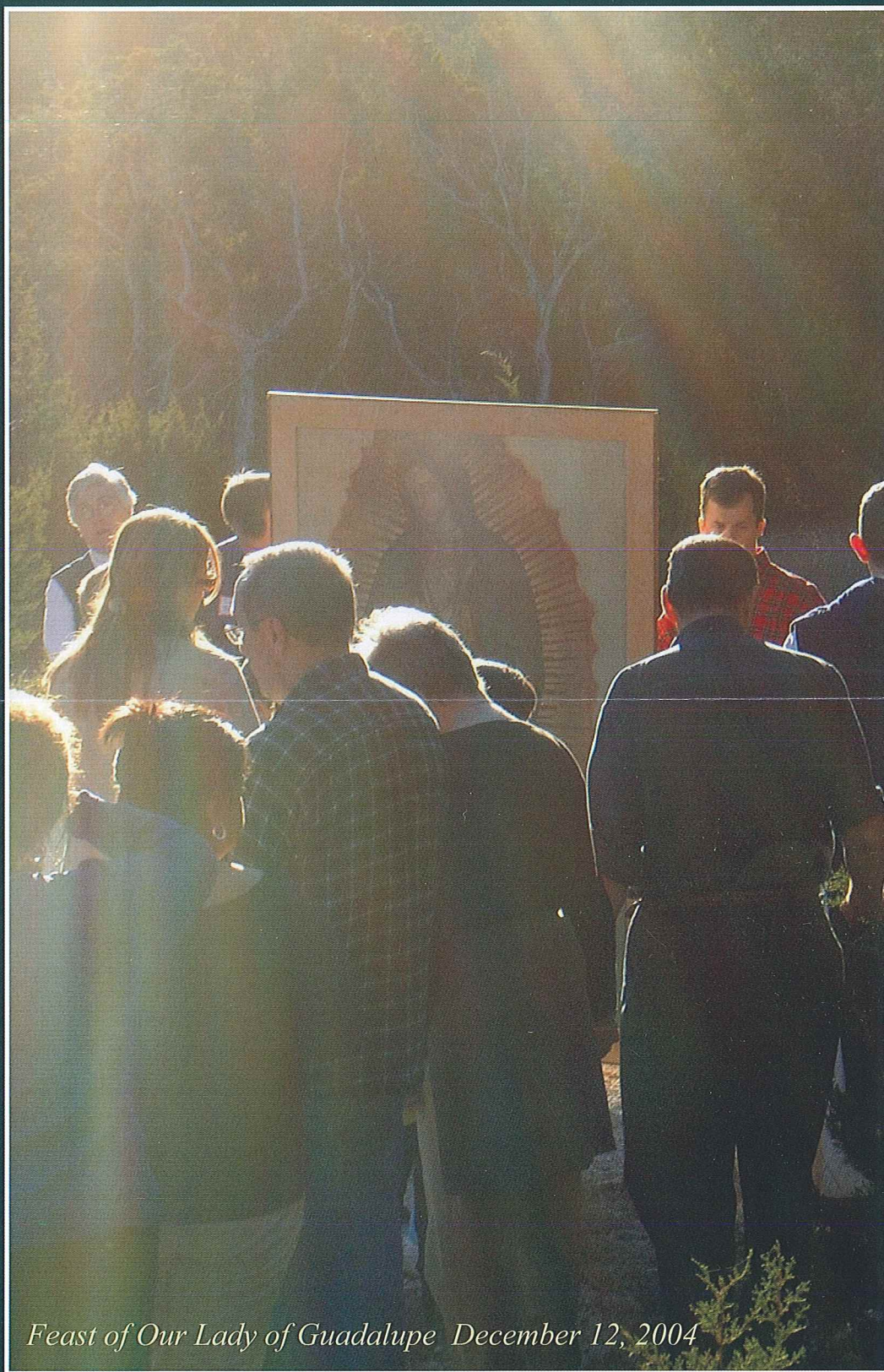




I will exalt Him and make Him manifest; where I will offer Him



"I ardently desire that here they build me my sacred little house...where I will show Him,



Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe December 12, 2004

to all the people with all my love, my compassionate gaze and my help, my salvation."

December 2010, A.D.



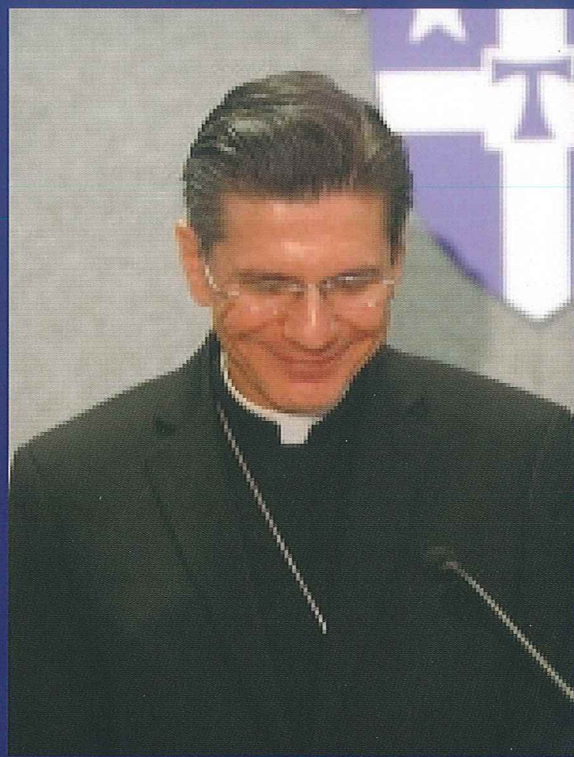
MISSION OF DIVINE MERCY



Welcome!

~Archbishop Gustavo~

In our last newsletter we said good-bye to Archbishop José Gómez and begged your prayers for whomever would be chosen to replace him. That was fast! On October 13th it was announced that **Auxiliary Bishop Gustavo García-Siller** of Chicago, had been chosen as our new Archbishop. Archbishop Gustavo, 53 years old, is a native of San Luis Potosí, Mexico. He entered the Order of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit at 17 years of age, and was ordained a Priest in June of 1984. We thank the Father for this new Shepherd; **we entrust him to Our Lady of Guadalupe;** and again we beg your prayers for the work to which the Lord will call him. ♦



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Mail The Mission of Divine Mercy
1346-A Hueco Springs Lp Rd.
New Braunfels, TX 78132;
(Current residence of the Community)

Phone: (830) 629-5042

Our Mission and place of Apostolate:

Mission La Divina Misericordia
1531 Indian Chief Trail • New Braunfels, TX 78132
(830) 905-4515
www.missionofdivinemeracy.org

ABOUT OUR COVER

from Fr. John Mary

The cover photo was taken on Sunday, December 12, 2004, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the day we consecrated the Mission property to Our Lord and our Blessed Mother. It was just three weeks after we'd made the first payment on the land and received the deed to what would be Mission La Divina Misericordia.

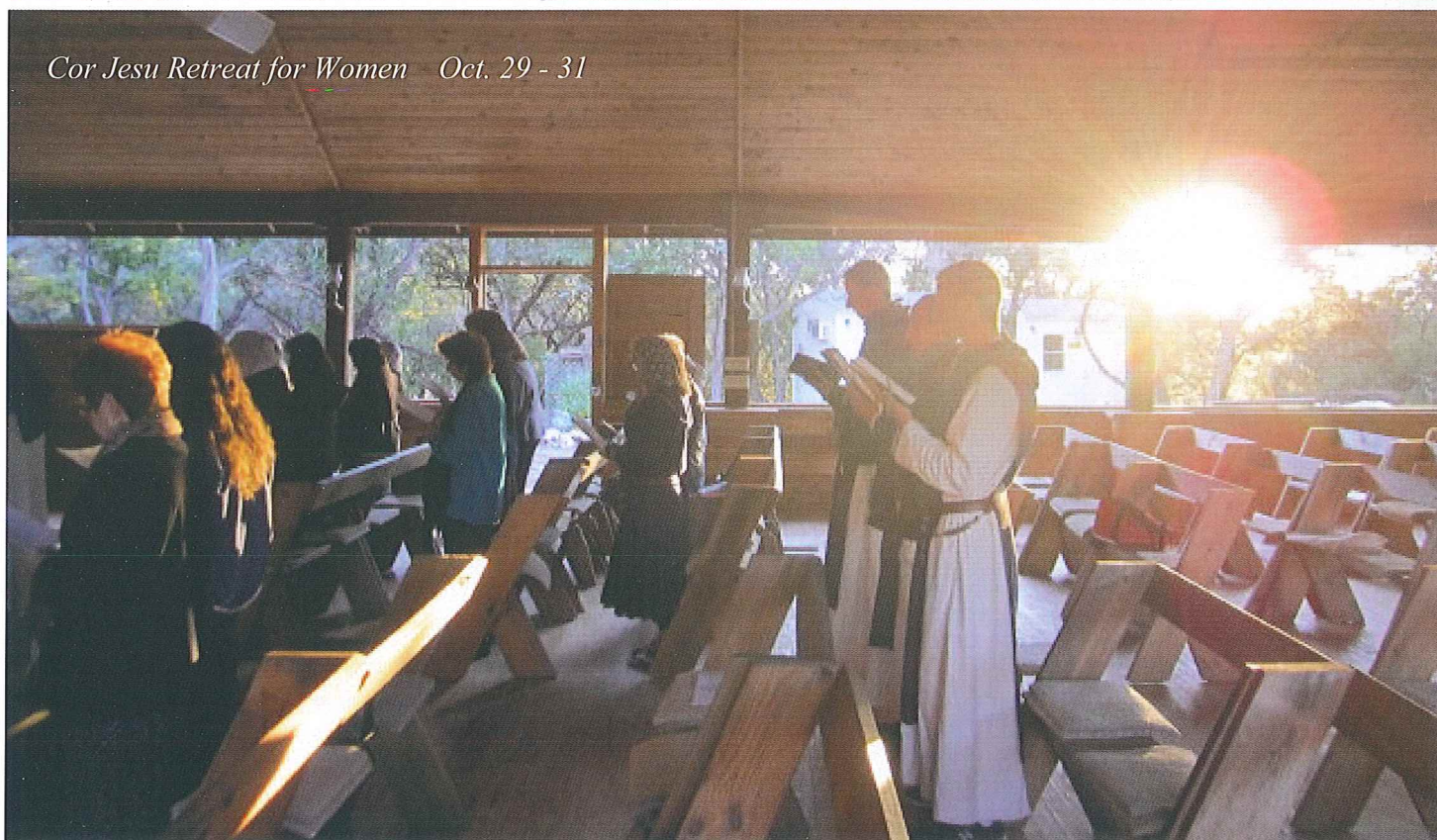
We had gathered that Sunday afternoon with our friends to walk in procession while praying the Rosary from the entry gate to the meadow in the center of the property; what we now call Marian Hill. As we walked different men took turns carrying a 3x5-foot Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. When we arrived at the meadow the Image was fitted into the stand that had already been constructed and was formally enshrined as Mother and Patroness of the Mission.

Now, as we rejoice in paying off the deed to the land (see p. 4), the words that She spoke to Juan Diego in 1531 AD seem for us to state exactly what the Mission is supposed to be:

"I ardently desire that here they build Me My sacred little house, a 'Teocalli' [House of God], where I will show Him, I will exalt Him and make Him manifest; where I will offer Him to all the people with all My love, My compassionate gaze and My help, My salvation."

In this Advent Season we are reminded that She Herself became the first *Teocalli* from which Salvation poured forth. And we ask that our own heart may be transformed into a little House of God where Mercy may dwell and where He may be made manifest. ♦

Cor Jesu Retreat for Women Oct. 29 - 31



PAYING OFF THE LAND!

By Mother Magdalene

In May of 2004, having looked at sixty-four pieces of property on our behalf, our friend Pat Fox came to us and said, “I think I’ve found it!”

A few days later when we were first able to visit the property at 1531 Indian Chief Trail we agreed that it was the best thing we’d seen: **128 rugged, scenic acres in the Texas Hill Country.** But we were barely solvent. There was no money to invest in real estate of this nature. And, yes, there was another detail. At this point the property was not actually for sale.

When we started back out of the gate Brother (at that time) Moses suddenly bent down **and buried a St. Benedict Medal** in the earth next to the gate post and said a prayer. Then we were off.

In June when Fr. John Mary and Brother Moses met with the Advisory Committee and spoke to them about the land, the six members all

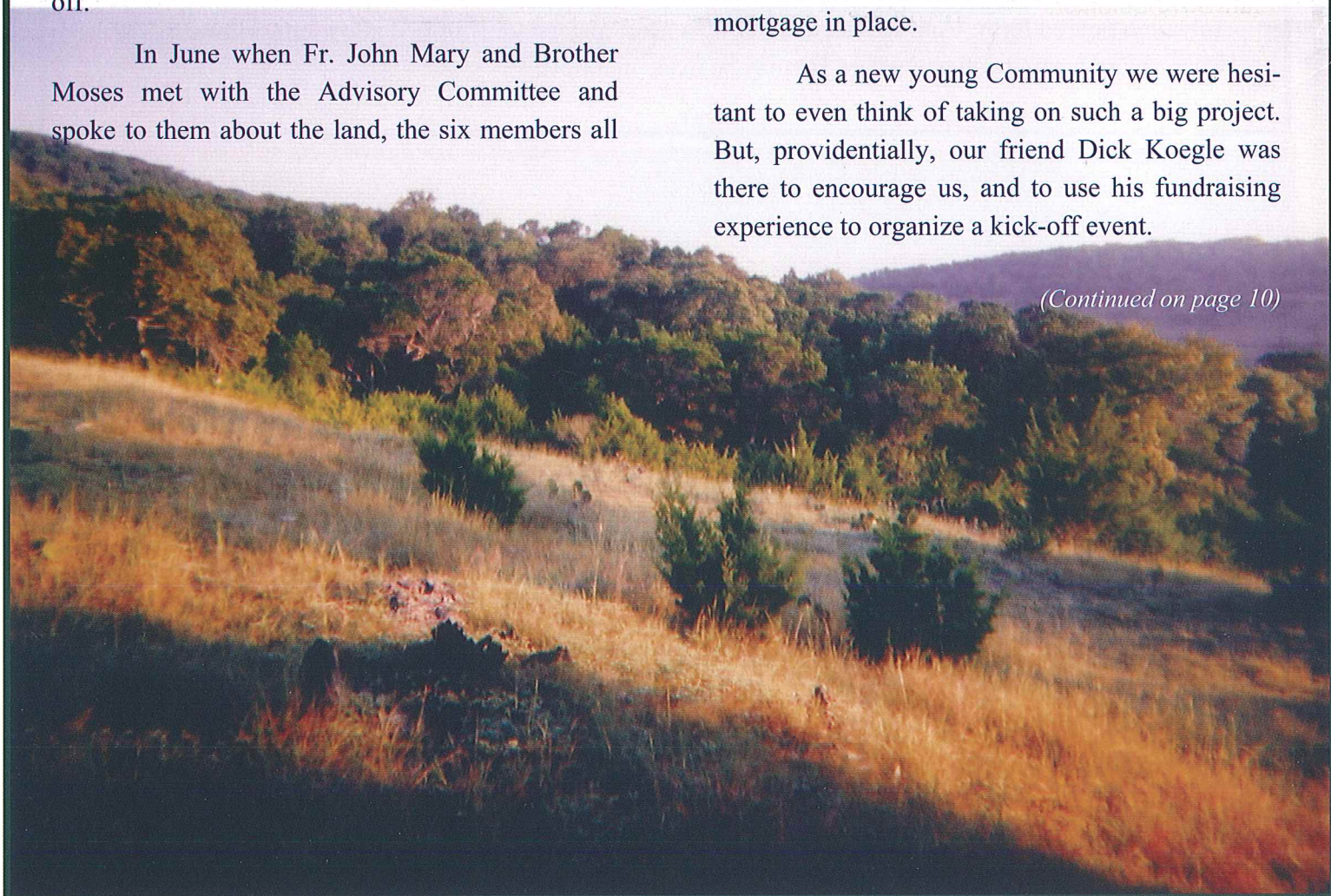
said that it was a good buy. “**But,**” they shook their heads, “**it just doesn’t seem feasible.**” However, they all agreed to pray over the next couple of weeks for the Lord’s Will to be made clear. In the meantime, Fr. John Mary and Br. Moses went back out to visit this beautiful property one last time, thinking they would never see it again.

Surprisingly, when the committee reassembled, each person had felt individually that we should move forward with trust in the Lord and try to purchase the land.

Negotiations began. The family agreed to sell, giving us a good price, and a November deadline was set for the down-payment with a ten-year mortgage in place.

As a new young Community we were hesitant to even think of taking on such a big project. But, providentially, our friend Dick Koegle was there to encourage us, and to use his fundraising experience to organize a kick-off event.

(Continued on page 10)



TOM AND JENNY: An Advent Story

By Emily Jebbia

*This isn't an Advent Story in the seasonal sense, but it **is** in the deepest sense. Because it's the story of the Coming of the Savior, and of the heart that received Him. (The names of the couple have been changed.)*

“When I was nineteen,” Tom said, **“I was dating seven different girls but I was still real lonely. One day I drove into town and went into the Catholic Church and prayed. I told Jesus that I needed to find someone that would love me as much as I loved her. The next day I met Jenny.”**

Tom was one of the contractors who had worked on various projects out at the Mission. Late last fall Dave Sommers got a call from him. Though not a Catholic he was asking if he could bring his wife Jenny out to the Mission for a blessing. She'd just been diagnosed with malignant melanoma and, unless she sought treatment, was given only a few weeks to live.

It was a Thursday and so Dave invited them out to the 7pm Holy Hour. Jenny was a slender, fragile blonde, visibly dazed and shaken by the diagnosis. As the wind picked up she began to shiver and Tom slipped his jacket off and laid it over her shoulders. She huddled next to him during the Holy Hour, then afterwards they went up to receive a blessing from Father John Mary and left. Periodically we remembered her in our prayers but heard no more until this September when we received word that she had died.

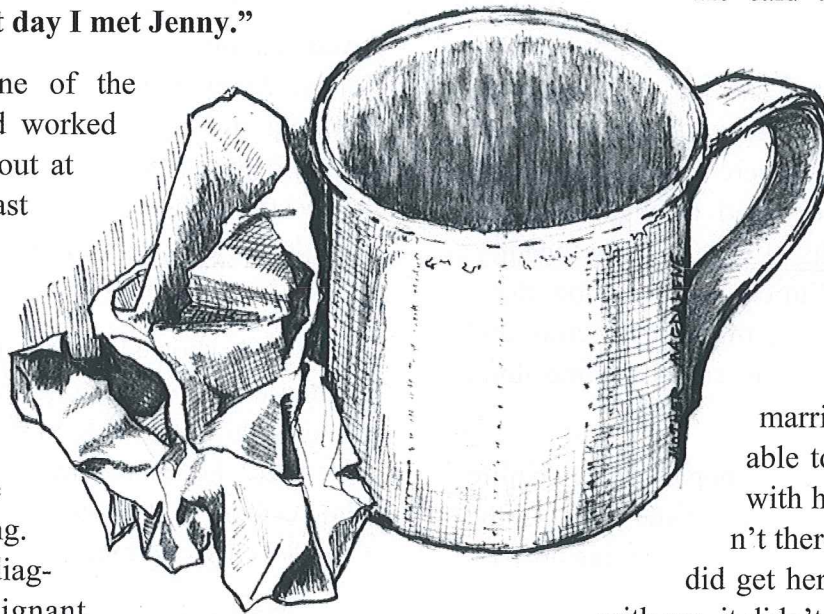
Then suddenly a few weeks later Tom showed up at St. Raphael's one morning while Jackie and I were working.

He didn't look good. His eyes were red and his voice was shaky. He had stopped at the Mission that morning to ask if he could go to the Chapel, but we urged him to come in for a cup of coffee first and while Jackie went to fix it I asked him how he was doing. Not so well it seemed.

He said that he had awakened that morning with the feeling that he was suffocating and the thought came to him that he just wanted to come out and **“sit in front of Jesus”** in our Chapel.

“All through our marriage I wanted to be able to pray and share Jesus with her, but Jenny just wasn't there. And each time that I did get her to go to some church with me, it didn't go well. But I got her to come out to the Mission one evening so that you all could pray for her.

“The priest prayed over her and I was standing right beside her. Father prayed for healing and for her to be able to accept God's Will for her. Afterwards Jenny asked me if I had put my hand on her back during his prayer. I told her no, that I was just standing beside her praying. She said she had felt such a wonderful sensation of someone's warm hand on her back comforting her while the priest prayed. But there hadn't been anyone else there.



(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

"After that evening there was a real change in Jenny. Not physically, but spiritually and emotionally. She began to pray and read the Bible, things that she had never done before. And for the first time in our married life, we prayed together. That part was wonderful. She seemed to feel easy; even comfortable with the idea of dying and going to God.

"Jenny lived for nine and a half months after her diagnosis. After 4-5 months of chemo, they had to stop the treatments. Her heart just couldn't take it anymore. At one point she tried to get me to divorce her; she didn't want me to watch her die. But I wouldn't. I mean, what kind of love would that be?

"Towards the end she lost her sight, her hearing and her ability to walk. We communicated by hand signals. They were both the hardest months that I had ever lived through, but also some of the best months of our 23 years together. People might say that I'm crazy, but I know that I experienced miracles many times both before and after her death. And no one can make me think differently.

"For instance, just a couple of days before Jenny died our daughter, Katie, came to me in the morning and said, 'Daddy, Mom's going to pass away in two days.'

'How do you know that, Katie?'

'That Man told me.'

'What man?'

'He said His Name was Jesus.'

'You saw Jesus?'

'Yes. He came to my room and told me that Mom was going with Him in two days to see God and Great Grandma.'

"The night before Jenny's last day I was lying next to her on the bed, holding her hand. I could feel that our pulses were synchronized, our

hearts seemed to be beating in unison and I just lay there sort of marveling at that, when I heard her saying something. I opened my eyes and looked up and saw two beings, that I knew must be angels, standing on the other side of the bed and one was holding her hand. They looked like two beautiful women, with long hair, but they were transparent. I shut my eyes and opened them again, but they were still there. One of them said, 'Don't worry, Tom, we've got her.' Then I started crying and they just disappeared. But Jenny was still talking and she was saying, 'I'm not ready yet. You just have to wait.' And then for a good while after that, even though she had lost her hearing, she kept asking me if I could hear that beautiful music.

"The next day my youngest brother arrived, having driven across several states to see Jenny. Jenny got along well with most people, but she and my brother had exchanged some hard words between them. A couple of weeks prior to her death she had me call my brother and tell him that she forgave him and wanted to reconcile with him.

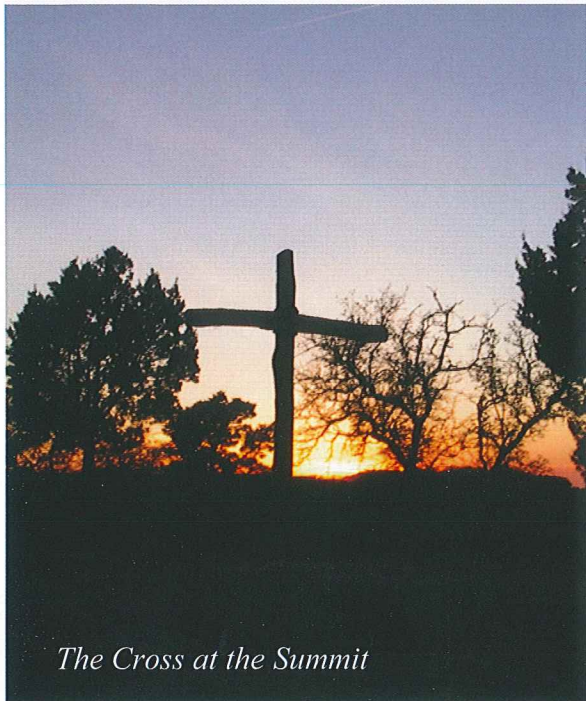
"He showed up that last day saying that he wanted to apologize to her in person. And though Jenny hadn't been able to see or hear for a couple of weeks, she seemed to see and hear my brother. She seemed to want to get everything right with God. Twenty-two minutes later she died."

During his account that morning Tom and I had gone through two cups of coffee and a good part of a box of Kleenex. Though his eyes were still red he seemed more peaceful for having shared his experiences. I commented to him that even though he was hurting he did not seem bitter about what had happened. He looked at me thoughtfully for a moment and then replied, **"I know that she is with God, and that makes all the difference."**

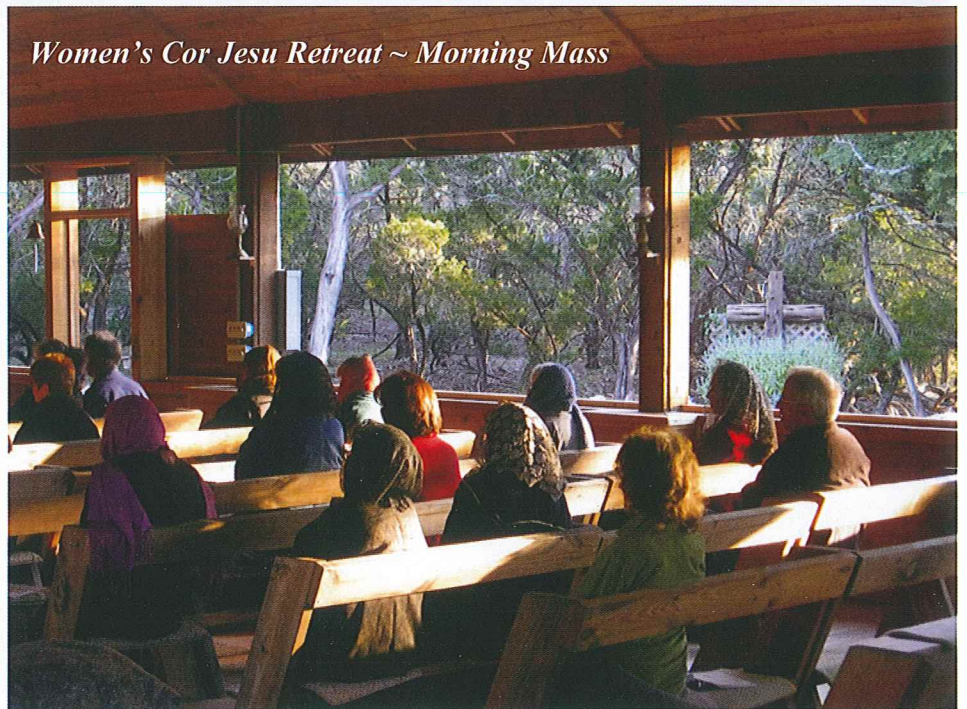
"You ok, Tom?" I asked as he got up to leave.

"No," he said, **"but I will be."** ♦

MDM Journal - In photos



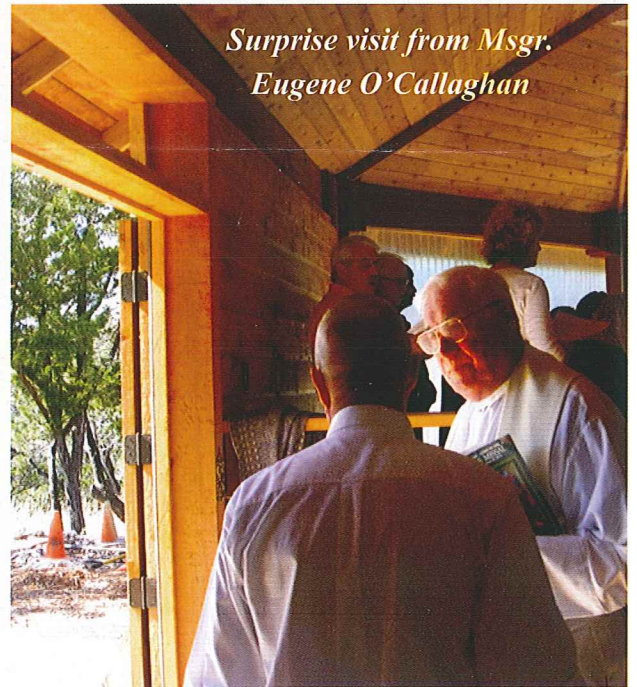
The Cross at the Summit



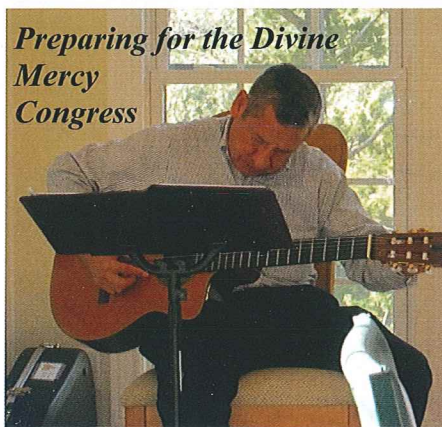
Women's Cor Jesu Retreat ~ Morning Mass



*Men's
Cor Jesu Retreat Nov. 5 - 7*



*Surprise visit from Msgr.
Eugene O'Callaghan*



*Preparing for the Divine
Mercy
Congress*



Amici Christi retreat Oct. 9

✠ Our Lady of Guadalupe: the Mother of God Expectant ✠

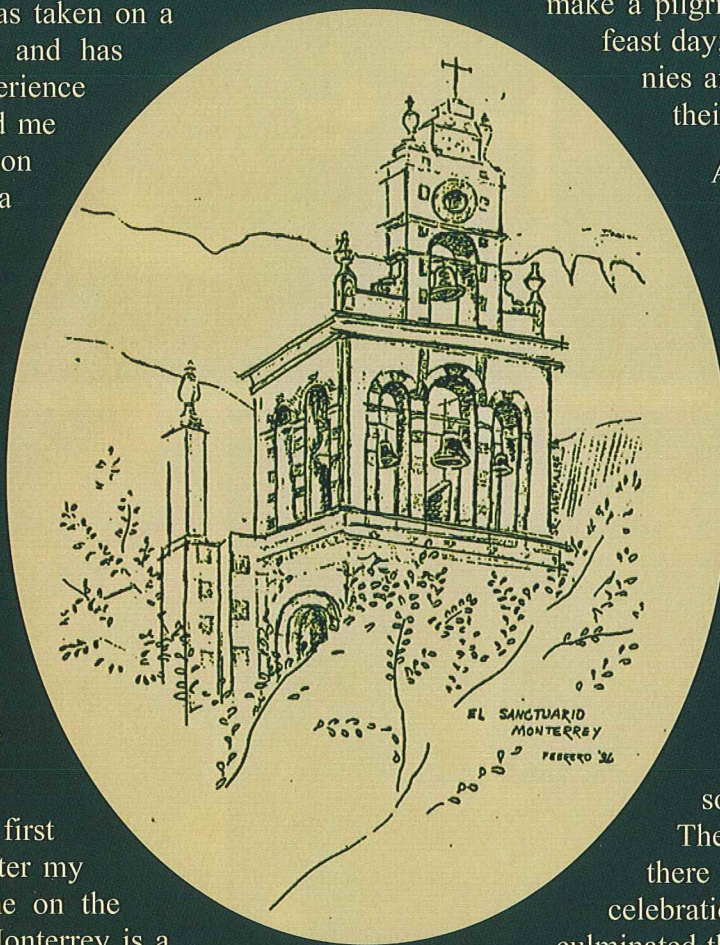
by Emily Jebbia

This year the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12th, falls on the second Sunday of Advent. That places it right in the middle of what has become the high-pressured, stress-filled time known secularly as the Holiday Season. But ever since my visit to Mexico, the Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe has taken on a new significance for me and has greatly enriched my experience of Advent. She has helped me to turn inward, to reflect on the fact that each of us is a Christ-bearer.

For various reasons, my trip to Monterrey, Mexico was scheduled for the middle of December. This was very unfortunate, I felt, as it placed it right in the middle of Christmas preparations which every person, especially every mother, knows is just too crazy busy already. But the plans were made.

I remember that the first really memorable sight after my arrival in Monterrey came on the drive from the airport. Monterrey is a major industrial city and we were speeding along a busy highway that could have been outside any large city in the United States. But the similarity ended when I saw a small parade of 8-10 people walking single file along the side of the highway, heading toward the city. This group appeared to be in native Indian costume. One man was beating a drum. One was carrying an Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the rest appeared to have rosaries. We had barely passed them when we came up on a second group, similar in number, but dressed in ordinary clothes and carrying a sign that evidently indicated the company where they worked. Again, one of their number carried an Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

My driver explained that the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe was only three days away and that Monterrey was the sight of a major basilica dedicated to Her, the original one being in Mexico City. It was the custom throughout Mexico to make a pilgrimage to honor Her on Her feast day; all sorts of groups, companies and factories would organize their own pilgrim groups.



As it turned out, the house where I was staying was not far from the basilica, and during the course of the next three days, I often walked over and watched the constant changing procession of pilgrims who came to pay homage to the Mother of God. They would gather on the plaza in front of the Church to pray, to sing and dance. They would light candles, and leave bouquets of flowers and some left paintings or statues.

The night before the Feast day there was a *serenata* to Her. The celebration went on all night and culminated the next day in a huge Mass; well, actually a series of huge Masses, because one wouldn't have been enough. The depth and vibrancy of the peoples' faith and love caught me by surprise and was very moving.

That experience made me want to learn more about the Mary that, when I thought of Her at all, I had considered to be "Mexico's Madonna." There is so much that is fascinating about this Image of Mary, existing on a 500- year-old piece of cactus cloth that should have disintegrated 450 years ago. An Image that was created, not by human hands, but supernaturally. Some refer to Her Image as a pictograph, a theology lesson in a painting that the native people would understand. In the Image

*"Know for certain, My son, the smallest one,
that I am the perfect and ever virgin Holy Mary,
Mother of the true God, through Whom one lives,
the Creator of mankind, the One Who owns what is near and beyond,
the Owner of heaven and earth." (Words of Our Lady to St. Juan Diego)*



*"Because I am truly your merciful Mother,
yours and Mother of all who live united in this land;
and of all mankind, of all those who love Me, of those who cry to Me,
of those who search for Me, of those who have confidence in Me.
There I will listen to their cry, to their sadness,
so as to curb all their different pains, their miseries and sorrow,
to remedy and alleviate their sufferings."*

Mary is wearing a black ribbon tied around Her above Her waist. The native people of the time would have recognized this as an Aztec maternity belt: it was a sign that Mary was expecting a Child.

The idea that She appeared as the pregnant Mother, carrying the Christ Child within Her grabbed hold of me and made me think about those nine months for the first time. I wondered about how much She must have meditated on the Child She was carrying, how "centered" She must have been on what was happening within Her. To have carried the God of the universe within Her own body. To think about it concretely like that was a minor revelation to me. I envied Her.

These new thoughts stayed with me after my return home. And then one day sitting in my pew after receiving the Eucharist it occurred to me that the Christ I carried in me at that moment was no less real than the Jesus borne in Mary's womb. In fact it is the same Christ. The Eucharist makes each of us, male and female, "Christ-bearers" in a real physical sense. What a tremendous responsibility.

Since my visit to Mexico, each year as Advent begins and Christmas preparations shift into high gear around me I find myself thinking of the Expectant Mother and Her approaching feast day. Instead of setting up my manger scene as Advent begins, I put the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in a place of honor until December 12th. She reminds me to turn inward, to tune out the craziness of the holidays and find the sense of the holy days. To remember that we are Christ-bearers for ourselves and for our world all year long. ♦



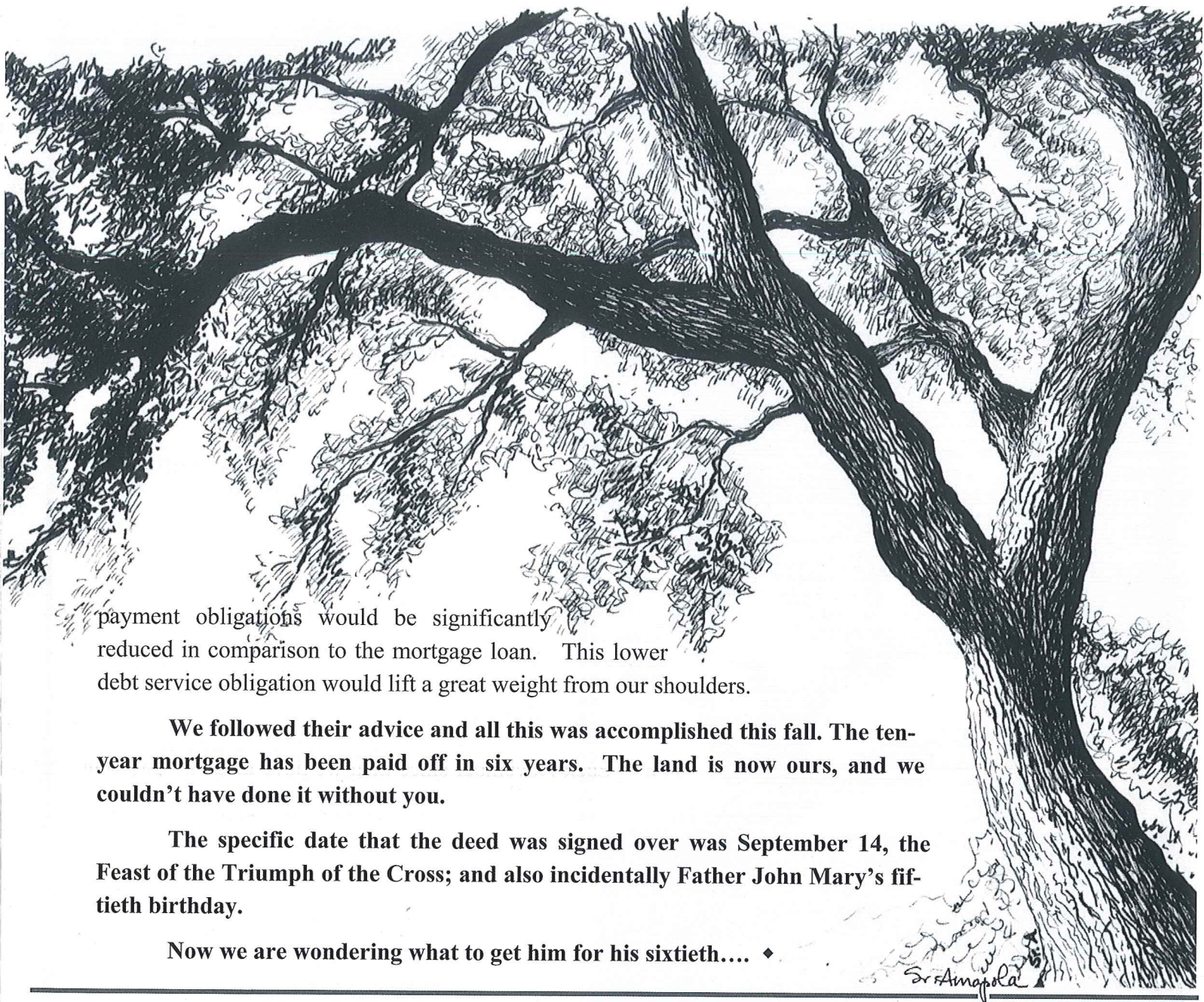
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Due to a technicality we were not able to schedule our fundraiser until the first week of October. **This would leave only six weeks for us to raise the initial \$160,000.00.** But that kick-off event “happened” to fall on October 5th, the Feast of St. Faustina! And to our surprise **Archbishop Flores** showed up (courtesy of our friend Dennis Clarkson), spoke some encouraging words, and then offered a \$100 donation to inaugurate the campaign.

Amazingly, the money continued to accumulate. By the designated date we had received almost exactly the sum needed, and on November 19, 2004, we became the owners of Mission La Divina Misericordia ... along with a significant debt. Each November since then we have made a payment on the property. And each December we begin to funnel donations into the fund for next year’s payment.

(The fact that that payment has been able to be made each year has been for us a quiet but substantial sign of the Father’s loving providence; and also of the selfless generosity of our friends. “So often we have seen this happen with the Mission,” says Fr. John Mary, “...the Lord working quietly, without big manifestations, but with a lot of little signs that may hardly be noticeable. Yet when we look back we are amazed at what has happened.”)

This past year, some of our financially astute friends looked at what our funds were earning (almost nothing due to low interest rates) versus what we were paying in interest (7%) on our mortgage. They suggested that we use our funds to pay off our mortgage four years early, thereby saving a significant amount of money over the next four years. They also suggested that we refinance the building fund debt and create a line of credit loan to be available if the need arises. These two loans would be secured by our land, but the



payment obligations would be significantly reduced in comparison to the mortgage loan. This lower debt service obligation would lift a great weight from our shoulders.

We followed their advice and all this was accomplished this fall. The ten-year mortgage has been paid off in six years. The land is now ours, and we couldn't have done it without you.

The specific date that the deed was signed over was September 14, the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross; and also incidentally Father John Mary's fiftieth birthday.

Now we are wondering what to get him for his sixtieth.... ♦

Dear Friends of the Mission of Divine Mercy,

In 2004 our little community made the decision to try to purchase a piece of property costing three quarters of a million dollars. At the time, we didn't have the money to even make a down payment. But we and a group of individuals, who we asked to pray with us and advise us, felt that this was what God was calling us to do. Six years later that land is paid off.

Now, we believe that God is calling us to build a monastery and retreat center on this land so that it can more truly fulfill God's plan for its use. First we have devised a plan to help meet our regular monthly expenses. In this, as in every step of the way, we turn to you, our friends, for prayerful support and financial help.

You will be receiving a letter from us soon. Please read it and prayerfully consider our request.

In His Mercy, *Fr. John Mary*

Upcoming Retreats

MARCH 4-6

**Encounter with Jesus
Retreat for Women**

MARCH 12

Day Retreat in Spanish

APRIL 1-3

**Encounter with Jesus
Retreat
for Men**



For the Love of God the Father

On Sunday, **January 30th**, we will again have a **special ceremony in honor of God the Father** after the Sunday Mass. As we move into the New Year we bring to Him our messages of adoration, thanksgiving, and petition. These messages may be mailed, emailed, or hand-delivered to the Mission. None will be opened (...except, I guess, the email; don't see how to get around that); all will be placed in the fire and offered to Him. Everyone is welcomed to participate.

If by mail: Mission of Divine Mercy
Attn: Ceremony for God the Father
1531 Indian Chief Trail
New Braunfels, Texas 78132

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

December

DEC. 12

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Mass and Veneration of the Image
(Regular Sunday schedule)

DEC. 24

Christmas Eve Vigil Mass 9:00 p.m.
(No reception will follow.)

DEC. 25

Christmas Day
(No Mass at the Mission!!!)

DEC. 26

Feast of the Holy Family
(Regular Sunday schedule.
A reception will follow.)

DEC. 31

**Mass for the Solemnity of Mary
Mother of God 9:00 p.m.**
*(Followed by reception and
closing prayer at midnight.)*

January

JAN. 2

The Epiphany of Our Lord
(Regular Sunday schedule)

JAN. 30

**Special Ceremony after Mass
in honor of God the Father**
(Regular Sunday schedule.)



Project Update

For the Holy Suffering Souls

By Mother Magdalene

I felt uneasy when I heard the phone message in early June though the message itself was simple enough – a friend of ours just asking me to call her. When I reached her that afternoon she said, “You know that memorial we’ve discussed for the Souls in Purgatory? Well I’d like to hurry up and get it done because pretty soon I’m going to be one.”

Ah, so that’s how it is....

She’d been part of the first ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS retreat we’d given after our arrival in New Braunfels. She and her husband had been friends of the Mission for years.

About three years ago they’d begun to discuss with us the possibility of funding a special memorial for the Holy Souls. Initially they had wondered about the possibility of a crypt or side chapel in honor of these souls. But seeing the state of our open-air Chapel on a cold November morning they relinquished that vision and instead gave a donation to insulate the ceiling, to replace the mulch-covered ground with an insulated wooden floor, and to build the half-walls we’d been talking

about.

“I guess we’ll settle for a plaque in their honor,” she’d said.

Then came the call this past June. She’d been diagnosed with cancer a few years ago, had gone through treatment successfully and had apparently been in remission. But now it was back and they’d given her six months at the most.

As anyone (everyone) who deals with MDM knows, it’s not easy to light a fire under us. Nonetheless this did it. The Memorial was pushed to the front burner and we geared up for action; not only because of the friendship that has existed between us and because of their kindness to us, but also because this request coincided with a long-standing conviction of our own.

As many of you know, we have sensed that the Lord wants prayer for the souls in purgatory to be an important part of the life of the Mission. We also had wanted a memorial to the Holy Souls and

(Continued on page 14)



(Continued from
page 13)

had been discussing possible ideas for such a project. Now it seemed that the Lord was saying it was time.

The design was quickly agreed upon; the Image and text were chosen; the materials were finalized; and the site was located. A friend of ours, an excellent graphic artist, set to work combining the Image and text for the 3x5 foot picture. And our contractor – who happened to be the son of this couple – immediately began to build the Shrine that would be a lasting gift to his Mother. At the same time we were calling upon both the Holy Angels and the Poor Souls to intercede for and hurry along this project.

But none of us were quite prepared for the beauty or impact of the Memorial upon its completion. It's both handsome and sturdy, made of cedar and stone, and frames a luminous and compassionate Madonna. It sits slightly into the tree-line to the left of the Chapel, and is visible as you crest the steps to St. Joseph's.

The Shrine was completed on Friday, September 10th, earlier than we expected, and no plans had yet been made as to when we would formally bless and inaugurate the new shrine. We had discussed the idea of keeping it covered until November when we would celebrate the Month of the Poor Souls. However no decision had been made when the workers departed on Friday and it had not been covered.

The next morning for our 8 a.m. Saturday Mass we were expecting thirty men from the Sts.

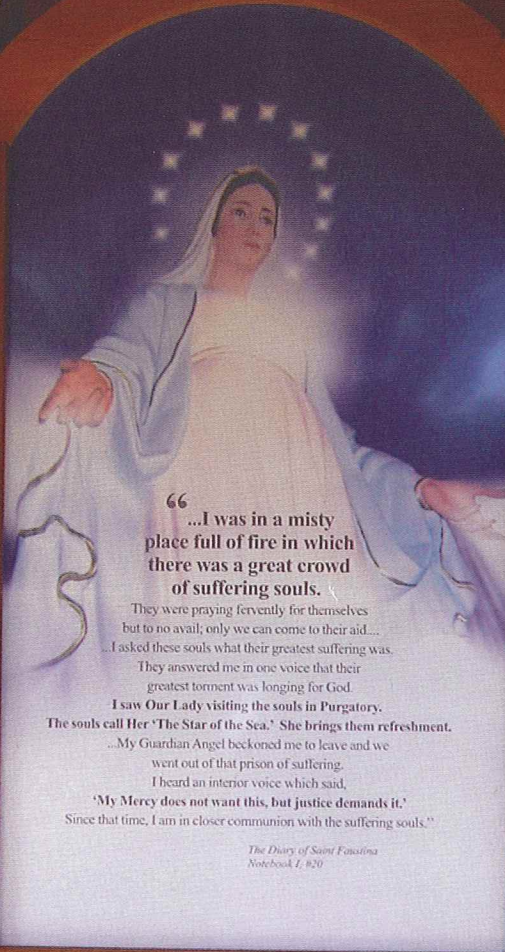


Peter and Paul ACTS Team who were making their team retreat. When we arrived half an hour before Mass several of them were already there, kneeling before the Shrine. It remained a magnet for them throughout the morning. A number of them spoke later of having recently experienced the passing of loved ones and of the comfort, grace and healing that they'd experienced while praying there.

That evening the Community met. "Father, we've got to hurry up and bless this thing. It's already up and running!" All thoughts of keeping it covered were discarded, and the next morning the Shrine was formally blessed after the Sunday Mass.

Our friend has not been able to visit the Shrine which has been her gift to the Holy Souls, to the Mission, and to all who pray there. She is too fragile at this point to make that journey. But we, as we come and go from the Chapel, cry out from our hearts, uniting ourselves with her intention, *"O Mary, Mother of Mercy, intercede for the souls in Purgatory!"* ♦

O Mary Mother of Mercy



“...I was in a misty place full of fire in which there was a great crowd of suffering souls.

They were praying fervently for themselves but to no avail, only we can come to their aid... I asked these souls what their greatest suffering was. They answered me in one voice that their greatest torment was longing for God.

I saw Our Lady visiting the souls in Purgatory.

The souls call Her ‘The Star of the Sea.’ She brings them refreshment.

...My Guardian Angel beckoned me to leave and we went out of that prison of suffering.

I heard an interior voice which said,

‘My Mercy does not want this, but justice demands it.’

Since that time, I am in closer communion with the suffering souls.”

*The Diary of Saint Faustina
Notebook I, #20*

Intercede for the Souls in Purgatory

Pray for the poor souls.
In loving memory of
Mary L. Butschek



1346-A Hueco Springs Loop Rd.

New Braunfels, TX 78132

"The Mother of God has taught me how to prepare for the Feast of Christmas....She said to me:



'My daughter, strive after silence and humility, so that Jesus, Who dwells in your heart continuously, may be able to rest.

Adore Him in your heart; do not go out from your inmost being....

'I shall obtain for you the grace of an interior life which will be such that, without ever leaving that interior life, you will be able to carry out all your external duties with even greater care.

Dwell with Him continuously in your heart. He will be your strength....

Try to act in this way until Christmas Day, and then He Himself will make known to you in what way you will be communing and uniting yourself with Him.' "

[from the Diary of St. Faustina]