

# The Charitist Voice

"For the sake of the Kingdom"

August, 2003

(Editor's mea culpa: I find this new endeavor exciting, but have not a clue what I'm doing. Please be patient with my efforts, as I learn along the way. I also apologize for the format; I prepare this flawlessly in WordPerfect 10, but when I publish it to HTML, the format becomes distorted. Bear with me as I teach myself how to do this. —bmg)

~~~News from all over~~~

We welcome two new people to our midst: Suzanne Allyn and Yossi Lopez-Hinrynu.

Suzanne was a former life professed member in the EOC, and is returning to us. Welcome home, Sister!! She will be formally received at next year's Days of Renewal; she lives on the East coast. Sister recently had foot surgery---we trust that all went well!

Yossi was with the Brotherhood of St Gregory for his formation, and has traveled a rich and varied path on his Journey. He will make First vows next year at DOR. Yossi and his life partner live in one of my favorite places in the world: Chicago.

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Welcome our fellow Travelers to the EOC—may our Journey together be long and fruitful, “for the sake of the Kingdom.”

Sister Catherine Benet wishes to share a letter with all her Companions:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing this to say a very heartfelt Thank You for your many kindnesses to Wayne at General Assembly. I always knew what a great group you are, but Wayne was a little hesitant. You see, with his speech impediment, Wayne is very shy about meeting new people. Also, it was only his second plane flight. (His first was a less than grand experience.)

You folks made many wonderful impressions on him. He has been asking many questions, and been most helpful in the early planning for next year's Days of Renewal. He is even considering applying to our Order.

One major personal drawback is his limited reading ability. In school he was passed from grade to grade and never taught how to read well; he was placed in a speech class where he had many unpleasant experiences that he has shared with me.

I have offered to take him to an adult literacy class but he is somewhat embarrassed to attend. So I ask for your

prayers on behalf of Wayne, that he overcome his fears and improve his reading skills.

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Thank you again for all your kindness—it is one of the things I love best about our Order.

God Bless,  
Sr. Catherine Benet, OC

Brother Mark celebrates his birthday on August 31<sup>st</sup> .....finally he's a legal age. Happy Birthday, Brother! In early July, Brother, in his capacity as Bishop of Arizona for The Church of Antioch, paid a pastoral visit to Sierra Vista, AZ to ordain seminarian Joan Specht to the Order of Deacon; she is a member of Holy Trinity House of Prayer in Sierra Vista.

The weekend following, Brother attended an executive council meeting of the Ecumenical Conference of Independent Catholic Bishops (ECICB) held in Santa Fe, NM. Brother Mark was one of the founding members of this organization, and had the opportunity to celebrate the Holy Eucharist that Sunday morning in Loretto Chapel. A pious legend says that in this very chapel holy father St. Joseph built a miraculous staircase without any nails, in response to a need expressed by the prayers of the Sisters of Loretto. This place has special

memories for Brother as well, as he was ordained to the priesthood In this very chapel!

Brother was also interviewed in July by the religion editor of one of the local newspapers for an article on the Independent Catholic movement; it appeared in print at the beginning of this month.

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On August 2<sup>nd</sup> Brother Henri attended a Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast with the Sheriff of Broward County Florida, Ken Jenne. The event had 500 Prison ministries, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous volunteers in attendance for a good southern "homecooked " breakfast.

The mood of the group was exuberant with a good ecumenical exchange of brotherly greetings, with great Gospel music and singing, as well as testimonies from former inmates who had been helped by these very volunteers.

The most important thing for Brother Henri was learned from the testimony of a young lady who had been in and out of jail for 15 years. Her last incarceration was in 1997; she has gone on to graduate college and is today a Registered Nurse. Praise God!

She credited the Prison Ministry and Narcotics Anonymous teams for providing the motivation she needed to change her thinking and thus, to change her life. She said, "Even if you don't see progress at each

meeting, just keep coming back! You changed my life—you can change others' too!"

In all our ministries, we have to "just keep coming back."

Sister Pat returned to Thunder Bay, Ontario at the start of August, to officiate at her nephew's wedding. She also hosted her high school reunion: St Patrick High School, Class of 1960.

I'm sure it was interesting when Sister celebrated Mass for them!

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Sister Pat and Bro. Guadalupe will be flying to California in September to join Bro. Lou Anthony in meeting with a group of potential candidates for our Order. While there, the finishing work on the handbook for our Foundation Program for postulants and novices will be completed. The tentative aim is to have it ready to send out to Companions by October.

Bro. M .Guadalupe has been thoroughly enjoying his recent lay off, from both his full time and part time jobs in the same week. Does God have a sense of humor, or what? His new job begins on August 18<sup>th</sup>, with former co-workers and supervisor. This is a new program for occupational medicine. (Bro. Guadalupe had worked in this field for 8 years before returning to the hospital.) In this capacity Brother will function as a medical assistant, interpreter, X Ray technologist and part time CT technologist. This couldn't happen soon enough, as

Brother has found himself muttering," Summer forever--  
--back to work never!"

He was recently interviewed by the editor of the diocesan paper of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, Plenteous Harvest.

This came about due to a small article he had included in his parish newsletter that shared the news of his reception into the Ecumenical Order of Charity, and to prepare fellow parishioners for the sight of him in his habit at Sunday Eucharist. The article was very complimentary, and his reception at St John's has been edifying. Folks don't hesitate to approach him for talk or prayer.

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A flasher wandered the streets one hot afternoon, looking for someone whose shock would give him the reaction he craved. Around the corner came Mrs. Nuzbaum, the neighborhood rabbi's elderly mother. Certain he would scandalize her, and she'd deliver the hearty scream he sought, he ran up to her and stepped directly in her way. When she looked up, he proudly whipped his overcoat open to reveal himself in all his naked glory. For a long moment she stared at the sight before her, then rolled her eyes and exclaimed, "Oi Vai.....you call THAT a coat lining? You want I should give my tailor's phone number?"

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# Did you know?

*Most of the dust particles found in your house, are actually flakes of dead skin you have sloughed off.*

*The first owner of the Marlboro Company died of Lung Cancer.*

*Michael Jordan makes more money annually from Nike, than the annual income of ALL the Nike factory workers in Malaysia COMBINED.*

*Marilyn Monroe had six toes on one foot.*

*Walt Disney.....was afraid of mice!*

*Pearls melt in vinegar.*

*And from the animal world:  
turtles can breathe through their butt; butterflies taste with their feet;  
elephants are the only animals who can't jump.*

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*Friends for the Journey.....Holy Souls whose lives bear testimony to the Charitist Spirit and Principles.*

Blessed Mary McKillop, 1842-1909  
Foundress of the Sisters of St Joseph  
of the Sacred Heart

Mary's beatification in 1995 made her the first recognized saint of Australia. She founded a remarkable congregation of sisters who devoted themselves to a simple religious life, as they provided free education and other services to the poor and needy of a sprawling nation down under.

What is most amazing about Mary McKillop, who would be known in religion as Mother Mary of the Cross, is not so much how she expressed her faith in the charitable works she performed for those in need, but rather, her trust in Divine

Providence. She had to endure astounding unchristian treatment from many priests and prelates of her time-the petty persecution and jealous behaviors of narrow-minded religious authorities who were convinced that they acted in the place of God. Despite her ordeals, Mother remained free of all bitterness or revenge- a proof of her holiness and faith.

Mary was born in January, 1842 to poor Scottish immigrant parents. While working as a governess she met a young priest, Fr. Woods, who inspired her to consider religious life. Together they conceived of a community dedicated to the poor. Soon she took her first vows and put on the new community's habit.

Mary reflected on the needs of her rugged homeland and composed a set of constitutions with some radical rules: total poverty, with the sisters owning literally nothing so as to be able to work and relate to the poor they would serve; no class distinctions within the community between 'choir' and 'lay' sisters, but radical equality.

Her sisters would live 2 to 3 in a house and be scattered far from one another. So she insisted that the community be guided and subject to a "central government," this meaning every community house, no matter how far away, would be governed by an elected mother general, who answered directly to Rome. This took them out of the jurisdiction of the local bishops. This final rule would be the source of extreme tension between the new congregation and the Australian bishops.

The new community grew quickly, with many young women seeking admittance, and houses being opened throughout the territories. Many bishops welcomed the sisters and their ministries to the poor, until they tried to manage and direct their work. Mother Mary of the Cross put up a spirited resistance to their attempts.

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Her resistance and faithfulness to her Constitutions provoked these same bishops to embark on a wicked campaign of harassment and public condemnation. At one point her local bishop even excommunicated her! On his deathbed he rescinded the act. Another bishop threw her sisters out of his diocese, while a third wrote to Rome, proclaiming that Mary and her sisters were "infected with fanaticism and insubordination to Authority."

Mother finally traveled to the Vatican and spent two years seeking authorization for her Constitutions. Pius IX became interested in the "excommunicated nun," and she was able to return to Australia with a papal document officially approving her congregation. But still clerical abuse did not cease. A team of bishops and clerics, falsely claiming to be authorized by Rome, put the community through despicable "visitations" where financial records were seized and Sisters were interviewed under a "vow of Secrecy" to discover anything scandalous and humiliating about their Foundress. A bishop even "leaked" the



claim that Mother Mary of the Cross was an alcoholic, and had been using community funds for her personal use.

The whole event provoked an inquiry by Rome, and Mary was completely cleared of all the accusations. But still the harassment continued. The Australian bishops vowed to rescind the Constitutions and put the Sisters under the control of the local Ordinaries. Rome once more came to the rescue and nullified the bishops' authority in the entire affair. The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart would retain their central government by a mother general. Mary's ideal would finally be achieved.

Though she suffered from these constant attacks on her virtue, her ideals and her very Faith, Mary always considered these events as "presents from God." Her malefactors were instruments in the hands of God, and her "most powerful benefactors." She admitted though, that God's gifts were sometimes hard to understand, and felt that she was too often cowardly in accepting them.

Her congregation began in a time when there were virtually no public services available for the poor in Australia. The Sisters of St. Joseph won the admiration and gratitude of Australians of all classes and religious persuasions for their care of fellow citizens regardless of religion or position.

Mother lived on to see her congregation become firmly established throughout Australia and New Zealand. After many years of being confined to a wheelchair due to a debilitating stroke, she died on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1909. Her passing was mourned throughout Australia.

Excerpted from All

Saints,

By Robert Ellsberg

"The Cross is my portion.....it is my sweet rest and support."

- Blessed Mary of the Cross

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### Brother Lupe's musings

*What links us to our pursuit of Religious Life, are the vows we take. I have investigated many religious communities that have, more or less, the same interpretation of the three traditional vows we observe: Poverty/Simplicity of Life; Chastity/Purity of Heart; and Obedience.*

*But what makes us unique, what defines us as Charitists, are the vows of Non-Violence and Universal Citizenship. Only the Ecumenical*

*Order of Charity asks these two of its Companions. No other community includes the concepts embodied in these vows of service to Life, be it two legged, four legged, winged, leafed or finned.*

*I have often wondered if the vow of Non-Violence would be more aptly named a Vow of Reconciliation; we are called to resolve human conflicts and protect our mother Earth and all Her creatures. We are called to be a “pontifex”—a bridge builder where ever we are, by using love, respect and understanding rather than force. As Bishop Itkin taught: “ We must challenge the sources of violence, war, oppression, and persecution. We must hold back the forces of Darkness and transmute them into Light.”*

*The vow of Universal Citizenship flows naturally from the previous vow: by seeking to be peacemakers and bridge builders, we thereby become members of EVERY community of peoples. We focus on the family of God, and so national, racial, cultural, educational, denominational, and sexual orientational lines become blurred and insignificant. We celebrate and defend the diversity among us. It is no longer ‘we’ and ‘them,’ but US. This vow links us to the Web of Life—God’s creation in all its expressions.*

*There are times, due to our distance from one another physically, that we may feel quite alone as we witness to our vows. But these special two “Charitist” vows, by their very substance, tie us one to another, and then  
to God’s eternal Creation. Welcome Beloved, to the Mystical Body of Christ!*

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*.....a word, from the WORD.....*

“This is my commandment: love each other the way I love you. No one can give a greater proof of love, than by laying down one’s life for one’s friends. You ARE my friends, if you follow as I direct. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant is not in the master’s confidence. I

call you my FRIENDS, for I have made known to you all that I have heard from my Father. Not that you chose me; no—I have chosen YOU, and the task I impose on you is to go forward faithfully bearing fruit; and your fruit is to be lasting. Thus, the Father will grant you any petition you present in my name. This is all I command you: Love one another.” —John 15:12-17

taken and adapted from The New Testament rendered from the Original Greek,

By James A. Kleist, SJ 1948

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*One day Sister was teaching her First Communion class about the Ten Commandments. After explaining the commandment, “Honor thy Father and Mother,” she asked: “Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?” Without missing a beat, one little boy announced, “Yup-----“Thou shalt not Kill.”*

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## ***Lifting up one another in Prayer.....***

For Suzanne and Yossi, who join us in the Journey, may they be blessed and a blessing to everyone they encounter in the Path we walk together,

For Birthday blessings on Brother Mark this month,

For Brother Arnie, and the leads he has on new housing, employment, and medical assistance, that he experience palpably the prayers and concern of his fellow Charitists, and rest securely in the Hand of God.....

For Sister Seal, and her job search and incardination process into the Church of Antioch.....that all go well and smoothly.

For traveling mercies on Sr. Pat and Bro. Guadalupe, who join Bro. Lou Anthony next month to meet perspective candidates and finish work on the Foundation Program handbook,

For all our dear ones near and far,  
For the sick, and those with any need,  
For this weary war torn world,  
For our departed Charitist Companions and all the Departed,  
For the Community, Companions and Associates of the Order of Charity,  
For our various ministries and all our private petitions,  
For all our praises and thanksgivings,

We lift all these concerns into the Light, and thank you oh God,  
for all Your blessings on us.....

For all You are, and all You do,  
Oh God-Creator, Redeemer and Renewer of all things,  
accept our deepest praise, worship and thanksgiving.  
Amen.

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What did the words 'faith,' 'trust,' and 'belief' mean for Jesus, and how did the Gospels understand the relationship between what Jesus did in history, and what he continues to do in the life of the believer?

"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed," says Jesus to his disciples, referring to faith as a nugget of trust in God's infinite possibility—the kernel and embryo always in a state of becoming—"then nothing will be impossible for you." His meaning is clear: to accept God, to rely unconditionally on His infinite and relentless love as the sole foundation of surety in life, is to ENTER INTO HIS OMNIPOTENCE. Seeing more deeply than with our physical eyes—seeing with the inner eye, just as we know from experience that we are INFINITELY ACCEPTED. That is the meaning of Jesus' injunction to "believe the Good News"—to accept that we are accepted. Nothing here about an intellectual endeavor, or exercise of reason: "It isn't a matter of reason," said Sir Thomas More, defending his faith. "Finally, it's a matter of Love."

And what is the effect of this trust, this faith? “Your faith has saved you,” Jesus says again and again to the wounded, the weak in body and spirit. Something has already happened: in principle one is saved—for meaning in THIS life, not ONLY for eternity (which is God’s business and in His keeping). “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me”—that is, “Rely on God, trust Him without limit”—and take with utter seriousness the life and meaning of Jesus. In this regard the English novelist C.S. Lewis was right: “Relying on God has to begin all over again every day, as if nothing had yet been done.” It is the work of a lifetime, a stance toward reality that has to begin DAILY , for faith, as the author of the Letter to the Hebrews wrote, is “of things unseen”—of things imperishable, beyond decay and death.

—Excerpt from the book, *The Hidden Jesus, a new life*, by Donald Spoto, 1998  
The emphases added by bmg.

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The Lord’s Prayer, from the Aramaic

Radiant One, You shine within us and outside us;  
even the darkness shines—when we recall Your Light.

In Peace, the Name resides within a ‘room of one’s own,’  
a Holy of Holies, open---giving Light to all.

Come into the bedroom of our hearts;  
prepare us for the marriage of  
Power and Beauty.

Help us love beyond our ideals,  
and sprout within us acts of Compassion for all creatures.

Produce in us and for us---the Possible;  
making every ‘only-human’ step toward Home illuminated.

Lighten our load of secret debts,  
as we relieve others of their need to repay.

Deceived by neither the ‘Outer’ nor the ‘Inner,’  
free us to walk Your path with Joy.

For from You is born all ruling Will,  
and the Power and the Life to do.  
And the Song that beautifies all,  
from Age to Age renews Itself eternally.

*Amen.*

*-----The above translation of the Our Father from Aramaic to English is taken from the book, Prayers of the Cosmos, by Neil Douglas-Klotz. Aramaic is a rich and complex language, filled with shades of meaning and vision. He thus provides several translations for each verse; I compiled the ones that resonated with me the most, and did some restructuring to aid in the flow of the reading. -bmg*