

Mission of Divine Mercy

September 2011, A.D.

From Fr. John Mary:

Building by Trust

September 11, 2001. It has already been ten years since that day when we saw the twin towers, a symbol of America's wealth and power, crumble. Taking so many lives with them. The destructive power of evil was made so visible.

Most of us remember what we were doing when we heard the news. For the small community of us wanting to be MDM it was a critical time.

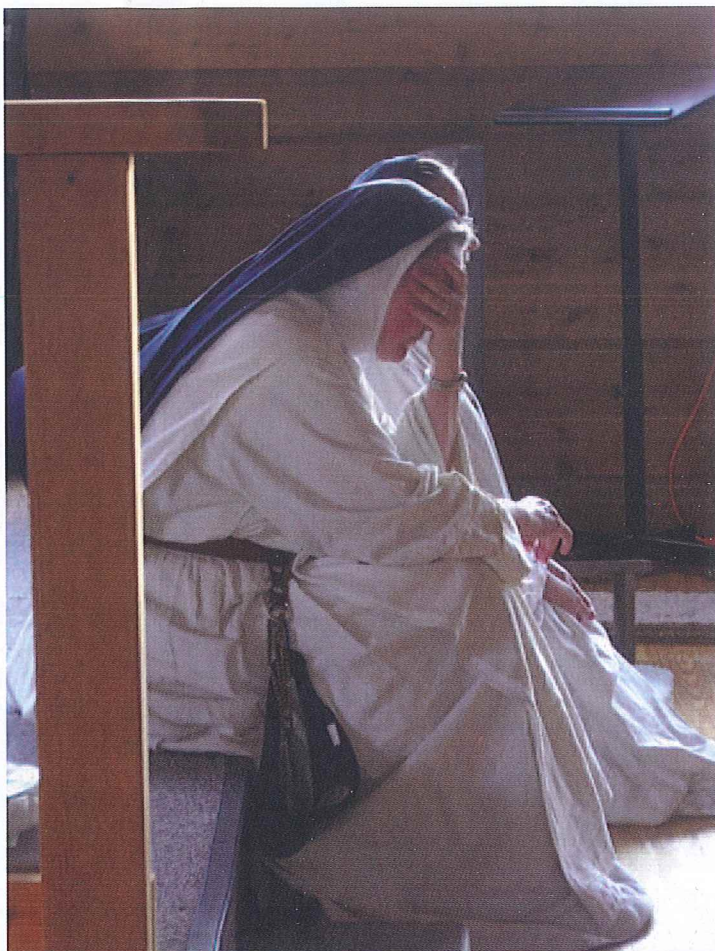
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Original photograph unknown. Composite image created by MDM.

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Men's EWJ—Spring 2011

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The idea for MDM had been *conceived* in January of that year. By the fall of 2001 we were trying to discern where we could *start* the Mission of Divine Mercy. We had just visited New Braunfels for the first time a month earlier. Should we start there? We decided to try.

Our arrival in November 2001 was the “birth” of the Mission of Divine Mercy. So this November we will be commemorating another 10th anniversary, that of MDM.

Is it just a coincidence? Or is there a connection between those two events ten years ago: the dramatic destruction of 9/11 and the insignificant arrival of a few monks and nuns in New Braunfels?

The attacks on the towers were a visible sign of the destructive force of evil that we usually experience in more hidden ways. Evil tears down and destroys.

God calls us to raise and build up. But only with His help. *If the LORD does not build the house, in vain does the builder labor [Ps 127, 1].*

BUILDING BY TRUST

We do not want to be among those who labor in vain. So how do we cooperate with God in building up our broken selves, our wounded families, our suffering world? What does He want us to do? God said to St. Faustina, *“The graces of My mercy are drawn by means of one vessel only, and that is TRUST. The more a soul trusts, the more it will receive.... I rejoice that trusting souls ask for much, because it is My desire to give much, very much....”* (1578)

God asks us to trust in Him. And He promises great things for those who do.

That is the reason for the Mission of Divine Mercy: to encourage everyone to trust in Him, so that He can give very much. We invite you to join us in this effort, an effort to increase our trust in His Goodness and Mercy. And to learn what it is that He wishes to give us and our world.

So what are we asking you to do? Simply pray **“JESUS, I TRUST IN YOU”** ten times a day, all at once or spread throughout the day. And we ask you to pray this prayer with us until our 10th anniversary celebration on December 3, 2011. The Lord Himself gave this act of trust to St. Faustina, and asked her to have it inscribed on the Image of Divine Mercy. Could there be a better recommendation?

You will be the first to benefit from your participation, but your loved ones, MDM, and our whole society will also benefit.

And it doesn't cost anything. You don't have to go anywhere or attend any meeting. It takes less than a minute a day. The elderly and the infirm can participate. Little kids can do it. In fact, these persons may be the ones who contribute the most. There is no obligation. If you forget, that's okay.

Invite your friends to pray with us. All of us who participate will be united in spirit. If you would like to let us know that you are participating, you could send us your name and we will put it in a basket in our chapel during this time. We would be glad to hear how this effort is going for you. During this period, we will include excerpts from St. Faustina's Diary with our weekly e-mail meditations, as a spiritual “boost.” (If you do not currently receive our e-mail meditations, but wish to receive them, just contact us at mdm@missionofdivinemercy.org.) But all that is optional.

“Jesus, I trust in You.” Just ten times a day. What a simple way to cooperate with God. To build with Him. To combat all the destructive power of Evil. And in the end, it is God Who wins.

Thank you for considering this invitation. ♦

OUR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: BUILDING A HOME FOR MERCY

(The Immediate Plans for the Future of the Mission)

By Emily Jebbia

Anyone who has visited the Mission in recent months has noticed some changes: a billboard has appeared on the hill overlooking the parking lot, a renovated mobile home sits on the edge of the meadow, and men stride across the camp house area taking various measurements of the site. These are early signs that our development campaign, BUILDING A HOME FOR MERCY, is underway.

Other signs might suggest that this is an odd time to start a 5.5 million dollar development campaign. Construction is off; the markets are down; money is tight. Unemployment is high and people are worried. Who in their right mind would start a development campaign now?

Only those who are trying to follow God's timing and not their own. Only those who are building on trust rather than economic certainty. Only those who are struggling to really mean it when they pray, "Jesus, I trust in You."

Campaign Objectives

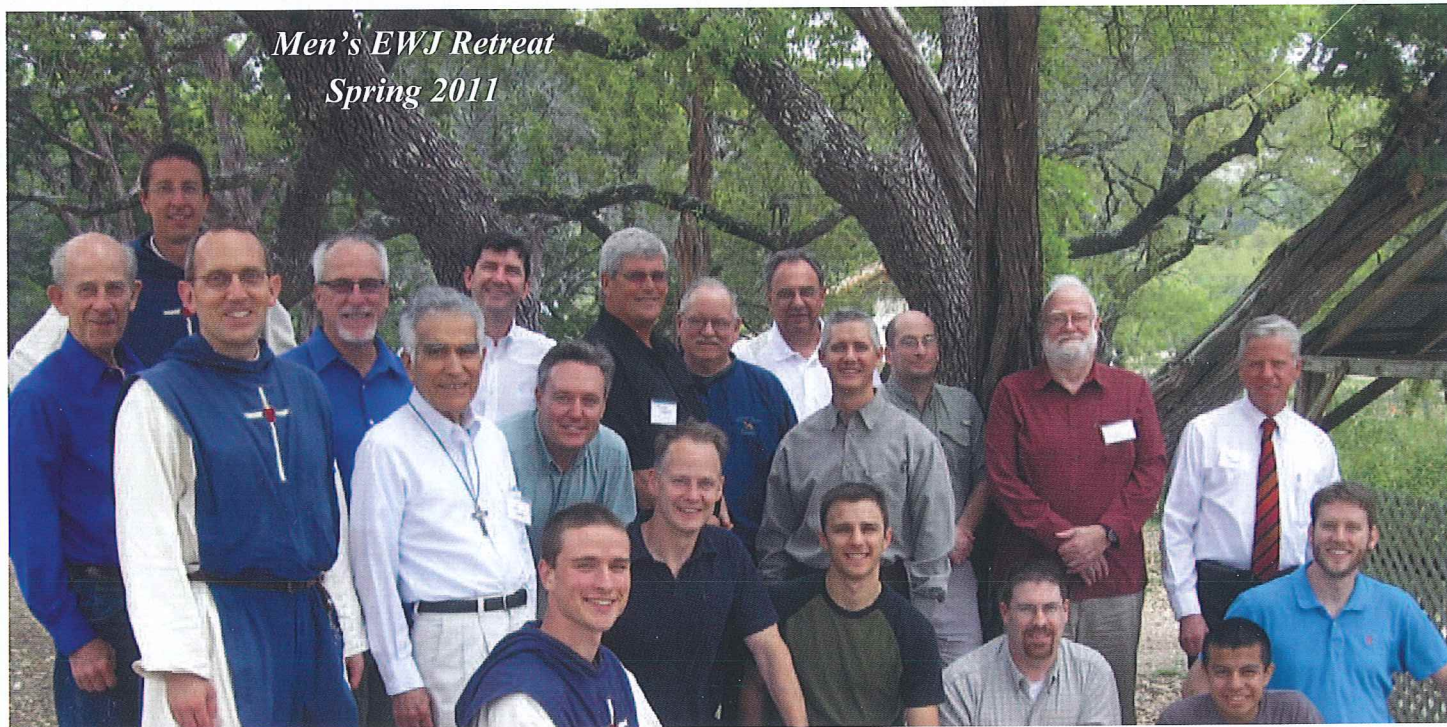
BUILDING A HOME FOR MERCY has **two major objectives:**

- To establish living quarters for the Community at the Mission.
- To improve and expand the Mission's guest and retreat facilities.

FIRST GOAL: LIVING QUARTERS AND THE FUTURE MONASTERY

The Community's plans for moving out to the Mission experienced a Providential alteration soon after the campaign was announced: properties with houses that could allow the Community to move out to the Mission within this next year suddenly became available. (See article on p.12).

Part of the Community's goal has always been, and remains, the building of a double





monastery with one cloister for men and one for women. An illustration of the monastery, by Sr. Amapola, is featured on a billboard that overlooks the parking lot, so that anyone who comes to the Mission can see the Community's hope for the future. The two cloisters, or living quarters, are anchored by a stucco Chapel with a red tile roof.

This simple, beautiful, classic structure will be the center of the Mission. The Chapel will be a place where Jesus resides permanently 'deep in the heart of Texas'; the monastery will house the consecrated Community; it will welcome new vocations; and it will be a place of intercession for all those – friends and strangers –

who are drawn to the refuge of Mission la Divina Misericordia.

SECOND GOAL: CAMP O' CALLAGHAN

One very big benefit of the purchase of the new properties is that it allows the Community to turn its attention and fund-raising efforts to its second campaign objective: improving the retreat facilities.

"The world is desperately in need of God's message of mercy, and this Mission is to be an instrument in spreading His message. But right now our ability to receive people is seriously hampered

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by the poverty of our facilities. Once this development gets underway we'll be able to serve a lot more people and to serve them more fully." (Fr.JM)

These new retreat facilities will be known as Camp O'Callaghan **in honor of Msgr. Eugene O'Callaghan** who hosted, befriended and mentored the new Community when they first arrived in New Braunfels. The Camp will offer new dining, conference, and dormitory spaces.

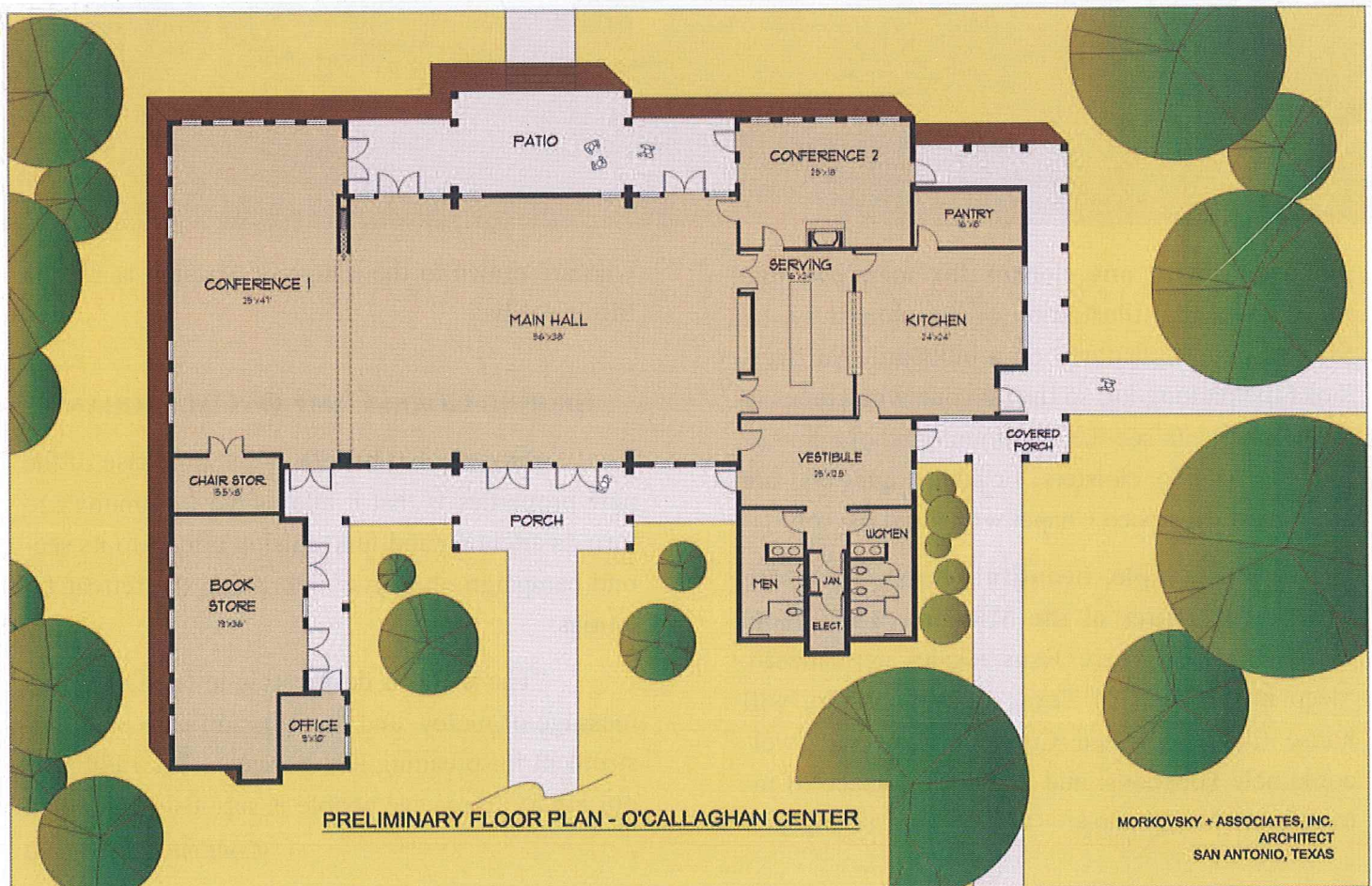
The centerpiece of the Camp will be a new structure known as the O'Callaghan Center. It will include a conference hall, dining room, kitchen, meeting room, office and bookstore. It will have indoor seating for up to two hundred as well as additional outdoor seating on the deck.

The O'Callaghan Center will replace the current camp house and tent area. Some people feel nostalgic about the demise of the faithful old

camp house. "I think most of the regulars feel that way," said Mother Magdalene. "As much as we need the new hall, we'll be sad to see the old camp house go. We've been through a lot together."

While ground has yet to be broken, plans for the Center are taking definite shape (see floor plan below). And there is one demonstrable sign of progress. A good friend of the Mission donated a used mobile home that has been cleaned, repainted, wired, and plumbed by Dave, and is ready to serve as the temporary camp kitchen so that the old camp house can be razed and the ground prepared for the new center. The tent, in a new location, will continue to serve (God willing!) as an open-air dining space until the O'Callaghan Center is completed.

But the O'Callaghan Center is just one aspect of the improvements entailed in creating Camp O'Callaghan. New dormitory space, landscaping, lighting and infrastructure are part of the overall plan.



“We hope to be able to provide dormitory space for 70 people. We will do this by renovating our existing St. Michael’s Hall to function as a permanent dormitory and by building some new dormitory structures,” says Fr. Moses.

The development plans require a significant investment in infrastructure. In addition to upgrading the septic, plumbing and water systems, it also calls for major improvements in the roads, foot paths, and outdoor lighting. While being essential to the project, these changes will also make the property more accessible to people of all ages and physical abilities.

At the moment there is no danger of the Mission becoming too ‘urbanized.’ Nonetheless, Father John Mary says that **the preservation of the natural beauty of the land is a fundamental part of its development.**

“We would like to keep most of the Mission as unspoiled as possible. We’d like for people to be able to experience the presence of God in the silence and beauty of His creation as well as in the Chapel.”

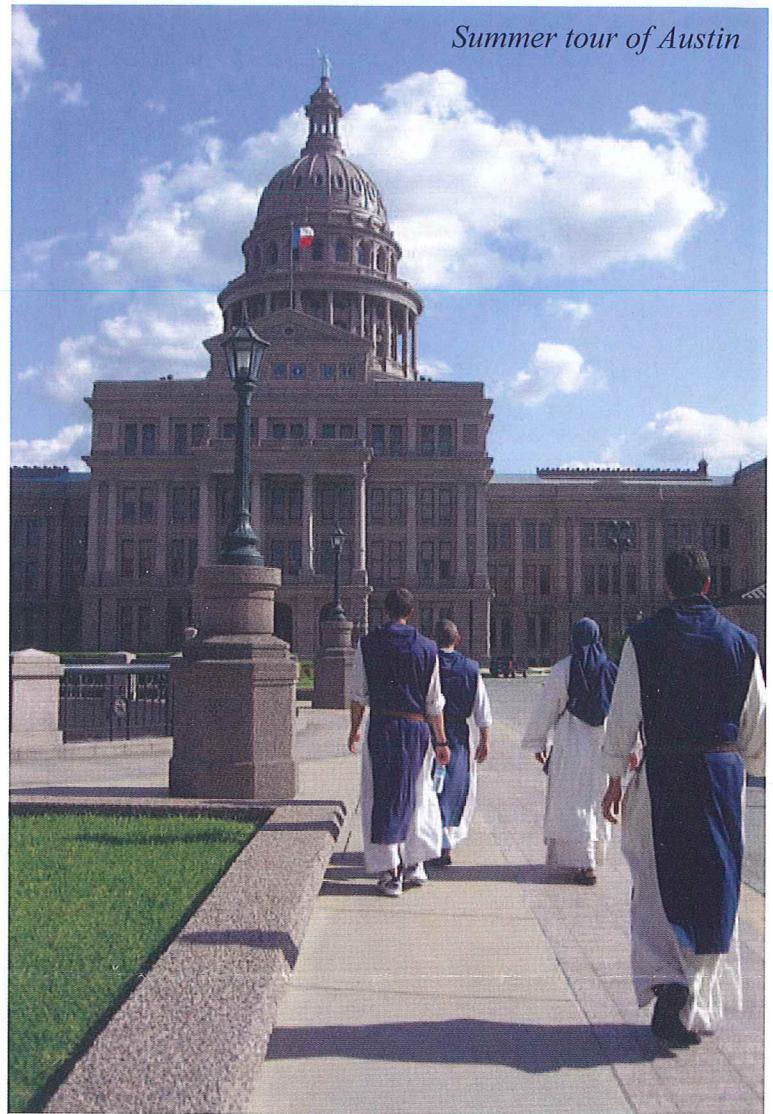
“Sometimes when people are at a crisis point,” said Mother Magdalene, “and most in need of the Lord’s peace and guidance, they are least able to sit down quietly in a Chapel. But if they can walk, climb, or sit at the summit... then almost without knowing it they begin to open themselves to Him.”

BUILDING FOR A NEW TIME

“After these first ten years of slowly putting down roots and laying the foundations, I think we are entering a time of new growth for MDM,” remarked Fr. John Mary. “This **BUILDING A HOME FOR MERCY CAMPAIGN** will help us to take a huge step forward in the service of a **greater outpouring of His Mercy** upon our wounded world.

“Is there anything our world needs more at this point than His Mercy?” ♦

Summer tour of Austin



For those of you who would like to offer financial support to the **Building a Home for Mercy Campaign**, please see the contribution envelope that accompanies this newsletter.

And if you are interested in becoming a Friend of the Mission, we invite you to consider the **Bethany Association**.

No fees or obligations.

For more information, contact Emily Jebbia at (830) 905-4515.

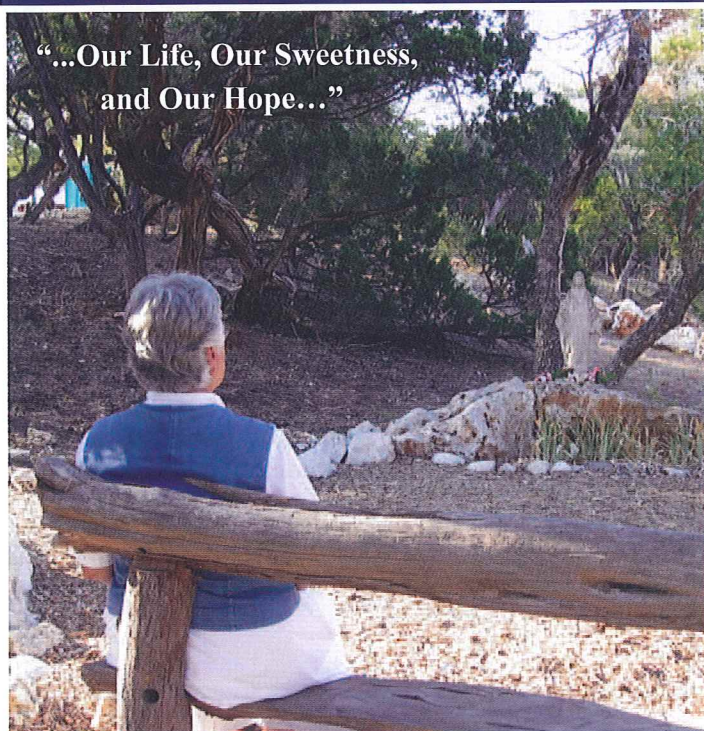
The New English Translation

Beginning this Advent, the Church in the United States will implement a new English translation of the liturgy of the Mass. This new translation, which endeavors to be more faithful to the original Latin text, has been a long time in the making. It is an important step for the Church in our country.

As those who have been to the Mission know, we have been celebrating Mass in Latin (*novus ordo*) for the past year. However, it seems to us that our Community should participate in this important step for our Church. So, **beginning in Advent, we will be celebrating the Holy Eucharist in the new English translation.**

At Archbishop Gustavo's request, Fr. Moses celebrates the Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday at St. Pius X Parish (see accompanying article). This permits all our friends who prefer that form to have access to it.

Let us pray that this step may help all of us to live more deeply the mysteries of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. ♦ *Fr. John Mary*



ARCHBISHOP GUSTAVO'S REQUEST

Archbishop Gustavo contacted us this summer with a special request for assistance: could Fr. Moses celebrate the Archdiocesan weekly Sunday Mass in the "*usus antiquior*" (a Mass in Latin according the traditional form), at St. Pius X Parish in San Antonio, for the next year? Though we wouldn't ordinarily have such a ministry in a parish—given the demands of our contemplative life and of the growing retreat ministry at the Mission—we **feel that the Lord, through our Archbishop, is asking this of us for now.**

So Fr. Moses has begun celebrating a Latin Mass each Sunday at 12:10 PM at St. Pius X Parish. His absence from our Community's Sunday Mass and from other Sunday ministries, such as Confessions and spiritual direction, is a real sacrifice—for him and for us. But we are glad to be able, through Fr. Moses, to offer this service to the Archdiocese. He has received a warm welcome from Fr. Francis McHugh, Deacon Dan McShane, and the Parish of St. Pius X.

Please join us in praying for God's blessing upon this ministry—and feel free to stop by St. Pius X some Sunday and say hello to Fr. Moses! ♦

Fr. John Mary

MERCY STORY:

Extreme Makeover: Home Edition

by Mother Magdalene

It had not been an easy five years. They'd bought a few acres and built a house **but somehow it had never felt like home.** During that time they'd started their own business, had another baby, and buried her Mother. No, it had not been an easy five years.

Last winter she had suddenly felt convinced that she and her husband and children should travel to Texas to take part in the Divine Mercy Sunday celebration at the Mission. The week's round trip was marked on their calendar and stubbornly preserved despite all the different obstacles and conflicts.

The day for their departure arrived and off they went. But just a few hours into the trip so many things had gone wrong that they seriously considered turning around. It was truly horrendous. However, they pressed on, the harassment keeping pace with their journey. Two days later, exhausted, they pulled into their camp site. Their children immediately sprang from the vehicle and everyone declared that they were not getting back in that van.

But once here the weekend proved to be as much a vacation as a pilgrimage. They slept in; went swimming, sight-seeing, and hiking; and visited with relatives. The whole family participated in the events of Divine Mercy Sunday, each drawing his own *Word from the Lord* from the basket of Divine Mercy Messages, and each venerating the Image. Even getting to ride in the golf cart and enjoying the food at the reception was part of the experience.

And the return trip? Happy; and blessedly uneventful.

A few weeks later she wrote to us telling us about the graces she felt they'd received as a result

of the trip. One part in particular struck me:

"Speaking of the house, the other monumental shift in our attitudes has been to completely embrace this home and property. It was weird how we both hated it here all this time and now we suddenly see the beauty in it.

"You know how much I hated it here. How I felt like we had made the biggest mistake of our lives buying this land because it had been nothing but trials and tribulations right from the beginning. Well, interestingly enough, I had a revelation after we got back home.

(Continued on page 15)



FINANCIAL REPORT

I will make this real simple: there is bad news and good news.

THE BAD NEWS is our **operating funds**. They are low, very low. Meeting our monthly expenses this fall is going to be hard.... And there are always the unexpected expenses: like our well running dry during this devastating drought.

I think these next two years or so are going to be a challenge financially as we embark on major improvements to the facilities at the Mission. Once they are completed, it will be possible to receive many more people, which should also make the finances easier.

God bless all of you whose sacrifices have

helped the Mission so much already.

THE GOOD NEWS is that, thanks especially to the Birch Foundation gift and a number of you, we do have some funds for **capital improvements**. Thus, we are able to move forward with the plans for housing the community at the Mission (see p. 12), which is an immense step forward. Thanks be to God!

This challenging situation is an opportunity for us again to put our trust in the Lord: **As one of the intentions of our Building by Trust effort (see pg. 3), please join us in confiding to the Lord the financial needs of the Mission.**

*Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in Him, and He will act. (Ps 37, 5)*

St. Gabriel Institute Retreat Weekend Reunion

One very hot weekend in August five former members of MDM's St. Gabriel Institute, got together for a weekend retreat at the Mission. Bro. Mikael summed up his feelings about the weekend: "We all feel that the St. Gabriel Institute bonded us in a special way, not simply as friends on the human level, but as persons united by our experience of God's grace. This summer, three years after

our SGI experience, we were all in New Braunfels, except for Dustin Bates, and had the opportunity to make a retreat together. It was a great experience to be able to come together in the Lord once again: in prayer, in activity, in laughter and memories, in our struggles, and God's grace."

The St. Gabriel's Institute was an opportunity for young men to **dedicate** a semester to the Lord; to **discern** His unique Will for them, and to be **formed** to better carry out their own mission. ♦



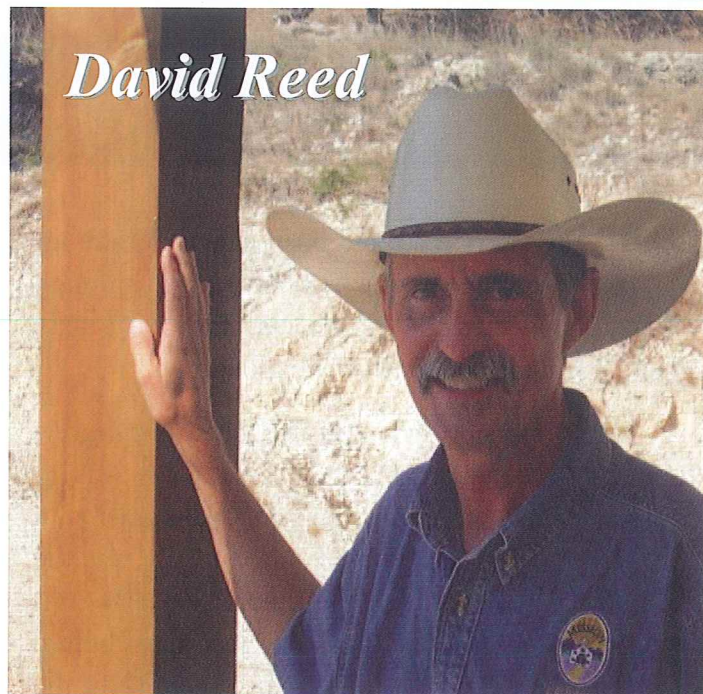
Br. Mikael, Antony, Rafa, Josh and Matt

New Help for the Mission:

Finally, after years of needing help in this area, we're happy to announce that we have asked David Reed to come on board as the Director of Administration and Activities. His job will have two primary areas of responsibility.

First, to better serve those who want to take part in activities out here, David will be the contact person and coordinator for all the groups who come to the Mission. He will also direct the logistical aspects of the retreats and activities that take place here. This will include being present on weekends to oversee the needs of the retreat groups, thus relieving Dave Sommers of some of his 24/7 responsibilities.

His second major task will be to take on much of the administrative responsibilities that Fr. John Mary and Fr. Moses have been carrying over the past few years. With the increasing number of parishes, schools, and groups requesting events at the Mission—and with the new stage of growth that the Mission is about to enter—we've felt the need of someone who could prudently administer the Mission in the midst of today's legal and bureaucratic complexities. Our lay friends advised

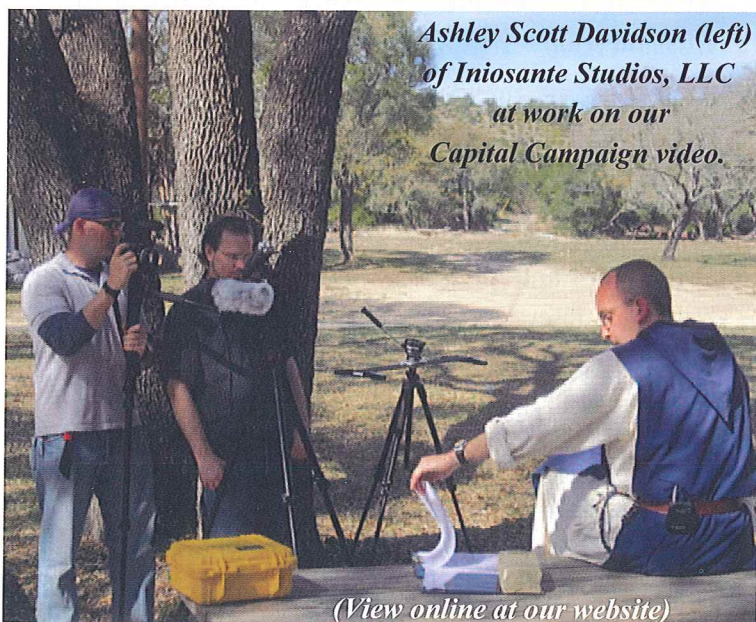


us that an administrator would be a very worthwhile investment—freeing the priests up for more ministry and prayer, so as to better serve all who come seeking God's Mercy.

We have been trying for several years to establish this position and the circumstances finally worked out. It's true that we are bringing David on at a time when our funds are very low. However, we believe that David will help the Mission to work better and that, with time, this will bear fruit in many ways.

David comes to the Mission from the position of Coordinator for the USDA Resource Conservation and Development program, a non-profit group working with rural communities. He worked with ten Texas counties.

David, his wife Marilyn and two of their daughters - Skylar and Britt - have been very involved at the Mission for the last five years, regularly commuting from several hours away! (Their oldest daughter, Amanda, is a wife and mother of three.) David and Marilyn have served on the Kerubim Board and last year he was the director of Kerubim activities at the Mission. We are very grateful to have David on board; and for the many sacrifices that he and his family are making to serve the Mission! ♦



*Ashley Scott Davidson (left)
of Iniosante Studios, LLC
at work on our
Capital Campaign video.*

(View online at our website)

Encouraging Developments in Our Quest for Housing

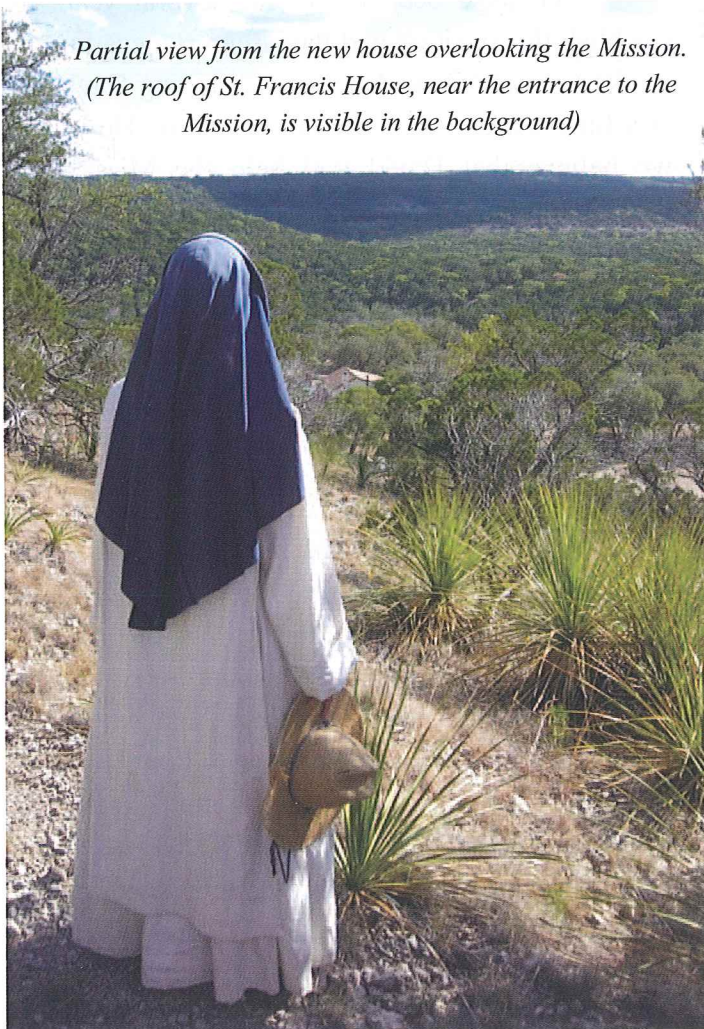
For years we have been eager to take up residence at the Mission. Now, through some unexpected developments, the Lord may make it happen sooner than we thought....

This spring when we launched our Development Campaign one of our first goals was to build a double monastery: one for the women and one for the men. The down side, though, was the knowledge that between the fundraising and construction it could still take several years before we'd be out there. And that didn't seem to fit the urgency we sensed from the Lord.

Over the years, in our quest to live at the Mission, we have been investigating different options. One of them: to buy houses near the Mis-



*Partial view from the new house overlooking the Mission.
(The roof of St. Francis House, near the entrance to the Mission, is visible in the background)*



sion. But there was nothing that worked.

Then *shortly after* the campaign kick-off, a surprising development happened. We were contacted about one property at the edge of the Mission, whose owner had just decided to sell. (This could house either the men or the women.) And then another owner of a nearby property approached us with a very favorable offer. The combination of these two could make it possible for both the men and the women to be out at the Mission soon.

These new developments were surprising. Moreover, with the Birch Foundations gift, for the first time we had the funds to make them happen. Was this combination of events a sign of God's Providence and guidance? The more we studied it the more interested we became. And we saw the following advantages:

1. The initial cost would be **significantly less than the monastery and immediately feasible** with the Birch Foundation grant. (When we discussed this new option with

representatives of the Foundation, they were pleased at the thought of having us out at the Mission as soon as possible.)

2. It could allow us to **move out in a matter of months** rather than years. Thus, finally we could begin our daily prayer life at the Mission. And this prayer would be open to the public.
3. With some renovation at each site **there could quickly be space to begin to receive new vocations**, something that we haven't had in our current situation.
4. It would **increase the size of the Mission and help insure its tranquility** ("protecting the perimeter" in the words of our Sergeant Major.)
5. It would permit us to begin work soon on **our second project, the O'Callaghan Center, which will serve all who come to the Mission.** (See article on p. 4).

These houses would not take the place of



the double monastery. But this gives us more time, and permits us to first tackle some other urgent construction needs to better welcome people to the Mission. And when the monastery is built, the houses could be used in other capacities, such as providing a place for visiting priests, longer-term guests and retreatants, and young people discerning the Lord's call.

So after consulting with our financial advisors and our building committee and doing the appropriate research, **we purchased the first property in June.** We are looking into the second as this newsletter goes to print. We confide these decisions to your prayers.

Again and again over the last nine years we have marveled at the generous charity of our friends-benefactors who have housed us on their property, and at the Providential love of the Father Who orders all things for the good. Now He seems to be ordering things so that, upon our move to the Mission, His Own Eucharistic Son will take up permanent residence there in the Tabernacle.

***"The Spirit and the Bride say,
'Come'.... Amen.
Come, Lord Jesus!" ♦***





Dave's Corner

by Dave Sommers

It has been a very difficult summer for everyone and the Mission has been no exception.

First, there's been the heat. I thought I would add a little color to the small garden at the entrance to the Mission so I went to Hobby Lobby and bought some plastic flowers, placed them around the garden and thought they looked real enough to do the job. This seemed like a good idea since we have no water to grow real ones. I checked the flowers a few day later and they were all melted! Now that's HOT!

Texas is also being plagued by roving bands of feral hogs. They usually strike in the early morning hours and have done a lot of damage to the Mission property around the Chapel, the Tomb, the Camp house-tent area, and the lower meadow. I have counted as many as 18 in a pack - all colors and sizes. (Anyone for a ham sandwich?)

But by far the worst thing has been the drought. Here in Texas we're suffering through the most severe drought in our history.

Our water situation has become critical. **During the last week of August our well went dry.** On August 30th we replaced our old well pump and lowered the new pump an additional 40 feet but we are still only able to pump a minimal amount of water before the pump shuts down. **For this reason we've had to cancel all overnight events for the Fall.** In order to save water yet still be able to have our weekend Masses we've closed down our regular restrooms and have brought in port-a-johns.

I took a ride around the Mission this morning to see how many trees have fallen. The results were very disturbing to say the least. The number of red oaks we have lost and the number that are almost dead is staggering! The lower end of the easement road near the old stock pond, that once was green with red oaks, is now brown with fallen trees littering the area. The agarita bushes that cover Cloister Hill are all

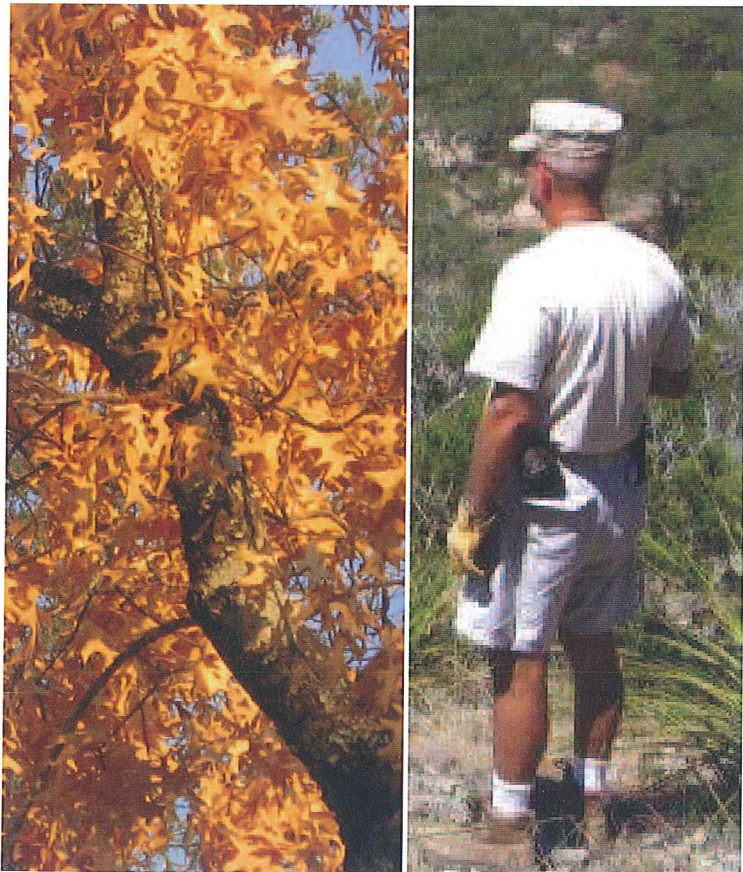
brown and most are already dead. The fruit from the agarita bushes and the acorns from the red oaks are two of the main food supplies for the deer and other local wild life. **Without these food sources the wild life will start to dwindle.**

Moving to a higher location and looking down across the Mission **you can see countless numbers of trees turning brown and some that have already lost their foliage and are waiting to fall over with the next big wind.** Areas that were once covered with native grasses are dry with a light gray color just inviting a spark or a lightning strike to set it ablaze.

The fire-danger level is at the max and we need to be extremely careful with all we do out here.

This long dry spell has truly put us into the desert and I am afraid that the amount of damage that is being done by this drought will be felt for years to come.

I know our only hope is to trust in the Lord and continue to pray that He will have mercy on us and our land. **Our land, like our people, is in distress and in great need of HIS Mercy.** ♦



(“Extreme Makeover” continued from page 9)

“I remembered when we were having this house built, that I had made a conscious decision to leave God out. I'm not exactly sure why I decided that, but I remember very clearly unpacking boxes from our old house and coming upon the statues of Joseph and Mary that I had always kept on our mantle and saying to myself, ‘I don't think I want my house to look like a church anymore. I want to have it a little more updated and focus more on new decorating techniques.’ I had also been spending time with ladies I met from a book club who were not very religious at all and I was enjoying their company and the difference between them and my ‘church’ friends. I guess I wanted to impress them too. So Joseph and Mary stayed packed in a box up in the attic along with all of our other religious articles.

“But after we returned from our trip to the Mission, I suddenly remembered that all of those things were up there and I made it my mission to get them all back down and hang them up. It was so wonderful to see them again - like seeing an old friend. And I remembered how I used to feel, how I wanted our home to be a little church for our family, a sacred place, where my children would know and feel the love of Jesus. It would be a special place set apart from the world, where we can pray openly as a family and never feel embarrassed. I feel so joyful having found that peace again.

“And I asked forgiveness from the Lord for having shut Him out all this time and then blaming Him for my unhappiness. He was only doing what I asked.

“And I realized that that was why every project I attempted to do to make this house a home, failed. I kept blaming the house and the land saying it was cursed. But since we have been back from Texas, we have managed to get an enormous number of projects completed that seemed literally impossible before.” ♦

**“BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE,
WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.”**



Mission of Divine Mercy
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Calendar of events *Fall 2011*

- Nov. 5 DIVINE MERCY CONGRESS
(To be held in San Antonio, TX. We will be assisting in the Holy Hour and Fr. John Mary will give a presentation.)
- Nov. 12 MINI-RETREAT IN SPANISH:
"Una Mañana por las Almas del Purgatorio"
- Nov. 16 MINI-RETREAT IN ENGLISH:
"A Morning for the Souls in Purgatory"
- Nov. 19 MINI-RETREAT IN ENGLISH:
"A Morning for the Souls in Purgatory"
- Dec. 3 10TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION OF MDM

Regular Activities at the Mission:

Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m.

Saturday Mass 8:00 a.m.

Holy Hour 1st Thursday of the month 7:00 p.m.

NOTICE: *Because of the drought, there may be modifications with regard to our schedule. Please check our website for changes.*



Trees felled by the drought

At the Texas History Museum

