SPECIAL VIEW 201

Fall 2015

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

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, may our families always live in faith, hope, and love, after the example of the Holy Family."





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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 quarterly 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: Painting of the Holy Family by Pawel Domaszewicz, located at the Basilica of Our Lady of Licheń in Licheń Stary, Poland.

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

Greetings and blessings to each of you and your families!

I feel it is most appropriate that I make reference to your families in my salutary greeting because we are within the exciting time of the World Meeting



of Families Conference scheduled to be held in the "City of Brotherly Love", Philadelphia, PA, starting September 22nd and culminating with the Mass of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, on Sunday, September 27th. Our Church is celebrating the gift of family

and the urgent need to protect and defend it during this time when it is under a tremendous amount of stress and attack by our secular world. I am aware that for some the term "family" can conjure up a wide range of feelings and emotions, for many of us it means happiness, safety, comfort, love and security, but unfortunately for many others, it can connote fear, worry, sorrow, pain, abuse and violence. In our modern society we cannot simply assume that the sense of family or its reality automatically translates itself into positive emotions.

We are called to assist those families that are hurting and struggling, especially those families where God is absent and a deep connection to the the Church is almost non-existent. This is where we turn to the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary & Joseph—and ask for their powerful and loving influence over all families so that they may become sanctuaries where God dwells. Being a mom and dad today is risky and terrifying; its demands everything we have and are and it is oftentimes filled with pain and doubt and despair. Yet to be a parent is to be a coworker with the Father of all, whose love for us, his sons and

daughters, knows neither limit nor condition. In the struggles of fear and anguish experienced by the Holy Family, we realize that the light of God shines in the midst of our own families as we confront those same tensions and crises in our life together.

As Oblates of St. Joseph priests, brothers, seminarians, sisters and laity we recognize and uphold the value of each and every family as a "domestic church," fittingly labeled by Pope Saint John Paul II. Even generations ago, our holy founder, St. Joseph Marello (1844-1895) understood the family unit as the fundamental foundation of society and the unique place where children learn their Christian Faith and ultimately become responsible citizens. His pastoral letters written in 1892 and 1894 as Bishop of Acqui (diocese in northwestern Italy) highlight his thoughts and teaching on this in an exceptional way.

We, the Oblates of St. Joseph religious family, will be proud to be represented at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia and to be in the company of our Holy Father. It is an exciting time for us as we promote through our ministries the sanctity of Marriage with the devotion to the Holy Spouses, and consequently the sanctity of the family. May this fall issue of our CUSTOS magazine help you to understand better how our religious congregation walks in union with Holy Mother Church by teaching and promoting all that is sacred and God-centered.

May we feel divine strength within ourselves and our families as we strive to combat the errors taught by today's world, errors that seek to weaken the very foundation of society and the Church. The Holy Family of Joseph and Mary and Jesus is a model for all of us as we struggle to make our own families holy places of peace and love.

Lovingly yours within the Family of God,

Rev. Paul A. McDonnell, o. S. J. Very Rev. Paul A. McDonnell, O.S.V. Provincial Superior, Holy Spouses Province

World Meeting of Families

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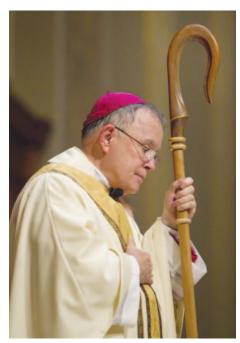
not just wrong," but

ried that it

by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

As this issue goes to print, the United States is gearing up for the visit of Pope Francis. In union with our country and indeed the world, we are happy to share with you the following column written by Archbishop Chaput on July 22, 2015 in preparation for these exciting events.

When Pope John Paul II chose Denver for World Youth Day 1993, skeptics were aghast. Colorado was an empty square in the middle of nowhere. A second-tier city with a Ku Klux Klan legacy, Denver was planted in the most "unchurched" region of the United States. It was more than 1,000 miles from any historic center of Catholic life. It had all the warning signs of a disaster.



Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

converged on the city, the crime rate dropped to nearly zero during the week, and the final papal Mass brought together as many as 750,000 pilgrims. World Youth Day profoundly changed the local Church, the city and the state. It sparked an energy that continues more than 20 years later. The change took time. There were no miracles of the sun. No sudden spike in baptisms. No surge in

Mass attendance or priestly vocations. A year after the event, some people wondered if the whole thing had just been a very big party, with some religion thrown

But over the next few years, the spirit of the place gradually came alive in dramatic ways. A generation of Catholic young adults had found their faith, the Pope, and the presence of Jesus Christ in a life-changing way at World Youth Day. And as time went by, the local Church served as a tractor beam for scholars, teachers, seminarians, youth ministers, new apostolic communities, ministries and movements, young families and dedicated Catholics from around the country.

To put it simply: World Youth Day remade and reignited the Church in Colorado. Two decades later, the fruit of that conversion is still being harvested. And if a miracle could happen in Denver, the same miracle

might happen—with God's grace and a lot of work—almost anywhere else.

So much for background.

Three years ago, the Holy See asked if Philadelphia would stand as one of the possible sites for the World Meeting of Families in 2015. Saying "yes" wasn't easy: At the time, Philadelphia's local Church faced very serious problems.

Yet our priests and laypeople warmed to the idea immediately. From the start, public officials and business leaders actively committed their help. In September, with as many as 15,000 visi-

tors expected for the family congress, and more than 1 million for the closing papal events, the economic impact for Greater Philadelphia could be extraordinary. For the Church, this global meeting offers a chance to renew Catholic life in the city where our nation began.

Of course, Philadelphia 2015 is a long way from Denver 1993. A mass gathering of families is different from a meeting of young adults. Colorado was largely unchurched. Pennsylvania has deep religious roots. The Church in Colorado was small and young. The Church in Philadelphia is large in numbers but older in her demographic profile. She also has a much longer legacy of social service and organized presence in the community.

Most importantly, today's world is very different from even 20 years ago; but not nearly as different as the world will be 20 years from now. Marriage, family and the raising of children with a strong faith—these things are under great pressure today from the sur-

> rounding culture. The future in Philadelphia and worldwide will have big challenges for anyone serious about being Christian. It will need a new generation of disciples formed by joy and perseverance.

The family is where new life begins: new life for the world; new life for the nation; new life for the Church. It's where we learn love and patience, and how to work with others in peace. Encouraging this new life is the purpose of the World Meeting of Families. It's the reason Pope Francis is coming across an ocean to Philadelphia... The World Meeting of Families is a moment for new beginnings and a new spirit of hope.

Archbishop Chaput is the ordinary of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and has been instrumental in the implementation and success of the World Meeting of Families 2015.



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"El Padre Viejo"

by Linda Gomez

In commemoration of the canonization of Junipero Serra taking place on September 23, 2015, we are blessed to be able to share with you this insightful and original work written specifically for **CUSTOS** magazine by a member of the Oblate parish of St. Joseph Marello in Granite Bay, CA.

Junipero serra was a 56-yearold asthmatic with a gimpy leg when he reached Alta California in 1769. The frail, five-foot-two friar seemed ill suited for the rigors of missionary life in New Spain's northern frontier. But appearances are deceiving.

Born and reared in Petra, Mallorca, Miguel Jose Serra was a sickly kid. He joined the Franciscans at 16 and chose the name Junipero in honor of the "Holy Fool," one of St. Francis's early followers known for "guileless simplicity and celestial mirth."



Portrait of Junipero Serra by Fr. José Mosqueda. Image courtesy of the Huntington Library.

Serra excelled in his studies, earning a doctorate from Ramon Llull University in Palma de Mallorca, where he later taught philosophy and theology. The short, skinny priest was a popular, charismatic professor with a bright and comfortable future when in 1749 at the age of 36 he chucked it all to become a missionary in the Americas.

It took four ships and five months for Serra to sail from Mallorca to Mexico. He celebrated his arrival by walking almost 300 miles from Vera Cruz to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe to consecrate his mission. On that trek a spider or mosquito bit Serra's leg leaving an ulcerous open wound that tormented him until the day he died.

Serra toiled in Mexico for 16 years, first in the Sierra Gorda Mountains with the Pame tribe, then at the Colegio de San Fernando—Franciscan Missionary headquarters—in Mexico City. When the Jesuits were expelled in 1767 he was dispatched to Baja California to oversee their missions. The following year Spain pushed the frontier north to Alta California and Serra joined the expedition. At last he was where he wanted to be: In a new, virgin missionary world.

Serra knew he was a stranger, migrant and missionary on someone else's turf and wrote as much. "I am not the first to walk these lands, only the first Christian." Serra called Native Californians "Gentiles," employing the New Testament word for people unfamiliar with Christ. Considering "heathens, savages and barbarians" were the common terms of the time, in any European lingo, Serra showed an enlightened perspective from the start.

For the aged Franciscan it was a case of love at first sight. He wrote of the Native Californians' "gentleness and peaceful disposition," recorded their acts of kindness and generosity and admired the beauty of their singing voices. "They are our children, for nobody but us has engendered them in Christ. And so we look upon them as a father looks upon his children."

Guided by that belief, Serra was unstoppable. In less than 15 years he founded 9 missions and

baptized some 6,000 natives. He converted the environment as well as the inhabitants, whom he wrenched from nomadism into herding, tillage and industry. Contrary to popular myth, there were no forced baptisms. At least not on Serra's watch. Nor strong-armed conversions. [Serra endured a year in San Diego without a single baptism.] It wasn't until Carmel in

All Serra wanted was to do pastoral work. It's when he was happiest.

December 1771 that he performed his first Alta California baptism, with a 5-year-old boy name TK from the village of Achasta.

Missionary Vision

Serra was a visionary, but his vision was based on the Mallorcan countryside of his youth and Alta California was half a world away. Initially, cargo ships were the missions' lifeline so the Padre Presidente was meticulous with requests; he dictated the dimensions, wood, and hardware for shipping crates so they could later be turned into tables and chairs. Serra was ferocious in priorities. Plows, yokes, tools and rope topped the list, followed by seeds, vines, thread and cloth. Serra could never get enough fabric as it was greatly

coveted by the locals. The old friar quipped had he "given all the cloth requested he'd be surrounded by a hundred pagan Franciscans."

Armed with animals and agriculture the Franciscans transformed California. Rumor had it they got help straight from Assisi. Oxen, mules and horses provided muscle power while sheep, goats, chickens, pigs and cows lent

pastoral counsel. Native Californians were naturally curious about these odd creatures and the seemingly miraculous technologies of the

missions like wells and irrigation. Buildings of earth rose from the ground. A hole was dug and water was found. A stream was diverted and a garden grew with exotic new foods like beans, corn, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, garlic and chilies. Serra's philosophy was "to let them taste how sweet God is," because once they did they'd keep coming back.

All Serra wanted was to do pastoral work. It's when he was happiest. But as the missions grew so did his administrative duties and difficulties with the military. Serra never met a military governor he liked. He dealt with three and liked each one less than the last. "I feel as if I'm spending my life at a desk writing reports," he confided to a friend. But the pen was his sword

and for Serra, writing was fighting. He wrote thousands of pages denouncing both the Spanish military and civil authorities, complaining they were "men without any fear of God whatever in their hearts." He decried the systemic rape of indigenous women and fought for the removal of military officers who did nothing to stop it. When three years of writing changed nothing, El Gran Caminante—The Great Walker—left Monterey for Mexico City to plead before Viceroy Bucarelli on behalf of Native Californians.

He returned four thousand miles later in 1773 with the 32 article *Representaciones*, hailed as the first bill of rights for Native Americans or anyone else in North America. He was an advocate for human rights before the word existed. Los Angeles Archbishop Jose Gomez theorizes Serra doesn't get proper credit because he was a "working class' missionary—a guy who tried to get things done. His writing and thinking are practical, administrative. He was a problem solver, not a prophet."

Serra never wavered on the purpose of the missions. After the San Diego mission was burned and his friend Father Jayme was tortured to death during an uprising in 1775, Serra pleaded for the killers' lives. "Let the murderer live so he can be saved, which is the

sole purpose of our coming here and the reason for forgiving him." His next letter to the Viceroy insisted on a written pardon for any Indians that might kill him in the future. He wouldn't work without it

Junipero Serra
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Serra was a complex man. He was a gifted writer, administrator, teacher and preacher, a man driven, devoted, inspired and on fire with his love of God and desire to evangelize. He was an adherent of medieval spiritual practices (such as self-flagellation) and not uncomfortable with corporal punishment. He was a Trotamundos—a Globetrotter—who covered over 24,000 miles in his life, more than the combined travels of Marco Polo and Lewis and Clark. By the time Serra reached Monterey the fraile andariego—walking friar had journeyed over 15,000 miles

and seen a thing or two. He had a profound understanding of human nature and truly believed paternalistic religious rule offered Indians a better life than the exploitation promised by soldiers and settlers. He knew English colonists on the Eastern seaboard paid \$20 bounties for Indian scalps and had heard George Washington advocated Indian extermination. Russians had a terrible reputation at home with serfs; why would they be better in Alta California with Indians? Granted the alternatives of the 1770s, Spanish Colonialism didn't seem so bad to the Mallorcan friar.

niper was nobody's fool. Knowing soldiers on the outpost of empire couldn't be trusted near women, he moved the missions from the presidios. He actively discouraged Spanish settlers, fearing they'd exploit and enslave the Indians. El Padre Viejo thought the land belonged to the Native Californians and the only justification for Spanish presence was to bring the love of God.

Despite his chosen name, Ju-

A Life for the Gospel

In his last years Serra's sole desire was to administer confirmations. He traveled throughout the missions and established direct relationships with the baptized natives. The military authorities, jealous of his popularity and power, tried to stop him. But Serra was

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The Power of Mercy

by Fr. Gregory Finn, o.s.J.

Our holy father Pope Francis continues to lead us and challenge us as Catholics and genuine followers of Christ. In his Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Joy of the Gospel, he sought to motivate us to an authentic expression of our faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of us all, by urging us to seek Christ personally and be open to the joy that comes from living in union with Him. All those who open their hearts and believe in Him will know the wonder of His love and the power of His grace, and that gives us a level of happiness that the enjoyments of the earth cannot. It also provides a motivation to go out and share this joy with others—that everyone would revel in the beauty, the peace, the contentment, the fulfillment, the rejoicing of a life united to God!

This is what the Church is about as the organized Body of Christ, the great union of all believers of which he is the earthly leader, and this is also what each of us, the individual believer and follower of Christ must be about. Our Holy Father spent some time looking at the world and its challenges, looking at the Church and its challenges and suggesting how we might go about doing this. He especially suggested we become genuine "missionaries," carriers of the joyful message of Christ to as many as we can, with whatever means are at our disposal, by word of mouth and by deeds that demonstrate

As another step in this great project, Pope Francis has established a Holy Year: a Holy Year of Mercy! The idea of the "Holy Year" is an old one in the Church, taking its inspiration from the Bible itself where in ancient times God wanted a special year of both joy in gratitude for His bounties, and effort to live more

Right: Detail from Rembrandt's famous depiction of the parable of the Prodigal Son.

closely to Him. This was the "Jubilee Year" a time to celebrate all that God does, and to renew our dedication to Him. It was a Year filled with a special closeness to God, an abundance of His grace, and with activities





The Oblates of St. Joseph imitate the Holy Family in their common life. They live together in their religious communities and foster a true family spirit in their houses:

- In faithfulness to their daily rhythm of liturgy and prayer
- Through sharing common meals and schedules
- By participating together in ministry and recreation
- While supporting each other in the challenges and trials of life

Is God calling you to be an Oblate of St. Joseph?

If you are interested in knowing more about our community and our spirituality, please visit our website at www.osjusa.org or get in touch with a local Oblate community. See our directory on page 19.

that only occurred at that time to show how special God was and how important it is to orient our lives to Him. The Hebrews of old held moments of public prayer and sacrifice, common celebrations and feastings, forgiveness of sins and debts, and return to ancestral lands as ways of marking the year.

Christians in the centuries after Christ marked the regular anniversary of the infinite gift of the Redemption, Christ's saving Passion and Resurrection which frees us from the bondage of sin and opens for us eternal life. Every twenty five years a special year of "jubila-

tion" was held, focused in the city of Rome, where pilgrims would come from all over the world. On these occasions, to concretely mark the bestowing of joyful graces, a special Holy Door would be opened, only for this time, in all the great Basilica Churches in Rome, so that passing through, you would know that you had entered the place of joy and received graces, which freed one from the wounds of sin, gave increase in relationship with God, and opened hearts for yet greater experiences of God's presence and power. Clearly these were moments of spiritual celebration, but celebration

nonetheless! What greater joy than a soul purged of even the traces of sin, free from its effects, with clear paths for the love of the Lord? In additional to these twenty five year celebrations, Popes have called for Holy Years to mark other remembrances of Christ's deeds or significant events in the life of the whole Church.

Pope Francis has inaugurated this Holy Year to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, the last great gathering of the world's Bishops in ancient form to offer guidance to the course of the Church as it faces the modern world. By the light of the Holy Spirit direction was given that even now we seek to follow and draw inspiration from to continue to bring the Gospel of Christ to a world that ever needs Him.

But even more, the Holy Father is moved by the experience of his own service to God's people and no doubt the Holy Spirit himself to focus this Holy Year in a particular direction: Mercy! His Papal Bull of Indiction, *Misericordiae Vultus* ("Face of Mercy") draws us to see, as God Himself would wish us to see, that He is foremost a God of mercy! His is the "face of mercy," looking with love and pity on His children, from the time of their fall in Adam and Eve, until now, seeking to rescue and restore what was broken. The entire Bible is a testament to God who is moved by mercy, who desires to forgive and heal us.

The Holy Father wants a Year so focused on God and his mercy that it will be widely experienced by his children, and even by those not yet his children, but whom he wishes to be. It is a year not only for the experiencing of mercy, but for the living of mercy. Our Church, fruit of God's love, must be a place that lives immersed in God's mercy, rejoices in it, is humbled by it, embraces it with trust and gratitude, and is energized by it. It is a year for the showing of mercy. Mercy received, mercy enjoyed, must become mercy shared. If we have been so saved by mercy, it is up to us to let it

be part of what we say and do, of how we relate to others, to the world, of how we reach out to those most in need and those furthest from the Lord.

The Holy Father's entire Bull of Indiction is a reflection on the source, meaning and demonstration of mercy as the core principle of this Holy Year. In this context we can also see the International Congress of the Family, being held in Philadelphia this year, with the presence of the Holy Father as well. Linked to it is the Synod of Bishops on the Family, gathering Bishops from all over the world to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and offer the Church reflection on the divinely created reality of the family. Is there any greater forum for the experience of mercy than the institution of the family in the world today? God made the family to be a reflection of himself, One God in Three Persons. The family thus is ordained by God to be a building block of human life. It has always been a challenge for us humble human beings, but it seems more so now, as forces of the world seek to either change it to their own convenience, undermine it by disconnecting it with its deepest meaning, or sideline it all together as no longer relevant to our lives. Here we need mercy! Mercy to show us God's true purpose and its beauty and necessity. Mercy to help us live it as He intended with all its challenges. Mercy for those struggling in broken and difficult situations. Mercy for those who fail to understand what family is about and seek to unwisely change and distort it. Mercy for those who have nearly forgotten it or live without out it. The Holy Father in his call for mercy, places before us an area of great need: the family!

Let us heed the call of the Holy Father. Let us read and reflect on his thoughts, and be renewed in the wonders of God's mercy and therefore more conscious and capable workers of mercy in the world!

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

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too dogged and tenacious and prevailed. Despite chest pains and an inflamed leg he began a farewell tour in 1783.

On May 26, 1784, with his confirmations totaling 5,308, and his baptisms over 6,000 in Alta California alone, Serra came home to Mission San Carlos to die. Predictably, he worked the whole time, despite his "worn out body."

The Chicken Lady, who was even older than Serra, visited in his last days. Serra dubbed her that in the early days because she was so skilled a thief "she need only look at the chicken for it to disappear." The old lady wanted a blanket, so Serra gave her half of the one from his plank bed. Serra died four days later in his 8x10 cell surrounded by the people he loved.

The missions thrived and prospered after Serra's death. When Mexico declared independence in 1810, Spain stopped send-

ing supplies to California and the settlers' provisions ran out. The missions were the only institution equipped to deal with the situation as they were good at growing food and had blacksmiths, carpenters and other skilled labor. The missions became California's economic engine and as dependence on native labor increased so did abuses. And there were many, to say noth-

ing of diseases. Unwittingly the Spanish unleased European diseases (measles, influenza, chicken pox, syphilis), for which Native Californians had no immunity. The death toll was staggering; a demographic catastrophe. When the Spanish arrived in 1769 there were about 225,000 Native Californians. By 1820 there were only 200,000 and by 1848, when the U.S. took California from Mexico there were 150,000. The population declined 33% in 80 years of Spanish and Mexican rule, virtually all attributable to disease.

The slaughter began with the Gold Rush. Between 1848 and 1858 the California Indian population plummeted to 50,000 at the hands of a "ruthless flood of miners and

Serra traveled throughout the missions and established direct relationships with the baptized natives.

> farmers who annihilated them without mercy or compensation. The direct causes of death were disease, the bullet, exposure and acute starvation," wrote historian Sherburne F. Cook.

"If there was genocide against native people in California," observed historian Robert Senkewicz, author of Junipero Serra: California, Indians and the Transformation of

a Missionary, "it happened during the gold rush, in the 1850's, when Americans offered bounties for Indian scalps and the native peoples of Northern California were brutally decimated and oppressed." By 1870 there were less than 30,000 California natives; by 1900 fewer than 20,000. Most historians deem California's first 20 years of statehood as the worst slaughter of Native Americans to occur in the U.S.

The Road to Sainthood

In the midst of such apocalyptic horror Native Californians reported seeing Serra "on the highest mountain, promising to 'pray for you forever." Others relayed how El Padre Viejo would bi-locate when his leg was too inflamed to

> walk and he needed to administer sacraments. "He'd sit in the middle of the road and pray for two or three hours," said Joseph John Hitchcock, who

was born in 1881. "Then he'd rise, say 'it is done,' and it was true; the people had actually received the sacrament." People claimed Serra could walk to a place faster than a man could ride.

By 1934 there were enough stories, in Spanish and English, to initiate an investigation into the cause of canonization for Junipero Serra. Testimony taken through-



out the missions included Native Californians recalling how their grandparents invoked Serra's help to find water or catch fish and had advised giving Padre Santo tobacco or chocolate. Spanish sayings unique to California such as making más sacrificios que Serra (more sacrifices than Serra) and being más santo que Serra (more saintly than Serra) were recorded.

Father Noel Francis Moholy, a short Franciscan theology professor with a bad leg, joined the cause in 1950 and became the head honcho, or Vice Postulator, in 1958 Moholy (as in "I'm mo'holy than you") had an unfailing sense of humor he considered "essential for this line of work. There's no vow to be dour and sour. Serra had a great sense of humor." And though that seems odd for a guy who beat himself bloody, Serra's writings do,

Above: Mission San Diego de Alcalá, the first mission established by Junipero Serra.

in fact, reveal a wry, dry and playful wit.

Moholy viewed Serra as a personal friend and "chatted with him every day. I call him Old Man and he calls me Bulldog... Right from the start I said, 'Look, Old Man, we have a tough row to hoe. So let's make a pact. I'll do the work and you take care of the dough.' Well, from that day he never let me down." Working alone and unsalaried Moholy raised \$1,000,000 to pay for prayer cards, historical research, medical testimony and the translation of 15,000 documents into Italian for use by the Vatican, to say nothing of 25 lobbying trips to Rome, where he stayed for free with Irish Franciscans.

Under Moholy's watch Serra was promoted to Venerable in 1985 and Blessed in 1987. Moholy worked for the Old Man until his death in 1998. Asked why he

worked so hard for 48 years the native San Franciscan quipped, "I'm lazy and looking for a shortcut to Heaven. I figure the Old Man will be waiting for me when the time comes and he'll say 'I owe you one, Bulldog."

Moholy was ever confident of his fellow Franciscan's canonization. "Serra's been in heaven for 200 years. We're just recognizing it so we can have him for an inspiration." The Irish-American friar enjoyed musing about Serra's eventual promotion. "I wonder, what job will the Old Man get? I think he should be the patron saint of travelers, but he's also qualified to cover Californians, correspondents, migrants and immigrants. What about immigrants to California?"

Linda is an author, a journalist, and a member of St. Joseph Marello parish in Granite Bay, CA.

Family Support

by Erlene Cueto

Parents want the best for their children, and parents of faith know that the best comes from living in right relationship with God. While the parents are the first ones responsible in this task, the role of youth ministry in the faith formation of youth cannot be underestimated.

Having served as a youth director for 11 years, and a CCD teacher for 35 years, I can honestly say I have always enjoyed teaching our Catholic faith to the little ones. They are so free and open to all of God's goodness and beauty found in God's love, and it has always been a great blessing to share with our youth how God gave us his only Son to suffer for our sins, even to the point of death so that we could have life.

We know that the first In y teachers of our children's lives are the parents, but we must not forget that the Christian community is so very important in our children's lives and their formation as well. As parents we teach them to share, to love, to get along with others, and to forgive one another. We share this by our example and how we live our lives as adults. We teach them how to talk, to walk,

and to play. Most importantly we teach them to pray to our Lord throughout the day and together as a family. Even before our children can truly understand and appreciate the importance of prayer and love of God, they already know that it feels good and brings

As parents we want the best for our children. And one of the best things we can offer them is to be involved in youth ministry.

harmony to the family. There is so much that as parents we can give to share with our children, especially in regards to our Catholic faith. The foundational teaching we need to make sure that passes on is God's love for us and to share his love with others. It is through this love that we are able to know who God really is and how we can best

serve him within our families and in our communities. These easy steps of loving, knowing, and serving the Lord allows our children and us to prepare for our eternal life in heaven. As parents we cannot do this on our own; we look for the support of our Christian community.

One particular area that assists parents in the moral, spiritual, and human formation of our children is in the youth ministry of our local parish. Youth ministry helps

our young people to share and learn about their faith from each other and to have the courage to share their faith among their peers. Our modern society is caught up with the mentality of "live and let live," to not offend anyone, to not share your faith with others in public. Unfortunately, we see pressure placed upon our children

in the public education system that attempts to instill teachings that are incompatible with our Catholic faith. On the other hand, having our children involved in parish youth ministry allows them to be encouraged with others who share their faith. It provides them a safe haven to express themselves and seek out the truth in our faith. It is strange but true that youth, especially teenagers, listen more to their friends and peers rather than their parents (though they do listen to us, even when we think they don't!). Instead of having our youth be surrounded by a negative or confusing environment, the local parish youth group allows our young people to ask questions and receive answers according to our faith.

As parents we want the best for our children. And one of the best things we can offer them is to be

involved in youth ministry. This not only benefits them, but benefits others and the local community. Youth ministry is not meant to replace the family or role of the parents, but to supplement it, to be a resource that strengthens the family. It is within youth ministry that our children will not only establish great friendships, but also discover their true identity of being children of God and being brothers and sisters in Christ. There have been countless moments during retreats or weekly meetings where a young person shared their joys, their frustrations, their anger, their sorrows, and their hopes, simply because they are comfortable sharing with their Catholic peers. With so many distractions in the world and floating identities in social media, the local youth ministry is where all masks can be left behind and what is set before them is their true self

in Christ. Having moments and experiences like these provides our children not only a great and safe place to "hang out," but also something to share with the family. Everything that is gained and learned in the youth group will hopefully one day find its way back to the family and strengthen the family as the domestic church.

The biggest support that the family can ever have is the support of the Church, especially of the youth ministries that bring our youth closer to Christ and closer to their families. All of this will then be able to make our young people stronger and more faithful Catholics

Erlene Cueto is a mother of six and grandmother of ten. One of her daughters, Guadalupe Cueto, is in formation to be an Oblate Sister of St. Joseph.



Vocations and Family

by Alan and Mary Shearer

Fr. Sergio Perez, vocations director for the Holy Spouses Province, welcomes the following contribution from Alan and Mary Shearer on their experience of supporting their son in his vocation to be an Oblate of St. Joseph.

The family, the domestic church,

should be a school of love, mercy,

forgiveness, respect and humility

in a world that struggles with sin,

particularly selfishness.

Ours is an ordinary family that is faced with the same daily challenges as every family. As spouses, we complete and complement each other, surrendering our imperfections and growing in God's love. As parents, we are called to help our children discover that God loves them and has a unique plan for each of them. We discover through our children that each and every life is precious. The family, the domestic church, should be a school of love, mercy, forgiveness, respect and humility in a world that struggles with sin, particularly selfishness.

Having been blessed with four children and three grandchildren, we recognize that each is a unique and unrepeatable gift from God. We are family; each is different, yet we see ourselves in each other. Our oldest child, Fr. John, is called

to the priesthood in a religious community. Being an ordinary family with ordinary struggles in the world, we have been blessed to witness and participate in Fr. John's journey to the religious life and priesthood. Our lives have been filled with great joy, many challenges and a profound sense of gratitude watching our

children grow up to adulthood. To witness your child seek and discover their vocation in life brings with it a deep sense of faith and fulfillment, of being within God's will.

As a religious, Fr. John belongs to a community, a family, dedicated to family life through St. Joseph; it is a congregation that guards, upholds and promotes family life as designed by God. They teach "life giving love" through catechesis, marriage preparation and the sacraments as taught by Christ's Church. In our parish in Madera, CA, we have witnessed this love blossom:

from the family springs the spiritual fathers who pass on the faith by being living and loving examples of God's fruitful life giving love. The family is the seedbed of vocations.

The experience of having a son called to be a religious and a priest brings

into focus our personal challenges. On the natural level, one of the great challenges, caused by our selfishness, is that we will not have grandchildren or the joy of daily family life together. Having enjoyed time with his siblings' children, we realized that we would never have that experience with Fr. John. On the supernatu-



ral level though, through prayer and trust in God, we know that Fr. John will be blessed with many spiritual children and that we, too, share in those blessings. This insight helped us to understand more fully the interdependence we have with one another as family, and through baptism, with the Church as the family of God.

We expect our children to grow up and perhaps even move away, but the reality of Fr. John serving on the East Coast presented us with another personal challenge. Letting go and trusting in God has led us to appreciate God's perfect plan in awe and wonder. We have witnessed Fr. John mature through obedience into the man God has called him to be.

Many years ago, the Oblates instituted a ministry of the Vocation Cross at St. Joachim Parish in Madera. At each Sunday Mass, a beautiful cross is handed on to a person or family to pray through the week for vocations. That cross has become a symbol for us of how the prayers of our family and faith community continue to be answered. At Fr. John's ordination, and indeed in the years leading up to his ordination, we experienced the power of that prayer and our interdependence in our family and faith community. We began to understand that through the prayers of our parish family, answering Jesus' call to unity in John 17:21, we were linked to an even larger family, the Universal Church. Fr. John's vocation to the priesthood and religious life is first of all a total gift of God which is nurtured and brought to fruition through the generosity, sacrifice and prayer of the entire community and family that surrounds him. As his parents, we are profoundly grateful to God, the Church and the Oblates of St. Joseph for nurturing and supporting his vocation.

Alan and Mary write from their hometown of Madera, CA, where they belong to the Oblate parish of St. Joachim.

News & Events

SANTA CRUZ, CA

- On August 23, the parish of St. Vincent de Paul in Davenport hosted their 21st annual parish barbeque. Fr. Jackson Pinhero, O.S.J. headed the committee who put on a nice event which included lunch and a raffle.
- The Shrine of St. Joseph, Guardian of the Redeemer, hosted a retreat for the Salesian Sisters and staff of Salesian Elementary and Junior High School in Corralitos, CA. The retreat was an opportunity for the staff to prepare for the this new academic year.
- Also in August, the Shrine welcomed a confirmation retreat for youth from Coalinga, CA. Forty young people came as they prepared for their confirmation in Spring 2016.
- The Shrine continues its efforts to plan and build a coffee house on the grounds, which will invite more visitors to the Shrine and serve as a beautiful venue for evangelization in the city of Santa Cruz, CA. Please continue to pray for the success of this project. More details to come in future issues of CUSTOS magazine.
- The Holy Spouses Province will host an exhibit at the Convention Center in Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families 2015. The Oblates will be supporting and participating in the event, promoting authentic marriage and family life, and sharing our spirituality with the participants in Philadelphia.
- On October 17, the Oblates in Santa Cruz will welcome Oblate laity from around California to participate in the annual day of recollection. The theme will be a reflection on the World Meeting of Families and its relevance for our country and world today. Please contact

your local Oblate community for more information.

MADERA, CA

• Fr. John Warburton, O.S.J., hosted the "Glory to Glory" pilgrimage on the Russian River in California, July 27-31. The pilgrimage included 108 pilgrims from Oblate parishes and ministries around California. Also present at various times were Fr. Sergio Perez, O.S.J., Bro. Stephen Spencer, O.S.J., Fr. Matthew Spencer, O.S.J., and Oblate aspirants.



Fr. John and two pilgrims navigate down the Russian River during the Glory to Glory pilgrimage 2015.

PITTSTON, PA

- The officers of the Josephite Marellian Laity held a meeting on Friday, August 21 to finalize the calendar for the new fiscal year which runs from September 2015 thru June 2016. The first meeting of the new year will be held on Wednesday, September 2 following Mass and Novena to St. Joseph.
- The Triduum of St. Joseph the Worker will be celebrated September 4, 5, and 6 in the Seminary Chapel in Pittston, PA. Mass and Novena honoring St. Joseph the Worker will be held each evening at 7:00 PM. The Feast day celebration will be on Labor Day, September



Fr. Larry and couples from Bakersfield gather with Archbishop Cordileone in San Francisco for the statewide conference of CANFP.

7 in the Seminary Chapel with Mass at 10:30 AM.

- On November 8, the Pittston and Hazleton laity will welcome Fr. Mariusz Beczek, O.S.J., to lead the Fall Formation Conference from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Fr. Mariusz is responsible for the care and guidance of four seminarians residing at the new Oblate house of formation in Bala Cynwyd, PA, a suburb of Philadelphia. Mass will be held at 4:30 PM in the seminary chapel followed by a reception. A Mass of remembrance honoring deceased laity members and their families will be held on Sunday, November 22 in the seminary chapel at 7:00 PM. Light refreshments will be provided by the laity members following Mass.
- Once again the Josephite Marellian Laity of Pittston will have their annual Thanksgiving Project. Food items will be collected during the entire month of November for the Pittston Food Pantry. This year proceeds will also go to help Fr. Mariusz and the Oblate seminarians in Philadelphia, PA.

BAKERSFIELD, CA

• Fr. Larry Toschi, O.S.J., and eight couples from Our Lady of Guadalupe, Co-patroness of the Unborn, participated in the statewide conference of the California Association of Natural Family Planning (CANFP) with the theme "Male and Female He Created Them." Seven of the couples are certified NFP teachers, including Oblate Associates Michelle and Juan Pablo Ayala, and one couple is preparing to coordinate the Theology of the Body

youth movement in the parish. Oblate Associates Tom and Cheley Spencer from St. Joachim parish in Madera, CA also accompanied us on Saturday. All came away with deep inspiration as well as a wealth of information and resources.

■ The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Copatroness of the Unborn, will send representatives to the World Meeting of Families to share the great project of the new Shrine construction and to promote interest in its successful construction.

LOOMIS, CA & GRANITE BAY, CA

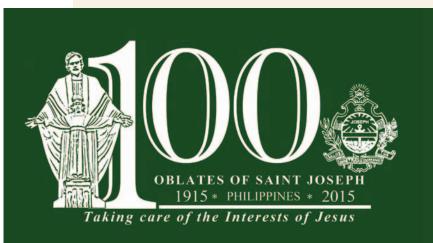
- The Oblates in Loomis welcome back Brian Ceja who continues his formation to be an Oblate of St. Joseph, and also welcome Jorge Mendoza who begins his first year of seminary formation. Please continue to pray for Oblate seminarians throughout the country and the world.
- St. Joseph Marello Parish in Granite Bay, CA, will complete the construction of the new ministry center in early September. The new building will serve to enable the parish to

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continue its mission to share the gospel with the people of Granite Bay and the surrounding areas.

• The Family of St. Joseph will resume the regular monthly mornings of recollection. The first gathering will take place on September

19 at Mount St. Joseph in Loomis, CA. The day begins with Mass at 8:00 AM, followed by adoration, a potluck breakfast, and a reflection given by Fr. Matthew Spencer, O.S.J. All are welcome.



INTERNATIONAL

■ The Oblates of St. Joseph commemorated the centennial anniversary of the first missionaries arrival in the Philippines this year. In celebration of this wonderful occassion, Oblate leadership around the world gathered for a Council of the Congregation. In addition, the Oblates hosted education and youth congresses with attendees from around the world. The Holy Spouses Province was represented by Oblates from the U.S.A., as well as laity from our communities involved in education and youth ministry.

Pilgrimage to Fatima, Santiago, and Madrid

MAY 17-26, 2016

Cost: \$2,999

Join the friends of the Oblates of St. Joseph from around the country for this special pilgrimage to visit holy sites throughout Portugal and Spain. Fr. Alvaro Joachim, O.S.J., will serve as spiritual director and lead the pilgrims to have a deeper appreciation for the richness of our Catholic faith and the vibrancy of the Church in these wonderful lands.

Itinerary

Day 1: Depart the U.S.A.

Day 2 and 3: Fatima

Day 4: Fatima / Santiago de Compostela

Day 5: Santiago / Salamanca

Day 6: Salamanca / Alba de Tormes / Avila

Day 7: Avila

Day 8: Avila / Segovia / Madrid

Day 9: Madrid / Toledo

Day 10: Return to the U.S.A.



Included in the cost: Airfare from Newark, accommodations, airport-hotel group transfers, hotel tips and taxes, baggage handling at hotels, touring by private motor coach, tour escorts, local guides. Some restrictions apply.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fr. Alvaro at 570-654-7542 / email: altvar70@gmail.com Or Fr. Paul McDonnell, OSJ at 831-239-5019 / email: osjseminary@comcast.net Or Mr. Carl Angelella at 570-654-6459

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- > Bro. Marcello DiNardo, O.S.J.
- ➤ Bro. Mathew Chipp, O.S.J.

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- > Fr. John Warburton, O.S.J. (Pastor)
- > Fr. James Catalano, O.S.J.
- > Fr. Gustavo López, O.S.J.
- > Fr. Shaji Athipozhi, O.S.J.

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- > Fr. Chummar Chirayath, O.S.J.
- > Fr. Steven Peterson, O.S.J.
- > Fr. Victor García Padilla, O.S.J.

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- > Fr. Victor León, O.S.J.
- > Fr. Daniel Schwebs, O.S.J.

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- ➤ Fr. Alvaro de Oliveria Joachim, O.S.J.
- > Fr. Raymond Tabon, O.S.J.

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- > Fr. Matthew Spencer, O.S.J. (Rector)
- > Fr. Philip Massetti, O.S.J. (Pastor)
- > Fr. Sergio Perez, O.S.J.
- > Bro. David Pohorsky, O.S.J.

St. Joseph Marello Youth Retreat Center

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web: http://www.marelloyrc.org

St. Joseph Marello Church

7200 Auburn Folsom Road Granite Bay, CA 95746

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PHILADELPHIA, PA

St. Joseph Marello House of Studies

108 Highland Ave. Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

- > Fr. Mariusz Beczek, O.S.J. (Rector)
- ➤ Bro. Stephen Spencer, O.S.J.

Choosing our Families

by Fr. Matthew Spencer, o.s.J.

About two years into the seminary I went through one of those rough patches that we all do every once in a while: I started to doubt whether I should continue along this vocation or not. Nothing



seemed to be going well at the time, and when things get tough we can practically convince ourselves why we should

just give up, sometimes before we even realize we're thinking about it.

In this case, in the midst of that small crisis, I was pretty sure I had hit upon the reason why my attempt at religious life was going to fail, and it was based mostly on simply the difference of personalities in community life. I found myself thinking: "In my former life, I would have never been hanging out with these men...how did I ever think the differences in our personalities, our interests, and our styles could ever work together now?" For that matter, why couldn't people just be more like me!?

In all seriousness though, at the time it really did feel like a pretty

difficult obstacle to overcome. But while there were undoubtedly differences in personalities and interests among us, I started to recognize something much deeper that binds us together. The Lord had called each of us to form part of the Oblate family together, and our spirituality of seeking the interests of Jesus in imitation of St. Joseph is so much more unifying than the characters and individuality that seem to separate us. The Oblate family that God prepared for me was one I had to choose, yes; but it was also one that was given to me by God, one that I needed to accept and love, with all of the blessings and trials that might come with it.

And isn't this the case with every family? Sure, sometimes our relationships are optional and sometimes we've gotten to choose the people that form part of our families. On the other hand, family is given to us by God, and oftentimes family includes people that are vastly different from us, people who have different perspectives on life, people that seem to be going a completely different direction in life. Because of this, too often we can begin to give up on our families: our immediate family, our

extended family, and our family of faith. We can start to make excuses why we don't need to be in relationship with those around us, and before we know it the vocation God has given to us is irreparably changed and our relationships are changed forever.

Yes, family certainly takes work. Yet as the Church gives us this special time to reflect on the gift of family, I have to say that I am so grateful to God to be an Oblate of St. Joseph, to have so many of you as part of our extended family, and to work together at making Jesus Christ known and loved in the world. We don't always choose each other in our journey of faith, and every once in a while our differences can cause us some grief. But if we can follow the inspiration of Pope Francis and work towards uniting our families in greater love and mercy, then family life itself will be transformed for the better in our nation and in the world.

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 mspencer@osjusa.org.

Thank you to our contributors who generously donated to the Custos between June 1 and August 26, 2015:

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