

Office of Ministries Newsletter

Diocese of Fresno



Volume I, Issue IV
February 2008

Message from the Director– *Patty Jiménez*

Recently, I was researching the origins of Lent and I was reminded that in the first three centuries, most Christians only prepared for Easter by fasting for only two or three days. In some places they did so for a week or several weeks. By the fourth Century it had developed to forty days. (*Encyclopedia of Catholicism*). Sometimes when we begin a project, it requires very little investment but then it begins to grow and develop giving birth to a wonderful event, celebration, or experience.

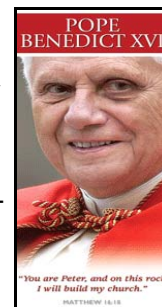
For a few weeks we have been working on preparing budgets and a grant through the USCCB that will help the diocese gain Mission Status. We are also beginning to plan for our 20th

annual Diocesan Congress scheduled for October 11, 2008. We are excited to announce that the theme for this year's Congress will be *Our Vision for the Future*. The five committees that were formed last year at the Clergy Convocation will be our main speakers and will be presenting the Pastoral Plan that is currently in development. The workshops that follow their presentations will provide training, education, ideas, and different techniques that will help all of us in the diocese to bring *Our Vision for the Future* to fruition.

Please remember that our office will be closed Wednesday February 27, 2008 through Friday, February 29th due to the L.A. Religious Education Congress.

Patty

In anticipation of our Holy Father's visit in April, *Our Sunday Visitor* has created a new pamphlet and prayer card to help us prepare. These pamphlets and prayer cards are useful in teaching more about the Pope's ministry and the Holy Father's role. The pamphlet gives a history of Benedict XVI and the history of the papacy. Spanish versions are also available.



If you would like to order copies of the pamphlets and prayer cards, you may call *Our Sunday Visitor* 1-800-348-2440 ext 2173 or visit www.osv.com.

In the weeks before our Holy Father visits, may we join together in prayer. May we pray for our country, and for our Church, that she may continue to be our font of hope and grace.

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Diocesan Morning of Reflection for Laity and Religious Sisters



All laity and religious sisters are invited to attend the Diocesan Morning of Reflection, sponsored by the Office of Ministries, and luncheon prior to the celebration of the Holy Chrism Mass at 2:00 on Thursday, March 13, at Holy Spirit Church in Fresno.

Gathering at 9:00 in the parish hall will include a continental breakfast. Morning Prayer in the church will begin at 9:30. Back in the parish hall at 10:00 Monsignor John Griesbach will begin his presentation entitled "Dying and Rising with Christ: The Spirituality of the Paschal Mystery."

At the same time, Sr. Aurelia Gonzalez will begin the Spanish presentation "Las Armas del Amor". A delicious chicken breast lunch will be served at 12:15.

Cost to all laity is \$15.00 per person. Parish registration forms have been mailed to each parish office. To register, please contact your parish office before Thursday, March 6.

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Youth and Young Adults

Our office recently created a blog designed especially for Youth Coordinators. It is a means to communicate with one another, network, and form community.



Bilingual Coordinator:
Vacant
Bilingual Secretary:
Martin Barrera
(559) 488-7495

Meeting times and up-to-date information is posted on the blog web site. Invitations to join the blog were sent out via e-mail to those who we have up-to-date information with our office. Check your spam folder in your e-mail. Please send an e-mail to patricia@dioceseoffresno.org to be added to the Blog.

We have been reviewing applications and are interview-

ing candidates for the position of Bilingual Youth Coordinator.



We continue entering Youth Ministry Surveys. Our hope is that they will be entered by the end of this month. The findings will help us develop a Pastoral Plan for Youth Ministry. A full report

will be written and available in English and Spanish.



If you have any time available, please contact our office to volunteer.

Catechetics

Our Office is happy to welcome Madeline Loiacono as our new Diocesan Coordinator of Catechesis. Madeline will begin March 3, 2008.

On April 12, 2008 DRE's/CRE's are invited to attend a very important meeting at the Pastoral Center. We previously scheduled a day of formation but we did not want to add an addi-

tional meeting as we know how busy you are. Members of the Catechetical Committee for our Pastoral Plan would like to meet with DRE'S/CRE's to get feedback regarding Catechetics in the Diocese. Your presence is very important as your opinions will help develop and shape our Pastoral plan. Because of your experience and knowledge, you have so much to contribute!!

A Diocesan Catechetical Advisory Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 10 at 9:30-12:00 noon. All D.C.A.B. Board members are asked to RSVP.



Our office is heading to Anaheim for the annual Los Angeles Congress. It is a good opportunity of continued formation for our staff, and to scout po-

tential speakers for our Congress. We will be meeting with Publishing companies especially those who have resources in Spanish and we hope to purchase some new additions for our Media Center.

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Patricia Jiménez
Administrative Assistant:
Paul Mentlewski
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Media Center

Since this is the month of love, we can find just about everything that clearly shouts "Hey it's Valentine Day". No matter where you go you're bound to run into flowers, pink and red and so many people shopping last minute for their special someone. I've researched and chosen from the library books that truly describe different types of love. Whether you're single, engaged or married I hope that these books will assist you in your everyday life, where love is truly a virtue.



Discovering the Hidden Ground of Love: Bridges to contemplative living with Thomas Merton.

A small Group Resource leads participant to explore the power of love and to embrace God as love and ultimate source of our very being.



Learning about L.I.F.E. Love, Infatuation, Friendship, Exploitation Kieran Sawyer & Kathie Amidei. A family-based program on relationships and abuse prevention.



Marriage It's a God Thing William P. Roberts

This book can help a couple achieve a deeper intimacy with one another and God by understanding the importance of their relationship and responding to its challenges with prayer, honesty and introspection.



Love in the Little Things Mike Aquilina

Paradise? Family life? Really? Yes—and one filled with laughter. If that doesn't sound like your family but you wish it did, or if you're just looking for a book to lighten your spirit, *Love in the Little Things* is for you.

Bilingual Media Secretary:
Rosie Navarro
(559) 488-7474

Multicultural/Campesino Ministry

We met with Coordinators of Campesino Ministries on Sunday, February 24, 2008. Thirty coordinators participated in the meeting where we gathered for prayer and assessed the basic human and pastoral needs of the Campesino communities in our Diocese. The top priorities for this ministry are 1) having a Diocesan Coordinator for Campesino Ministry; 2) formation of coordinators; 3) the need

for resources such as bibles, catechetical material for all age groups, etc.; 4) and developing a Diocesan plan for this ministry. We will gather next month on Sunday March 30, 2008 where we will provide information, resources and formation for coordinators of Campesino Ministry.



The Consulate of Mexico in Fresno and the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME), introduced a free hotline by the Mexican Secretary of Public Education to assist Mexican nationals living in the US with questions regarding education matters: 1-866-491-7436 Monday thru Friday, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, Mexico City time. You can receive **general information** on the services provided by the Secretary

of Education, such as requests for a duplicate of school diploma/certificate; academic credit transfer information, and school "transfer documents" for migrant children, among other services related to education.

www.mexterior.sep.gob.mx

Director:

Vacant

Bilingual Secretary:

Martin Barrera

Detention Ministry

Plans for balancing the California state budget continue to make the front pages. One thing is clear - the prisons and jails in our diocese will remain overcrowded, and Catholic chaplains will continue to lack basic supplies. Much of the funding for these programs was cut years ago, and has never been restored. The jails and certain prisons have a very high turnover, which means that chaplains distribute a lot of material -- it is easy to run out.

We *always* need more detention ministry volunteers, but not everyone may feel able to do that. However, we also need generous groups and individuals to generate the funds to fill in these gaps for those ministering to the 80,000 inmates in this diocese. What is needed?



Catholic Bibles -- We are fortunate that groups such as the Paulists supply a number of Bibles free to prisons. There are rarely enough at facilities.

Rosaries -- There is always a great demand for rosaries, but the only kind allowed inside have plastic beads and cross on string. No metal of any kind is allowed, and, in fact, some colors are prohibited at some facilities. If you are part of a rosary-making group and would like to help, please contact me.

Greeting cards -- Many inmates have no funds to purchase items like birthday, Mother's Day, or Christmas cards. The only contact inmates have with some distant family members is by mail, so

these cards are important. Some of the most appreciated and requested items from chaplains are greeting cards.

Used magazines -- Back issues of Catholic magazines are welcome, but make sure that any identifying labels are removed first.

Catholic books -- Paperback **only**, please. Most Catholic chaplains maintain libraries for inmates that get a lot of use.

Missalettes -- Masses and communion services are held in all sorts of places, but the inmates need a missalette just as any parishioner does. These must be purchased new, must be bilingual in English/Spanish. This is an expensive

item for chaplains, but some facilities have found benefactors that pay for them. We need more. Also, we are investigating a group purchase for all facilities to save money.

Liturgical supplies -- Each chapel is fully equipped with liturgical vessels, vestments, books and other items. As time goes by these items can wear out, disappear, or become outdated. All of them are quite expensive -- usually well outside a chaplain's budget.

Concerning most items above, we must have both English and Spanish language versions.

Director:

Claude Muncey

(559) 488-7494

School of Ministry

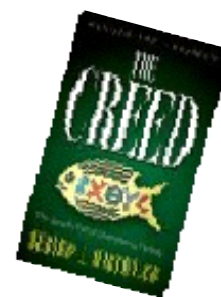
The ongoing RCIA formation course is reflecting on ways to celebrate the **Scrutinies** as major steps in the process of preparation for the reception of the sacraments at the Easter celebration. Sr. Therese Randolph, R.S.M., has joined Fr. Steve Coffey, O.S.B. in teaching the course. Eight people participated in

the New Wine Alumni Retreat, last weekend, at Three Rivers. Sr. Danielle Witt was the retreat director. They all had a wonderful experience.



Fr. Steve
Coffey, OSB

In keeping with this year's curriculum, **New Wine / Vino Nuevo** participants are studying the core beliefs of our faith in the course "**Creed**". Fr. David Norris is teaching the course in Fresno and Fr. Steve Coffey is teaching the course in Visalia and Bakersfield. Ms. Maria Livier is teaching "El Credo" course for Vino Nuevo in Fresno.



Dean

Fr. David Norris

(559) 493-2871

Office of Ministries Newsletter

Family Life Ministry

Our Office is happy to welcome Andy Ruperto as our new Diocesan Coordinator of Family Life. Andy will begin March 3, 2008.



Marriage in the U.S.

People are getting married later in life. Median age for males is 27; for females it is 25. (*The National Marriage Project: The State of Our Unions 2006*).

The marriage rate (annual num-

ber of marriages per 1,000 unmarried adult women) continues to decline. It has dropped 50% (to 45.6) in fifty years. (*The National Marriage Project: The State of Our Unions 2003*).

From 40% to 50% of Catholic marriages are between a Catholic and a non-Catholic.

Within the first few years of marriage nearly half of all inter-church couples become same church because one spouse or both change religious affiliation. (*Ministry to Inter-church Marriages: A National Study*).



Look for the March 2008 issue of ST. ANTHONY MESSENGER, a Catholic magazine from the Franciscans, to see photos spotlighting a Diocese of Fresno parish during last year's Easter Vigil and read the feature article written by the parish's Director of Religious Education. Parts of the magazine can also be found on-line at

www.americancatholic.org

Social Justice

Thirty-three years ago the Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania decided to do something to help the people of the Sahel (western Africa just below the desert of the Sahara), an area known for its droughts and difficult living conditions. What Allentown started has spread throughout our country and has so far raised more than \$160,000,000 for people who need food around the world.

Operation Rice Bowl participants are asked to give, to make a sacrifice in some way to help their brothers and sisters in need—it's also a question of their wallets. They are asked to pray with their families and faith communities—it's also a question of their hearts. They are asked to fast in solidarity with those who fast but not by choice—it's also a question of their stomachs. They are

asked to learn about their global community, about their brothers and sisters who are challenged by extreme poverty—it's also a question of their minds.

What can you do? Pray—fast—learn—give. But also, if your parish does not participate in Operation Rice Bowl, urge your pastor to do so.

Jim



Director
Fr. James A. Rude, S.J.
(559) 488-7482

Upcoming Events



Feb. 28-Mar. 2— L.A. Religious Education Congress

Mar. 13— Diocesan Morning of Reflection and Holy Chrism Mass

Apr. 5 — RCIA Training

Apr. 5-6— "Vino Nuevo" Year 2 Retreat

Apr. 10- Youth Coordinators Meeting— English

Apr. 12— DREs/CREs Meeting

Apr. 15-20 — Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Journey to the U.S.

Apr. 22— California Catholic Lobby Day

Apr. 27— Youth Coordinators Meeting Spanish

May 3— RCIA Training

June 19— Bishop's Annual DRE's/CRE's Appreciation Mass & Luncheon

Diocese of Fresno

OFFICE OF MINISTRIES

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Administrative Assistant: Paul Mentlewski

Bilingual Media Secretary: Rosie Navarro

