

Diocese of Las Vegas

# DESERT CLARION



## Diocese continues Safe Environment Program

### Virtus protecting God's children

The Diocese of Las Vegas implemented the Virtus Protecting God's Children program in response to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in Washington D.C., Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, 2002. The Virtus program is designed to assist the church community in creating an environment of safety, with particular attention placed on children and youth and the adults working with them. Using the fundamental principles of Protecting God's Children and the recommendations of the Conference audits; expert advisors; and key Diocesan people, the effort has evolved into the Diocese of Las Vegas Safe Environment program.

In the 4 years of the program's growth, the Diocese has obtained fingerprints for over 10,000 staff and volunteers. Today, given the ever changing environment of

Clark County, there are 2,000 Diocesan employees and volunteers actively participating in the Safe Environment program.

With a committed base of 36 Safe Environment Coordinators; 13 training facilitators; and countless support staff, the future goals of the program include safety training for all children of the Diocese; child abuse awareness training and certification of adults; and the creation of an environment where the innocence of children is not only protected, but cherished as well. Additionally, the Safe Environment Program supports a 24 hour Advocacy line for any child or adult who has - at the hands of a member of the church community - been victimized by abuse.

Before the Diocesan community is a monumental task, one that can only be achieved through the active support of the volunteers, parents, and concerned

adults of each parish and school.

Instrumental to the success of the Safe Environment program will be the recognition of the program's value by the parish community. The Diocese has already administered the fingerprinting and child abuse certification of employees. In the near future, however, parish members will be asked to consider life through the eyes and heart of an abused child and to then commit to maintaining awareness and understanding - to commit to being instrumental in the prevention of abuse through support of and participation in the Safe Environment program. In the near future, church bulletins will identify phone numbers where help can be obtained. Quarterly Safe Environment Program newsletters will also be provided and will contain facts about the plight of children in our community, safety tips

for parents and family members, certification training schedules, and highlights of the program in various parishes and Diocesan schools. Parish members and school volunteers will be asked to adhere to procedures new to them including fingerprinting and certification training before volunteering, children will be receiving permission slips that will need to be signed and returned in order to participate in safety education. In the near future, each parish member will be asked to remember that the safety and protection of children is a commitment shared by the church community.

#### If You Would Like to be Involved:

Contact the Safe Environment Coordinator in your parish or school or contact: Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator at: (702) 469-5992

### Altar Renovation

## St. Christopher's Crucifix

St. Christopher parish in North Las Vegas has renovated the altar area to place a beautiful crucifix made by a renowned sculptor Juan José Méndez in Guadalajara, Mexico.

According to Fr. Bruno Mauricci, "The community worked very hard to raise the funds at the parish Bazaar last year and it was a great success."

The hand carved crucifix was carved from Sabino wood, Fr. Mauricci, says the wood is a kind of cypress and was carefully carved over a 5 months by Mendez.

The crucifix is finished according to Old Spanish colonial techniques to make it look life-like and old. Fr. Mauricci says, "The new crucifix is a masterpiece! Is so beautiful!"

If you have the opportunity to take a closer look you will see the astounding details: the features of the face, eyes, mouth,

teeth, tongue, the veins, muscles, bones, feet and hands as well as the wounds and marks of the passion on his body. "It's so beautiful and moving!" continued Fr. Mauricci.

Although Mr. Mendez is famous for the many bronze sculptures he's made in the cities of Guadalajara and Mexico City, his specialty is crucifixes. He has made more than a hundred crucifixes for many churches and cathedrals in Mexico and other countries. He also does restorations of old crucifixes and statues from colonial times. His work locally includes the crucifix in Our Lady of the Valley in Pahrump too.

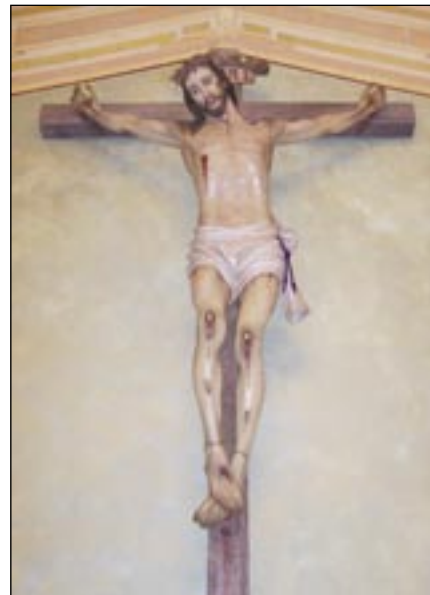
Local artist and long time parishioner Gregory Barnaby has artistically painted the altarpiece. Fr. Mauricci said, "It was to enhance the crucifix" and continued to say, "It looks so beautiful and elegant."

Barnaby has been a parishioner since 1961, Fr. Mauricci said, "He received his first Communion and Confirmation in this church."

He has done religious art work in several churches in the Diocese of Las Vegas, including St. Viator, St. Francis De Sales, Our lady of Las Vegas. His next project in the diocese is at St. Francis of Assisi in Henderson.

Fr. Mauricci said, the raised floor in the sanctuary has been widened to make room to access the tabernacle and the carpet was removed to place travertine marble and some railings.

St. Christopher's current church was built in 1962 and through the years has seen some improvements made but not to this extent. According Fr. Mauricci, "The community is very happy to see their church so beautiful and inviting to pray."



**Left: The beautiful crucifix made by a renowned sculptor Juan José Méndez in Guadalajara, Mexico. The hand carved crucifix was carved from Sabino wood.**

**Below: The newly renovated altar area of St. Christopher's provides an inviting place to reflect and pray**

PHOTOS FR. BRUNO MAURICCI



## St. Francis of Assisi starts construction

Henderson's Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Site a Busy Place

Block by block, what is known as the San Damiano Parish Center of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Henderson is rising. Having completed most of the grading of the site by April, construction began in May. The walls of the parish center are now nearing completion. Each Monday morning at 6:30 am at the construction trailer on the site, members of the Saint Francis of Assisi Building Committee meet to review the progress of the project with the Korte Company, Welles Pugsley Architects, and the various subcontractors.

The project borrows various romanque elements from the Church of San Damiano in Assisi, where Saint Francis of Assisi received his vocation and the mandate from the Lord- "Rebuild My Church."

The target date of completion, when the Saint Francis parish family will move out of its temporary Mass site at Neil C. Twitchell elementary school to its permanent 2300 Sunridge Heights Parkway address, is early January. While the project remains on target for that date, Fr. Gordon and the entire parish are praying for an early, temporary, certificate of occupancy by Christmas

"if the Lord wills, and St. Francis is fairly influential with Our Lord," Fr. Gordon added.

This parish center will house the permanent parish and religious education offices, have six classrooms, a commercial kitchen, outreach center, gift shop, sacristy, and a nave that will seat 880. This will help tremendously with the overcrowding problem at the school site. Even in the summer, parishioners sit outside, in 110 degrees, to assist at Mass. "That's faith!" Fr. Gordon said.

"The faithful have been exceed-

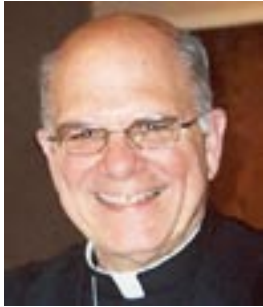
**See ASSISI on Page 7**



**Above: New Parish Hall begins to take shape. Left: Building Committee discusses progress of Construction**

## BISHOP'S CORNER

JOSEPH A. PEPE



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ;

As many of you are aware, the constraints being placed on many of our existing parishes and its clergy by the continuously growing population combined with the growing cost of acquiring land, has made it necessary for the Diocese of Las Vegas to embark on a capital campaign. This campaign has been entitled, Service: Growing Faith in Our Community and will be geared to raising money for the purpose of acquiring land in communities where there is a pressing need for a new parish.

As a Diocese, our mission is to bring the Gospel Message of Hope to all through evangelization, life-long formation and worship. We all know that bringing the intimate encounter of Christ to the people of our community begins for most at the parish level and as many of you personally experience every week, it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet that spiritual need with the growing number of faithful in our current parishes.

The Service capital campaign will allow us to purchase land in the areas that have been prioritized through careful study and review. These areas include: Southern Highlands, Centennial, West Summerlin and Cheyenne Hills.

The campaign kicked off November of last year beginning with three initial parishes with the majority of parishes beginning their efforts this year. As you know The Catholic Stewardship Appeal (CSA) will be suspended for one year to compensate for the efforts it will take on everyone's part for this important capital campaign to be successful.

We are the beneficiaries of those whose pioneer spirit responded to the pastoral needs of an early Church here in southern Nevada. The time is now for us to respond to the ever growing needs of our young Diocese and ensure a healthy, vibrant Church for the 21st Century.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Joseph A. Pepe, D.D., J.C.D.  
Bishop of Las Vegas

## IMMIGRATION: CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE Ron Cruz

The cry "sí se puede" has been heard before in marches and demonstrations in this country. For more than forty years "sí se puede"—yes, we can do it—has been the popular rallying cry of culturally diverse migrant farm workers seeking better working conditions, basic benefits and a wage that allows them to support their families. Many of them are undocumented, but hard working. Sounds familiar doesn't it?

More than twenty-five years ago this country experienced a shocking and horrific situation when bodies of undocumented immigrants were regularly discovered in the deserts of Arizona. They died of exposure and dehydration while trying to reach Tucson or Phoenix or other destinations where they could connect with family members and friends and where they might find work. Today, many of the people who are participating in the demonstrations have also taken drastic and risky measures to get to the United States. As has been widely reported by the news media, they do so not because they want to leave their countries, but because they cannot find work to feed or raise a family in their homeland.

Like forty years ago, or even 25 years ago, immigrants are marching once again and are using the rallying cry "sí se puede." For the first time in history the undocumented from all parts of the world have come out of anonymity because the fear and uncertainty cannot continue. They seek to become legal residents of the United States. They want to purchase homes, educate their children and state proudly that they do pay taxes. In the past

several months it has become quite clear that the immigration issue involves more than Latinos or poor people. Churches of all denominations and different religious traditions have joined in the plight of the undocumented immigrants from all over the world whose only crime is that they need work.

The organized and peaceful rallies seen across the country in the past several weeks demonstrates that Latinos, the poor, the undocumented peoples can come together on a common issue. It does not hurt to have the support and collaboration of ecumenical and inter religious groups. Generally speaking, Latino Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims are very much on the same page as regards immigration policy.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been extremely active in educating Catholics about the need for immigration reform through its National Catholic Campaign on Immigration Reform.

As a result of national and local grass root activities, society seems to be paying attention.

For the first time in several years, television and radio news reports and talk shows are presenting the pros and cons of the issue. Newspaper editorial pages are discussing the issue and its causes in a much more balanced way than before the rallies. Human interest stories are seen in daily newspapers which put a face on the undocumented. The media is helping the nation and local communities realize that immigrants have a story to tell, that immigrants are real people who happen to be our neighbors,

we worship with them, work with them, shop and eat in the same restaurants with them, and ride buses and airplanes with them. Most immigrants work at several jobs and pay taxes. Many of them have lived in the United States for many years and their children were born in this country, and most are not undocumented people. More than sixty percent of all Latinos were born in the United States. Most foreign born residents do have a legal residency status.

As collaborators in the National Catholic Campaign on Immigration Reform, it is very encouraging to see that people of different colors, nationalities, religions, and political perspectives are immigrants themselves, are children of immigrants, are related to immigrants, work with immigrants, or are sympathetic to the plight of immigrants.

The quick and effective organizational work to bring attention to the issue of immigration reform has got to be an example of democracy at its best. Hopefully our U.S. representatives and senators will think so also.

Don't forget to use the resources found on the USCCB's webpage [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) to better comprehend what is going on with the issue of immigration reform and other issues that impact the poor, local communities, and issues important to the common good. We can help when we understand. "Sí se puede."

Ronaldo M. Cruz is the Executive Director Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

## WHEN BREAKING BREAD

BREAKS THE LAW Julia Occhiogrosso

Las Vegas is known for providing a haven for the shadowy albeit forbidden practices of modern society. This point is made all too well in the popular advertising slogan associated with Las Vegas "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas".

Last month the City of Las Vegas took a profoundly immoral action that defies its own slogan's promise of keeping unseemly behavior under wraps. This action, far from being hush-hush, was featured in headlines all around the world. On July 19, 2006 the Las Vegas City Council voted to approve an amendment to an existing ordinance that will ban "the providing of food or meals to the indigent for free or for a nominal fee" in city parks. It further defines an "indigent" person as a person who a reasonable ordinary person would believe to be entitled to receive public assistance.

The Las Vegas Catholic Worker has been feeding the hungry in Las Vegas for twenty years. We serve outside in a vacant lot and as of yet have not been affected by this ordinance. Still, the enforcement of this law has sorrowful fallout for the poor and hungry, for City Council members and for the entire Las Vegas community.

When I first heard about this law I was sick to my stomach. Lately there has been an onslaught of legislation that seems to be directly aimed at the

most vulnerable. While all these actions cause me to cringe, this particular ordinance directly forbidding the feeding of the hungry offends my most basic sensibilities.

I had a few images. What if the Bishop was to celebrate Mass at a city park. Would he be arrested for giving an indigent person the Eucharist? I imagined Jesus surrounded by the thousands of hungry men, women and children who sat outside on the public grounds and waited for him to divide the loaves and fishes. Only, in my image he was stopped by the Roman soldiers.

I recalled the story once told to me by Franciscan Sr. Klaryta who grew up during WWII in Poland. She remembered WWII victims who in their hunger went from Mass to Mass to be fed in the Catholic Churches by the communion bread.

In the Catholic Worker tradition you will find a very strong connection between the significance of the Mystical Body of Christ found in the celebration of breaking bread in the Eucharist and the breaking of bread to feed the hungry. For the poor and hungry, God truly comes in the form of bread. Feeding the hungry is sacramental.

My years of experience with street people have given me a perspective that is sometimes difficult to translate in to mainstream dialect. We tend to speak in dichotomies of "us

and them" thinking. It is the homeless versus the city police or the the indigents versus the ordinary citizens. What is most dangerous and counter productive about this law is that it fosters and strengthens this type of thinking. Thinking which divides the human family into competing groups misses the truth of our common needs. It fails to recognize the woundedness and sacredness that paints a universal and poignant portrait of the human person.

Us and them thinking and acting damages the possibilities for true healing of social ills. The homeless, like all of us, carry the wounds and traumas of life's scarring. The neighbors who complain about feeding the homeless in the parks, have the same fears and a need for a safe haven as the homeless do. Catholic social teaching requires us to strive to meet basic human needs for all people. This teaching is clearly expressed in the Corporal Works of Mercy; feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, give drink to the thirsty, care for the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead. These simple mandates are responsible for much of what we can hold up as good, just and healing in society today. They have served as humane standards to guide the creation of social programs that benefit us all.

The complex tapestry of human experiences, its hopes,

its disappointments, its needs and its possibilities are what we hold in common. Feeding the hungry in a park or anywhere for that matter is an opportunity for two seemingly different worlds and different life experiences to discover common ground and deeper understanding. In Christian tradition, sharing a meal was more than nourishing the body, it was the place where one shared stories of life and found spiritual sustenance for the community. For Catholics, this practice of sharing a meal is central to our faith experience and is celebrated in the sacrament of the Eucharist. We draw strength and spiritual nourishment in remembering the life and suffering love of Jesus through the breaking and sharing of bread. When we break bread and share food with the hungry we open a space for the sacrament to take on tangible Reality. When breaking bread breaks the law, the law not only withholds food from the hungry but it also steals from those who have the food to share. It steals from all an opportunity to gain understanding, empathy, compassion and communion. The city defends this legal action as helping the homeless by motivating them to get the social services they need. Yet Las Vegas rates among the lowest in the nation on mental health and social services. It is not that the Las Vegas commu-

nity is not capable of developing more ways of responding to the needs of the poor, but for some reason the present leadership is choosing not too, and instead creating an environment where even nongovernmental efforts to respond to human needs are being thwarted.

To respond effectively to human suffering, a community must be guided by the collective heart. It must choose compassion as a guiding principle. In a world filled with religious people who in the name of high morals cause undo harm to the human family, we need to embrace spiritual practices like feeding the hungry, so that we can be taught the art of compassion. When we learn this art the remedies for all social ills will come easily. Freedom to break bread with the poor in a city park will multiply the infinite possibilities of the human heart.

Julia Occhiogrosso is a member of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. The Catholic Worker Movement, founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933, is grounded in a firm belief in the God-given dignity of every human person.

Today over 185 Catholic Worker communities remain committed to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer, and hospitality for the homeless, exiled, hungry, and forsaken. Catholic Workers continue to protest injustice, war, racism, and violence of all forms. Julia can be reached at: The Las Vegas Catholic Worker House (702) 647-0728

# AROUND THE DIOCESE

## St. Joseph Husband of Mary Parish presents John Angotti in Concert

John Angotti, Catholic Music Recording Artist, energizes his audiences, touches their hearts, and sparks new life. The lyrics and arrangements of John have cultivated many, inspiring them to draw closer to God and truly follow the teachings of Jesus. Through his workshops and concerts, Angotti has traveled the United States and even the World abroad, sharing his story, witnessing to those with an appetite for Christ.

Sunday September 10, Contact parish for more information.

## St Francis De Sales

5th Annual Bishop's Day

The Italian Catholic Federation Branch 367 at St. Francis De Sales Church will be hosting its 5th Annual Bishop's Day on Sunday, September 24th, at St. Francis de Sales Parish. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Joseph Pepe at 1:00 p.m. Mass.

Following Mass, a no-host cocktail hour will be held in Msgr. LaVoy Hall next door to the church from 2:00p.m. to 2:30 p.m. with a luncheon to follow, which is being catered by "At Your Service Catering". The cost is only \$10.00 per person. Please call Joe or Jackie at 878-8894 for reservations.

## St. Elizabeth Anne Seton

Meet the Father Ministry

Eileen George founder of Meet the Father Ministry, a ministry that helps others to encounter more fully the love of God, will be speaking at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 1811 Pueblo Vista Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89128 on the dates of September 25 - 27, 2006. Schedule for each presentation, Monday, September 25 - Wednesday, September 27, 6:00 PM Mass celebrated by Bishop Joseph Pepe Presentation and Healing Service by Eileen George.

Eileen George is a woman who has been granted many exceptional supernatural gifts and a unique mission. This mission flows from Eileen's unique relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Her spiritual director states: "Eileen knows heaven as we know earth." One of the remarkable things about Eileen is that despite her many supernatural gifts she remains an ordinary woman with a great sense of humor. It is to this woman that the Lord has entrusted the Meet the Father Ministry. Eileen's ministry has been praised and welcomed by Bishops and Cardinals from around the country and the world. Eileen is the author of four books: Eileen George Beacon of God's Love: Her Teaching, Conversations in Heaven volumes I, II and III. For more information please go to [www.meetthefather.org](http://www.meetthefather.org)

## Catholic Charities

Announces New Social Services Program for Disadvantaged or

Disabled Youth and Senior Volunteers: The Foster Grandparent Program Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada announces the addition of their newest program, the Foster Grandparent Program, which provides special needs children inter-generational relationships with seniors. The program has a dual purpose—to enhance the lives of children with special needs through a loving, and caring relationship with a Foster Grandparent and to provide a high-quality experience that enriches the lives of the volunteers and the children they serve. The program is funded by the Corporation for National & Community Service and the Division for Aging Services. Further information can be obtained about the Foster Grandparent Program and how to volunteer by contacting Catholic Charities Senior Services located at 531 N. 30th Street, Las Vegas NV 89101, telephone 382-0721. "The Foster Grandparent Program is a perfect fit for our programs of social services helping infants, children, seniors, families and the homeless," says Monsignor Patrick R. Leary, executive director of Catholic Charities. "We look forward to growing the program and offering our senior volunteers an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children in the Las Vegas valley." The Foster Grandparent program offers support to child victims of abuse and neglect; tutoring children with low literacy skills; mentoring troubled teenagers and young mothers; and caring for premature infants and children with physical disabilities and severe illnesses. The Foster Grandparents play a role in the young person's life as mentors, tutors and caregivers. Currently, there are 105 Foster Grandparents dedicating their time and talent to 38 locations throughout Clark County such as: Clark County School District, detention centers, day care centers, shelters and developmental centers. To become a Foster Grandparent, volunteers must be 60 years of age or older and meet certain income eligibility guidelines and be eligible to serve between 15-40 hours a week. Volunteers do receive a modest tax-free stipend to help offset the cost of volunteering. In addition, Foster Grandparents are required to attend quarterly training sessions, are reimbursed for transportation, offered some meals during service, receive an annual physical, and are provided with accident and liability insurance while on duty. Catholic Charities is one of the largest nonprofit social service providers in the state, offering the most comprehensive range of human services. Catholic Charities includes 25 diverse programs designed to help people, from infants, children, and families, seniors, regardless of race, religion, or creed.

## St. Andrew Catholic Community

Is hosting a continuing education course for an introduction to the Old Testament for anyone who has an interest in reading, discussion, and learning.

The course consists of 9 sessions on the 1st Saturday of each

month beginning in October 2006 through June 2007.

Continuing Education Credit (OPTIONAL) is available at a cost of \$25 per unit of credit or \$100 for 4 units of credit.

Registration Fee of \$100 (non-parishioners ONLY)

The Hebrew Odyssey of Faith An Introduction to the Old Testament

A Program for Adult Education taught by Dr. Daniel Smith-Christopher

Professor of Old Testament Loyola Marymount University Los Angeles, California.

Biblical Study is a journey, and one of the most important set of "maps" for that journey is the Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures.

This course will introduce you to the Old Testament, even if you have never read the Old Testament before, or if you have read the Old Testament with reluctance—this course is for you.

This course will not presume any previous study of the Bible, but will presume an interest in reading, discussions, and learning!

Do not even THINK about coming to class without your Bible, a pen and note paper. Please bring a copy of the Bible that you can write in, make notes and write questions—in other words, not the "Family Bible".

Recommended Bible Texts:

Please have EITHER the New American Bible, OR the New Revised Standard Version only. Please do not bring old versions, like the "King James", etc. Please bring a copy that you feel free to write in, highlight, fold...in other words...use heavily!

Recommended Reading will be provided for each session, after the first introduction.

SESSION TOPIC Page

(1) October 7, 2006 Preparing for a Journey through the Bible

(2) November 4, 2006 Reading Genesis: The Beginnings

(3) December 2, 2006 Moses and the Law

(4) January 6, 2007 Early Israel and the Monarchy

(5) February 3, 2007 The Prophets

(6) March 3, 2007 The Exile, Wisdom, and Apocalyptic

(7) March 31, 2007 Zechariah, Apocalyptic, and Enoch

(8) May 5, 2007 "Advising the Conquerors..."

(9) June 2, 2006 The Deuterocanonical Books

## Pro-Life Calendar

Up Coming Pro-Life Activity in Las Vegas

The Diocesan Liaison Committee for Pro-Life activities will hold their next quarterly meeting on Thursday, Oct. 26 from 7-9 PM at Anderson Hall. If you are not currently kept abreast of pro-life activities, or your parish does not have a liaison, please join us at this meeting where we share what is going on in the pro-life community.

October is Respect Life month, check your parish bulletins to stay informed on the churches teachings on the sanctity of life from conception to natural death. This years program has beautifully done articles on stem cell

research, partial birth abortion, how a sacred marriage protects children, and other brief but informative articles on the culture of life.

November 17 - 19th will be the eleventh Rachel's Vineyard Retreat, a post abortion ministry to women and men who are suffering the psychological and spiritual pain of abortion.

December 1 - 4, we are pleased to have Fr. Thomas J. Euteneuer, President of Human Life International saying Mass and offering a culture of life presentation at 6:30 PM at the Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer, 55 E. Reno Ave, on Friday evening, and a prayer vigil and rosary at A to Z Abortion Center at 1760 E. Flamingo Rd. on Sat. Dec. 2 at 9 AM. Please join us, for the rest of Fr. Euteneuer's schedule, contact St. Francis of Assisi Church, 914-2175.

The ecumenical pro-life community gathers for a memorial service each year on the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade at the Lloyd George Federal Building. A Vigil Mass will be held prior to the candle light vigil on January 21, 2007.

Finally, each week faithful members of our congregations gather at the various abortion facilities in the valley for peaceful prayer vigils for the end to abortion. If you would like to join us, please check the diocesan website, times and days are listed.

Submitted: Kathleen Miller, Chairman, Liaison Committee for pro-life activities

## Respect life

The 7th Annual Booksale benefiting the Diocesan Pro-Life Liaison Committee of Las Vegas will be held April 28th & 29th, 2007 at St. Viator's Parish Center. We will ask for book donations and volunteers in the months ahead, in hopes of having the most successful sale yet.

On the weekend of Respect Life Sunday, Sept. 30th and Oct. 1st, 2006, St. Viator Respect Life Committee (SVRLC) hosts a bake sale after each Mass (4pm vigil, 8, 10 & 12).

We meet on the first Thursday of the month. If your parish does not have an active pro-life group, please join us at St. Viator Church in parish center- Fr. Anderson's Room at 7pm.

## St John Neumann

SJNC Plans to Have a Good Time

Come one, come all to the fabulous "Guam Dinner" on September 15th at St. John Neumann Parish in North Las Vegas. It's always a special event when these guys all get together and plan a party! Not only will the food be delicious, but there are always high spirits and plenty of entertainment to make the evening a real treat. Party with us "The Guam Way," say these fun-loving people on their posters... and they are not just kidding.

Plans are also in the works for our Fall Festival. The festival committee has been meeting and working out the details for a bigger and better festival for October 27th of 2006 from

3 p.m. to 9 p.m. It will include an International Food Fair, Music, Games, Rides and a safe Halloween experience for the kids. "It's really gonna be a blast!" said Mary Santos, the Events and Activities Coordinator for SJNC, as she spoke about the upcoming event. "I hope people of all ages come and share in the fun."

St. John Neumann is located just north of Ann Road, between Simmons and Coleman (behind the Star Nursery). Call for more details at (702) 657-0200.

## St. John the Evangelist

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Overton, Nevada is having their annual Fall Fiesta on October 7th from 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Fr. Leo Coughlin and all the parishioners of St. Johns invite you to come out and enjoy authentic Mexican Food, games for the kids, raffles, and our live auction which will begin at 4:00 p.m. The Chamber of Commerce will also be having their annual car show at Overton Park which is just down the street from St. Johns. We look forward to seeing you. Overton is just 60 miles out of Las Vegas off of I-15 North. If you have questions or would like more information, please call (702) 397-8096.

## St. Joseph Husband of Mary Parish

Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile.

--Mark 6:31

Contemplative Outreach of Southern Nevada presents a "Day of Renewal".

Saturday, September 30, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

St. Joseph Husband of Mary Parish Catholic Center 7260 W. Sahara Ave. (corner of Tenaya and Sahara)

Contemplative Outreach of Southern Nevada is hosting Fr. Joseph Ruiz of Chicago for a day of renewal. Father Joseph Ruiz, a native Chicagoan, was ordained for the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1966 and has served the Church of Chicago in eight parishes. He has an M. A. in Psychology from Loyola University. A member of Retreat Directors International, Father Ruiz has given many Directed Retreats to priests, sisters and laity, parish retreats, parish missions and, since 1990, has developed and taught programs in Centering Prayer.

All are invited to attend, even if you've had no experience of Centering Prayer. Basic instruction will be provided for those who need or desire it. A light lunch will be provided. Suggested donation: \$15, with reduced donation for retirees, students, or fixed income.

Contemplative Outreach of Southern Nevada is a member of Contemplative Outreach International which was founded by Fr. Thomas Keating in 1986 for the purpose of providing the method, teachings and support necessary to actually live the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life.

Pre-registration requested: Joanne Halt at # 360-1027 or email [jghalt@aol.com](mailto:jghalt@aol.com)

# St. Andrew's celebrates 75 years

## Boulder City parish has rich history

St. Andrews Catholic Community will be celebrating its 75th anniversary on Friday, October 13, 2006.

The liturgical celebration begins at 6:00 P.M. followed by a complimentary buffet in the Parish Hall.

Please RSVP by Friday, September 22, 2006. Contact Mary at the parish office (293-7500) or standrew@dioceseoflasvegas.org.

### THE JOURNEY OF ST. ANDREW CATHOLIC COMMUNITY 1931 - 2006

The news spread rapidly. It was 1930, and "Uncle Sam" was getting ready to build the world's highest concrete dam in the Black Canyon of the Colorado River, between Nevada and Arizona. Men by the thousands beat a path to the construction site in the Southern Nevada desert. All wanted to be a part of the challenge of building the greatest engineering project of all time.

Years earlier, engineers from the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation had surveyed the dam and town sites. The first arrivals lived in tents and shacks until dormitories for the singles and houses for the married people could be built. Some even slept on the courthouse lawn in Las Vegas near the hiring hall, hoping to get jobs at the dam site. It was rough going—the hardships were great.

But, like the Pilgrims who set foot in America three centuries ago, these men and women, these pioneers who landed in Boulder City to build Hoover Dam in 1931, brought their faith with them. Their zeal for worship no doubt would have pleased the Catholic, Mormon and Protestant missionaries who left footprints in the desert sands of Southern Nevada many years earlier—long before people had dreamed of damming the mighty Colorado River in Black Canyon.

The '31ers, those directly involved with the construction of the dam, began their church buildings almost as soon as they moved into houses built by the Hoover Dam contractor, Six Companies, Inc., and the Bureau of Reclamation. Construction funds came from the church's national and regional headquarters as well as from local residents. Six Companies and Reclamation pitched in with machinery and voluntary labor. Churchmen and non-churchmen alike donated hours of their time.

Pioneer Bruce Eaton, a foreman with the Bureau of Reclamation and in charge of all maintenance for the public housing, once said that everyone seemed to agree that Boulder City needed churches if it were to do its best job in building Hoover Dam.

When French architect S. R. DeBoer, under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, laid out Boulder City, he designated certain lots which were leased by Uncle Sam to the churches. Following the turnover by the Federal Government of the community in 1960 to an incorporated citizenry, this general leasing policy was continued and the churches were also permitted to buy their lots.

Nevada Catholic Bishop Thomas Gorman did not waste any time in providing for the spiritual needs of the Catholic families in Boulder City. In 1931, he established a parish named for St. Andrew, brother of St. Peter, first vicar and pope of the Catholic Church. Priests from Las Vegas celebrated Mass in homes and in Anderson's mess hall until the parish's first pastor, Father Cuthbert D. Hogan, arrived early in 1932. Under his direction, construction of a chapel on the triangular lot bordered by Utah, Wyoming and H Streets began. Parishioners supplied the labor, while Six Companies donated materials. William McCullough, who worked in the power house for the Bureau of Reclamation at Hoover Dam, assisted by Joseph Dietch, a Christian Brother, built pews and cabinets in the Six Companies carpenter shop.

Although the parish began to gather for community worship in 1931, the Bureau of Reclamation's official monthly magazine, *The Reclamation Era*, April 1932, records that construction of the Catholic church was under way. Later it was reported that the church was dedicated on April 10, 1932. Its construction was closely followed by the Episcopal, Grace Community and Mormon churches. The May 1932 issue of *ERA*, reporting on construction in Boulder City, carried this item: "Boulder City now has three churches, a community church headed by Rev. Thomas Stevenson and which is representative of 20 Protestant denominations; a Catholic church with Father Hogan as pastor; and an Episcopal church with Rev. Arthur S. Keane as pastor." A month later the magazine reported: "A branch of the Latter-day Saints (Mormon

Church) has been established in Boulder City, with Laurence Wortley as presiding elder.

"Six Companies' Frank Crowe and Reclamation's Walker Young, construction engineers at the Hoover Dam site, and their crews who volunteered labor, were largely responsible for the speedy construction of the church buildings. Crowe, although not a regular "church-goer" due to his seven-day work schedule, felt the Christian influence in the lives of the people who worked on the dam was very important, according to S. L. "Red" Wixson, Crowe's right-hand man who lived in Boulder City after his retirement.

A building that once served as a temporary jail for early-day law offenders in Boulder City was moved from the east entrance of the town to the corner of Wyoming and Utah Streets, adjacent to the church building, to serve as the priest's residence. A later pastor, Father John Ryan, in 1945 extensively remodeled the building into a comfortable home.

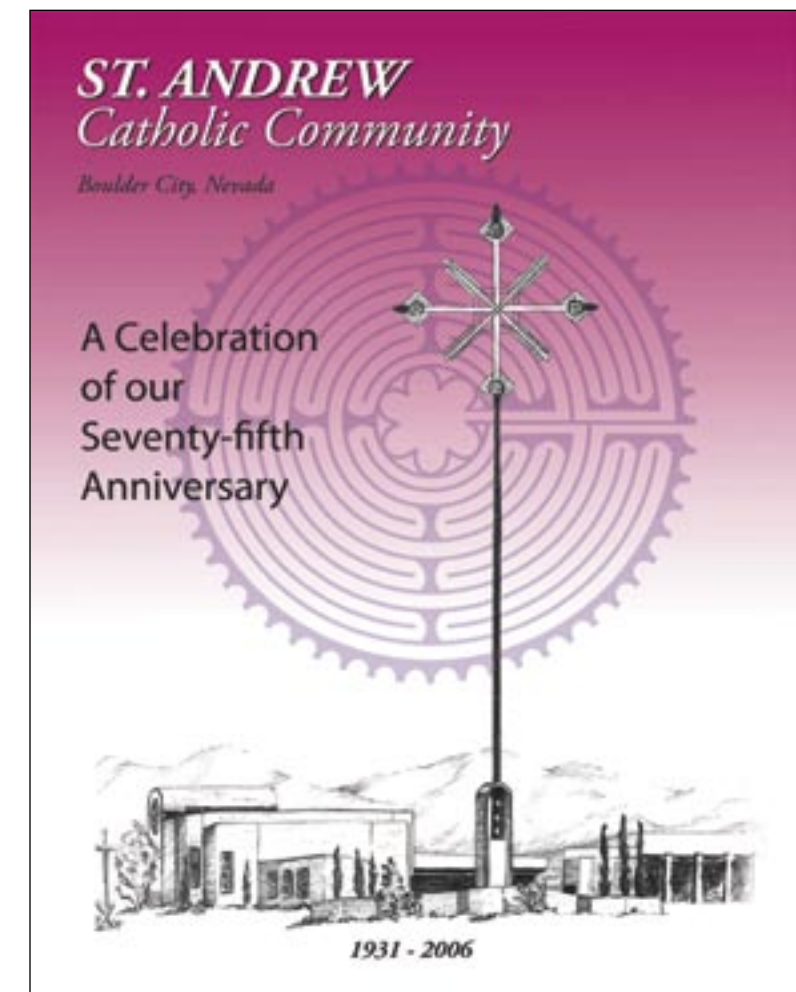
The St. Andrew Altar Society and the Holy Name Society were organized in 1932 and two years later the Sisters of Holy Family and women of the parish began religious instruction for children. These groups fostered the growth of community involvement in parish activities.

Foreseeing the time when the small St. Andrew's chapel could not accommodate the ever-increasing parish membership, Father Joseph Baldus in 1977 began efforts to purchase land for a new church site. In 1978 Father Joseph Annese became pastor of St. Andrew's. After two and a half years of five liturgies on each weekend in the small chapel and a round trip to Searchlight, Nevada, for a sixth liturgy there, Father Annese said that it was definitely time for more worship space and greater parish facilities. With permission of the bishop at that time, the Most Reverend Norman McFarland, Father Annese finalized arrangements with the City for the present location on San Felipe Drive and proceeded with plans for the new church, parish offices, hall and residence.

In beautiful autumn weather on October 12, 1980, Father Annese and this community broke ground for the new church building, office and parish centers. Some 500 parishioners celebrated the event by participating in an outdoor liturgy. The A. F. Construction Company of Las Vegas began work November 12, 1980, and the new building rose quickly. Interestingly, the sanctuary of the church sits on the first tee of Boulder City's original golf course on which some of the city's pioneer golfers knocked little white balls among the desert's cacti and rocks. Near the southeast corner of St. Andrew's property, there remains the last tee box of that desert golf course.

Father Annese recalls the first service held in the new building before it was fully completed. It was on a cold, windy Easter Sunday, April 19, 1981, that the Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated. The beautiful faceted glass windows and the pews were not yet installed, but the sound of the wind whistling through the church was diminished by the enthusiastic singing of the parishioners in their joy at realizing that their church was deed becoming a reality.

It was standing-room only at the two Easter Masses in the new church building. The 500 folding chairs that substituted for pews were oc-



cupied and several hundred people stood along the back and side walls. Approximately 1,400 people attended the two services, although Father Annese had celebrated a well-attended 8:00 P.M. Easter Vigil liturgy the day before in the old chapel on Wyoming Street.

That year, 1981, the first communion class of the parish celebrated its First Eucharist in the far-from-completed church on May 3. On May 24 the church was officially occupied. A regular schedule of church services began on Pentecost Sunday, June 7. The Golden Jubilee of St. Andrew's Parish was celebrated November 30, 1981, and the new church building, which seats 500 comfortably, was dedicated by the Most Reverend Norman F. McFarland, Bishop of Reno-Las Vegas. Some forty priests of the Diocese of Reno-Las Vegas joined many parishioners in the dedication.

The priest's residence, matching the architecture of the new church, was built a year later. In planning the new St. Andrew's Church, Father Annese preserved much of the history of the parish and memories of early Hoover Dam construction. The old wooden cross and the bronze statue of St. Andrew were brought from the old building and mounted on the wall of the new church at the entrance. That statue of the patron saint, from its cubicle above the entrance of the old building, and the cross on the roof had looked upon worshippers entering and leaving the little chapel on Wyoming Street for forty-eight years. The statue was given in 1931 in memory of J. F. Shea, whose firm was one of Six Companies Inc. that built Hoover Dam. The inscription on the base of the statue is the only inscription on any of the church appointments.

A striking feature of the new St. Andrew's Sanctuary is the massive concrete altar beneath the domed ceiling. Explains Father Annese: "The poured reinforced concrete base of the table is analogous to Hoover Dam which enhanced life by means of taming the unpredictable energy of the river water into a controlled source for flood control, hydroelectric power, irrigation and recreation. The dam is a source of new life just as the Eucharist celebrated at this altar is the source of spiritual nourishment and divine

life for the members of this Catholic Christian Community."

The large candlesticks are designed along the lines of the intake towers at the dam site. The ambo (pulpit) picks up the theme of the dam's fluted concrete similar to the altar. The front of the ambo where the Gospel book rests is decorated with an X-shaped cross symbolizing the patron saint of this community, St. Andrew who traditionally is believed to have died on an X-shaped cross. The four stones inserted in the cross are actual borings that were made before the dam was built. The X-shaped cross is made from brass because of all the brass used in the dam itself.

Since the Dam is the determinate factor in the very existence of Boulder City and consequently, of St. Andrew Catholic Community, many of the Liturgical furnishings in the church were designed to incorporate themes from the construction of the Dam.

The Baptismal font is constructed of polished grey granite highlighted with a terra cotta vein. Warmed water cascades from the infant immersion basin on the uppermost level, over the descending steps into the lower adult immersion pond where the elect are baptized during the Easter Vigil Liturgy into Christ's Community of the Catholic Church. On the corner of the walls is the Ambry (oil cabinet) which contains the sacred ointments used in sacramental rites.

The Paschal Candlestick, slightly larger than the Processional Candlesticks, is a symbol of the risen Christ—again inspired by the tall towers at the dam. It is made prominent during the Easter season, and thereafter is placed near the Baptismal Font while recalling the Spirit Over Living Waters theme as depicted in the stained glass window hovering over the font.

The stained-glass windows throughout the church, depict the seven sacraments -- Baptism, Confirmation, Penance or Reconciliation, The Eucharist, The Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Marriage. The large circular abstract window in the sanctuary is titled "The Window of Love & Life." This window through symbol and abstract design mani-

## PASTORS WHO HAVE SERVED DURING THESE 75 YEARS

**1931 - 1934**

*Cuthbert E. Hogan*

**1934 - 1935**

*Rev. John Lamb*

**1935 - 1937**

*Rev. Joseph Donnellan*

**1938 - 1941**

*Rev. John Groves*

**1941 - 1942**

*Rev. Gerard Fanning*

**1942 - 1945**

*Rev. William Devlin*

**1945 - 1948**

*Rev. John J. Ryan*

**1948 - 1950**

*Rev. Florence Flahive*

**1950 - 1953**

*Rev. Joseph Donnellan*

**1953 - 1954**

*Rev. William Condon*

**1954 - 1956**

*Rev. George Eagleton*

**1956 - 1964**

*Msgr. John Sibon*

**1964 - 1968**

*Rev. George Fanning*

**1968 - 1977**

*Rev. Hugh Smith*

**1977 - 1978**

*Msgr. Joseph Baldus*

**1978 - present**

*Rev. Joseph P. Annese*

# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

## Bishop Gorman High School

Bishop Gorman Begins Last Year at 1801 S. Maryland Parkway

Wednesday, August 23, was the first official day for Bishop Gorman High School students. The 2006-2007 school year will be one of mixed emotions...anticipation and excitement for a new campus as well as some nostalgia as an era comes to an end. "As we begin our last school year at 1801 S. Maryland Parkway, our new campus is very much in the forefront of our thoughts but we have a lot of other great things going on in our community. Our enrollment has increased nearly 12%; we are implementing a new house system to enhance our community and create more leadership opportunities; and we will be following a block schedule this year to give our teachers more quality time in the classroom," commented Dr. Paul Sullivan, Head of School.

In addition to the 313 freshmen and 37 transfer students, Gorman also welcomes 19 new faculty and staff members. During the first week the focus will be on orienting the students to the new schedule and house system. The house system divides the student body into 10 houses named after Catholic Universities and Colleges. Each house consists of ninety to a hundred students who were randomly selected. All grades are included in each house. Once a student is in a house, they remain in that house throughout their Gorman experience. The houses will be involved in a year long competition for points. Points may be accumulated through a variety of experiences from intramural sports, various spirit events, arts competitions, attendance at school functions, to gaining points for academics and discipline. House Director Irene Anderson said, "The house system is intended to strengthen school community by establishing bonds across grade levels creating a greater sense of belonging. It will also provide more leadership opportunities for a greater number of students and faculty. The students will create their own house mottos, logos and t-shirts. They will be responsible for setting the standard for the Bishop Gorman House System for years to come."

"It is an exciting time to be part of the Bishop Gorman High School Community. The administration and staff worked hard over the summer and we are ready for the school year to start. Our focus is on having the best school year we can while remaining flexible during this transitional period," said Dr. Sullivan.

## Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Information and activities

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School (SEASCS) begins its seventh year of operation this fall. It is the newest Catholic Elementary School in the city of Las Vegas and is located in the beautiful Northwest part of the city in the community of Summerlin.

This is the first year that SEASCS is operating as an accredited institution having been accredited in June of this year.

For general information, the school was dedicated and opened in the Fall of 2000 with half of the total facility. The second half opened in the Fall of 2002 and has continued through the development phases to a fully staffed and enrolled Catholic School under the leadership of Very Rev. Kevin W. McAulliffe, J.C.L. and Rev. Francis Vivona, J.C.L.

SEASCS offers double sections of grades K through eight with grades six through eight being conducted in a middle school or departmentalized program. Class sizes in the school are set at 27 students reflecting a total enrollment of 486 students. The school offers special classes in Music,

Art, Technology, Physical Education and Library to all grades. The school operates on a trimester system with report cards being distributed in November, March and May.

Students attend Mass every day with 6-8 attending on M-W-F, and K-5 attending on T-Th. All Masses are planned, served and lectured by students, and Homilies are scripture related for the age groups attending, as an extension of the religion program offered in both the school and the parish Religious Education program.

Students at SEASCS participate in all diocesan school programs including sports leagues, cheerleading, spelling bee, geography bee, and science fair. Students also participate in a myriad of parish ministries as well.

SEASCS has a very active parent organization, PIP, which raises funds in support of students and tuition assistance. Students are most participative in fundraising efforts through art projects developed in the school and offered at auction during an annual Spring fundraiser.

SEASCS offers a highly organized and structured K-8 curriculum which is supported by a well organized up to date technology infrastructure and trained staff. Students have every opportunity to experience and utilize technology through a school lab, classroom computers, and a school laptop program for students in grades 5-8. This technology is supported by two full-time technology personnel who also provide major support to parish departments.

SEASCS provides an at cost hot lunch program four days a week, and a well stocked parish learning center in support of reading, curriculum, and religious education.

For more information on the school, please visit our website at [www.edline.net/pages/seaslv](http://www.edline.net/pages/seaslv) or call 702-804-8390

## St. Francis de Sales

We are very pleased to welcome all of our families to the new school year! This year we have twenty-six new families joining our school community - eighteen in our Kindergarten and eight more in Grades One through Eight. Community is the very heart of Catholic education at St. Francis - it is not a concept to be taught, but a reality to be lived. There are so many people who are responsible for this sense of community - the heart and soul of our school! We are extremely grateful to have the support of our terrific Pastor - Father Manuel - his devotion, care, and enthusiasm provide our school with strong and caring leadership. We are also very fortunate to have such an exceptional faculty and staff! Together, they create an environment that makes the spiritual formation, academic growth, and well-being of our students the top priority. Finally, we cannot say enough about our wonderful students and their parents - you provide active support and contribute so much to our school! We are truly blessed!

Looking forward to this new school year, We would like to briefly touch upon the major educational goals we will be focusing on:

This year, we will complete our school's self-study and prepare for next year's accreditation process. It is hard to believe that six years have gone by so quickly! This important process allows us to fully examine our school and continue to develop goals and plans for the future of St. Francis. Such plans will address needs, concerns, and hopes as a result of surveys, meetings, and discussions with parents, students, faculty, staff, and community. We look forward to working with everyone - building upon the tremendous progress we have made during these last six years!

Of course, we will continue to develop all areas of strength

- from Language Arts and a continued emphasis on the writing process to critical thinking skills.

This year, our in-depth study will be devoted to the subject of Science. We are pleased to be introducing new Science textbooks within our middle school program - exposing all students to earth, life, and physical science each year - rather than assigning each grade to one specific area. We know our students will welcome this refreshing change within our science program!

Over the last several years, we have recognized the need for challenging our gifted students and providing more individualized attention for those students requiring extra assistance. We have made great progress, however, this year we will be expanding our program. Our goal is to ensure that we are providing our students with all of the best possible educational opportunities.

This fall, we will be introducing some new and exciting technology in our classrooms - Smart Boards - interactive white boards. Research suggests that this technology has the potential to significantly improve the learning environment - students are actively engaged, pay better attention, and learn more! You will be hearing much more about Smart Boards in the coming months!

In these first weeks of school, we

will be focusing on the main fundraising event of our school year:

The Fourth Annual Parish Bazaar is scheduled for Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Once again, we have so many of our parents actively involved in key leadership positions and we are extremely grateful! Our parish organizations are offering their complete support as well. Committees continue to meet year round in order to ensure the success of this year's event. Last year, everyone had a wonderful time and we enjoyed a fun-filled and memorable day. Most importantly, we experienced a tremendous sense of pride throughout our Parish community!

Finally, a few words about our current building project - the new lunch pavilion. At the present time, our architectural plans are being revised. Once finalized, the plans will require the appropriate Diocesan and City approval. It is my understanding that we are approximately six or seven months away from the completion of this project. While the process may be slow - in the end it will be well worth the wait!

We hope this article has provided an overview of some of our plans for the new school year. Again, we thank all of our families for their commitment to Catholic education and entrusting their children to us during these most important years.

## St. Christopher

Parents send their children to St. Christopher's to strengthen overall faith and receive a high quality education.

St. Christopher's School is made up of people who care. They care about God, themselves, and others. It is that feeling that makes St. Christopher's School stand out as a community of Christian commitment.

Take a walk on our campus and you will feel something special. You can see Christ's love in action in each classroom. Our highly motivated teachers are well-educated and caring. Our students are consistently called to act upon the gospel values of love, respect, and compassion. Our school consists of parents and staff members who are dedicated to ensuring that our school thrives.

We invite you to see for yourself what makes St. Christopher's Catholic School so special.

Yours in Christ,  
Dr. Kathy Dunne  
Principal

## Is your school not listed?

Attention Schools of the Catholic Diocese of Las Vegas. If you would like to publicize upcoming events or school news in the Desert Clarion please email documents or inquiries to [desert.clarion@mac.com](mailto:desert.clarion@mac.com)

Picture this: In a corner of east Los Angeles where violence used to rule the streets, hope has now arrived. Children who once walked in fear after school, now laugh and chatter on their way home. The difference is *Safe Passage*. Nicknamed the "women in green," these ladies and other parents have united to protect the children by walking them safely home. Because the best way to lead a community to a better future is by educating its children. Today, 37 million Americans live in poverty. Together we can help them find a safe passage out. For easy ways you can help, visit [www.povertyusa.org](http://www.povertyusa.org).



Catholic Campaign  
for Human  
Development



One in six children lives in poverty.

These women know a safe way out.



# Answering the Pope's call to 'assist neighbors in need'

*St. Thomas More sends team to  
assist clean up in New Orleans*

GARY FALAGRADY

Just a little over a year ago, Louisiana was hit by Hurricane Katrina carrying winds of up to 175 mph. Over 80% of the city of New Orleans was flooded, over 1500 deaths were reported in Louisiana and somewhere between \$100 and \$150 billion worth of damage was recorded, easily qualifying as the worst natural disaster in U.S. history. Hundreds of thousands of people left the area and over 90,000 homes were destroyed or damaged in New Orleans.

Most everyone heard or read about Katrina when it happened. The stories hit the news less frequently now, other than the stories about the anniversary of the catastrophe. Yet today, over one year later, only about half of the population has returned. Some of the families that returned live in 300 square foot FEMA trailers parked in the front yards of their destroyed homes. Some areas still do not have full utilities available. The city, state and federal government still have not agreed on a rebuild plan for the city.

One great agency, Catholic Charities in New Orleans, has coordinated the cleanup efforts in the city. Operation Helping Hands is recruiting volunteers to help cleanup houses for the elderly, disabled and disadvantaged regardless of religious affiliation. This is the story of one local parish that answered the call to help send volunteers to assist Catholic Charities.

After Hurricane Katrina hit, the Social Justice Ministry at St. Thomas More Catholic Commu-

**'our times call for a new  
readiness to assist our  
neighbors in need.'**

Pope Benedict XVI

nity in Henderson started formulating a plan. Money, food and supplies were collected. Parishioners were willing to open their homes to refugees from the area. The ministry helped with housing, furniture and jobs for those that relocated temporarily or permanently in the area. The parish "adopted" a sister parish that had been flooded, Our Lady of Prompt Succor.

In February, the head of the Social Justice Ministry, Ken Rosania, spoke at two masses seeking volunteers to spend a week cleaning up houses. Hoping to get 10-15 people, 28 people signed up. The group was a diverse group including 10 members ages 18-25, a brother and sister, two married couples, and a mother and daughter. An informational meeting was held. Not a lot of information was available on the exact mission of the group. We were told that we'd be "cleaning up houses"; anything from spraying for mold to removing furniture or even stripping the houses. Respirators and protective gear were required along with tetanus shots.

On April 30, a blessing by the parish community was extended to the 28 disciples. The following morning we departed McCarran for New Orleans. We arrived in the early evening at a mostly deserted Louie Armstrong air-



COURTESY PHOTO

Parishioners from St. Thomas More in Henderson take time out from their mission in New Orleans for a group photo. Standing from left to right are Sandy Raab, Ivette Herrera, Steven Forst, Mark Martinez, Miracle Martinez, Phyllis Bakos, Rose Ruiz, Ashley Ruiz, Patty May, Jeannetta Bell, Katie Kolman, unknown Catholic Charities worker, Amy Moran, Gary Falagraday and Ken Rosania

port in New Orleans. We loaded our rental vans and departed for the FEMA camp where we would be staying. When we finally put linens on our cots it was after midnight.

Camp Algiers, our FEMA camp, was erected on the former site of a city park with military like accommodations. The six sleeping tents could sleep over 2000 although when we were there less than 150 volunteers were in camp and only one tent was in use. There was also a mess tent for meals, a recreation tent with TV and couches, a laundry tent, and several temporary trailers that housed bathrooms and showers. Although the sleeping tent was co-ed with the cots about four feet apart and the restroom facilities and mess tent were several hundred yards away, no one complained.

Early Tuesday morning we drove to the Catholic Charities staging area to receive our assignments. We split into two groups of 14 and proceeded to our first house. Along the way we witnessed firsthand the devastation that was caused. Many houses, motels and retail stores were severely damaged or destroyed. Cars and other vehicles littered the streets. Trash was piled at the curbs most everywhere. One grassy median on a main street still had a boat left sideways, probably where the storm left it.

Our assigned house was a one story brick home in a middle class neighborhood. The daughter of the owner greeted us and shook each of our hands and thanked us for our efforts. She also brought water and donuts for us.

Upon entering the house we all noticed a water line about five feet up the wall. The force of the water moved furniture, appliances and clothing all over the rooms. Everything had to be removed. As we removed the window coverings and furniture, the owner's daughter had to leave; watching a lifetime of memories being carted out and heaped in a pile at the curb was too hard for us to remove all clothing, furniture, carpet and appliances. Look, if you can, at the condition of your house today. Now imagine leaving it as it is without having a chance to remove anything. Besides the furniture scattered all over, we noticed a few dishes in the kitchen sink, portraits and pictures hanging askew on the walls and dentures in the bathroom. We found bibles, a painting of the last supper and a framed letter addressed to the resident thanking her for all her community involvement; the letter was mailed from the White House and was signed by President Ronald Reagan.

Food, dishes and pots and pans were in the kitchen cabinets. All items were water damaged and nothing was salvageable. The refrigerator was duct taped shut before we removed it. We estimated that it contained about 75 pounds of solids that had transformed into liquids over the preceding months. Despite the attempts to seal the refrigerator before removal, the liquids seeped out and the noxious fumes even penetrated our masks. We removed a big screen television, washer, dryer, water heater, dishwasher, oven, stovetop, two refrigerators and even the kitchen sink! We gutted the kitchen and bathrooms including all cabinets and tile, leaving only the bathtubs and toilets.

The pile at the curb at the end of the first day was five feet high by five feet wide by 100 feet long. Catholic Charities coordinated the trash pickup the following morning so that we could have more space to put everything that was removed. After all the furniture, clothing, appliances and sinks were removed, we started on the drywall, linoleum and floor tile. Several ceilings also had to be removed along with all nails. Lastly when the inside of the house was only a skeleton of studs, a bleach solution was sprayed on the studs. Our group spent a total of three days on that house.

Our other group of 14 encountered a similar situation. Their house was a two story that

required the same hours to clean and gut. Both groups combined on a third house, working hard to finish until we needed to stop on Friday afternoon. During our week, we finished two and a half houses. Catholic Charities estimates that if the residents were to pay for the cleaning and gutting, the cost would be around \$12,000 to \$14,000 per house.

During the cleanup, we wore hardhats, goggles, respirators, tyvec suits and hard boots. The temperature was mostly in the mid 80's with the humidity in the 80's and 90's. We had to break frequently to drink water and to breathe fresh air. At the end of the day, most of us were soaked down to our underwear due to the work and the weather. One day our group decided that they wanted some fast food for lunch. Two members of our party spent an hour and a half looking for something open. They passed seven McDonalds that were closed in addition to several other chains that were also closed.

In addition to all the physical damages that the city has endured, the economical damages continue on. With a very large portion of businesses destroyed, damaged or just closed many jobs have been lost. The catch 22 situation is that with some of the businesses up and running, the lack of employees has hurt the recovery.

On Saturday we had several hours to tour the French Quarter before returning home. That area was flooded with the rest of the city but less damage was noticed. Most of the retail shops were doing a brisk business unlike the rest of town. The Jazz Fest was in town and as people walked the streets amid the many different sounds of music emanating from the quaint clubs, most were most likely oblivious to the damages just miles away. After all most people travel to New Orleans to party and sight see, not to clean up a damaged area.

With all the work being done, one aspect that we did not neglect was our spiritual needs. Each evening we gathered together to recognize that God gave us the talents to assist and that we are here to do His will. In spite of physical exhaustion most nights, we welcomed the spiritual nourishment that our leaders provided. We visited Our Lady of Prompt Succor and listened to how they are helping their neighborhood. We learned that parish has about 15 priests (yes

**See HELPING on Page 7**



GARY FALAGRADY/ STM SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Piles of material removed by parishioners from homes destroyed by flooding from Hurricane Katrina just over year ago. On the right: Mike Foskaras removes drywall and insulation from a water damaged interior wall.



# News from UNLV St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic

**Fr. ALBERT FELICE-PACE, O.P.,  
DIRECTOR**

As I start my third year as Director of the Catholic Newman Community on the UNLV campus, I have seen quite a few changes at the Center. When I started my ministry in Las Vegas, the Center was an Interfaith Student Center. As of July 1, 2005 the Interfaith Board Center dissolved, and so the Center became officially the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Newman Center. So we painted our name on the building. One cannot miss it now.

And this year we will be the sole resident since Hillel, the Jewish campus ministry, moved to their own building. We made many improvements to the building and the surrounding property.

The worship space, the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and the kitchen were recently painted. A sign was placed on Brussels Street, so that the students will know who we are and what we offer. All the AC/heating units have been replaced through the generosity of

the Diocese.

Since our goal is to make the place a welcoming one, the KofC painted the outside of the building. One family built an outside Gabriel Grotto and another couple are doing our landscaping. We are grateful to St. Thomas More Teen Life for helping landscaping the south side of the lawn. Now the outside is more welcoming. Throughout the year, we have been making every effort to make our

community known at the university. We participated in the homecoming events. More people have been attending our Sunday Masses at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. This coming year we will continue with the same schedule of Masses. Our Social Justice Committee organized the "Table of Plenty" food drive throughout the campus. We collected over 3,000 cans that were given to St. Therese Center. One student was baptized and 10 received the Sacrament of Confirmation while three received their First Holy Communion. And for the

first time the community experienced the celebration of the whole Easter Triduum. In order to recognize the student diversity, we joined with other student organizations in order to celebrate the Day of the Dead and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadeloupe.

The Gospel Choir from St. James Parish sang at one of the Mass in February to recognize the African American culture.

In January, the community celebrated the Feast of their Patron Saint, St. Thomas Aquinas and also the 45th anniversary since the foundation of the Newman Club. Bishop Pepe was the main celebrant at the Mass with our Provincial Fr. Roberto Corral and other Dominicans concelebrating. As we approach our 50th anniversary, we have a program called "Seek and you shall find." We are going to all the parishes in order to find alumni, faculty and staff.

Finally, the Diocesan Building Commission and Bishop Pepe have approved the plans for a new building for the com-



COURTESY PHOTO

**Father Albert Felice-Pace stands with UNLV students that recently celebrated their confirmation at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Newman Center.**

munity. We desperately need a chapel on campus. Although we have a great plan, we do not have the funds yet. We are still hoping that some day soon we will start building. It would be great to have a new Chapel and Center built when we celebrate our 50th anniversary. We need about

\$5 million. The Chapel's cost is around \$2 million.

You can get more information about ongoing events by checking our website at <http://newman.unlv.edu>. You can also reach us through e-mail at [unlvnewman@yahoo.com](mailto:unlvnewman@yahoo.com).

## 75TH from Page 4

## St. Andrews offer a variety of worship and prayer opportunities for spiritual growth

fest's God's eternal action radiating through creation. The circle symbolizes balance, perfection and wholeness. In the world of nature, the sun is the source of life and growth just as God is the creative process and source of all love and life.

In the vestibule of the church, the Holy Water Font was carved out of the original marble from the Baptismal Font in the original church. This new form is accented by plaques, which are of the identical granite of the new Baptismal Font.

The latch-hook tapestry which hangs on the wall across from the Baptismal Font was created by designer, Sue Massi. Sister Mary Georgina Gleason, who provided initial input on its design, came from California to start and oversee the project. Parishioners — men, women and children became an enthusiastic community of "latch-hookers." The wall hanging, created with love, incorporates the symbols of the Liturgy—the Chalice, grapes, wheat and the Sacred Host. The words "Welcome to our Catholic Christian Community" were cho-

sen to greet visitors to the parish. A total of 1600 cumulative hours of patient labor went into the project which was completed in six weeks in August of 1983.

In 1982, the library and the large multipurpose classroom were completed. Later, the multipurpose classroom was divided into two classrooms, St. Joseph and St. Mary. Today, the parish hall is also used as a multipurpose room for religious education classes, adult enrichment workshops, as well as parish socials and other church events.

In 1998, the Blessed Sacrament Chapel was built onto the church (left corner) to provide a special setting for the Tabernacle that would be separate but accessible to all. The Tabernacle, by its size and simplicity, calls immediate attention to the presence of the Blessed Eucharist with a Sanctuary Lamp continuously burning nearby. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel, except for the stained glass windows, was designed and built by volunteers of the parish. It is used during the week to offer a more intimate and practical daily

liturgy and for private adoration on weekdays.

Ours is a unique Christian community because Boulder City is unique in the true sense that if there were no Hoover Dam, there would—in all likelihood—be no Boulder City, no St. Andrew's. In the course of these seventy-five years, fifteen priests have had turns as Pastors in this Catholic Christian Community. Not only has the community grown, although not as rapidly as other Catholic communities in Clark County because of the controlled-growth policy in Boulder City, but the assembly has grown in consciousness, aware of their God-given gifts, and have in turn used these gifts in a variety of ministries so obvious in our community.

In the fall of 1999, construction of the St. Andrew's Labyrinth was begun with all of the work done by volunteers, and the material needed was donated. The Labyrinth, dedicated on September 30, 2000, offers away of journeying, inviting one into a sacred quiet place. The labyrinth is a path for prayer and medication.

Fr. Joe Annese, after much reading about the labyrinth and then participating in a workshop at Chartres, France, at the famous cathedral and its labyrinth, which was built around 1220, decided that indeed, the labyrinth is definitely a tool for prayer and meditation and a great addition to St. Andrew's. To walk the labyrinth is to make a pilgrimage to discover something about oneself and God. People of all faiths have since come to St. Andrew's to walk on the sacred ground. For a continued path to spiritual growth, St. Andrew's parishioners, on a volunteer basis, funded the Woman at the Well statue. In June of 2006 the bronze statue arrived and was placed under the olive tree at the courtyard entrance. The statue is the result of a wonderful marriage of thought and inspiration, for a period of one year, between Fr. Joe Annese and the sculptor, Timothy P. Schmalz, of Kitchener, Canada. The Woman at the Well statue was dedicated on June 24, 2006 and represents the inspiring story of the Samaritan Woman and Jesus as recorded in

John's Gospel, Chapter 4. People of all faiths are welcome to come and rest in the presence of this original piece of art and reflect on the messages in the gospel.

St. Andrew's is a community aware of its mission to worship, to give thanks and to serve others, thus helping to create the reign of God on Earth.

During the early years of St. Andrew's up until 2005, the Altar Society was an active group and prominent in the day-to-day workings of the parish. They not only provided decorations for liturgies, they held an annual boutique, rummage and bake sale, and other fund raising events for the community. When they were first formed in the early years of the church, they also ran the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) program (or Religious Education program). As the community grew and as many of the members aged, other ministries and staff personnel took over many of their functions.

## HELPING from Page 6

## STM Social Action Team turns words into action

15!) because most of the other churches in the area are closed or damaged. We had a blessing ceremony; we attended an evening mass. We also had a local well known speaker talk to us and challenge us to realize all of our talents. Saturday before we left we gathered in the historic St. Louis Cathedral in the French Quarter to pray for all our needs and the needs of others. Most mornings several members of our group prayed the rosary before Our Blessed Mother. Many of us found quiet time to pray, read spiritual books and reflect on our work.

Before we left we gathered as 28 individuals with one goal: to do our best for our fellow man. During the week we worked hard, prayed and lived in close quarters with each other. We also learned more about each other.

Little did we know how well we would bond with one another. 28 people from different backgrounds doing God's work.

Recently our Social Justice Ministry has decided to see if there is interest in sending another group of workers to New Orleans. The trip is planned for October 14-21. The FEMA camps have closed due to the end of funding. Catholic Charities will find other accommodations for us in a parish school that has been closed. The workers might have to pay their own air fare and other expenses this time. Yet I do know that we will get people that will answer this call; people that will work hard to help others.

There is still a lot of work needed in the New Orleans area. If you, your parish or group can help, please visit the Catholic Charities website at [www.catholiccharities-no.org/volunteer.htm](http://www.catholiccharities-no.org/volunteer.htm).

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Pope Benedict XVI, in his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Es* (God is Love), tells us "our times call for a new readiness to assist our neighbors in need." Our parish mission statement challenges us to "grow in commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and to each other through our worship, service and community efforts." The St. Thomas More Catholic Community answered the Pope's call and met the challenges of our mission statement in a small way as we assisted the people of New Orleans.

*Gary Falagradý is a member of the St. Thomas More Social Justice Committee. He journaled and photographed the team's trip to New Orleans.*

## ASSISI from Page 1

## Parish realizes power of commitment

ingly generous and sacrificing since we began celebrating Mass here 2 1/2 years ago. The US Census Bureau and the NCEA point to a critical lack in our community which we hope to fill. 'Henderson is the largest city in the United States without a Catholic School.' On our 20 acre site, a Catholic school will eventually be a part of the landscape."

Monica M Simmons, chair of the building committee said: "We ask for St. Francis' intercession on this project every time

we celebrate Mass as a parish. We invite the faithful of our local diocesan Church to join us, especially as his October 4 feast day approaches. We are so excited that the Lord, and His people in the far southern end of the Las Vegas valley, will soon have a real home.

For more information or updates on Saint Francis of Assisi parish project, visit our website at [www.sfahdnv.org](http://www.sfahdnv.org), or call the parish office at 914-2175.

*Today the conflict is between a culture that affirms, Cherishes, and celebrates the gift of life, and a culture that seeks to declare entire groups of human beings—the unborn, the terminally ill, the handicapped, and others consider 'unuseful' — to be outside the boundaries of legal protection. Because of the seriousness of the issue involved, and because of America's great impact on the world as a whole, the resolution of this new time of testing will have profound consequences.*

**Cardinal Justin Rigali, Homily for Pro-Life Mass, January 23, 2006**



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Faithfulness Outpoured  
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Diocese of Las Vegas  
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