

Mission of Divine Mercy

December 2009 A.D.



Christmas Memory

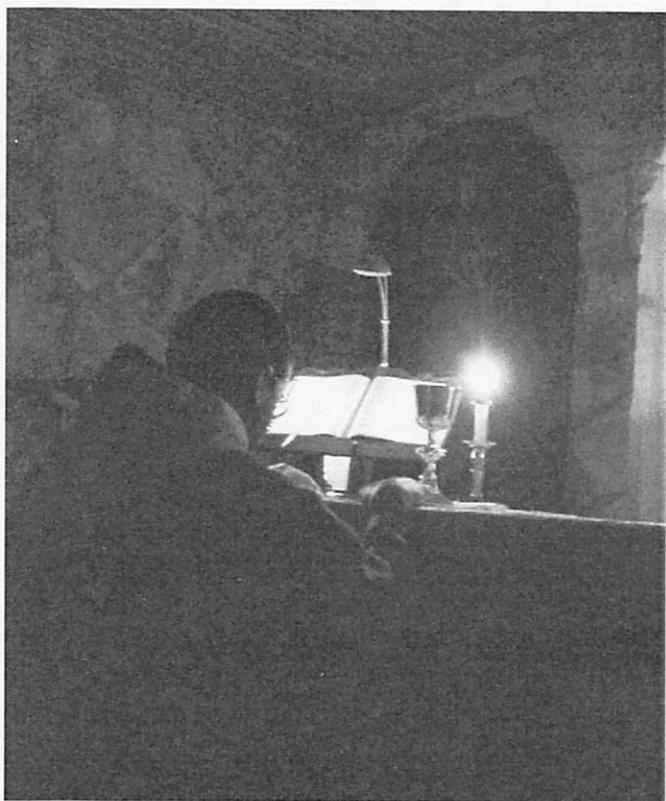
by Fr. John Mary

Christmas, 1979. I was nineteen and this was my first Christmas away from home. I was in a little village in the cold grey fog of northern France. I was spending a year there living and working at L'Arche, a community for the mentally handicapped. There were many blessings there. But it was also *very* challenging for me, and interiorly I was going through a lot of struggles.

(Continued on page 2)

Intr. 6.

H O- di- e sci- é- tis, *qui- a vé- ni- et Dómi-nus, et salvá- bit nos : et ma- ne vi-dé- bi- tis gló-



friend said on sampling them, “You can taste the love.” Yes. It seemed to me like *edible love*. Reaching me, embracing me in my exile. Helping me to keep on going.

Recently, remembering that experience made me think of the Holy Eucharist. We are living here in exile from our true Home, from the warmth for which our souls long. And the Father sends us “bread from heaven,” Bread from Home, made with love; the Gift of His Son in the Eucharist. To sustain us, to help us keep on going. Coming to us in our exile. God reaching out to embrace our heart and remind us of the Home that is awaiting us with Him.

At that first Christmas God was made Flesh for the salvation of the world. Each time that we receive the Eucharist, we receive Him Who leads us Home, God made our Food: the Ultimate Edible Love! ♦

Christmas Memory

(Continued from page 1)

As Christmas approached I was feeling very homesick. Each time I would see a jet passing overhead I longed to be on it, going home.

Communication with my family was difficult. There was of course no internet nor cell phone. It was complicated and expensive to make transatlantic calls. That was reserved for one call at Thanksgiving and one at Christmas. Otherwise I crammed all I could write into the little blue “aerogrammes” which would take at least a week to reach home.

Then, a few days before Christmas, a box arrived with Christmas cookies from my Mom and my sister. Rum balls, date bars, honey soaked baklava; shortbread, sugar cookies, and mint-frosted squares of chocolate.... The cookies had always been awfully good, but never had they tasted as good as they did then. They came with the warmth of the family gathered at Christmas. A taste of home. As a



ri- am e-jus. Ps. Dómi- ni est terra, et ple- ni- tudo e-jus: *orbis terrá- rum, et uni- vérsi qui há- bi- tant in e- o.

Living Advent

(Last year we printed the inspiration a friend had received as she reflected on how to really live Advent. Unfortunately our Newsletter arrived around the third week of Advent, and many of you told us how much it would have helped to have received that article at the beginning of the season. So we send this again.)

*While she was wondering what would be the best way to live Advent our friend picked up *The Diary of St. Faustina* and her eyes fell immediately on the following passage:*

"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.' "





Need Your Help

By Father John Mary

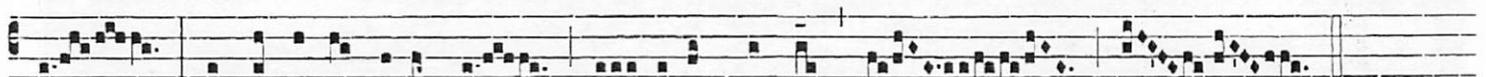
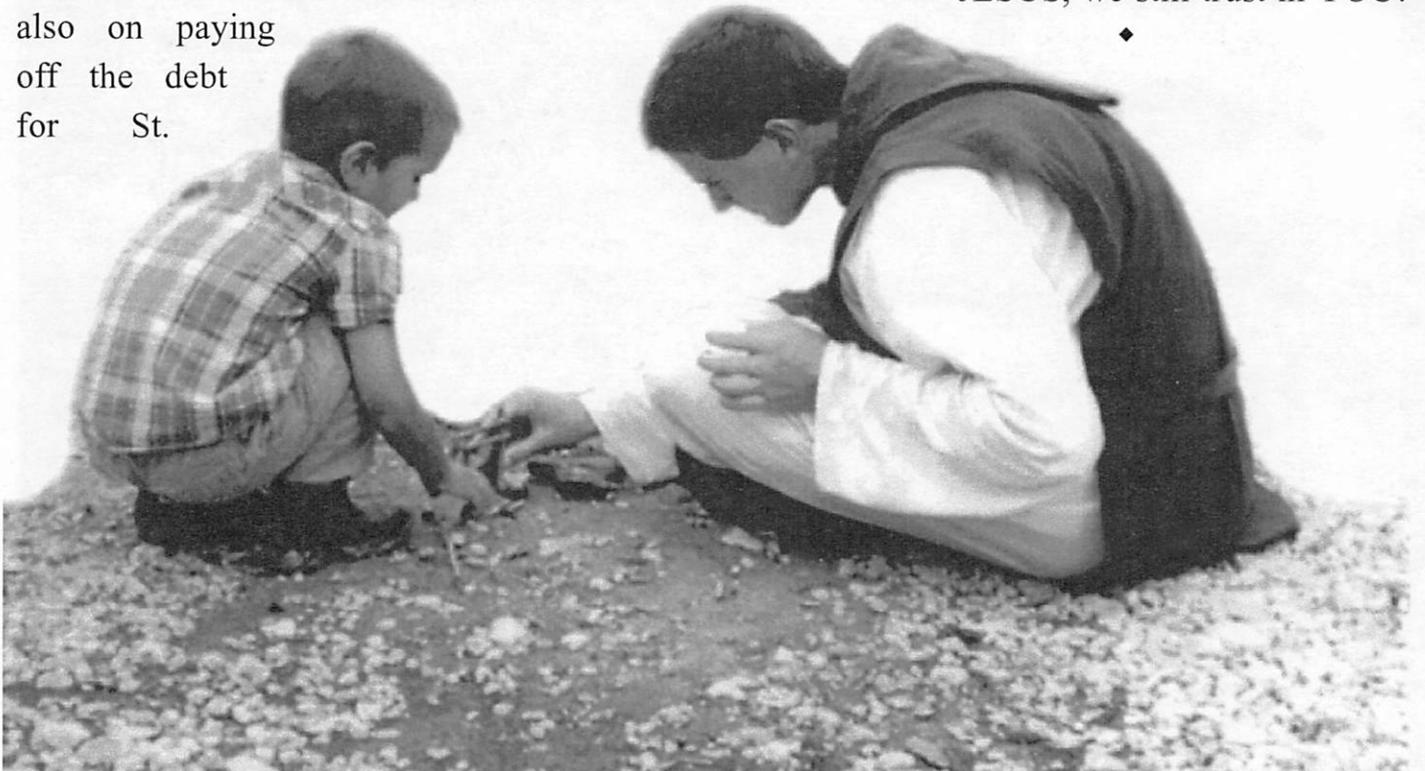
Some of you are asking how we are doing financially. Frankly, our finances are *very low*. We've just made our yearly payment on the debt for our property for \$81,792, and now we will begin again saving for next year's payment. This is the sixth year that we have, by God's Grace and the goodness of our friends, been able to make that payment. But until we have paid off the land (four more years) we are pretty tightly strapped for anything beyond the basic operational expenses.

We have been able to make progress also on paying off the debt for St.

Raphael's (see *Thermometer* on pg. 15), but we still have a ways to go.

Dave has catalogued some of our more pressing needs (*Dave's Corner* on pg. 14) but there are several others that aren't listed there, one of which is the need for an indoor confessional during the winter months. On the other hand, cold and rain tend to make our penitents brief and concise. (See photo on pg. 6)

So, yes, we would welcome any end-of-the-year help you can give us. And, yes, JESUS, we still trust in YOU!



Point and Counterpoint

By Mother Magdalene

We knew things were going well when the oven caught fire.

On Friday, Oct. 2, thirty women arrived for our first ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS of the season. To that number we added a team of eleven; forty-one people to feed five times over the weekend.

On Saturday morning, with breakfast casseroles in the oven, Maria Felicitas was doing a last minute check before Mass: Coffee was brewing; the serving table was set; refried beans were heating in the crock pot; cream, sugar, butter and green salsa were all in place. Then she heard a sudden loud sizzle and something caught her eye through the oven window – an electric blue light flickering back and forth for a moment, and then a burst of flame.

Quickly turning off the oven and rescuing the casseroles, she did what the Mission Emergency Manual directs as the first step in any crisis: *Find Dave Sommers and put it all on him.*

Dave had just sat down to listen to the First Reading when Maria Felicitas pulled him out of Mass and presented him with the situation: Breakfast in one hour; forty-one hungry people to feed on a cold, rainy morning; no stove; and four more meals after that.

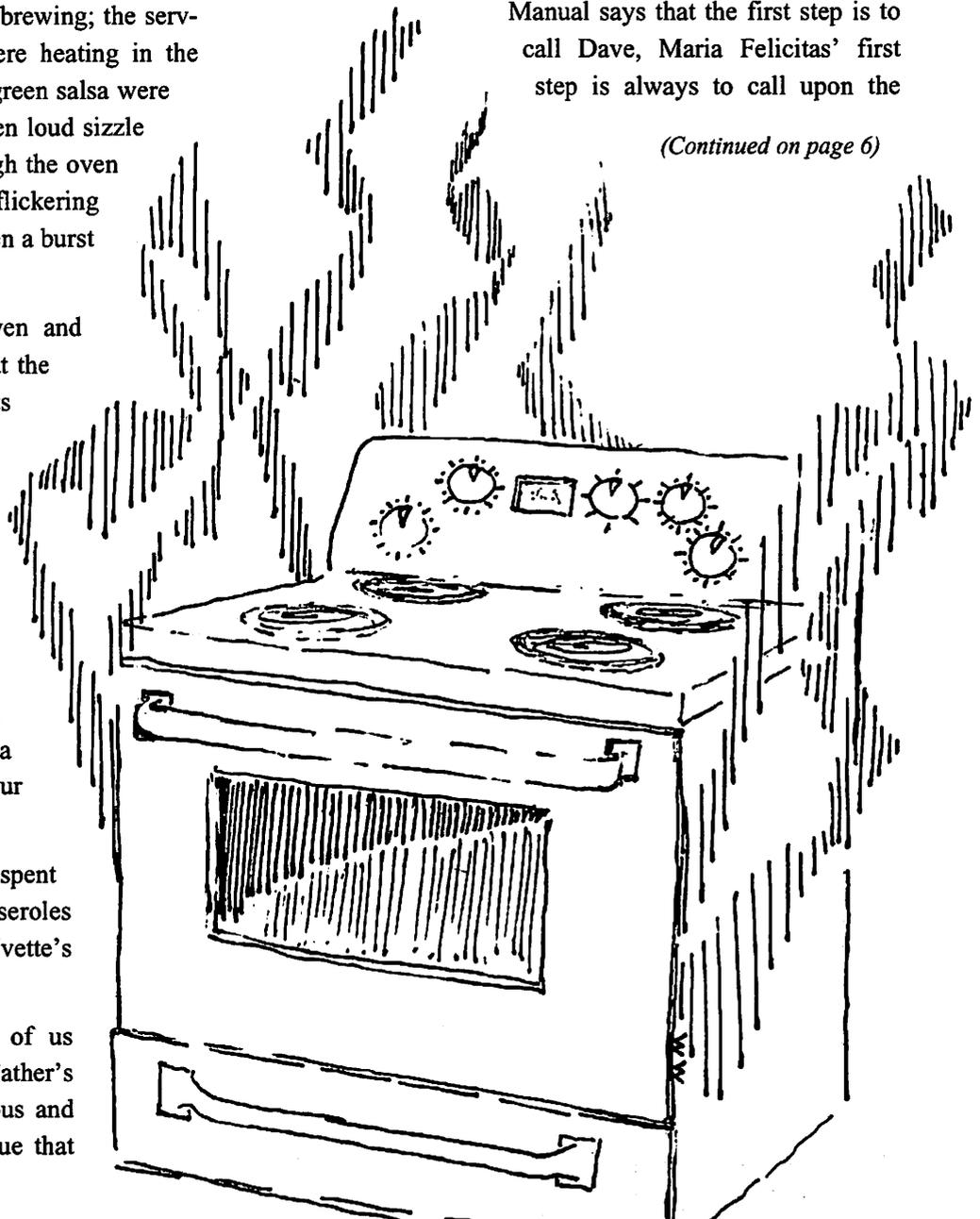
Dave and Maria Felicitas spent the rest of that hour ferrying the casseroles to and from the oven at Dave and Yvette's home in the golf cart in the rain.

Amazingly, when the rest of us gathered at the tent after Mass and Father's talk, breakfast was served – delicious and on time – and none of us had a clue that there had been a problem.

The first problem was solved but the specter of meals-to-come loomed large, and Dave and Crew (in this case our man-for-all-seasons, Dennis Brown) had already been commissioned to bring back a new stove before lunchtime. The EWJ, and the Mission, however, operate on a shoe-string, and this one had already been tied. A new stove was not in our budget.

But while the Emergency Manual says that the first step is to call Dave, Maria Felicitas' first step is always to call upon the

(Continued on page 6)





Point and Counterpoint *(Continued from page 5)*

Poor Souls and the Holy Angels; and she'd scarcely ceased invoking them when help appeared in the person of a good friend.

This friend of ours doesn't make it out to see us too often, but he'd had a dream the night before about the Mission that had prompted him to come out. While having breakfast with Father John Mary Father confided to him the reason that things were a little hectic behind the scenes and our need to purchase a new stove. "Well, I can help with that," he said, and right away wrote a check that would cover several stoves. Ahhhhhhh.....

The men arrived back before noon with stove-in-hand. But then another hurdle arose; getting it through the door. (Our Camp House dates roughly from WWII, and the kitchen door is narrow and lists slightly to one side. Simply to enter can be a challenge.) After one failed attempt to bring in the stove there was talk of removing the oven door in order to negotiate the passage. This did not go over well with Maria Felicitas who feared that she might witness the dismantling of her new stove before it ever set foot in her kitchen. "Let's just ask the Holy Angels to help. Now PUSH." And in it went.

And so it was throughout the weekend – point and counterpoint, attack and counter-attack, crisis and rescue.

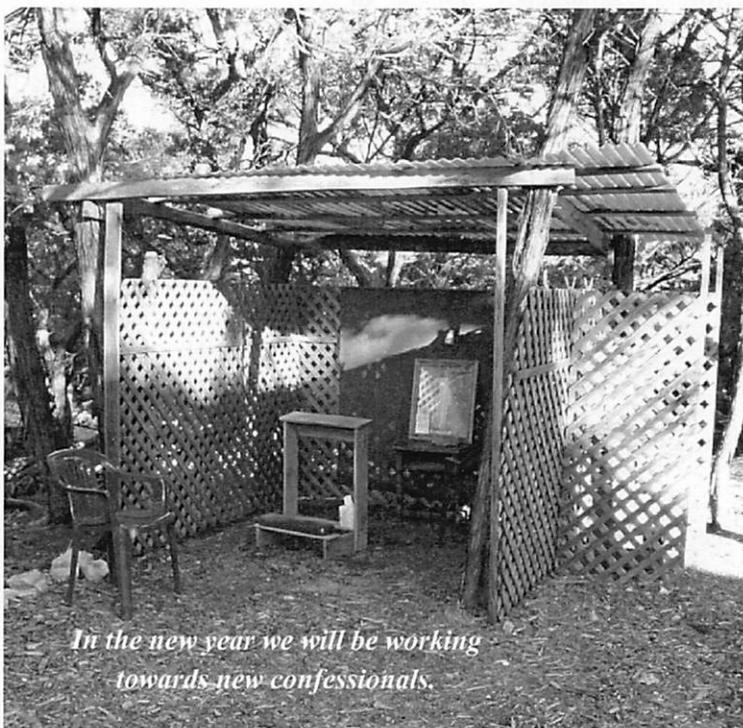
But while rain, and lightning strikes, and collapsing cots and flaming ovens were challenging us at every turn, the team was conscious of a marked attentiveness and grace among the retreatants. "One of the best groups we've had," said one team member, noting the spirit of silence they maintained despite the varied situations of the weekend.

We know that whenever the Lord is preparing a special work of Grace the enemy will try to throw a

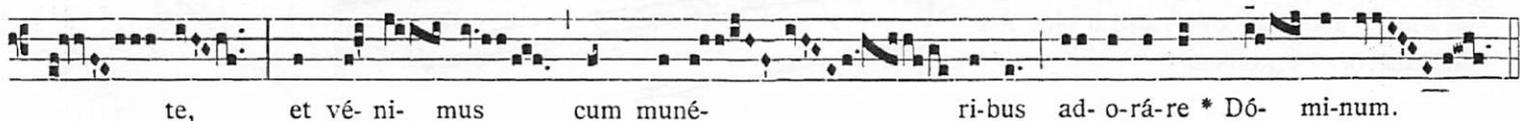
wrench into the works. We know that that is true for the Lord's children everywhere. Not everyone recognizes the pattern; but it's a big help if you do.

Because we've learned (are learning, will continue to learn) that the trick is to trust and continue; to not become too discouraged when things go wrong; to not let the enemy win. The Lord's solution usually comes after the problem, not before it. It's there waiting for us as we move forward.

The first Advent at Nazareth was a preparation for the most special Work of Grace the world has ever known. Each Advent we renew our personal preparation to receive that Work of Grace more deeply into our own hearts and lives. Given the importance of that Work of Grace inside you, don't be surprised and don't be discouraged if your Advent plans – material, familial, professional, spiritual – seem to be sabotaged. Accept, trust, and continue to move forward. A new stove is on the way.....♦



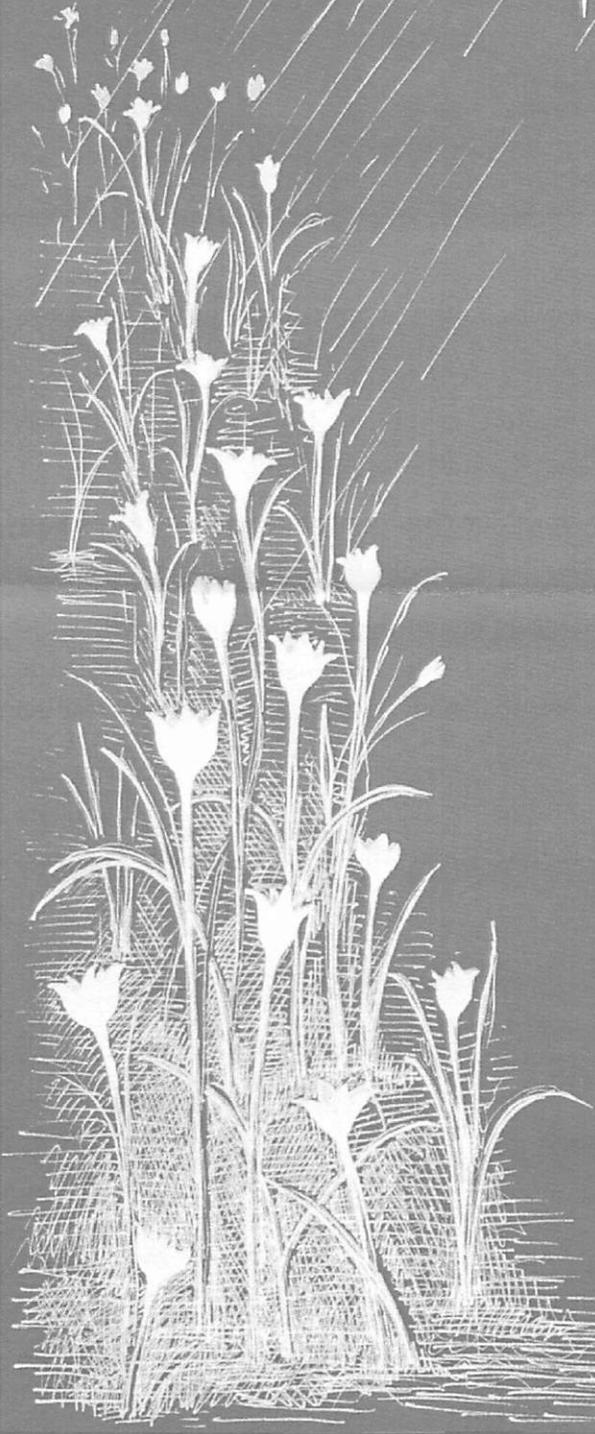
In the new year we will be working towards new confessionals.





N nómi-ne Je-su * omne ge-nu fle-ctá- tur, cae-lésti- um, ter- ré- stri- um et infer- nó-

Reina* Drops



On August 22nd it rained.

For over two years our area had been suffering serious drought. And, yes, we had prayed - sometimes ardently, sometimes mechanically - for rain. There was no visible answer to that prayer.

Desperate times require desperate measures. In the midst of one of the hottest summers on record, we decided to bring in the Heavy Artillery.

On Saturday, August 15, Feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Mother, we invited our friends to join us in a week of prayer that would end on the Feast of Her Queenship, August 22. During that week we prayed the Fifth Glorious Mystery of the Rosary each day, begging Our Blessed Mother to obtain from God the Father the rain that we needed so badly.

At 12:02 am on August 22 there was thunder and then rain. Not long; not heavy. It lasted less than half an hour. But it had begun.

During the next couple of weeks it rained several times at night. Gentle rains. And I remember thinking that we were getting optimum performance-per-raindrop, because at night the water had time to soak in and stay a while without evaporating under the hot sun of the dog days.

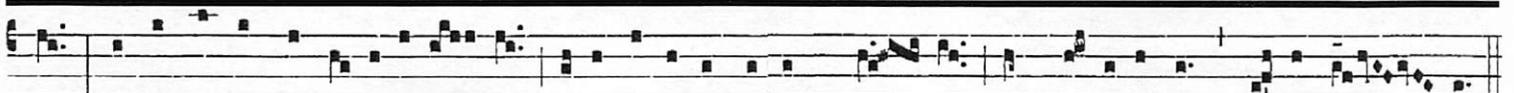
Then there were some soakers, heavy downpours that produced flash flood warnings; and even whole days when there was thick gray cloud cover and cool moist air. Wonderful!

Rain, light or heavy, has become a more normal event.

We certainly haven't re-filled the aquifer yet. We will need regular rain throughout this next year to begin to repair the damage of the drought. But we've had more rain in the last two and a half months than in the year before that. And the Texas Hill Country has turned green again.

"Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy... our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope...."

*"Reina": "Queen" in Spanish.



rum : et omnis lingua con-fi-te-á- tur, qui-a Dómi-nus Je-sus Chri- stus in gló- ri- a est De- i Pa- tris.



THE CHAPEL:

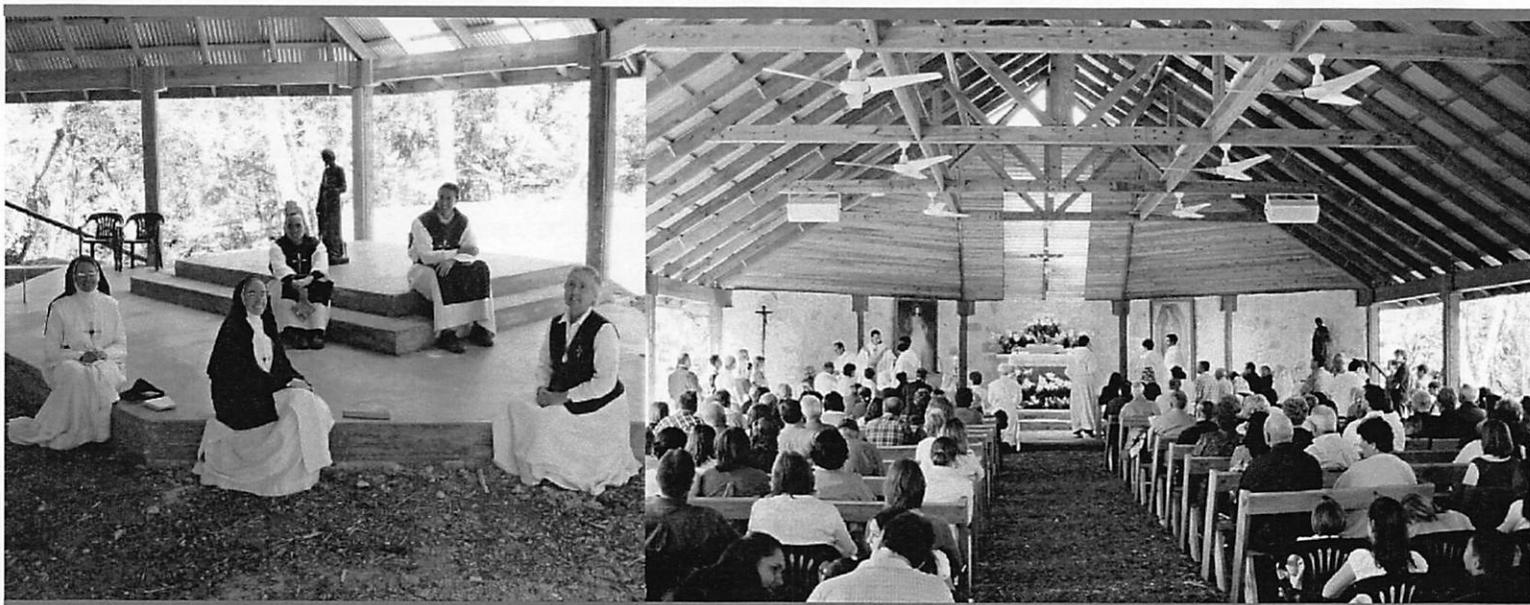
The main material event at the Mission this summer and fall was the latest work at St. Joseph's Chapel.

Good-bye, oven-hot corrugated aluminum roof and flooring forever-mulch. Hello, handsome cedar-paneled ceiling (with heat-resistant radiant barrier) and beautiful knee-friendly wooden floor.

Last fall some loyal friends of the Mission gave us a generous donation designated specifically for St. Joseph's and given in honor of the Poor Souls.* It was this gift that made possible the current renovation.

The work began this past summer and it was strenuous! During one of the hottest summers on record men were hoisting and securing the layers for the new ceiling just inches below a hot-as-fire metal roof. And the prep work for the floor involved jack-hammers drilling down through about fourteen inches of rock for the entire area of the floor. This is why Texans don't build cellars.

But by late September we were back in our newly and beautifully renovated Chapel. To the uninitiated a Chapel that is still without walls may not seem impressive, but to those of us who have lived with the mulch for several years our new wooden floor and ceiling seem luxurious.



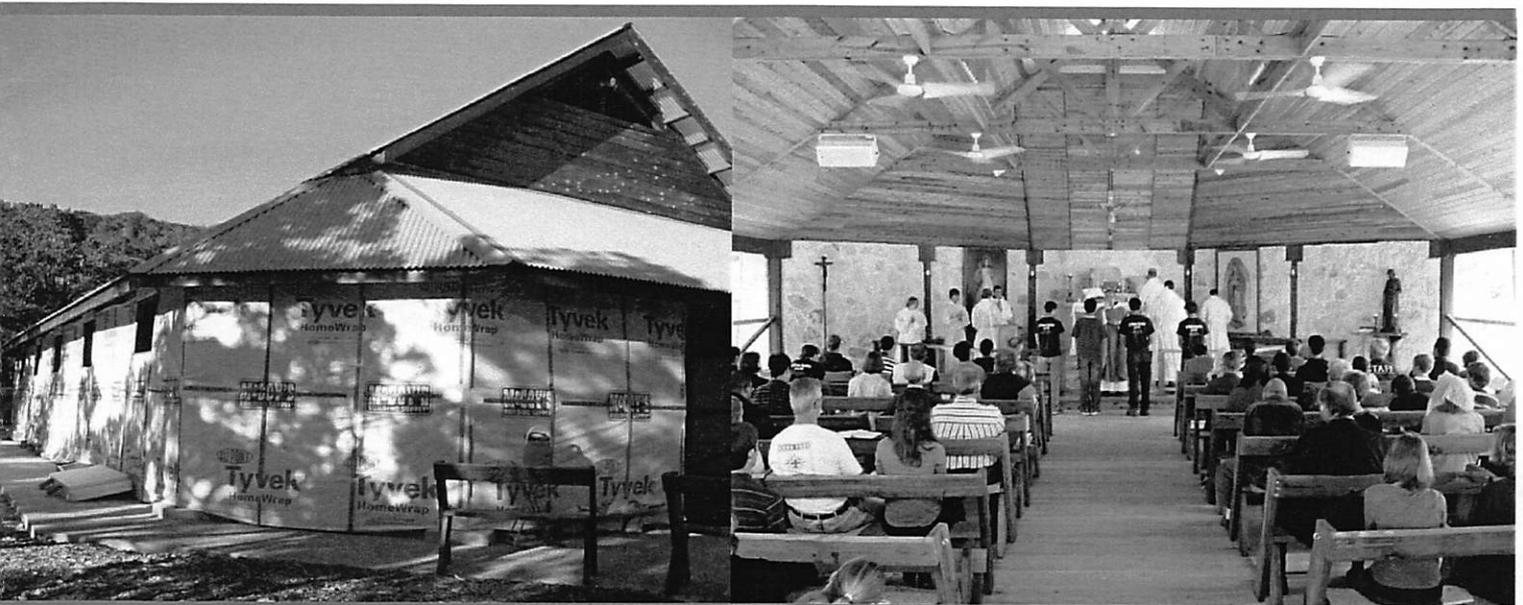


The next phase: A design that will provide walls that can be closed against the cold during the winter months and that allow an open-air chapel in the warmer months. Funding for this is well on the way thanks to the unexpected kindness of some new-found friends of the Mission in Ohio. (See pg. 11)

But no matter what the material status of St. Joseph's Chapel, it has inspired our affection and reverence from the very beginning when it was simply a tin roof and a dirt floor. The Presence and the prayer that dwell there make it for many of us the best Chapel in the world. ♦

*[Our Community has a strong devotion to the Souls in Purgatory; feels called to intercede for them; and has received many graces through their intercession. Since we had already discussed the possibility of a future Crypt Chapel that would be dedicated to those Souls, we were as pleased with the intention of the donation as with the gift itself. In the New Year we plan to erect outside the Chapel a Memorial to the Poor Souls; one that would be a permanent reminder of our vocation to pray for them.]

The picture in the upper left-hand corner was taken at the meadow. All other photos are from the site of St. Joseph's Chapel.

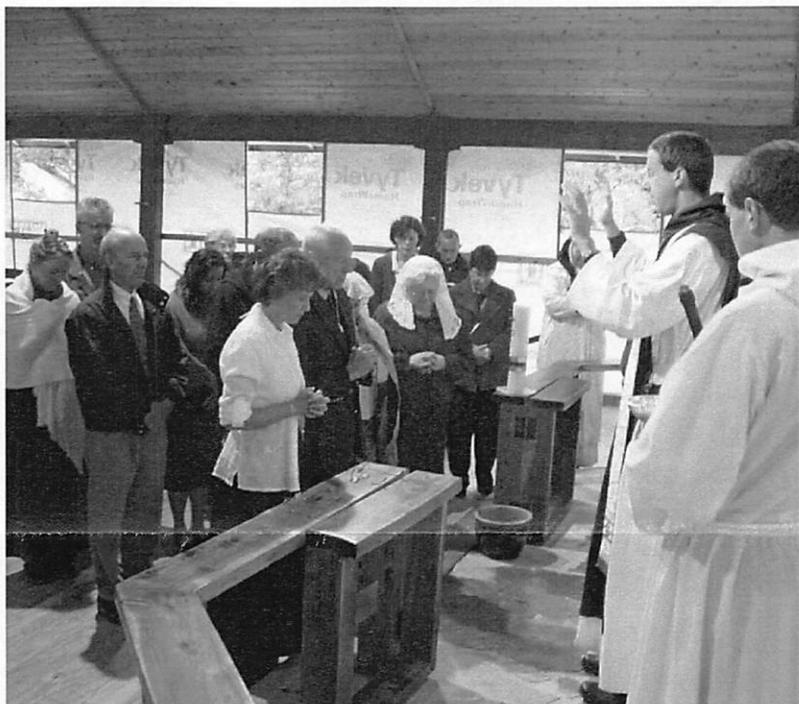


Intr. 8.

LUX fulgē-bit *hō-di-e su-per nos: qui-a na-tus est no-bis Dō-mi-nus: et vo-cā-bi-tur Admi-

MDM Journal

- ❖ **Urgent Prayer:** We continue to invite you to pray with us before the Eternal Father, begging Him to have mercy on our Country and on the whole world.



- ❖ **Medal of Honor:** Because they were out of the Country on Divine Mercy Sunday, Ed and Sara Peters made their commitment to Amici Christi in a simple ceremony on October 11th, and received their Amici Christi medals. The medal bears the Community Emblem on one side representing their participation in the charism of the Community. The other side has an image of our Patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe.

- ❖ **Third World Charity?** On Mission Sunday we had, appropriately, a surprise guest. A Catholic Priest from Nigeria arrived to concelebrate the 10:30 Mass. He was visiting some friends in the area who wanted to show him the Mission, and so they drove him out for Sunday Mass.

At the end of Mass, when Fr. John Mary asked him to say a few words, he smilingly agreed. Having mentioned how different things were from his native country, his smile widened and he said, "But when we started to drive down your road I began to feel at home. We have rustic out-stations in the bush in Nigeria and that's what your Mission reminds me of."

(If you like to support Third World Charities, consider us....)

Offert. 8.

D E-us e-nim *firmá-vit or-bem ter-rae, qui non commo-vé-bi-tur: pā-



❖ Generous Friends from Ohio

This summer two parishes in Ohio, St. Raphael's and St. Mary of the Falls, invited representatives from the Mission of Divine Mercy to speak at their weekend Masses and to receive the benefits from a second collection.

Fr. Tim Gareau is the Pastor at St. Raphael's Parish in Cleveland, Fr. Moses' home parish. After visiting the Mission himself, Fr. Tim invited Fr. Moses to come back and tell his parishioners more about the Mission and about the message of Divine Mercy.

Fr. Moses would have been justified in feeling a little nervous about addressing his home parish. "A prophet is not without honor...." But instead he found them extremely open, welcoming and supportive.

"It was heartwarming to see how much the message of Divine Mercy seemed to hit home. I had many people come up to me in tears to confide their burdens, to ask for prayer, and to seek the Lord's help. And so many people also told me that they would pray for me and for the Mission."

And the parishioners could hardly have been more generous in their support of the Mission. "One of the people who counts the collection money," relates Fr. Moses, "said the collection for the Mission was the largest amount given in a second collection in the past 20 years."

Later in the summer an invitation to speak came from Fr. Wally Hyclack, Pastor of St. Mary of the Falls in Olmstead, Ohio. It was decided that Dave Sommers, our Mission Administrator, should be the one to address the parish. (Before God promoted him Dave had served as the 11th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corp, and then as CEO of the Non-Commissioned Officers Association.)

Dave spoke at four Masses that weekend. Speaking about the fact that we are all, whether we

realize it or not, engaged in a great spiritual battle between Good and Evil, he reminded them that we already know which is the winning side. The question is will we be on it?

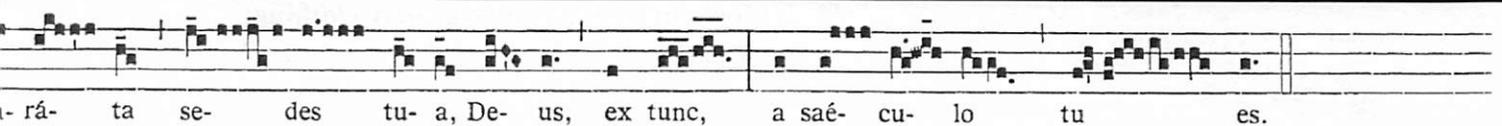
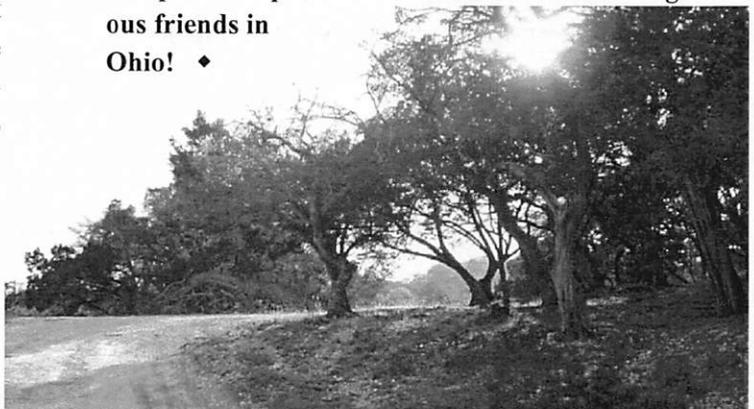
He spoke especially about the Mission's focus on the young and on our efforts to arm them spiritually for what's at hand.

"I was surprised at how immediately people related to the idea of the spiritual battle. People feel that there is something going on and they are relieved to hear it concretely addressed."

Dave also related one incident that had been particularly moving for him. After the second Mass on Sunday an older woman was waiting to speak with him. She had heard him at the earlier Mass and wanted to make a donation but hadn't had her checkbook with her. So she'd gone home and now was back and wanted to contribute twenty-five dollars to his Mission.

"For me that might as well have been twenty-five hundred dollars. I think for Jesus it was. There she was, older, probably on a fixed income; and she'd made a real effort to contribute to what the Lord is doing here. Times like that I know we're doing something right."

The combined donations from the collections at the two parishes amounted to over \$15,000. This money will be put toward the new walls at St. Joseph's Chapel. *Gracias a Dios* and to our generous friends in Ohio! ♦



Schedule

All events take place at Mission La Divina Misericordia. For more information see our website: www.missionofdivinemeracy.org or call (830) 905-4515.

December

- Dec. 12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
Mass and Veneration of the Image 8:00 a.m.
- Dec. 12-13 Queen of Peace mini-retreat
- Dec. 13 Amici Christi Meeting
- Dec. 19 - 20 St. Michael Squadron Push
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Vigil Mass 9:00 p.m.
(No reception will follow.)
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day (Private Community Mass)
- Dec. 27 Feast of the Holy Family
(Regular Sunday schedule)
- Dec. 31 New Year's Eve Mass &
Chaplet of Divine Mercy 10:00 p.m.
(A reception will follow.)

January

- Jan. 1 Solemnity of Mary Mother of God
(Private Community Mass)
- Jan. 31 Special Ceremony after Mass
in honor of God the Father
(Regular Sunday schedule.)

February

- Feb. 5-7 Encounter with Jesus Retreat for Men
- Feb. 27 Day of Mercy Mini-retreat
Mass, Talk, Holy Hour. 8 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

March

- March 13 Día de Misericordia - Mini-retiro
Misa, Plática, Hora Santa. 8 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Regular Activities at the Mission

- ❖ **Tuesday–Friday Divine Mercy Chaplet**
3:00 p.m.
- ❖ **Thursday Evening Holy Hour** 6 -7 p.m.
(Confession available during Holy Hour)
The following takes place after the Holy Hour:
 - 1st Thursday of the Month **Prayer for Healing:**
 - 3rd Thursday of the Month **Blessing of Sacramentals:**
- ❖ **Friday** 3-4 p.m.
Special Hour of Prayer for our Country

- ❖ **Saturday Mass** 8:00 a.m.
- ❖ **Sunday Mass** 10:30 a.m.
(Confessions before and after Mass)

REQUEST FOR MODEST DRESS:

Please refrain from wearing shorts; sleeveless tops; hemlines above the knee; or any low-cut, tight, or provocative clothing.
Thank you.

Letters to the Eternal Father

On the last Sunday of January (January 31, 2010), after the Sunday Mass, we will again offer a special gesture in honor of God the Father. Letters to Him of love and thanksgiving will be carried up to the Altar at the Offertory, blessed, and then set aflame outside after Mass. If you would like to participate from afar, simply mail your letter to:

MDM: Letter for God the Father
1531 Indian Chief Trail
New Braunfels, Texas, 78132

None of these letters are opened. They go unopened to the Mass and to the bonfire and to the Father; He opens them. ♦

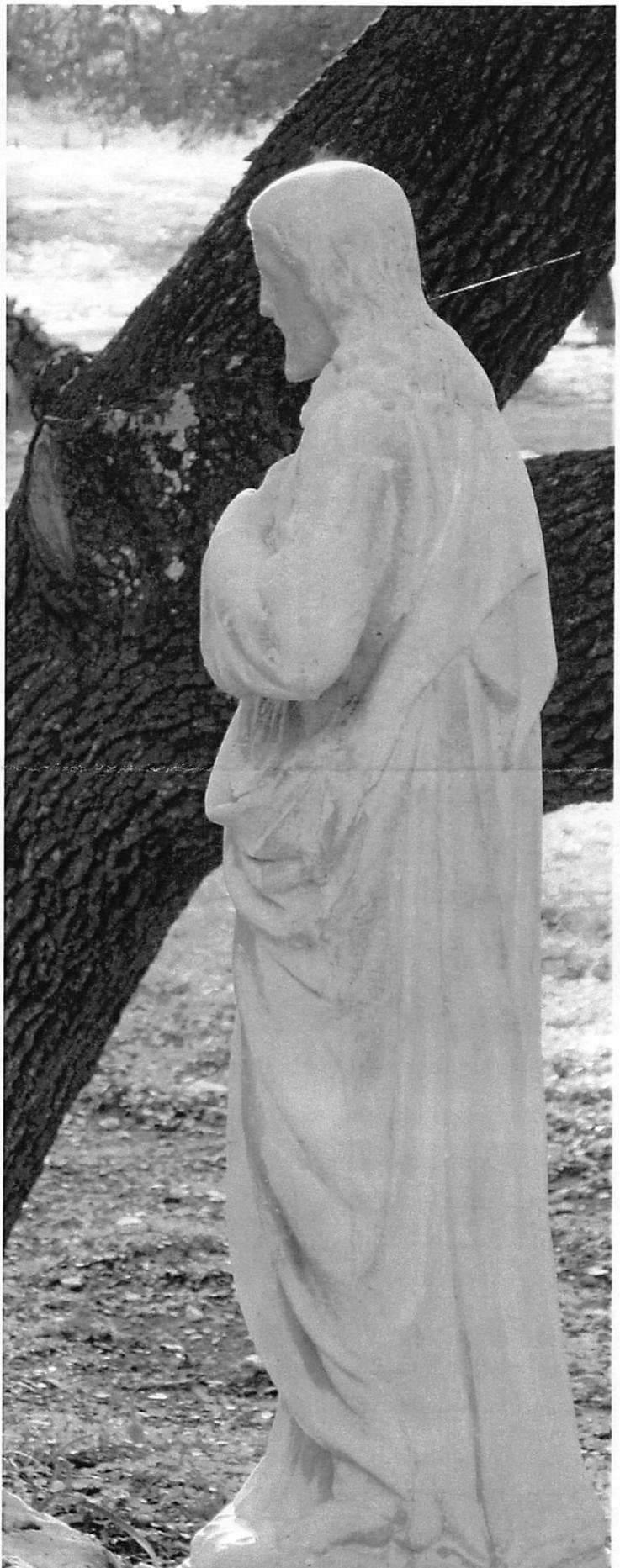
For Men

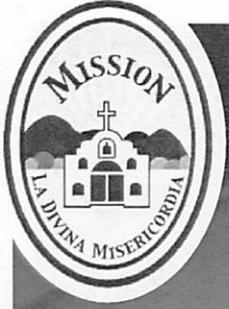
In each of you Our Blessed Mother sees Her Son.

She protected Him as a Child; guided Him as He grew; believed in Him despite all disbelief; strengthened Him with Her agonized love in the excruciating hour of His immolation.

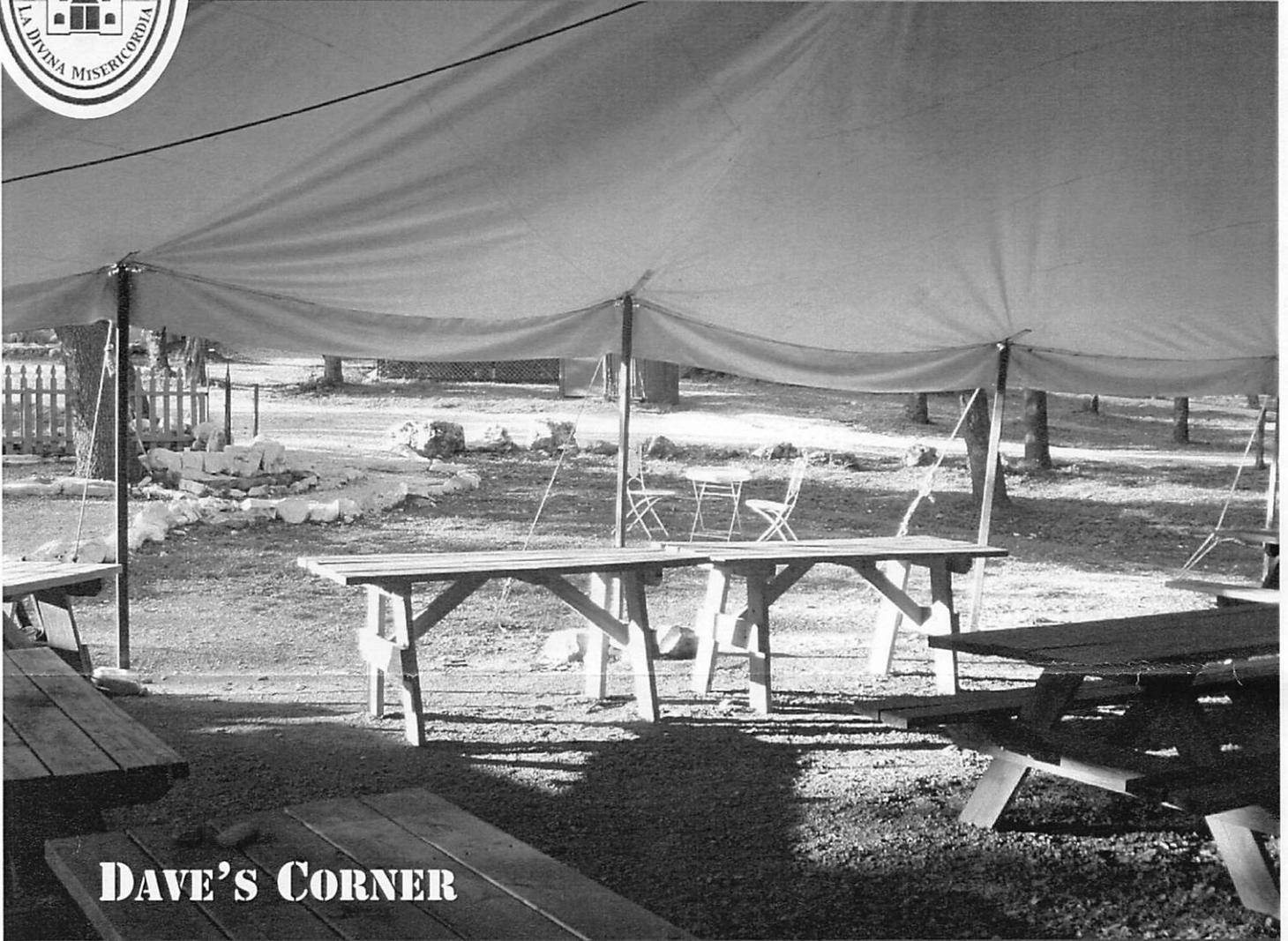
You are Her son too. And one glance draws Her to your side no matter what sin, weakness or despair is stalking you. Her love does not necessarily take away pain or suffering. But it transforms it. It strengthens you to endure; it strengthens you to conquer.

You are Her son too. ♦





Project update



DAVE'S CORNER

As always there's lots to be done at the Mission. We more or less break even between what's breaking down and what's being repaired. More or less.

On the one hand there's concern over **our patched old tent** surviving another winter; over **the Camp House floor** holding up; over **our machines** withstanding the weather until a **proper maintenance building** can go up; and over the constant battle to keep **our roads and parking areas** serviceable.

On the other hand, as the MDM Journal article says, **St. Joseph's Chapel** is getting better and better. New ceiling, new floor, and the first stage of the walls in preparation, all due to the generosity of **our friends in both Texas and Ohio.**

When I look at some old journal entries (see pg. 16) I can see that we've come a long way. **All of this must be credited to the Holy Spirit. He has touched the hearts of so many of you**

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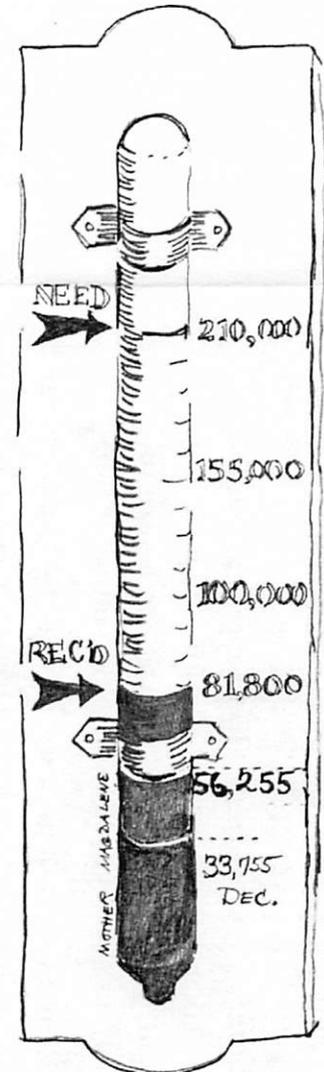
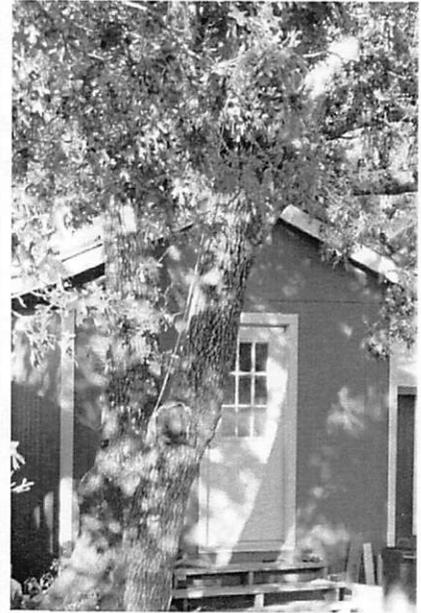
(Continued from page 14)

who have made this progress possible.

Many of you remember us having **Mass in the trailer**; in the **Camp House lower room**; in the **meadow**; and in the **clearing in the woods in the rain with the servers holding umbrellas over Father John Mary during the Consecration**. We now have a beautiful roof over our heads and a beautiful floor under our feet.

But we also now have the challenge of building – and funding - walls to protect these wonderful improvements.

As the caretaker of the Mission I often sit in the Chapel and feel embarrassed that we haven't a better place to greet Jesus when He comes to us at every Mass. Then I realize that it isn't the greatness in the design, not the images on the walls, not the grand structure of a church, **but rather what is in our hearts that matters when we welcome Jesus into our chapel**. I am sure that He smiles on every little improvement we make **and on every heart that has helped make these improvements possible.** ♦



*\$81,800 already paid.
\$129,200 to go.
Slowly but surely....*



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Some old journal entries from Dave:

JAN. 24, 2005: “This morning I had a meeting with the Sisters and Brother Joseph about the location to have Saturday morning Mass during Lent. The Sisters gave me the dimensions for the altar platform, altar, and altar top.

“Trees, brush and some old junk will have to be removed from the location in order to accommodate the chairs. We will also consider mulching the area.

“It would be a good idea to put up a gate at each entrance to the cleared chapel area to keep out our holy cows....”

MAY 24, 2005: “The outdoor Chapel dedicated to St. Joseph has been completed and was blessed by Monsignor O’Callaghan on May 14. There were over two hundred people in attendance. During this same celebration the St. Michael’s Squadron renewed their commitment to Jesus....The inside of our Camp House is near completion and should be ready for use next week. Jesus, we trust in You.”

Mail: The Mission of Divine Mercy
1346-A Hueco Springs Loop Rd.
New Braunfels, TX 78132

(Current residence of the Community)

Phone: (830) 629-5042

E-mail: mdm@missionofdivinemeracy.org
www.missionofdivinemeracy.org

Our Mission and place of Apostolate:

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