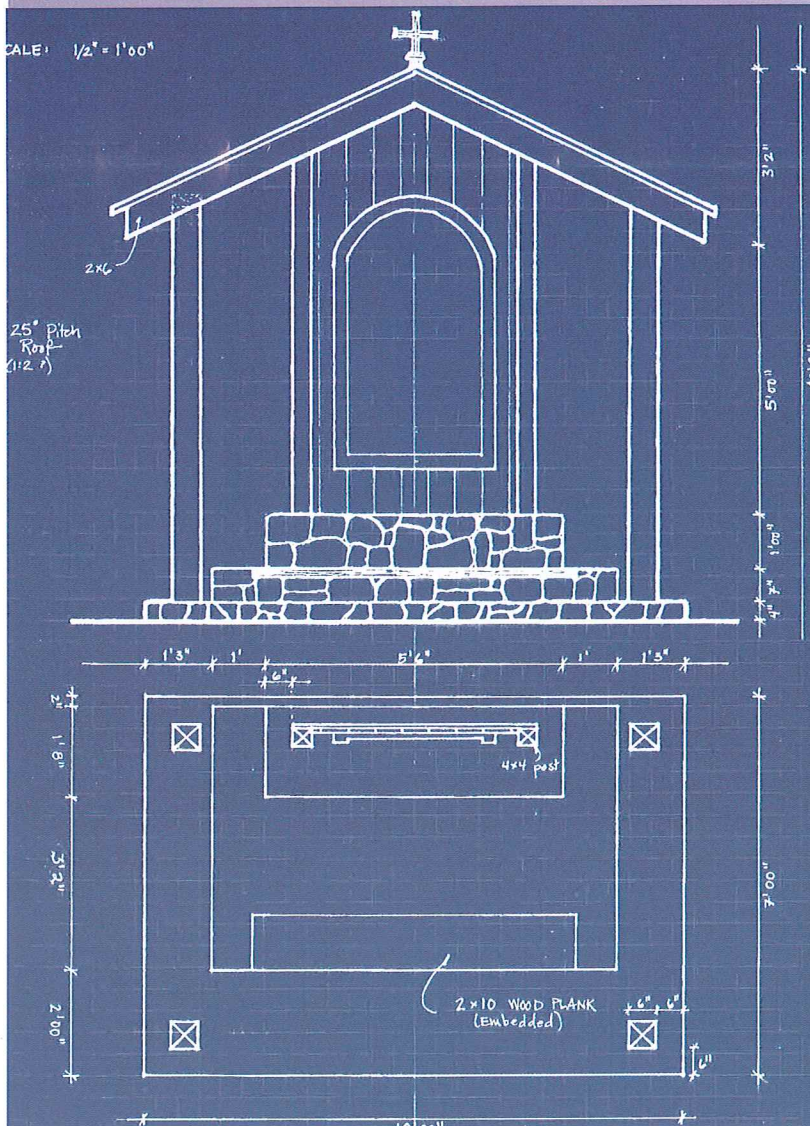
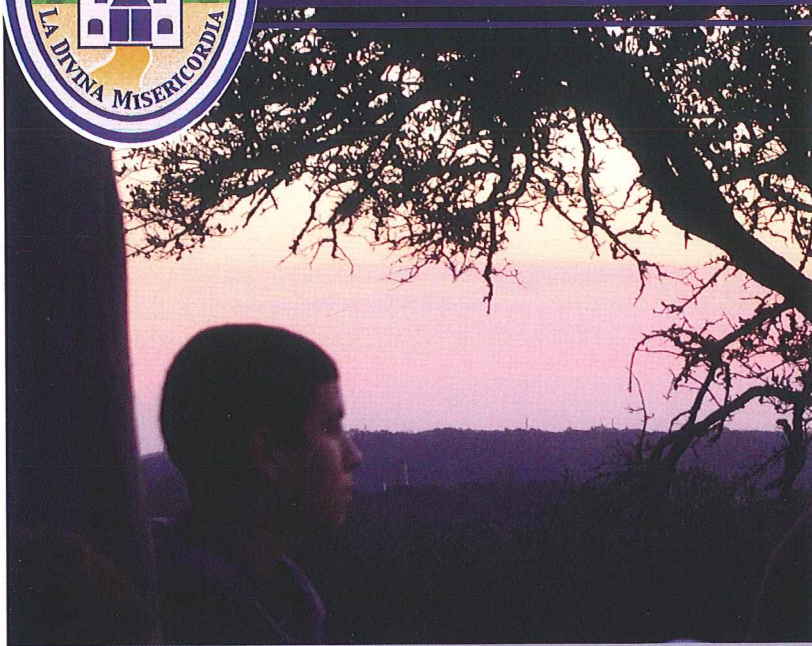
Who doesn't struggle with the unreality of receiving the Lord of the Universe in that bland disguise? Who doesn't have to work at not letting it become routine? But I had never thought of it from the point of view of Jesus, of His exquisite awareness, and His longing to give love and to receive our love, all the while receiving such a lack of response from us.

Like Ellen waiting for the coolness that didn't come, does Christ wait for the warmth of our love when we receive Him, only to find that it doesn't come?

Lord God, help me to grow in love and awareness for Your Son Jesus in the Eucharist. ♦



Project Update



View from the Summit...

Memorial for the Poor Souls

A new outdoor shrine near St. Joseph's Chapel is being built as a memorial for the Poor Souls in Purgatory.

Our Advent Newsletter will carry the story of its inspiration.



1346-A Hueco Springs Loop Rd.
New Braunfels, TX 78132

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O Pure Virgin

*(Excerpt from the ancient Greek hymn
to Our Blessed Mother, the "Agni Parthene".)*

Rejoice, Ever-Virgin Bride!

O Ever-Virgin Mary, O Mistress of creation
O Bride all pure and spotless, O Lady all holy
O Holy Mary Bride and Queen, O Cause of our rejoicing
O Maiden Queen most honorable, O Mother most holy!

Rejoice, Song of the Cherubim, Rejoice Hymn of the Angels!
Rejoice, Ode of the Cherubim and Joy of the Archangels!
Rejoice, O Peace; Rejoice, O Joy and haven of salvation!
O Bridal Chamber of the Word, unfading, fragrant Blossom,
Rejoice, Delight of Paradise, Rejoice, life everlasting!
Rejoice, O holy Tree of Life and Fount of immortality!

I call upon Thee fervently, Thou Temple most holy
O Thou my help, deliver me from harm and all adversity
And by Thy prayers show me to be an heir of immortality.

Rejoice Ever-Virgin Bride!



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(Current residence of the Community)

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