



March 2004

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# Apostleship of the Cross

## Houston Center



## Lent 2004

### Dear brothers and sisters in the Apostleship of the Cross:

**By the time you receive this newsletter**, we will be in the season of spiritual renewal, Lent. We were very fortunate in Houston to have started the preparation with two excellent speakers. First, Father Roberto Saldivar, M.Sp.S. visited us the second weekend of January, with a retreat in Spanish on Saturday, January 10; an English one on Sunday, January 11, and an English talk on Monday, January 12. This was our experience of celebrating the birth of the Works of the Cross on January 14. A summary of this retreat appears on page 3.

**Our Center also sponsored, on Thursday, January 29**, a talk by the auxiliary bishop of the Galveston-Houston diocese, Bishop Joe Vasquez. He talked on "The Universal Call to Holiness", a theme frequently repeated by our Holiness, Pope John Paul II. A short summary of this talk is on page 2. Please keep our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II in your prayers and join in his February prayer intentions to bring peace and understanding between Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The Holy Land should be an oasis of peace in the world and not a flashpoint of hate and discord. Sincerely in Christ,

Frank García, St. Thomas More Section Coordinator

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- March 3 – Conchita's death (1937)
- March 12-14 – English Retreat – Fr. José Ortega, M.Sp.S
- March 25 –Annunciation and Conchita's Mystical Incarnation

**On the evening of March 25, at St. Thomas More, we will have a special Mass, followed by a get-together, to celebrate this important feast in our history of salvation and to commemorate Conchita's Mystical Incarnation (1906).**



## APPOINTMENTS

**Father Roberto Saldívar, M.Sp.S.** has been named the new Director of the Apostleship of the Cross in the US (Zone 1). As we welcome him in that role, we also want to thank Fr. Celso Marquez, M.Sp.S. who was our director for many years.

**Fr. Domenico Di Raimondo, M.Sp.S.** is now the new Superior General of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit and Director General of the Apostleship of the Cross. Congratulations Fr. Domenico!

**Fr. Eduardo Sarre, M.Sp.S.** has been appointed by Fr. Domenico Di Raimondo, M.Sp.S. as the new Delegate Director General of the Apostleship of the Cross. Fr. Eduardo lives in Mexico City at the General House of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit in El Altillo. Please keep Fr. Eduardo in your prayers as he begins this new service.

## CENTER ACTIVITIES

**Our Center will have two important activities during Lent.** Fr. José Ortega, M.Sp.S. will conduct an English retreat March 12 through 14.

**Our all-night vigil on Holy Thursday, April 8,** will take place at St. Thomas More Church. The theme this year is: “My Human Self; My Divine Self; My Other Self”.

## SUMMARY OF BISHOP’S VASQUEZ TALK “THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS”

**Bishop Vasquez took us back to “Lumen Gentium” from Vatican II.** This document highlighted the need for every member of the Church, religious and laity, to strive for holiness. This is a call that derives from our Baptism and applies to all. For all of us in the Apostleship of the Cross it is expressed in our own “transformation into Christ” [Bylaws ch. III, 41]

**He then applied the three principles, or “pillars”, of holiness** (poverty, chastity, obedience) to every vocation. He made it a point to emphasize that the “single life” could very definitely be a vocation, just as marriage and the call to religious life are. By “poverty” he “meant “detachment” from material things. By “chastity” he meant “faithfulness” to that call or vocation. By “obedience” he meant the “willingness” to hear God’s voice and do His will as the root of the word obedience is “to give ear”. He explained how each would apply to the different vocations in life.

**This call to holiness is difficult and requires a life of prayer and sharing** with other people who have similar beliefs. That is why is so important for the Church to provide “small communities”, such as the Apostleship of the Cross, where each member helps others in that journey to holiness.

**He ended with his personal reflections** on the tremendous example our Pope is providing the world in his old age and in his infirmities. He sees it as an example of the contribution older individuals can give to our society, of how our Pope, in spite of his suffering, lovingly continues on his mission to bring Christ to the world in this day and age.

## FATHER ROBERTO SALDIVAR'S RETREAT

### “ON THE PRIESTLY VIRTUES OF CHRIST; HOW TO BE A PRIEST WITH CHRIST PRIEST; HOW TO BE A PRIEST ACCORDING TO THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CROSS”

**Virtues are the active element of every spirituality.** They are the dynamic elements that make us spiritual beings. In the Spirituality of the Cross, virtues are the elements of a “priestly spirituality”. In order to exercise our virtues, we need to practice them one at a time.

**The virtues of Christ Priest are redeeming** (they take away our sins); expiatory (suffered for us, experienced sin without being in sin); salvific (moved us to another level). Likewise, our virtues must partake of these three characteristics.

**Mary, out of profound love, participates in the salvific mission of Christ.** Love for Mary is a requirement for all who belong to the Apostleship of the Cross. “No one loves God as he should, if he does not love Mary”. (Fr. Félix de Jesús Rougier).

**We, as baptismal priests, are called** to an attitude of service, of loving of laying our lives down for others. The virtue of immolation is necessary in order to be a priest with Christ Priest. In the Apostleship of the Cross we live our priesthood through mortification and immolation out of love for others. We can only exercise this priesthood through our sacraments.

**Offering and immolation equals sacrifice.** We can better understand the concept of sacrifice when we participate in the Liturgy of the Mass. In the **offertory**, we present the gifts of bread and wine (an offering of ourselves); in **consecration**, God transforms that which is offered (our attitude of transformation); in **immolation** of the Body of Christ (crushing of the bread and wine; our laying down our lives for others); in **communion**, we are one with God.

**In the Apostleship of the Cross we live our priesthood** through mortification and immolation out of love for others. These actions are voluntary. We become Christ Priest when we are open to God’ sanctifying grace upon us. We become Christ Prophet when we preach the Good News. We become Christ King when God in us is translated into service. Each virtue is a link that forms the Chain of Love of the Apostleship of the Cross that takes us to God.



## *Words of Reflection...*

“Providentially, to affirm Mystical Incarnation one must believe that the soul experiences a period of transforming graces that if assimilated will lead him to identify his will with my Will, humbling him in a way that the unity with God becomes as integrated as possible.

This is the purpose of the Mystical Incarnation, a grace with which the Holy Spirit blesses certain souls. In short: The Mystical Incarnation is a powerful grace that transforms and humbles through purification and immolation (sacrifice) making us one with Jesus by converting the soul, the whole creature in His image.

With this union of the soul with the Word made flesh, the Eternal Father is pleased, and the vocation of priest and victim, which Jesus embodied while in the world, is communicated to this soul to attain graces from heaven for the world.”

-From the Writings of Conchita (Verbo p. ed.)

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***Jesus, Savior of all people,  
Save them!***