

Jesus, Savior of All People, Save Them!

APOSTLESHIP OF THE CROSS Houston Center

September, 2002

Important Dates

September 3
1st Meeting – Notre Dame

September 5
1st Meeting – STM and St. Theresa

September 8
Stewardship Sunday – Notre Dame

September 14
Exultation of the Holy Cross

September 18
Information Night – Notre Dame

September 19
Information Night - STM

September 21
Matthew the Apostle

September 30
St. Jerome

October 1
St. Therese of the Child Jesus

Council Members

Ana Quiros --
Coordinator
Frank Garcia
Carmen Martinez
Myrla Vanegas

Information Night St. Thomas More Section

St. Thomas More will have its annual Information Night for the Apostleship of the Cross on Thursday, September 19th. This year's Information Night will be a little different than past years, so we will need everyone's assistance to make this a success. Accordingly, please come to the regular Thursday meetings in September to help plan this important night.

Even more importantly, BRING A FRIEND TO THE INFORMATION NIGHT! As part of the priestly vocation of the laity, we should be inviting all to "come and see" (John 1:39) the wonders of the Spirituality of the Cross. This is your chance!

News from Fr Eugenio

Six Brothers will make their Perpetual Vows on Sept 14th:

*Hector Miguel Corona
Lucio Villalobos
Hugo Maese
Guillermo Flores
Joel Quezada
Pablo Sanchez*

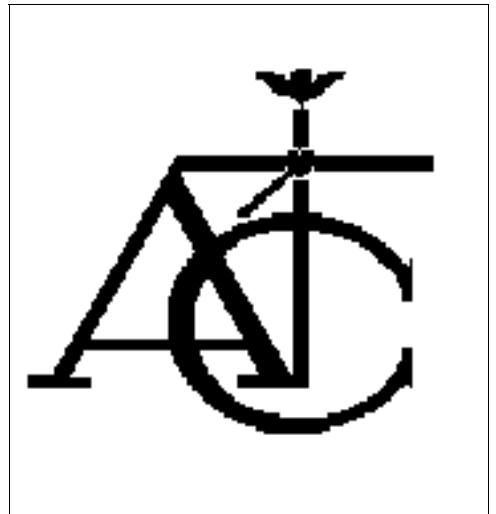
Please pray that the Holy Spirit will be with these men on September 14th and throughout their lives.

News From Notre Dame Section

The summer is almost over and it is time again for our regular meetings. The old groups will begin meeting on Tuesday, September 3 at 8:00 p.m., Bishop Odin Room.

The Festival of Ministries at Notre Dame will be celebrated on Sunday, September 8 after all Masses. Each ministry of Notre Dame, including the Apostleship of the Cross, will be available for a procession and sign up at all Masses. Stop by the Parish Hall and visit the Apostleship of the Cross booth.

The "information night" for new members will be held on Wednesday, September 18 at 8:00 p.m. in the Community Center (Bishop Odin Room)."



News from World Youth Day in Toronto — Our Priests are Loved!

Several members of the Apostleship of the Cross in Houston had the grace and privilege of attending World Youth Day in Toronto this past summer. Each of those members could (and have!) talked for hours about their experiences there. However, one thing in particular is noteworthy with respect to our spirituality, especially in light of the current crisis in the Church.

Young people love our priests! The signs of this were everywhere, but two stand out for me. Neither of these made the newspapers, but both illustrate the point.

The first sign of their love of priests occurred at a “small group” gathering of about 800 youth. (Only at World Youth Day is a group of 800 considered small.) The gathering concluded with Mass celebrated by Archbishop Chaput of Denver. At Mass the Archbishop simply expressed his thanks to the priests who were in attendance. The youth responded by applauding, and applauding, and applauding. The applause continued for several minutes, and the priests on the altar were visibly moved by this show of love, which was from the heart and completely unrehearsed.

The second sign occurred at an evening Mass after World Youth Day concluded, with three priests and approximately 40 youth. At the end of Mass, the three priests knelt down, surrounded by the youth. The youth raised their hands over the priests and recited the Litany for Priests, led by our own Frank Garcia. I am sure Fr. Felix and Conchita smiled at this sight.

So, the message is clear. Our priests are loved.

A Book Review

Irresistibly Drawn to the Eucharist: Conchita Cabrera de Armida's Most Beautiful Writings on the Eucharist

Author: Juan Gutiérrez González, M.Sp.S.

From among the many journal entries written by Concepción Cabrera de Armida (Conchita), mother of nine and foundress of the Sisters of the Cross, the compiler of this selection offers us carefully chosen "mystical" writings about the Eucharist. Regarding the meaning of the word "mystic", the author refers us to Saint Thomas, for whom the essence of the word lies in the fact that when in a mystical state, one's reason is not only illuminated by faith, but one's soul is also driven to work under the impulse of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These writings are ordered chronologically, in order to follow Conchita's spiritual development and at the same time to display her spirituality and contribution to love for the Blessed Sacrament. This book, therefore, contains a good source of eucharistic spirituality for which so many are hungering today.

This review is from the website www.albhouse.org/Irresist.htm

*Jesus,
Savior of
All
People,
Save
Them!*

REFLECTION ON THE CROSS FOR THE APOSTLESHIP OF THE CROSS IN HOUSTON, TX.

Our Sisters, the Religious of the Cross of the Sacred Heart of Jesus have as one of their guiding phrases of consecration, "Hail, O Cross, our only Hope."

In this simple and brief idea is expressed the key to a profound and sincere acknowledgement of the richness wrapped up in the Cross. The Cross is a source of hope because it bears Jesus on its arms. It offers to us He who, out of love, let Himself be led to the ultimate consequences of His deliverance to His Father and to us. Jesus is our peace, He is our hope because when suffering and death entered the world due to sin, He was willing to come free us from those consequences which we, without knowing it, have allowed to fall on humanity when we rebelled against our God. As Moses raised up the bronze serpent in the desert and all those who saw it were healed of the bites of the serpents, in the same way Jesus allowed Himself to be raised up on high to grant us health and salvation. This was the unique way in which God, in His Divine Providence, wanted us to be redeemed. Our loving God was willing to be raised above the earth, when the hour desired by the Father was fulfilled. Jesus voluntarily handed Himself over for us, as He himself says: "No

one takes my life from me, I give it up because I want to." On the Cross, He gives us life and gives His Spirit. Thus, the Cross is our Hope.

Our Mother, Conchita, on her trip to the Holy Land and to Rome to request the founding of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, found at one of the places she visited some words that impressed her. She writes them down in her Account of Conscience:

There is no cross without a saint
Nor a cross without eternal weeping
Nor a saint without any Cross.

Without a doubt, our Mother Conchita knew the significance and scope of the Cross. This was our Lord's gift to her and this is the same gift that she gave to her sons and daughters; the fruitful Cross, the glorious Cross, the Cross which is God's gift to the world, the Cross of the Apostleship.

On this glorious Cross is God's answer to our worries and fears, to our doubts and concerns for carrying the cross. It is the Cross full of love, full of the Trinity, illuminated with the presence of our God who sustains, heals and encourages us.

Our Mother shows us from her first volume of her Account of Conscience, the desire of Jesus for us and she writes in the following manner about that longing of our Redeemer:

"I want the earth to burn with the wood of the cross and the fire of the Holy Spirit; I want you to pray for my Church, I want holy priests so that they may work for my glory and not for theirs... I want love, I am thirsty for love, for consolation, for reparations in the Eucharist... Give me souls, give me crucified hearts, give me yours to fill it and possess it..." (Account of Conscience (C.C.) T.1).

Jesus in the Gospel speaks to us about that desire of His: "I have come to bring fire to the earth and how much I yearn for it to burn!" To Conchita, our Mother, He says what that fire is with which He wants us to consume ourselves and give light and warmth to the world and to the Church, and in a special way, to those consecrated to Him, to His intimate friends and those friends chosen to be with Him, to His priests. It is the fire of the Cross, the fire of the Holy Spirit. How many hidden treasures there are in doing the will of Jesus! Only the Cross will allow us to give Him consolation and rest, which He asks of Conchita, which can only be fulfilled by of-

*"Hail,
O Cross,
our only
Hope."*

REFLECTION (*CONTINUED*)

fering Him souls, crucified hearts, so that He can fill them and hold them, beginning with our own.

Is there anyone among your beloved family whom you wish to bring to Jesus? Are you concerned about anyone whose heart you would like to open so that he would accept Christ? If your answer is yes, remember the secret which Jesus Himself gives us. "When I am raised up on high, I will attract all to Me." And for us the answer is to allow ourselves to be raised up to also attract our loved ones, the world, the Church and especially the priests, to bring them all to Christ.

Our Mother's answer to Jesus' wish came immediately and her answer was:

"I [12] want to suffer for He suffered so much for me... My Jesus, my Jesus, love and sacrifice; this is what I want my existence on earth to consist of, love and sacrifice...!" (C.C. T. 1 Pg 12).

And what about us? What about you? What do you want? How do you want to spend your time on earth? Our Lord has invited us to follow Him, living a life of love, purity and sacrifice. Are we willing to accept this? Are we willing to live our lives, which is our Heavenly Father's gift to us, like Conchita, sharing it with others?

If we have decided to follow Jesus, Priest and Victim, He will not deceive us nor give us unpleasant surprises. He always speaks truthfully to us and invites us to live in truth. He Himself is truth. Christ tells our Mother Conchita:

"...united with Me there will be no dissolutions but there will be much

suffering and heavy cross... your Beloved is crucified... you will suffer; you know not what awaits you but promise me you will never give up, you have to hold fast to the cross, hold it close to your heart to exude love and tenderness." (C.C. T. 1 Pg. 149).

Christ never hid the truth to attract followers. Followers who through ignorance said yes but later were disappointed and disenchanted. Jesus tells us very clearly: "If you wish to follow me, deny yourself, pick up your cross everyday and then follow me."

Let us ask the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Beautiful Love, for the grace to convince ourselves to the very depths of our soul that only by embracing our cross voluntarily will our hearts exude love and tenderness which makes it bearable, which helps us bear it without complaints of grumbling, without grief and with our heart filled with hope.

In the loving response which Conchita gives Jesus, she expresses her total conviction of the power contained in the cross, of the graces which are hidden beneath its hard exterior and thus, once Jesus asks her to accept the cross, to drink His cup, she responds to Him with all the love in her heart:

"O my Jesus, treasure of my life, my Beloved, so anguished! What will the cruelest pains and sufferings matter to me? I will pass through a thousand swords, over 293 mountains with thorns, as long as you are my light, my star, my guide... The only thing I ask and that worries me is that I never offend You, only to take my pleasure in You; the main thought of my life, which absorbs all else, is Your glory. Yes, my Jesus, I would

cast myself into hell a thousand times if that would give you even a small degree of glory or praise. O my Beloved, You know I say it with all my heart. Come whatever You wish, I am yours. Prune me, shape me, crucify me; your will be mine. If I destroyed myself, if I cut myself into a thousand pieces, it would not be enough to pay for even one of those looks of tenderness which makes me tremble, penetrating my heart completely." (C.C. T.1, Pg. 149-150).

The Cross takes us to whom is also for us our lighthouse, our star, our guide. Our Mother is convinced of the love of her God and knows that He will not permit her to suffer anything that can separate her from that eternal and infinite love. Conchita wishes to pay for the divine love with love. In her smallness she knows that she will not be able to respond as she would like but she is sure that each day she will try to respond as best she can to the free gift of God who has given her Faith, Hope and Love together with all the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit as ripe fruits from the Tree of the Cross.

When we celebrate the Exaltation of the Cross, let us pray through the intercession of the Virgin Mary for the graces we need in the Works and in the Family of the Cross in order to be faithful to the plan of salvation that our Heavenly Father gave to us in Christ and for us to know how to live this plan with Him and filled with the Holy Spirit we feel, as the Virgin Mary in the mystery of her Solitude, sustained by Him.

Fr. Eugenio, M.Sp.S.