

Who is Jesus for you?



THE CUTTING EDGE

SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC

College provides many challenges for students. One is that it provides an opportunity to really claim and own their faith, to examine what they really believe.

Up until college, many young people believe because others say so. It is what they are taught. After high school, and sometimes during, it is not uncommon for one to question one's faith. This is not a bad thing. In fact, those who question what they claim to believe usually end up with a stronger and more meaningful faith. Some characterize it as "owning" one's faith.

A mediocre Catholic is one who "believes" just because others say so. Their faith is often minimal or superficial. Too many people are nominal Catholics who identify themselves as such but rarely

grace a church with their presence. It is like people who call themselves Jews but do not practice Judaism.

Central to our Christian faith is our belief in Jesus. He is the core of what we profess. I always reflect on this every time I hear the words in the Gospel when Jesus asks Peter and the others, "Who do you say that I am?" To be a Christian, a follower of Jesus, each of us must answer that question for ourselves.

Have you ever really taken time to reflect upon who Jesus is for you? Is Jesus merely a historical figure that lived in the past and has stories written about him in the Bible?

Do you think of him as a nice guy, someone always ready to help others, especially the poor and the outcasts?

Or is your Jesus a taskmaster who demands hard things from people, someone you better obey or else? Does he look over your shoulder to see if you are behaving?

Maybe you view Jesus primarily as a miracle worker, someone who might help you get a good grade on a test you haven't studied for or who gets you out of trouble with your parents. Is he someone you go to when you are desperate and can't think of

anything else to do, someone you think of last instead of first?

Or, hopefully, Jesus is someone who is there for you in the good times and when life is hard. Does your belief in his loving presence console you when your family is having difficulties or when you are feeling low?

Do you go to Jesus regularly? Is he real to you and a part of your ordinary life? Is he a personal friend or a figure "out there somewhere?" Do you spend time with him? Do you desire to get to know him better and to love him more?

Like Father Michael Joncas said in a homily recently, there is a difference between belief and real faith. We can believe everything our church teaches and obey all the commandments, but we will never grow in faith unless Jesus is in the center of it. The Pharisees conformed to the letter of the law but never really knew and accepted Jesus.

Our faith is empty without him. Take some time during this summer and honestly reflect on your relationship with Jesus? Is he an important part of your life or basically an acquaintance or a stranger. Do you only know about him or do you know him? Do you desire to know and love him



YOUNG ADULT PERSPECTIVES

better?

What will you answer the next time he asks, "Who do you say that I am?" I hope you can say that he is your Lord and your best friend, someone you can always count on. He is a real person for you, not just one of the characters in the Bible.

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Young adults journey to Texas for Habitat for Humanity mission trip

BY JEAN E. EISERLE

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — "God's Providence is about timing and presence."

Sister Gloria Ann Fiedler, CDP, former campus-young adult minister in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, mentioned this in a lesson about Divine Providence at an associate meeting in May.

This is also a very appropriate summary of the recent mission opportunity that 14 young adults and diocesan staff had the privilege of attending from June 4-10 this summer.

Carrying the spirit of hope and service to the Archdiocese of San Antonio, every young adult intended to charitably donate time and talent to the less fortunate of this southwestern community. Yet no one could fathom the rich outpouring of grace, humility and lessons learned from this experience.

On the first day, six Divine Providence Associates, along with four young adults from the Fort Wayne area and two from Michigan, learned about the charism of the Congregation of Divine Providence, including the history and relevance to the congregation's current mission.

Everyone became well-acquainted with Blessed John Martin Moye's vision to provide education to young people and to the uneducated lower socioeconomic classes in 18th century France.

With the help of one sister, Blessed John Martin Moye developed the spirituality of charity, abandonment to Divine Providence, simplicity and poverty.

This apostolate grew, and in 1866, Sister St. Andrew Felin became the first superior general of the congregation in Texas; one of the first projects was to build Our Lady of the Lake University and



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Fourteen young adults and diocesan staff from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and from Michigan carried the spirit of hope and service to San Antonio, Texas, from June 4-10, and participated in a Habitat for Humanity project.

the Sacred Heart Conventual Chapel, both symbolizing the mission of education and the centrality of the sacraments in this congregation.

In addition to this historical overview, the young adults and leaders were touched by a woman's story, who explained how ministries, such as Habitat for Humanity, have personally empowered people like her through advocacy and community projects.

The spirit of exerting physical labor in the southwestern neighborhood of Palo Alto in San Antonio was often penitential, at least overtly. In temperatures climbing to the upper 90s and above, the young adults, along with some Divine Providence sisters, built four storage sheds and painted houses for five to six hours during the days.

One potential homeowner, Felicia, joined everyone on Thursday, which illustrated the

power of collaboration among different socioeconomic classes to begin the elimination of the cycle of poverty through projects like these. Yet, even in the oppressive heat, powerful spiritual symbols from the work site were made manifest, and these symbols were offered with explanations of their significance during the commissioning Mass held on Friday, which closed the time shared in a Spirit-filled liturgy.

The items taken from the Habitat work site included soil, a rock, wood, a nail, a shingle, a water cooler and a multicolored hat. The spiritual significance of each related to the work completed on this mission, especially reminding the participants that all of humanity was "raised up from the dust" and built upon a firm foundation of "toughness, endurance" and "strength."

Because of this, the team "joined together in this project

with what (they) were given; (they) drew closer in (their) relationships with one another, and (their) work was transformed into a gift for the new residents." The gifts were offered in thanksgiving for the "blessings received" and in petition that "blessings will multiply for those who will be living" in the houses built by volunteers.

Maria Pirrie, staff member of the diocesan department of Campus and Young Adult Ministry and team member on this trip, summarized the experience in three words: "Spirit, service and social."

It is true that to call this travel-

ing experience simply a vacation or simply a mission opportunity or simply a pilgrimage would be an incomplete description of the full encounter shared by all in San Antonio; in essence, it was a combination of all three.

"Opportunities for liturgy, prayer and sharing were part of our daily routine. We endured the 100-degree temperatures with many unexpected blessings," continued Pirrie.

All of the participants extend "many thanks to Sister Gloria Ann and the Congregation of Divine Providence for their hospitality."

Don't like the sign of peace? Try this ...

BY MARK WEBER

FORT WAYNE — Catholics who use time at Mass to think about doughnuts or their Sunday afternoon yard work or who are reluctant to exchange the sign of peace, squander a divine opportunity, says Michael Dubruel, author of two books on how to get more out of the Mass. In a stimulating presentation at St. John the Baptist Parish, Fort Wayne, he used the word "sacrifice" as a memory aid to describe steps on how Mass becomes a Christ-sharing period of spiritual awareness, which can enrich all other activities through a soul-building experience.

Using the letter F, as in eucharistic fast, Dubruel described how our fast becomes a hunger for the Lord, the bread of life, the



MICHAEL DUBRUIEL

incredible gift given by our savior so that we can share his presence on earth.

Dubruel explained how, with simple preparation, Mass becomes a peacefully fulfilling

experience and one in which we offer ourselves along with the Divine Victim.

The author's talk was made to a group known as Adults and Young Adults, which meets monthly at St. John the Baptist in Fort Wayne, St. Joseph Parish and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Jenny Murray is president.