

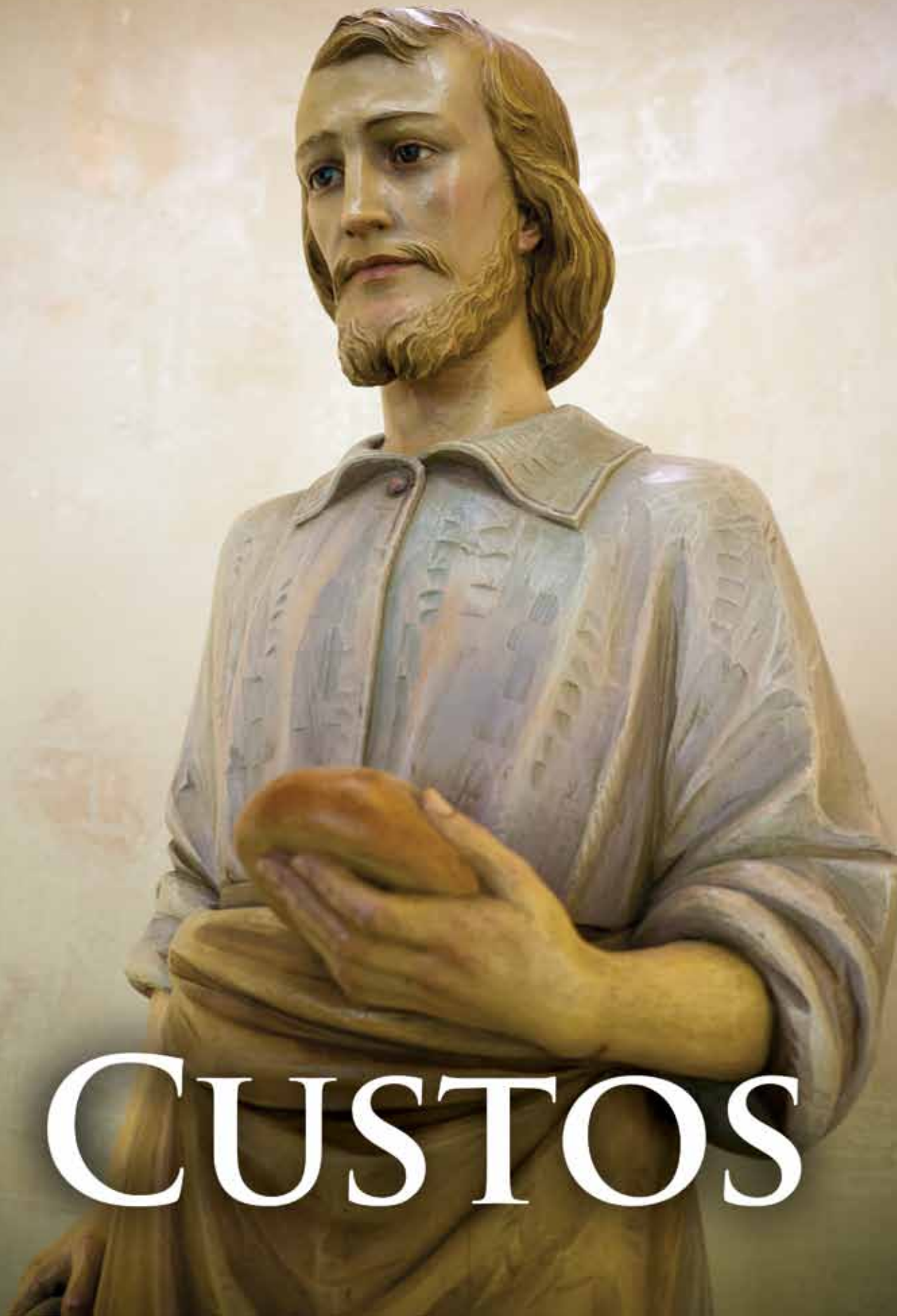
Summer 2014

A publication of the
Oblates of St. Joseph,
Holy Spouses Province,
United States of America



*"St. Joseph, teach me to
work as you did, with
patience and persever-
ance, for God and for
those whom God has
given me to support."*

CUSTOS





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We are dedicated to sharing the charism of the Oblates of St. Joseph with you through meditations on our Josephite-Marellian spirituality, sound theological reflections, and news and events from our Congregation.

CUSTOS

A publication of the Oblates of St. Joseph, Holy Spouses Province, U.S.A.

The title of our magazine 'Custos' is the Latin word for 'Guardian' and refers to St. Joseph in his vocation as the guardian and protector of Jesus and Mary.

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Front Cover: Statue of St. Joseph the Worker, Loomis, CA.

Above: The Oblates of St. Joseph of the Holy Spouses Province (U.S.A.).

DEAR FRIENDS OF St. Joseph,

As we enjoy the summer season, let us be mindful of God's wonderful gift to us – the gift of nature. I just had the enjoyable experience of driving across country for five days, from Santa Cruz to northeastern Pennsylvania. Driving on Interstate 80 all the way across was an opportunity to appreciate God's handiwork in the mountains of Nevada and Utah, the wide open range of Wyoming, the fertile fields of Nebraska and Iowa, the rolling hills of Illinois and Indiana, the farmlands of Ohio and finally the deep



woods of my home state of Pennsylvania. Having 2,700 miles to drive from coast to coast with our seminarian, Bro. Stephen Spencer, OSJ, we had plenty of opportunity to converse on a multitude of topics. One common conversation was recognizing the presence of God in

physical nature and in the many people we met along the way at hotels, restaurants, fuel stops, etc... We met a variety of people who were kind, interesting and welcoming to us, which allowed for more "God moments."

In fulfilling this "bucket list" wish, I came to the realization that it is not necessary to drive across country to have this daily spiritual experience with the Lord of all creation. It is in our everyday life where God is speaking to us in countless ways in the ordinary, routine unfolding of our lives. I am afraid that sometimes we limit our spiritual encounters with the Lord when maybe we are in church, the offering of our private prayers and devotions, or

maybe even at some monumental event in our lives (e.g. birth of a child, marriage, some personal loss, etc.). At this time on the Church's calendar we are in the period referred to as Ordinary Time, a term that refers to the systematic numbering of Sundays until we arrive at the season of Advent. This long liturgical period can also be a perfect opportunity to help us discover the powerful presence of God in the daily rhythm of our lives, with the same people, the same routine actions done often at the same pace. Such was the story with the Holy Family of Nazareth, where our Blessed Mother and her holy spouse, St. Joseph, lived a normal patterned life with their Son, Jesus, in their midst. There are no Biblical references to this period in the life of our Lord, yet it was just as important as His public ministry and the Easter events that would eventually unfold for the salvation of all humankind.

May these weeks of summer, which serve as the traditional period of personal and family vacations, allow us to step back from our lives and take a good look of how God walks with us daily in so many beautiful and varied ways. With a couple of deep breaths and an extended panoramic view of the world of nature we will come to the realization that God stands right before us and how easy it is to miss Him because He can often blend in to the busy, chaotic lives that we lead. Maybe that expression of "slowing down and smelling the roses" has a lot of truth in it, but let us not only smell the roses, but experience God who created them!

Wishing you all a safe, relaxful and holy summer season!

Rev. Paul A. McDonnell, O.S.J.
 Very Rev. Paul A. McDonnell, O.S.J.

Provincial Superior, Holy Spouses Province

Oblates Youth Day 2014

From June 13-15, Oblate youth from around the country came to St. Joseph Marelo Youth Retreat Center in Loomis, CA to celebrate Oblate Youth Day 2014. The weekend is the largest youth event of the Province, gathering together youth from Oblate parishes and ministries who all share in the charism of St. Joseph Marelo.

WE WERE BLESSED to welcome over one hundred youth to this years Oblate Youth Day. The theme we chose for the weekend was 'Nunc Coepi', a Latin phrased used by St. Joseph Marelo which can be roughly translated, 'Now I begin.' St. Joseph Marelo always encouraged young people to strive for holiness, and just as each day is a new beginning, so this youth experience was truly a time to "begin again."

We are happy to share with you in the next few pages some memories of Oblate Youth Day 2014. Please keep all of these youth and the youth we serve in all of our Oblate ministries in your prayers!





Right: Youth form an "OSJ" to symbolize their connection to the Oblates of St. Joseph. Bottom: Youth from Holy Annunciation parish in Hazleton gather around their associate pastor, Fr. Dan Schwebs, O.S.J., for a photo. Bottom, right: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is one of the highlights of the weekend. Far right: Music for praise, worship, and activities was provided by our talented youth from Madera, CA and Hazleton, PA. Right: Youth had time for private reflection, prayer, and journaling. Center: Oblate Youth Day includes talks and presentations by Oblate priests and brothers.



70 Years of Priesthood

Fr. Aldo Grasso, O.S.J., celebrates his seventieth anniversary as a priest in the Oblates of St. Joseph.

The Piedmont region of northwestern Italy, the land of St. Joseph Marello (Founder of the Oblates of St. Joseph), became quite famous through the centuries for their native men and women of great sanctity who responded generously to the call of Christ and helped re-build the Catholic Church with the formation of new religious congregations and ecclesiastical movements that brought a renewed zeal to religious life in Italy and beyond. Among the many religious orders that benefitted from the presence of these faithful consecrated religious and priests, was the Congregation of the Oblates of Saint Joseph. When this religious family first began in 1878 in Asti, Italy, by St. Joseph



Fr. Aldo Grasso, O.S.J., at the Mass of his ordination anniversary.

Marello, it immediately gathered local young men consumed with love for God and His Church. That tradition continued for many decades well past the death of our saintly Founder in 1895 as the Oblates continued to grow in number and expand outside the Piedmont region of Italy even into foreign mission countries. As many were drawn to serve Christ in “imitation of St. Joseph,” among them was Fr. Aldo Grasso, O.S.J., a

native son of the Italian Piedmont region, who just recently celebrated his 70th anniversary of ordination to the Holy Priesthood.

Father Grasso, born on July 4, 1917 to Giovanni & Giuseppina Grasso of Asti, Italy, was one of eleven children. After entering the Oblates of St. Joseph

Seminary in that area as a young boy, he persevered in his studies for the Priesthood and was ordained in Asti on June 18, 1944, shortly after the D-Day invasion, by Bishop Umberto Rossi. Immediately after his ordination, he was made chaplain to the underground movement during World War II. He was in direct secret communication with Bishop Angelo Roncalli (future Pope Saint John XXIII) for the rescue and exchange of prisoners of war. During the war, he issued special certificates to many Jewish families in order

to save them from harassment and eventual death by the occupying hostile forces.

After serving in various capacities throughout northern and southern Italy, on July 4, 1948, he arrived in New York by ship and was assigned briefly to assist the Oblates of St. Joseph serving the poor Italian immigrants in the coal mining area of northeastern Pennsylvania, namely in the parish of St. Anthony of Padua,

Exeter. Shortly afterwards, he was sent to California serving in Oblate-staffed parishes as well as other capacities including Superior of the Oblate California delegation. His final official assignment came in 1980 where he would spend the next 34 years at the Shrine of St. Joseph, Guardian of the Redeemer, in Santa Cruz, CA, residing there with the community of brothers and priests. Due to failing health, it was decided that his physical needs would be better served by moving him to the New Bethany Nursing Facility in Los Banos, CA, staffed by the Franciscan Hospitalier Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. He was transferred there permanently on March 24, 2014.

A beautiful celebration honoring Fr. Grasso’s 70th anniversary of priestly ordination was celebrated in the chapel at the New Bethany facility on June 25, 2014 with the Sisters and residents in attendance. Also present were Rev. Paul McDonnell, O.S.J. (USA provincial superior); Rev. Brian Crawford, O.S.J. (General Councillor-Rome, Italy); Rev. Jackson Pinhero, O.S.J. (Associate shrine director, Santa Cruz) and a few friends who traveled from Santa Cruz to be present for the festivities. A luncheon followed in the community dining room for all to enjoy and share in the joy of one of the “eldest sons” of St. Joseph Marello as he celebrated this milestone anniversary.

New Seminarists

THE HOLY SPOUSES Province of the United States has received three new seminarists into the initial stages of formation. José Batista (Hazleton, PA), Brian Ceja (Bakersfield, CA), and René Vargas (Madera, CA) were welcomed as Aspirants on July 8, 2014 at Mount St. Joseph in Loomis, CA. They have since begun a program to continue to know their vocation through prayer, academic studies, manual labor, and a generous self-offering of themselves to God.

“The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest” (Matt 9:38).



A Missionary Spirit

by Fr. Gregory Finn, O.S.J.

Fr. Gregory Finn continues his reflection on the apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis, reflecting on that joy which should just shine out of the Church as a whole and each individual Catholic, sees that the energy which this joy stirs up, should be “missionary” in spirit. When we use the word “missionary” what first comes to mind is the person who has dedicated themselves to bringing the Light of Christ to far away, desolate and impoverished places. We hear about them on Mission Sunday, and perhaps we support them with donations and prayers as they go about this great work of making sure all the world has heard of Christ and His salvation. However, not everyone is called to do precisely that - but everyone is called, simply by being redeemed by Christ - to having the spirit of a missionary: the inner enthusiasm over their Faith, the impulse to want to share it widely, the happiness in living it and helping others to live it too, the heartfelt restlessness that we are personally incomplete if there are fellow human beings, near or far, who do

not know Christ, who do not know their Faith, who do not appreciate the treasures the Church offers us. This is what the Holy Father would like to see in the hearts and lives of every believing Catholic!

You might suppose that that is asking a lot! The Holy Father doesn't think so, and he is but following the Lord Jesus Himself who urged us all to go out and spread the Good News. It is only a lot if we think solely in terms of what the professional full time missionaries do: preaching, teaching, church building, fighting poverty and injustice, promoting a new Christian society where there were pagan ones before. What every Catholic can do might be more modest, but if done with the same spirit, can accomplish much. Can you live your Faith with integrity and joy? Can you be bold enough to live it when others around you do not? Can you occasionally speak of what you believe and the principles you hold to those who ask? Can you try to ensure your family is a little corner of the world where Christ is honored? Can you be a peaceful but solid model of virtue at work or in public? Can you voice your

values when it comes to voting or expressing your opinions on things that matter? Can you make efforts to further deepen your personal relationship to Christ in prayer, and grow in your understanding of His teaching through study and reflection? Can you be a wholly loyal member of the Catholic Church? If so - you can live with a missionary spirit!

The Pope has high expectations for the revival of our missionary spirit. The whole thrust of the New Evangelization is not so much its content - for the content is the one and only message: God so loved the world that He sent His Son, Jesus, who died to save us and rose to extend life to us, and that to all those who enter into relationship with Him there is the incredible joy of union with God that lasts forever. No, what is “new” is not the message, but the manner. We must enliven our own relationships with the Lord, and, filled with that life and energy, infuse every aspect of our lives with the love of God in Christ Jesus, and by means of that seek to draw others to meet Christ too. The Pope desires that every one of us Catholics be on board!



Thus there is no room for the “same old, same old”, or “lets keep things the way they are” or “we've always done it this way.” We human beings can all too often become fixed in comfortable, but ever less effective, patterns. This goes for the routines of our daily lives, for our human relationships, but even for our spiritual lives. The complacency that cushions us can become blinders that sap the joy and energy out of our faith and simply leave us going through the motions. There is no attraction to a faith lived like that, no missionary spirit. We cannot settle for this! If we appreciate in even the smallest way what Christ has done for us, then we have to constantly re-motivate ourselves for Him and His mission.

The Holy Father is under no illusions that this will be easy, or that it will go smoothly. In fact he anticipates that it will meet with resistance! The first resistance is from ourselves, for we are often slow and reluctant to shake ourselves into greater efforts. However, there will also be the resistance of certain segments of our Church that are too locked into customary ways of doing things - patterns that might no longer be meeting the needs of the people they serve, or conveying the joy and conviction of the message of Christ. There may also be resistance on the part of those who oppose Christianity. The spirit of the world has never vanished, and to every effort of encouragement towards Christ and the eternal goal, there are efforts to focus purely on

this world and its attractions. The world not only opposes, it persecutes. The missionary spirit we are seeking must be ready to meet these resistances and persevere with trust in the Lord, unafraid of the effort or even the resistance and suffering that might have to be endured. The reason for our effort and perseverance should be clear - we know Christ and His love and this trumps all fear, all suffering and all opposition. It is the reason why the Saints and the Martyrs went forward joyfully and confidently, and why they drew countless others to Christ. This is the missionary spirit we need to cultivate today!

Fr. Gregory Finn, O.S.J., is the pastor of Holy Annunciation parish in Hazleton, PA.

We are excited to share with you in the next few pages some thoughts from two of our Lay Associates, members of the Josephite-Marellian family that have made a deeper commitment to serve Jesus in imitation of St. Joseph. If you are interested in the Lay Associate program, please visit osjusa.org/slim/associates for more info.

What is a Lay Associate?

by Celia Meehan

In his last visit to the United States, the Superior General of the Oblates of St. Joseph, Fr. Michele Piscopo, O.S.J., asked the Lay Associates working in California to share with others what it means to live our particular consecration. I could sum up the Lay Associate vocation by saying that it involves a rich sharing in the spirituality of the Oblates of St. Joseph. But concretely what does being a Lay Associate entail?

Our training to be a Lay Associate lasts about two years and begins with regular study and discussion along with an Oblate priest, brother or Lay Associate mentor. Our studies include the history of St. Joseph Marelo and the Oblates of St. Joseph. During this process we reflect on the personal commitment required of us to be a Lay As-

sociate: participation in the Liturgy of the Hours and regular Sunday and daily Mass, daily rosary, weekly service to Oblate apostolates and works, promotion of vocations to the Oblates of St. Joseph, and a personal commitment to serve Jesus in imitation of St. Joseph.

At the end of this training, the candidate requests permission from the Superior General to make a private profession of vows. If permission is granted, the candidate goes through a ceremony of being invited by the local provincial, and the Associate responds with his or her promises.

As Lay Associates we try to balance sharing our Catholic faith at work, school, home, and at church. We are called to share what we have received: joy in living our Catholic faith in the spirituality of

St. Joseph Marelo and under his patronage. We find strength in our creed, in the blessings of sacramental grace, and in the consolations of scripture. We admire the beauty of the liturgy and the peace of prayer. In short, the Lay Associate becomes a disciple of Christ working in the New Evangelization!

The vocation to be a Lay Associate is both a humble call and a great blessing. Whether we work in front of many in positions of leadership, or work behind the scenes in relative obscurity, we build up the Catholic culture of family and life, working alongside the Oblates of St. Joseph.

Celia Meehan serves a Lay Associate at the Shrine of St. Joseph, Guardian of the Redeemer, in Santa Cruz, CA.

Called to be a Lay Associate

by Michele Spencer

I remember vacationing with my family, as a kid in the 60s, on a hot July afternoon, sitting in the stifling waiting room of a VW repair shop in the Central Valley of California, wondering who would choose to live in such a dreadfully hot place. Yet thirty years later, in October 1991, our family of 10 found itself loaded into a 28 foot U-haul truck, traveling north to Madera, CA.

We had grown tired of the hectic life we lived in San Diego and we had always had a deep desire to live in the country. There had been many signs in that last year that God wanted us to look elsewhere for home and work. But little did we know that God would use our urgency to leave San Diego to

lead us from temperate and balmy Southern California to the blistering heat of the Central Valley. While we didn't realize it at the

Joseph Marelo that staffed the parish. Even though we had made few new friends and had no family in the area, within a few months we

began to feel that we had come home. The preaching, teaching and faithfulness of the Oblates to Catholic doctrine as well as the witness of lives lived for Christ in a hidden, humble and simple way in imitation of St. Joseph was truly refreshing and began to revitalize



Some Lay Associates and Associates-in-formation gather in Loomis for a retreat in March 2014.

time, God was about to use our move north to deepen our friendship with Him.

Almost immediately after our arrival, God led us to St. Joachim Church, an Oblate parish in Madera, and soon we met the Oblates of St. Joseph, the order of priests and brothers founded by St.

our own lackadaisical, cafeteria-style Catholicism.

Some years passed as God continued to patiently transform us into better Catholics, and to invite us to a more intimate relationship with Him, especially under the direction of St. Joseph Marelo and his Oblates. Along the way my

husband Tom and I came across a brochure describing the Lay Associates of the Oblates of St. Joseph. The brochure sat on the desk in our home office for a year, a subtle and patient invitation to take another step in our journey. As the brochure described, "Associates to the Oblates of St. Joseph are lay men and women (and priests) without profession of vows who choose to live a life of consecration to God and the Church in a spirit of collaboration with the Oblates.... they live the spirituality of St. Joseph according to the model of Marelllo, join with the Oblates in prayer, and work closely with the Oblates in a number of areas, including youth ministry, parish ministry, vocation ministry, social apostolate, missionary apostolate and spreading devotion to St. Joseph."

After meeting with our pastor and discussing it, we decided to apply to be Lay Associates. Tom and I have been Lay Associates for seven years now, and it has transformed our spiritual life in ways we never imagined.

Recently the California Lay Associates were invited by the US provincial, Fr. Paul McDonnell, to make a retreat together this past March 14-16, 2014. We found ourselves together with two other Lay Associates and three Associates-in-information, in beautiful Loomis, CA at Mount St. Joseph, a seminary

and retreat center for the Oblates of St. Joseph. It was the first retreat of the Lay Associates of the Holy Spouses Province. Providentially, it took place on the anniversary of the publication of St. John Paul II's *Redemptoris Custos*, the apostolic letter on St. Joseph, and during the annual novena leading up to the great feast of St. Joseph.

The retreat was a beautiful time of quiet, shared prayer and community meals. The retreat included conferences on St. Joseph and vocation ministry, Adoration and benediction, confession, Liturgy of the Hours, recitation of the Holy Spouses Rosary, and opportunities to meet together with Fr. Paul. The meetings were especially helpful and fruitful, as they were opportunities to ask questions and discuss what it means to live as Lay Associates. The highlight of the retreat was the time spent in community meals and prayer with the Oblates. It gave us the sense of truly belonging to the Oblate family. It was a powerful reminder that this beautiful life God has called us to live as Lay Associates to the Oblates of St. Joseph is helping each of us to grow in holiness both individually and together.

The Lay Associate program is still in its infancy and much work is still needed to develop it but the beauty of this opportunity to live more fully the spirituality of St. Jo-

seph Marelllo is very evident to all who share in it. As our Province is one of the first to begin to develop the program, the superior general, Fr. Michele Piscopo, has asked the Lay Associates in California to help in shaping the program so that it can be further cultivated and carried to more Oblate provinces throughout the world giving more people the opportunity to live this beautiful spirituality.

Living as Lay Associates these past seven years reminds us that God is not done with us. He continues to call us to make a home for Him in our hearts as St. Joseph did. In 1991, that 28 ft. U-haul trailer contained most of our earthly possessions. We didn't need the majority of things we thought so dear. Living as Lay Associates, sharing in the prayer life and work of the Oblates, as well as the tremendous spiritual fruits and benefits of the Oblates of St. Joseph, reminds us again and again to build a home for God and to fill the hole that only God can fill with the things of God rather than the things we so often think we need.

Michele Spencer lives with her husband Tom outside of Madera, CA. They remain active parishioners of St. Joachim Church in Madera.

TEN DAY CALIFORNIA CLASSIC

Fr. Paul McDonnell, O.S.J. along with the Josephite-Marellian Laity of the East Coast invite you to join them for ten fabulous days in sunny California.

OCTOBER 20-29, 2014

WE WILL TRAVEL together for ten wonderful days of sightseeing and visiting members of the California Oblate communities and parishes. We will have the opportunity to visit, share fellowship and enjoy hosted dinners with them. We will also have plenty of time to tour many of the famous California sights along the way.

Included Tours

- Morning tour of Alcatraz Prison
- Guided four hour afternoon tour of San Francisco
- Full day tour of Sonoma and Napa with wine tastings
- Guided tour of the Sacramento Capitol Building and Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament
- Full day tour including Monterey, Pebble Beach Golf Course & 17 mile drive, Carmel by the Sea and Carmel Mission
- Monterey Mission & Cathedral of San Carlos Borromeo
- Guided Tour of Ronald Reagan Library (Simi Valley)
- Guided four hour tour of Los Angeles
- Private Touring Coach to destinations

Sixteen Meals Included

- 8 Breakfasts 1 Brunch 1 Lunch 6 Dinners
- Dinners include: a gourmet welcome dinner San Francisco, dinner in Napa, hosted dinners at various parishes and a farewell dinner in Los Angeles

Accommodations Included

- 2 nights at the Grand Hyatt Union Square, San Francisco
- 2 nights at the Hyatt Place, Roseville
- 2 Nights at the Dream Inn, Santa Cruz (beach front)
- 1 night at the Hampton Inn & Suites, Madera
- 2 nights at the Beverly Hilton, Los Angeles

\$2,999 per person (based on double occupancy)

A non-refundable deposit of \$400 is required in order to confirm your reservation. Final payment is due August 20, 2014. Single and Triple rates are available upon request. Optional trip cancellation insurance is available.

Please contact Susan Gorham of TRAVELWORLD to make your reservation: (570) 288-9311

Return to the Michelerio

by Fr. John Shearer, O.S.J.

From June 16-20 at Mt. St. Joseph Seminary in Loomis, CA, we were blessed with the opportunity to have our first weeklong vocation experience in our newly formed province. The Lord blessed us with seven young men who desired to have a more intense experience of the Oblate way of life. Apart from Fr. Sergio and I, we were blessed with the presence and assistance of quite a few Oblate confreres! Fr. Paul McDonnell, Fr. Victor Garcia, Fr. Matthew Spencer, Fr. Phil Massetti, Fr. Shaji Athipozhi, Bro. David Pohorsky and Bro. Stephen Spencer all participated in some fashion, which really added to our retreat.

We decided to name this experience the Michelerio Retreat. The Michelerio is very dear to us as Oblates because it reminds us of our humble beginning as a congregation. St. Joseph Marello gathered four men,

and together they began to live a life dedicated to serving Jesus in imitation of St. Joseph in the confines of a little room at the Michelerio Institute in Asti. In that room, the early Oblates lived a simple community life, striving to grow in holiness each day. The spiritual strength they gained through God's grace and their open hearts enabled them to go out and share Christ with their brothers and sisters in need.

This retreat truly was an experience of the Michelerio for the young men who attended and for us Oblates. The focus was on Oblate community living, which is a hallmark of our way of life. At the heart of each day was Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. We began each morning our time of silent meditation before the Blessed Sacrament, the Liturgy of the Hours and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Then, after a good

breakfast, we had a conference each day on a different aspect of the spirituality of St. Joseph Marello using the Marellian Pathways as our guide (for a free e-copy of the booklet see: <http://www.marellobookstore.org/page/marellian-pathways>). After some time for silent reflection, we made our daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament, had lunch, cleaned the kitchen and, in true Oblate spirit, went to work. Once work period was completed, we had time for some fun and recreation. Around 5:15pm, we invoked the intercession of our Blessed Mother by praying the Rosary while walking the grounds at Mount St. Joseph. Following the Rosary, we gathered again in the Chapel for Evening Prayer. We were blessed with delicious dinners each night that were donated by our generous benefactors at Mount St. Joseph and St. Joseph Marello Church in Granite Bay. In a lighthearted way, it has been said that a good appetite is a sign of a vocation, and our friends made sure that we had plenty to eat! Once the dishes were done and everything put away, there was an evening conference (except on Thursday, as we prayed a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament). At 9:00pm, we gathered in the chapel for Night Prayer, which was followed by silence until the next morning. As you can see, we had a pretty full schedule, but it was balanced between prayer, reflection, service, work, recreation, community time and silence.

One memorable outing during the retreat was an overnight trip to St. Joseph's Villa in Soda Springs, CA. The cabin provides a very nice atmosphere for growth in fraternal community life. Once we arrived and settled in, we took a short drive around Donner Lake and showed the guys a little bit of Lake Tahoe. When we got back to the cabin, the Holy Spirit spontaneously moved us into a time of praise and worship that filled us with great joy and energized us for the next day. After waking up early, we celebrated Mass and then went for a hike to the top of Castle Peak. It was definitely an adventure. The journey reminded some of the re-



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treatants of our spiritual lives. At times, it seemed too difficult, dangerous or scary to continue climbing, but with God's assistance and persevering hearts, we made it.

We would like to thank everyone who assists us with your prayers and support for our Oblate vocation ministry. The many ways you express your generosity truly help foster, promote and support vocations to the religious life and priesthood. Our personal vocations are great treasures from God that lead us to Heaven and fill us with true happiness and peace, for our vocations form us into disciples of Christ. In a draft for the Rule of our Congregation, St. Joseph Marello reflected on those who might be called to the Oblate way of life: "Withdrawing therein with the resolve to remain hidden and silently active in imitation of that great Model of a poor and obscure life, he will have an opportunity to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ." Through our simple lifestyle in which we strive to imitate St. Joseph's example of prayer, hard work, service and family living, we grow closer to Christ. I believe that this year's Michelerio Retreat truly helped our young men on retreat and us Oblates to deepen our relationship with Jesus.

Please continue to pray for the young men who visited us on retreat and for the many others who are being called by the Lord to serve Jesus in imitation of St. Joseph as Oblate brothers and priests here in the United States.

Fr. John Shearer, O.S.J. and Fr. Sergio Perez, O.S.J. serve as vocation directors of the Holy Spouses Province.



News & Events

SANTA CRUZ, CA

- On Divine Mercy Sunday (April 27) an image was blessed at the 11:00 AM Mass and enthroned on the wall of the Shrine confessional. The Divine Mercy image was generously donated by a benefactor who wishes to remain anonymous. The Oblates of St. Joseph of the Santa Cruz community, along with friends and visitors are most grateful for this gift reminding us daily of God's Infinite Mercy, especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- A Eucharistic celebration honoring St. Joseph the Worker took place on May 1st. The day also served to initiate the month of May traditionally dedicated to our Blessed Mother. Shrine rector, Fr. McDonnell, spoke on the Province's promotion of the Holy Spouses devotion and most appropriately on this particular day of the Church's calendar.
- In conjunction with the local Santa Cruz Council of the Knights of Columbus, a special Mass honoring Our Lady of Fatima was celebrated on May 13th by Rev. Jackson Pinhero, O.S.J., associate shrine director. An outdoor procession around the shrine grounds with the Blessed Mother followed the Mass, accompanied by the Knights Color Guard and numerous faithful.
- Following a month of renovations on the sacristy shrine, daily operations resumed on May 15th providing a more adequate environment for such a venerable space that serves in storing the sacred vessels and vestments used for the celebration of Mass. Carpeting was also installed in the adjacent St. Joseph Exhibit and bookstore.

- The Shrine celebrated the Feast of the Founder of the Oblates of St. Joseph, St. Joseph Marello, on May 30th. The feast day celebration was preceded by a three-day spiritual preparation (triduum) at the regularly scheduled daily Masses.
- The Feast of Corpus Domini (June 22) was solemnly celebrated at the Sunday 11:00am Mass. Following the Mass, an outdoor procession of the Holy Eucharist was held throughout the shrine grounds. The numerous lay faithful were joyful to participate in this ancient custom on the solemnity honoring the Most Holy Eucharist.

BAKERSFIELD, CA

- On June 21, Our Lady of Guadalupe parish hosted a Forum on Religious Liberty to discuss the importance of religious freedom in our country, and to promote awareness of dangers to religious freedom in recent months. Speakers included professionals, a legislator, a doctor, and an Oblate of St. Joseph Catholic priest.
- On the weekend of June 7-8, Holy Spirit Mission celebrated a solemn vigil for the feast of Pentecost on Saturday night, followed by their annual festival on Sunday.



- Also on June 8, Our Lady of Guadalupe parish recognized the 10th anniversary of Fr. Steve Peterson's priestly ordination by sharing food and fellowship at the pavilion on Brundage Lane. The parish is grateful to God for Fr. Steve's continued service and his religious and priestly vocation.

- The entire parish community is proud of Brian Ceja and Guadalupe Cueto, who are both entering into formation as religious. Brian has started his initial formation at Mount St. Joseph to be an Oblate of St. Joseph, and Guadalupe will be continuing her formation as a postulant with the Oblate Sisters of St. Joseph in Rome, Italy. Please pray for both of them.

PITTSTON, PA

- St. Joseph Marello parish hosted its annual summer picnic on July 11, 12 & 13 on the parish grounds. Festivities included food, drink, games, baskets bingo and an in-door flea market.
- Once again the Association of the Josephite Marellian Laity from Pittston, PA sponsored a day at Saint Vincent De Paul Soup Kitchen in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on Saturday, June 28th. They gave a monetary donation of \$125 and volunteered their time to help prepare and serve the hungry in our community. Thank you to all members who shared their most important gift of time for this humbling experience.



- Laity from Pittston, Hazleton, and the entire East Coast are organizing themselves to participate in the Ten Day California Classic trip to see many of the sites of California. Please see page 13 for more information.

MADERA, CA

- St. Joachim parish had a vibrant celebration in honor of the feast of St. Joseph Marello on May 30. The activities included an evening Mass as well as a dinner for the parish hosted by the youth.
- On June 28, St. Joachim parish hosted a Walk for Vocations to encourage awareness and openness to vocations to the priestly and consecrated life. It was organized by the youth of the parish, and included a solemn Holy Hour in prayer for vocations.
- The pilgrim icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa will be coming to Madera on August 2-3. Make sure to come by the parish for this once in a lifetime event!



- The monthly gathering for men who are discerning their vocation continues to be held on the last Friday of every month at the rectory. Men interested in the religious life and the priesthood are invited to attend. Please contact the parish office for more information.

LOOMIS, CA & GRANITE BAY, CA

St. Joseph Mareello parish held its first ever summer picnic on June 1. Parishioners enjoyed barbequed hamburgers and hot dogs along with potluck sides and desserts, a bounce house and games for the children, music, a raffle, and most importantly a shared appreciation for the gift of the parish family.

The seminary chapel at Mount St. Joseph has reopened after extensive renovations, though small tasks are still being completed. The community is so grateful to all who made the renovations possible. The chapel is normally open to visitors during daytime hours, so feel free to come by to visit with Jesus and see the new floors, lighting, pews, and much more.

St. Joseph Mareello parish hosted again its annual Vacation Bible School for children from June 23-27. This year, Fr. Sergio Perez, O.S.J. organized the week of activities with the help of many generous volunteers from the parish, both youth and adults.

St. Joseph Mareello parish is sponsoring a ten week summer series of adult faith formation taking place on Mondays and Thursdays. The program will use the Symbolon RCIA series of videos and discussions. Response thus far has been fantastic.

Mount St. Joseph celebrates the 50th anniversary of its founding this fall. The Oblates in Loomis are preparing two days of celebration scheduled for September 12th and 13th. Festivities will include a solemn Thanksgiving Mass, an evening social, historical displays of the Oblates' work at Mount St. Joseph, an open house, and a picnic luncheon. More details to come.

ITALY

Fr. Michele Piscopo, the Superior General of the Oblates of St. Joseph started his canonical visit of the Oblate Provinces in Perú and Brazil. He traveled from Rome to Spain and on to Perú in early July, and he will spend the next several months visiting Oblate communities in South America. Please pray for his safe travels and for all of the Oblates working in South America.

MOZAMBIQUE

One of the newest missions of the Oblates of St. Joseph can be found in Mozambique. Seeking to spread the Gospel in new territory, the Oblates in Brazil spearheaded the efforts to open a new mission in Mozambique. They are being helped financially from Oblates around the world, including the Oblates of the Holy Spouses Province in the United States.



INDONESIA

On July 2, the Oblates from the Philippines have opened the first mission of the Oblates in Indonesia. As the Oblates' first mission outside of Italy was in the Philippines, so we desire to continue spreading the Gospel to all. Please pray for this newest mission of the Oblates.

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What are you looking for?

by Fr. Matthew Spencer, O.S.J.

In April 2008, I traveled back East and ended up in a small grassy field forty minutes outside of New York City. I was a seminarian at the time, and I was visiting a seminary in Yonkers, NY, along with tens of thousands of youth from all over the country. We had all come because Pope Benedict XVI, who was in the middle of his trip to the United States, was going to speak to us. As we all stood there in the sun, the Pope in front of us, he looked at us and asked us all a



simple question: "What about today, what are you seeking?" And maybe somebody who was watching it on

TV might have thought that answer was obvious: "Well, it's you! They're seeking you out today. These youth came from across the country to see you, Holy Father!" And they would be partly right in saying that: in spite of the resources we had to put together to make the trip, in spite of the difficult travel, and the challenges along the way, we had gone to listen to a man of faith share his wisdom with us.

But that is not what the Pope meant when he asked us the ques-

tion of course. He was not asking us what we were looking for at that moment; he was asking, "What are you looking for in life?" He was asking us to look within ourselves and to find out what it is that our heart desires, what it is that will lead us to true fulfillment.

But Benedict wasn't the first person to ask what we are seeking. Two thousand years ago, Jesus asked some of his first disciples, "What are you looking for?" (John 1:38) Like Pope Benedict, he wasn't asking the disciples why they were following him at that moment; he was asking them, what are you looking for in life? What are you looking for that will satisfy all the longings of your heart? What are you looking for that will give you hope in life? It's the question of Jesus that forces them to stop and ask themselves, what is it that we want in life?

What is it that you and I are looking for? If we are seeking security in the stock market here, we will probably be disappointed. If we are looking for real estate to make us millionaires, we will be let down. There are so many things with which we can try to fill our hearts, and so many of them will only lead us to disappointment.

As Benedict said on that same day, "The hope which never disappoints is Jesus Christ." So the question that Benedict asked us some years ago is the question that Jesus asks us each day of our lives. "What am I looking for?" This is a question that each of us has to ask ourselves, and that only you can answer. He knows the difficulties we face, in our relationships, in our sinfulness, in our wallets. And he knows that each one of us longs for something more than what we are going to find this side of heaven. He calls each one of us by name, inviting us to get to know him better, to love him by saying yes to him and following him. As Jesus turned to his first disciples two thousand years ago and asked them, "What are you looking for?," today he asks each one of us, "What are you looking for?" Let us seek Jesus, and let us put our sights on the hope that never disappoints, Jesus our Lord.

Fr. Matthew serves as Director of Communications for the Holy Spouses Province and as rector at Mount St. Joseph Seminary and Novitiate in Loomis, CA. You can reach him at m Spencer@osjusa.org.

Calling

The Oblates of St. Joseph are a religious community of priests and brothers founded in 1878 by St. Joseph Marelllo. They:

- Dedicate themselves to serve Jesus in imitation of St. Joseph
- Foster a rich interior life through prayer and meditation
- Are devoted to the Eucharist, the sacraments and the liturgy
- Work in the catechesis of youth and in pastoral ministry
- Nurture a special relationship with the Blessed Mother
- Live a humble and hidden life in Christ

Remember the Oblates of St. Joseph in your Will and Estate Plan

A simplest way to make a gift to the Oblates of St. Joseph is through a bequest in your will. Such bequests help us continue our mission in many ways. They support our missionary efforts both within and outside of the U.S.A, provide upkeep and assistance to our poorer houses and ministries of the Province, and assist in the cost of forming candidates for the brotherhood and the priesthood.

Here is the suggested wording you can use when writing a charitable bequest to the Oblates of St. Joseph:

"I, (your name), of (city, state, zip), give and bequeath to the Oblates of St. Joseph of the Holy Spouses Province U.S.A., (written amount, percentage of residuary estate, or description of specific property) for its unrestricted use and purpose."

For more information, please contact the Provincial headquarters:

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544 West Cliff Dr., Santa Cruz, CA 95060
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