



THE DIOCESAN CHRONICLE

THE OFFICIAL NEWS OF THE DIOCESE OF BAKER

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"greater good of souls"

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PARISH NEWS: On Saturday, December 11, 2010, St. Patrick Church in Madras celebrated the dedication of its new altar with Bishop Robert F. Visa celebrating the Mass and blessing the area for worship. St. Patrick parishioners have been planning and fundraising for nearly three years. Although the entire project will be completed in phases under the guidance of Fr. Luis Flores, pastor, the sanctuary received priority. It seemed appropriate to begin in the true heart of the church where Our Lord comes to commune with us in the Mass. A number of St. Patrick parishioners devoted many hours of planning and assisting the contractors in the construction. The result is a much more spacious and beautiful space.

The remaining phases include the expansion and renovation of the entry and sacristy. St. Patrick parishioners will be working and praying that they are able to complete the entire project in the near future.



St. Patrick's Altar before (above) and after (below).



PRO LIFE NEWS: As another anniversary of Roe V. Wade passes, there has been significant progress made because of the prayer and demonstrating of the pro-life community, but there is much left to do. Even one abortion performed anywhere in the country creates a need to make people aware of the devastating results of a culture of death.

In Bend a group of dedicated pro-lifers meets on Division Street every week and demonstrates near the Planned Parenthood clinic. They silently protest and ask the Lord to open the staff's hearts to the innocent unborn and find a way to celebrate life and not death.

Everyone is welcome to join the group on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. in committing one hour to this cause of most vulnerable souls God has created.



Parishioners shown above and who come out regularly to join in the silent protest are Irene Richardson of Bend, Carol Smith of Prineville, Lexie Beemer of Bend, Dennis Vlach of Bend, Fr. Robert Greiner and Morris Martin of Prineville. The group is led by Susan Thorne (not shown) from St. Thomas Church in Redmond under the direction of Fr. Robert Greiner, Diocesan Priest Moderator of the Office of Pro Life Activities and Pastor of St. Joseph Church in Prineville. All diocesan parishes have a Pro Life ministry and all parishioners are encouraged to become involved.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Powell Butte Retreat Center: April 15 – 17, 2011

See page 3 for more information.



MIND AND HEART OF BISHOP VASA: The opening Mass prayer for the First Week of Ordinary Time sets a wonderful theme for the whole of the year. “Father of love, hear our prayers. Help us to know your will and to do it with courage and faith.”

First, the prayer is addressed to our God as “Father of love”. It is, at the outset, a proclamation of confidence and trust in Him who is our Creator and Father. Our initial petition is simply “hear our prayers”. This is our most ardent hope, that He who loves us will be attentive to that which we deem to be significant and important.

Then, in imitation of the example of our Lord, who added to His prayer, “not my will but yours be done”, we add, “Help us to know your will.” Knowing God’s will is rarely an easy thing. For the most part arriving at what God wills of us and for us is achieved only after the fact. This is true since everything that actually happens is at least permitted by God, if not actively “willed” by Him. Having confidence that the God who loves us would never cause or even permit anything to happen to us which is not ultimately beneficial for our eternal salvation makes the acceptance of all that happens to us much easier. Arriving at an understanding of how something which appears to have no value or benefit to us at all could be “beneficial” must often simply be accepted with faith.

The fact that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for us to understand all the ramifications of God’s “plan” for us does not deprive us of the possibility of entrusting ourselves into the gracious, loving hands of our Father. The prayer recognizes the challenge of doing this and thus adds, “Help us ... to do it (your will) with courage and faith”.

Besides the things that have already happened it is also possible to discern God’s will with a high degree of certainty in a variety of other ways. The first is simply to look at what God has clearly delineated for us in His Ten Commandments. It is God’s will that these be kept. The teachings of our Lord in the Gospels is a further explication of the meaning and intent of these commandments. For instance, Thou shall not kill is explained as including anger at one’s brother. It is clearly God’s manifest will that no one hate his brother. This goes far beyond the strict letter of the law, which only forbids killing. We can also further understand God’s will by listening to the Church and her explanations of what is included in God’s will for us. It is here that we learn that this command against killing definitely extends to all human beings, including those not yet afforded civil rights in our society. It is God’s will that innocent children in the wombs of their mothers not be killed. It is God’s will that all human persons, including those in the womb, be treated with the same depth of love and compassion shown to any and every other human person.

Our prayer includes our efforts to protect them. “Help us to do your will with courage and faith.”

CONSIDER LITURGY: There are a number of prayers in the Roman Missal which are designated as the private prayers of the priest and which are to be said silently. Active participants in the Mass can make these prayers their own. The first is before the Gospel: “Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God, that I may worthily proclaim your holy Gospel”. Then at the Offertory while adding a little water to the wine: “By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled Himself to share in our humanity.” Again at the Offertory: “With humble spirit and contrite heart may we be accepted by you, O Lord, and may our sacrifice in your sight this day be pleasing to you, Lord God.” They are said silently, but we too can pray them. God bless you. +Bishop Vasa

SAINTS AND FEASTS: The Feast of the Presentation on February 2 brings the Christmas/Epiphany season to an end. Called in earlier times the Feast of the Purification or Candlemas, this day celebrates two major events in the life of the Christ Child and his Blessed Mother.

The Presentation refers to the Jewish custom of offering a child to the Lord in the temple. Those who were modest in means offered in addition a pair of doves as a sacrifice. While still in His mother’s arms, Jesus fulfills the Jewish law and foreshadows the sacrifice He will offer of Himself on the cross.

The second event marked on this day is the Old Testament custom of purifying a woman after she has given birth. Although Mary remained a virgin before, during and after the birth of her Divine Son, she submitted herself to the ritual of her people, as she had submitted her will to God at the Annunciation.

Two themes predominate today. The first is that of Meeting. The old man Simeon has waited for the Messiah his whole life and represents the longing of the Jewish people. When he sees the infant Jesus, he immediately says, “Now, O Lord, you can dismiss your servant in peace ... because my eyes have seen your salvation.” He has met the God-Man and thus his life is complete. We too need to realize we meet Christ just as profoundly in every Mass.

The second theme is that of Light. In the more ancient rite of the church, candles were lit and carried into the church to symbolize Christ enlightening the world by His coming. They were relit at the Gospel and during the canon of the Mass. Although this practice has been largely lost in contemporary liturgy, its history makes it the climax of the light theme, which begins with Christmas, is developed at Epiphany and culminates at Candlemas. As Christians we need to view this theme as symbolizing our coming out of darkness into the light of faith in the Infant King.

PROTECTING CHILDREN: Pray for the grace of healing for all victims of child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse. Take time to learn more about what you can do to prevent a child from being harmed.

NOTICIAS HISPANAS: La fiesta de la Presentación celebra una llegada y un encuentro; la llegada del anhelado Salvador, núcleo de la vida religiosa del pueblo, y la bienvenida concedida a él por dos representantes dignos de la raza elegida, Simeón y Ana. Por su avanzada edad, estos dos personajes simbolizan los siglos de espera y de anhelo ferviente de los hombres y mujeres devotos de la antigua alianza. En realidad, ellos representan la esperanza y el anhelo de la raza humana.

Al revivir este misterio en la fe, la Iglesia da de nuevo la bienvenida a Cristo. Ese es el verdadero sentido de la fiesta. Es la "Fiesta del Encuentro", el encuentro de Cristo y su Iglesia. "Oh Sión, adorna tu cámara nupcial y da la bienvenida a Cristo el Rey; abraza a María, porque ella es la verdadera puerta del cielo y te trae al glorioso Rey de la luz nueva".

Función de María. La fiesta de la presentación es, como hemos dicho, una fiesta de Cristo antes que cualquier otra cosa. Es un misterio de salvación. El nombre "presentación" Habla de ofrecimiento, sacrificio. "Heme aquí que vengo a hacer tu voluntad". Apunta a la vida de sacrificio y a la perfección final de esa autooblación en la colina del Calvario.

Dicho esto; tenemos que pasar a considerar el papel de María en estos acontecimientos salvíficos. Y preguntamos: ¿Se trataba exclusivamente de cumplir el ritual prescrito, una formalidad practicada por muchos otros matrimonios? ¿O encerraba una significación mucho más profunda que todo esto?

Para María, la presentación y ofrenda de su hijo en el templo no era un simple gesto ritual. Fue un acto de ofrecimiento verdadero y consciente. Ella ofrecía a su hijo para la obra de la redención con la que él estaba comprometido desde un principio. Ella renunciaba a sus derechos maternales y a toda pretensión sobre él; y lo ofrecía a la voluntad del Padre. San Bernardo ha expresado muy bien esto: "Ofrece a tu hijo, santa Virgen, y presenta al Señor el fruto bendito de tu vientre. Ofrece, para reconciliación de todos nosotros, la santa Víctima que es agradable a Dios".

Hay un nuevo simbolismo en el hecho de que María pone a su hijo en los brazos de Simeón. Al actuar de esa manera, ella no lo ofrece exclusivamente al Padre, sino también al mundo, representado por aquellos ancianos. De esa manera, ella representa su papel de madre de la humanidad, y se nos recuerda que el don de la vida viene a través de María.

Existe una conexión entre este ofrecimiento y lo que sucederá en el Gólgota cuando se ejecuten todas las implicaciones del acto inicial de obediencia de María: "Hágase en mí según tu palabra". Por esa razón, el evangelio de esta fiesta cargada de alegría no nos ahorra la nota profética punzante: "He aquí que este niño está destinado para ser caído y resurgimiento de muchos en Israel; será signo de contradicción, y una espada atravesará tu alma, para que sean descubiertos los pensamientos de muchos corazones" (Lc 2,34-35).

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Powell Butte Retreat Center: April 15 – 17, 2011

Attention All Married Couples!



Would you attend a seminar to enhance your job or to increase your salary? Why not give your marriage the same attention? Enhance your good marriage by attending a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend!

The next weekend is scheduled for April 15 – 17 at the Baker Diocese Powell Butte Retreat Center. Registration is limited. For more information or to register, call Mike & Milly Pungercar at 541-746-3469, or contact us via e-mail at pungercar2@msn.com. You can also register for the weekend by visiting the Worldwide Marriage Encounter website for Oregon at www.rediscoverthespark.org, find the link to the April 15-17 Powell Butte, OR Weekend, and follow the instructions for registering on-line for this opportunity to grow in your marriage.

If you have already made a Marriage Encounter Weekend, and would be interested in Helping on the Powell Butte weekend, please contact Mike and Milly at the contact Information listed above.

PARISH NEWS: St. Mary Church, Pendleton - Dear Men of Christ, A Blessed New Year to you. The 2011 Men's Conference is soon approaching. It will be held once again at the Pendleton Convention Center on February 25-26. Cardinal Burke is still on board to visit us. Bishop Robert Vasa, Doug Barry and I will also lead. Registration began January 7, 2011. Please keep the 2011 Northwest Catholic Men's Conference in your prayers that it will be fruitful. Visit www.gowestcatholicmen.com for more information. -- In Christ, Fr. Bailey Clemens

CLERGY NEWS: Congratulations to the following as they celebrate their ordination anniversaries during February:

Rev. Thomas Scanlan, retired	February 2, 1957
Rev. Francis Ekwugh, Bend	February 14, 1982

We are most grateful for the years of service of all our priests. Please keep them in your prayers.

For a complete list of clergy ordination dates, please visit the Diocesan website at www.dioceseofbaker.org

THE DIOCESAN CHRONICLE: We are always in search of news and events of importance and of interest to the people of God of the Diocese of Baker. We appreciate and thank those parishes who have used the Chronicle to share the events that are dear to them. We encourage those parishes that we have yet to hear from to send us a short paragraph and a picture, if appropriate to the story, of your parish event. Please call Terri at the Diocese for more information at (541) 388-4004 or email your story and pictures to Terri@dioceseofbaker.org. Please send time sensitive announcements as early as possible.

SISTERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF OUR LADY, MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP IN EASTERN OREGON: Only a few generations ago, the church in America proudly sent missionaries to Africa to share the good news of the Gospel with those who lived on a sometimes mysterious continent. Today, things have come full circle, with African orders of priests and nuns sending missionaries to the often priest-poor dioceses of the United States.

One such order, the Congregation of Our Lady, Mother of Perpetual Help, has given the Diocese of Baker four members to help out in The Dalles, where Father Charles Nnabuife is pastor. The order, founded in Nigeria only five years ago, has about 40 sisters and more will be professed this year. It is an example of the exploding number of vocations in many African countries. One Kenyan sister said when all the clergy and religious gather together for a major event in her country, it creates a small city.

The congregation, which answered Bishop Vasa's call to help at St. Peter's Church, was founded as a missionary order by Mother Ngozi P. Obi in 2005. Its charism, said Sister Calista Ekeh, one of the teachers at St. Mary's Academy in The Dalles, is "to see Jesus Christ in all, for all are made in the image and likeness of God. This charism inspires the sisters to seek out and care for all with love and compassion, bringing them closer to their Creator."

The sisters have expressed thanks to God, to Bishop Vasa and the faithful of the Diocese of Baker for the opportunity to live among them and be part of the effort of evangelization in Oregon.



Sister MaryAnn Okonkwo: Sister MaryAnn is the third of six children, whose family comes from Awkuzu in the Anambra State of Nigeria. Her upbringing, she said, imbued her with an understanding that life could be made better for anyone, no matter the person's background or experience.

She joined the Sisters of Jesus the Savior at age 18 and has been finally professed for ten years, the last three with her current congregation. She has a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and further study in Theology from the Urban University in Rome. She has a Master's degree in Educational Leadership and has trained in clinical pastoral education. She has also served as chaplain in both acute and psychiatric hospitals.

"My wish," said Sister MaryAnn, "is that I will continue to bring the healing presence of Christ to children, adults and the aged (whom) I encounter in my daily apostolate."



Sister Sandra Alamezie: Sister Sandra is the third of 12 children in a Catholic family from Orodo, Imo State, Nigeria. Her education consists of a Bachelor's degree in science, a Master's in banking and finance and a certificate in clinical pastoral education.

She also first joined the Sisters of Jesus the Savior and became a member of the Congregation of Our Lady, Mother of Perpetual Help in 2008. She worked as an accountant and bank manager, then was principal in a school for eight years. Sister Sandra is working with the kindergarten students at St. Mary's Academy.

"It has been really fun working with the kids; and I wish to bring the healing presence of Christ to all I meet in my apostolate," said Sister Sandra.



Sister Calista Ekeh: Sister Calista is the fifth of seven children in a practicing Catholic family. Born and raised in Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria, she has a Bachelor's degree in Education Management, a diploma in evangelization and in counseling and clinical pastoral education.

She first joined the Sisters of Jesus the Savior in 1995 and became a member of her current congregation in 2008. She has been a teacher and dean of students for 14 years and now works as in religious education and bible study in the school and parish of St Peter.

"I wish to bring peace, happiness and joy to wall with whom I come in contact in my ministry," said Sister Calista.



Sister Jose Vera Oguagha: Sister Jose Vera is from Agulu, Anambra State, Nigeria, and is the third child in a family of seven children. Although she attended Catholic schools, she never thought about becoming a nun until she came in contact with the altar girls' society of her parish, which nurtured her desire to serve God as a religious.

In 2006 she made her final profession with the Sisters of Jesus the Savior, but decided the newly formed Congregation to which she now belongs was more suited in nature to the life she wanted. She joined the sisters of Our Lady, Mother of Perpetual Help, in 2007.

Sister has a diploma from the College of Education on English Language and Social Studies. He is currently working with the altar society at St. Peter's Church. Sister Jose Vera said it was good to be in The Dalles and she is grateful to all who gave birth to her stay there. "My desire is to encounter people who are open to the Spirit, so that my mission will suffer no lack," she said.