



FROM THE CENTER

A Newsletter for Friends and Benefactors of Saint Benedict Center across the Country

Noviciate August 15, 2016

As the busy summer came to a close, the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady was celebrated in a most solemn and joyful manner here at Saint Benedict Center. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the feast was offered by Father Neil Roy. Reverend Deacon Matthew Vierno, FSSP, served as deacon and Brother Christopher Isaac, MICM, served as subdeacon. During the Mass, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary had the joy of receiving two new novices. Jennifer (Jenny) Brizek and Amanda Katherine (Katy) Hannon, having finished their six month postulancy, which was full of prayer, work, study and discernment, presented themselves before the altar to be received into the novitiate. In the presence of the community, family and friends, they asked for “the mercy of God, and the companionship of the community.” They then received the habit of a Slave of the Immaculate Heart with the white veil of the novice, and their new names: Sister Mary Jacinta (Jenny) and Sister Maria Faustina (Katy). After the Mass the community assembled outside the chapel to wish the new novices “Perseverance.” They were joyfully greeted and congratulated by family and friends who had come to share this happy event, and see as the Sisters began their two-year formation, and set their faces toward that beautiful



day when they will become the Brides of Christ. Please pray for Sister Mary Jacinta and Sister Maria Faustina, as they begin this time of prayer and study and aspire toward the crown of eternal life as a Slave of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



Above: The new novices with Sister Katherine Maria, Prioress, and Sister Christopher Margaret, Sub-Prioress.

Right: The line of Sisters congratulating the new Novices and their families now extends out of the Chapel!





What a blessing to have a Solemn High Latin Tridentine Mass in this beautiful Basilica during its 150th Jubilee year!

Solemn High Mass at Mission Hill

In 1866, Blessed Pope Pius IX entrusted the Redemptorists with the miraculous image of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, with the mission: "Make her known throughout the world." The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer has fulfilled that mission in Boston at the Basilica dedicated to Our Mother of Perpetual Help on Mission Hill. The basilica houses a replica of the icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. This icon was solemnly enthroned on May 28, 1871, and has been venerated by thousands who seek assistance and cures from Mary, the most loving of mothers.

On Saturday May 28, 2016, a century and a half later, the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and lay associates and parishioners, attended a Solemn Latin Tridentine Mass celebrating the 150th Jubilee of the icon's enthronement.

This was the first time that a Solemn High Latin Mass had been offered in the basilica in over 40 years! The choir of Brothers, Sisters, and lay volunteers sang the Mass from the loft of the basilica and Mr. Michael Olbash accompanied on the organ. What a magnificent tribute to the Mother of God in these stunning surroundings!



Father Braulio Roger Pereira, C.S.S.R. celebrated the Mass and was assisted by Father Neil J. Roy, and Father Thomas Kocik, who acted as deacon and subdeacon. When the Mass was finished, the priests and servers processed to the beautiful altar dedicated to Our Mother of Perpetual Help as the choir sang the ancient chant of the Sub Tuum - "We fly to thy patronage, O Holy Mother of God." Following this, the Litany of Loreto was sung in Latin. Father Roger then concluded the ceremony by reading a beautiful prayer to Our Blessed Mother. Afterwards the congregation explored the shrines of the Basilica leaving their petitions, prayers and lit candles at the altar of the miraculous image.

Following the ceremonies, the celebration continued in the parish hall with a wonderful repast of traditional Brazilian food provided by friends of Father Roger. Father, who was returning to Brazil, presented the Brothers and Sisters with a hand-painted icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help as he bade farewell in a heartfelt speech. A second image was presented to his friends in the Brazilian community. We extend our deep gratitude to Father for this historical event and the Redemptorists for the use of the basilica.



A full choir of Brothers, Sisters and lay people sang the chants and hymns of the Mass in the choir loft.



Miles for Mercy

This summer a new spiritual journey blazed through western Massachusetts. Led by the Brothers, Slaves of the Immaculate Heart, 14 young men made a four-day, 80-mile pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, MA. Traversing water and land, the group canoed, hiked and camped, as they prayed and sang, all in the pursuit of the Mercy of Our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The motto for the pilgrimage was “Convertimini” meaning, “be ye converted,” taken from the 89th Psalm. These simple words spurred the pilgrims on to a renewed spiritual life asking for Christ’s Mercy. Brothers and pilgrims witnessed to the year of Mercy as they walked on the highway and trails carrying the banner of the Divine Mercy designed for the trip.

The pilgrimage began in Turners Falls, at the Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa. The following day and a half were spent canoeing down the Connecticut River to Northampton, with frequent stops along the riverbank for spiritual reflection. The third day the pilgrims covered a grueling 30 miles through the hills and forests of western Massachusetts. It was definitely penitential walking so many miles! They were rewarded to see that they inspired others, however, witnessing with their perseverance during the grueling work-out, and earning encouraging waves



and honks from the passing cars. The trip ended on the fourth day with a hike of the remaining 10 miles to the Shrine of the Divine Mercy. As the tired and blistered group walked up the hill to the Shrine, they sang the *Ave Maria*, stopping before the Chapel doors to chant the *Salve Regina* in thanksgiving for their safe journey. Mass was offered in the Lourdes grotto, then the pilgrimage finished with the Divine Mercy Chaplet in the Shrine Chapel. It was a beautiful conclusion to a fantastic pilgrimage and hopefully the first of more to come.

Above: Whether it was miles of trekking on foot with their banner flying along main highways and rugged paths, or paddling the pilgrimage miles, the men filled up the hours with prayer, song and spiritual reflection.

Left: Pilgrims relaxed with a hearty meal and some enjoyable music at various camping areas after the long days of rowing or hiking on the first Pilgrimage of Mercy.



2016 in Piura, Peru

This year the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters were blessed to accompany the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter on its mission trip to Peru for the second time. The Fraternity priests and seminarians have led the St. Francis Xavier Mission Trip to the city of Piura, Peru since 2010 as a spiritual outreach to spread a love and devotion for the Traditional Latin Mass along with the corporal works of mercy.

Thirty-three youth participated in the mission activities directed by the Santissimo Sacramento Parish of Piura. Each morning these young missionaries from across the USA were divided into groups and assigned to various jobs. Alternating the spiritual with the corporal, they participated in building bamboo houses, delivering food and clothing to the poor in one of the nearby pueblos, or accompanying one of the priests on Communion calls to homes or hospitals. Countless elderly and dying people were offered the consolation of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and Extreme Unction. It was inspiring to see the devotion with which these people welcomed Our Lord into their hearts and homes, and wonderful to witness what the simple presence of a Catholic priest could do for these people. The missionary groups would witness how a blessing or embrace from Father was enough to move an entire family to tears.

But the most important purpose of the trip was to expose the people of Piura to the beauty of the Latin Tridentine Mass. Every afternoon, 3 Masses were said in separate (often remote) villages surrounding the city. Some times, an entire year had lapsed since Holy Mass was celebrated in their chapel...the last time having been the previous year's Mission Trip! Each priest spent afternoons hearing confessions, saying Mass, and blessing holy water or other sacramentals. Wherever they went, priests and missionaries were always greeted by a warm welcome, happy and grateful smiles... and lots of hugs, especially from the crowds of Peruvian children!

Aside from the daily activities, the group participated in deepening their spiritual life. Every day began with Mass and ended with rosary, followed by a spiritual talk from one of the seminarians or Sisters.

The last day of the trip, missionaries became pilgrims in the capital of Peru—Lima, to the home of St. Rose of Lima; the church of Santo Domingo –



Above: One of many humble Chapels that was honored to receive the missionaries.

Left: Sister Marie-Bernard, MICM distributes Miraculous Medals while accompanying one of the mission groups assigned to Communion calls.



The 2016 Saint Francis Xavier Mission group before departing from the mission parish at Piura. What a blessing to see the power of the priesthood and the consolation of the sacraments at work!

A mission group on hospital visits to the sick and dying.

Right: Sisters pray before the miraculous crucifix in the crypt of the Sanctuary of Saint Rose of Lima.



the tombs of St. Rose and St. Martin de Porres and the Franciscan monastery where St. Francis Solano had lived. The visit ended with a Sung Mass in the elaborate church of San Marcello in the heart of this “City of the Saints.”

The message of the Gospel of Our Lord, preached by the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, more than words, was taken home by all participants in this refreshing witness to Christ among the poor. It is proof that the Gospel can be preached anywhere, and like St. Francis of Assisi said, you do not always need words!



Morning Star in El Paso!

Immaculate Conception Parish in downtown El Paso, Texas welcomed the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on May 20th for a weekend “mini” camp for girls in the spirit of Morning Star Camps.

Over 30 girls from ages 6 to 18 joined in the event which was conducted by Sister Agnes Mary, MICM and Sister Martina Marie, MICM. The Sisters worked with the girls, re-enforcing the truths of our Holy Faith in a program that was accompanied with songs, arts and crafts and games in the park.

Fathers Shannon and O’Neill, FSSP, started each day with the Holy Mass in the beautiful ex-pro cathedral of El Paso, now staffed by this Latin Mass community. The Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet also re-enforced the prayer life of the girls throughout the day. Parents contributed to the success of the camp with contributions of food and supervision.

On May 22nd, parishioners assembled in the parish hall for an inspirational explanation on the spirituality of Saint Louis de Montfort in “True Devotion,” the spirituality of the Slaves. This was given by Sr. Martina Marie, MICM, whose family still lives in El Paso.

May God bless this beautiful community and all our young campers!



The Sisters brought a little bit of the Morning Star Camp activities... along with talks on True Devotion to Mary for the parish!

Right: Sister Martina Marie, MICM, teaches the group some classic Morning Star Camp songs!



Mission Mexico

This Holy Week, two Sisters MICM traveled to Guadalajara, Mexico where they joined the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter for the Saint Francis Xavier Holy Week/ Easter Mission. It was a wonderful opportunity to spread the spirit of True Devotion to Jalisco, the heart of the Cristero country, and to join forces with the FSSP to promote the Traditional Mass, and work for the glory of God and salvation of souls in Mexico.

Eighteen Americans joined the Saint Francis Xavier Mission team, which was also composed of local families, some coming from other parts of Mexico to join the mission. Father Daniel Heenan, FSSP, served as chaplain, and was joined by two seminarians of Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Mission began on the Feast of Saint Joseph with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, after which each missionary presented himself at the communion rail to receive his missionary cross. After Mass and the ceremony, the whole mission team caravanned to Cijititlan, a village outside of Guadalajara, where they stayed during Holy Week.

"*Viva Cristo Rey!*" was the battle cry as the missionaries set out each morning of Holy Week for Avento, the destination of their mission labors. The missionaries went door to door encouraging the faithful to return to the sacraments and come to the Traditional Mass offered this week

by the FSSP. The missionaries were warmly received by some, but turned away by others, as they planted little seeds of Faith in the hearts of all they encountered, which they pray will come to fruition.

The Sisters spent the mornings teaching catechism, sharing the the richness, beauty, and truths of the Faith with the children of the village. In the evenings, the Rosary was recited at Avento. The missionary's day closed with a Solemn High Mass. It was heartwarming and gratifying to see those who were evangelized during the door-to-door mission appeal actually come to Mass, especially at this most sacred time of the liturgical year. Afterwards, the mission group returned to camp in Cajititlan for dinner and evening activities, where "testimonials" were shared of experiences from the day. Night prayers closed the long day, and the missionary looked forward to the next day's "labor in the Lord's vineyard."

On Good Friday, the mission team joined the people

The Saint Francis Xavier Mission group to Guadalajara during Holy Week 2016.



Above: The Mission group walked the streets knocking on doors to encourage the faithful to make their confession and attend Mass.



Right: The Passion Play took place in the main streets and was attended by all the local people of the mission.

of Cajititlan for the Passion play, which processed through the streets of the village. This moving event ended at the church where a cross was erected and a tomb displayed representing the sorrow of the day.

The Saint Francis Xavier Mission returned to Guadalajara on Holy Saturday for the Easter Vigil at El Templo de Nostra Senor de La Pillar, the home of the FSSP Parish. Easter Sunday dawned in splendor over Mexico as the team of missionaries experienced the glorious Mass of the Resurrection.

The crowning event of Easter Week was a trip to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary are grateful to Our Lady for this wonderful experience, and beg her to continue to bless and protect her country of Mexico. *Viva Christo Rey!*



Above: Sister Mary Clair talks to parishioners about True Devotion to Mary and our Order.

Right: The Sisters stand on Tepeyac Hill during the visit to Guadalupe and the sights of Mexico City on the last day of the trip.



IHM: 40 Years and Counting...

The academic year 2016-2017 marks the 40th anniversary of Immaculate Heart of Mary School. Marking the celebration, IHM opened the doors to the new high school across the street from the chapel. This handsome complex brings a new dimension to student life at Saint Benedict Center. Three classrooms are on the second floor of the gym building with an open hall that balconies the actual gym. One large classroom is on the ground floor and will accommodate a variety of activities.



The band finds a home at last in the lower level with a room exclusive for its use. Outside, there is lovely picnic area under the

trees for lunch breaks in the warm weather and a lunchroom, also in the lower level, for the rainy and winter days.

IHM has come a long way since the purchase of the initial ranch house in 1976, which was used for classrooms. The small group of parents, who identified a need for true Catholic education in the days before homeschooling became popular and available, rallied around the school. Years of sacrifice on the part of the religious kept it open and slowly growing to what it is today. Although still small by comparison, with an enrollment of 110, we are proud to be able to broaden our horizons and reach more souls, as we open these new doors to students looking for an authentic Catholic Education.



May They Rest in Peace

Margaret Jean (Gavin) Bitzer



...Passed into eternity at her home in Louisville, Kentucky on April 27. She was 88 years old. "Jean" suffered two years from cancer, valiantly offering up her sufferings to God. She was devoted to the Traditional Latin Mass and the Holy Rosary, and spent her last days faithfully praying all her devotions. She also made the Total Consecration to Mary recommended by Saint Louis DeMontfort.

Her love of God was evident in her selfless task of motherhood to her six children, her 33 grandchildren, and 13 great granddaughters, who can each attest to her many virtues and shining examples of love, peace and joy. To many of her friends and acquaintances Jean was the perfect "Southern Lady." She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

She is survived by her brother, William Gavin; her sons Rev. Father Gavin Bitzer and Alan C. Bitzer.; her daughters Sister Christopher Margaret, M.I.C.M, Leslie Mittel (Joseph), Carole Brenner (Joseph), and Amy Mueller (Paul). She was preceded in death by her husband of 49 years, "Doc" Yandell Bitzer by 19 years. May she rest in peace.

Arthur J. Hurley, III



...Close friend and benefactor of Saint Benedict Center passed away after a long valiant battle with cancer on April 14, 2016.

Arthur, president of the Arthur J. Hurley Company, founded by his grandfather in 1929 was 61 years old. Over the years, Arthur generously contributed all the electrical wiring to Montfort Retreat, a complex of 21 buildings. Recently he again supplied the wire and light-

ing fixtures for MacIsaac Hall, gym and facility. Hidden in the structure, his generosity was one of the most essential elements of both facilities. Without his and his brother Drew's (pre-deceased) help we would have never been able to accomplish the building projects. We are forever grateful for the friendship and generosity of this very missed friend. May he rest in peace.

Albert H. Schmit

Long time friend and supporter, Albert passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family on August 20, 2016 in Oregon. An astounding example of faithfulness to the Latin Mass, Albert and his wife, Sally, would sometimes travel 175 miles one way to attend the Liturgy they loved. Catholic to the core, Al was one of the steadfast faithful who helped keep the Mass going even in the darkest time. We can attribute the current widespread and growing use of the Extraordinary Liturgy to the perseverance of men like Albert. May he rest in peace.



Fighting the Good Fight

On the feast of Saint Peter the Apostle, the Brothers were very blessed to attend Bishop Athanasius Schneider's talk and Pontifical Mass at Fr. Jay Finelli's parish in Tiverton RI. Brother Patrick Joseph, Novice and Brother Anthony Marie, MICM were able to serve at the Mass and all the Brothers had a chance to meet and chat with his excellency. God bless him for fighting the good fight!



Introducing True Devotionals!

This spring we launched an all-new online presence for our monastery religious goods shop called: TrueDevotionals.com! It is your one-stop shop for everything pertaining to Total Consecration to Mary and living the life of True Devotion. Already we have gotten orders from near and far, especially for our True Devotion Rings and Bracelets! How exciting to see the army of Holy Slavery growing! Visit, shop and help spread the word of "to Jesus through Mary!"