

## *Blueprint for Reform: Impact on Catholic Schools*

By Leisa Schulz

**T**he Chief Administrators of Catholic Education (CACE) Conference was recently held in Mobile, Alabama. The CACE Conference gathers leaders in Catholic education from all across the United States to support members in their ministry, mobilize leaders for local and national action, and provide networking opportunities with one another and government and Church agencies. The theme for this year's conference was "Called to be Prophets."



As part of the gathering, Catholic school leaders received an update on public policy issues at the federal level prepared by Sr. Dale McDonald, Director of Public Policy, from the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA).

In the coming months, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is scheduled to be reauthorized. The Obama administration has outlined its goals for the reauthorization of ESEA (formerly No Child Left Behind) in a *Blueprint for Reform* (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/>) that establishes program frameworks that depart significantly from past approaches. The new law would consolidate 38 Titles (programs) into 11 and make most of them competitive grants.

### Proposed new ESEA titles in the *Blueprint for Reform*:

- College and career-ready students
- Effective teachers and leaders
- Teacher and leader pathways
- Effective teaching and learning for a complete education
- College pathways and accelerated learning
- Successful, safe and healthy students
- Expanding educational options: charter schools and public school choice only

The reauthorization is heavily focused on improving

underperforming public schools. Catholic schools may not meet some of the new criteria for participation. Many of the formula programs used most widely by Catholic schools are eliminated or assumed into competitive grants. Catholic school officials have not been successful in obtaining the equitable inclusion of their students and teachers in competitive grants for which they are eligible. Acceptance of common standards and assessments appear to be a criterion for participation in many of the programs and could eliminate private school students whose curriculum differs from that of public school students. Emphasis is being placed on building state-wide longitudinal data collection systems to measure growth of students/teachers that may require participation of private schools who wish to participate in programs.

The private school lobbying efforts continue for the equitable inclusion of its students and teachers in all programs that have served them well in the past. The challenge will be to create pathways for inclusion that will respect the uniqueness and independence of the Catholic school and thus avoid having to compromise and/or adopt public school mandates. Advocates in Washington DC are concentrating their efforts on the following points:

- *Equitable participation* by students in private schools has been a requirement in ESEA since it was first passed in 1965 and should continue.
- In recent years *funds generated by students in private schools have been diverted* to public school programs in which our students cannot participate.
- ESEA should be changed so that the proportional share of funds to serve nonpublic school students and teachers in private schools will be based on the *total allocation* of a program prior to a school district setting aside funds which only public schools can use.

Catholic school students have benefited greatly from previous ESEA programs, and it is critical we continue to advocate for the equitable participation of private school students in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

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## Bringing the Catholic Voice to the Public Square

By Rev. Patrick Delahanty



Rev. Patrick Delahanty

In 2008, Kentucky's Catholic Bishops approved a pilot program to bring the annual Catholics @ the Capitol event out to each diocese since the General Assembly only meets for 30 days during odd-numbered years, making it difficult to pinpoint a "best day" to bring people to Frankfort to advocate for issues of importance to Catholics and Kentuckians.

The experience proved beneficial. People who could not spend two days in Frankfort did come to meetings at local parishes and schools to spend several hours learning about the legislation the Conference would be working on in the upcoming session and how to contact legislators about it.

Bishops and planning staff invited legislators to these meetings and many of them took advantage of their offer.

Because of the positive evaluations received from participants the pilot is continu-

ing this year and by the time this newsletter reaches readers, 11 of the 18 events will be completed. Already more parishioners have participated than are ordinarily present in Frankfort for the two day event.

And legislators are once again coming and listening to our concerns about protecting the life of the unborn, speaking up on behalf of victims of usurious payday loan operators, and the execution of the severely mentally ill.

Of course the Conference expects to see other bills filed that will need to be analyzed through the prism of the sacredness of human life and dignity to decide whether they would be included in the Conference legislative agenda or not.

To keep informed about legislation the Conference is working on, we encourage you to visit the website often and to become Faithful Citizen Advocates so you receive our legislative alerts and messages.

And please spread the word about raising the Catholic voice in the public square.

May you enjoy a prayerful Advent and a Christmas celebration blessed with peace.

### Catholics @ The Capitol - Regional 2010-11 Events

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Saturday 1/8/2011	10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	St. William Church, 521 West Fifth Street, London
Saturday 1/8/2011	9:00 a.m. - Noon Central Time	Holy Spirit Parish, 4754 Smallhouse Rd, Bowling Green
Tuesday 1/11/2011	5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Hilton Garden Inn, Louisville Airport \$20.00 Registration (Includes Dinner)
Saturday 1/15/2011	9:00 a.m. - Noon Central Time	St. Pius X, 3814 US Highway 60 East, Owensboro
Saturday 1/22/2011	9:00 a.m. - Noon Central Time	Lourdes Hospital, 1530 Lone Oak Road, Paducah
Saturday 1/29/2011	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Blessed Sacrament Parish Hall, 2909 Dixie Highway, Fort Mitchell

# *We All Sink or Swim Together*

By Polly Duncan Collum



**E**lection season just ended, and the lack of civility among political candidates and citizens who disagree just seems to get worse every year. It's like a never-ending drumbeat or backdrop that continually reminds us of the meanest aspects of human nature. I make myself listen to

some of the back-and-forth, then, frankly, I tune out.

Rewind to just a few weeks ago and a very different picture that touched the world's cultural consciousness: the Chilean miners. Who wasn't moved by the community that developed among 33 desperate men over the course of 69 days, 17 of them with very limited food and drink?

But the best part was when they came up. Shortly thereafter, the miners announced that there would be no individual financial gain for any one of them at the expense of the others. Their story would be told collectively, and they would divide the profits equally.

What kind of air were those miners breathing down there? It seems different from the dog-eat-dog atmosphere that too often characterizes public discourse and political action in these United States. How come examples of human interdependence, solidarity, and acting for the common good are (big sigh) so few and far between?

Of course our Catholic tradition of social action offers many such examples. Faithful individuals, religious communities, voluntary associations, parish communities, and the Church as a whole have testified throughout the centuries to a deeper, stronger reality than our modern American my-rights-versus-your-rights, me-and-mine versus you-and-yours, ethos. That reality is this: We are all profoundly connected. As Saint Paul boldly states: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28)

The early Christians were described to the Roman emperor Hadrian in this way: "They love one another. They never fail to help widows; they save orphans from those who would hurt them. If they have something, they give freely to the one who has nothing; if they see a stranger, they take him home, and are happy, as though he were a real brother. They don't consider themselves sisters and brothers in the usual sense, but sisters and brothers through the Spirit, in God." (Aristides, Apology 15 in *The Anti-Nicene Fathers*)

What is perhaps most remarkable about those first follow-

ers of Jesus is that they welcomed the most vulnerable members of their society — widows, orphans, strangers — into their community as equals. They seemed to understand what the miners understand: We all sink or swim together.

Our culture might tell us to live in gated "communities" with People-Like-Us; to bar the door on undocumented immigrants and other "strangers among us" (Lev. 19:33-34); to eradicate the new life within that seems to threaten our own well-being; and to care more about "stuff" than about people. But our Church says otherwise.

Scripture and Catholic teaching repeatedly emphasize that we are all sisters and brothers to one another, children of the same God. Catholic social teaching points to this truth: The best test of any society is not how well the relatively few at the top are faring, but rather how those who are most vulnerable (economically and otherwise) are getting along. Rampant individualism that neglects community and the "least of these" (Matt. 25: 40) contradicts not only fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching, but also the best of our common good-oriented American democratic tradition.

So what can the aspiring Faithful Citizen do? One thing is legislative advocacy. In their document, *Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish*, the U.S. Bishops encourage parish communities to advocate for justice in the legislative arena:

"Parishes need to promote a revived sense of political responsibility calling Catholics to be informed and active citizens, participating in the debate over the values and vision that guide our communities and nation. Parishes as local institutions have special opportunities to develop leaders, to promote citizenship, and to provide forums for discussion and action on public issues... Parishes can help lift up the moral and human dimension of public issues, calling people to informed participation in the political process.

The voices of parishioners need to be heard on behalf of vulnerable children — born and unborn — on behalf of those who suffer discrimination and injustice, on behalf of those without health care or housing, on behalf of our land and water, our communities and neighborhoods." (pp. 13-14)

The Church will likely always be outdone by the paid political lobbyists and the money of powerful special interests. But we need not be outnumbered. Legislators listen to numbers.

Together we can help shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and rights of the human person. Through efforts such as "Catholics @ the Capitol" and the Catholic Conference of Kentucky's Faithful Citizen Advocacy Network, we can act on the Catholic principles of human interdependence, solidarity, and the common good, and effect the social change sorely needed in our local communities, our state, and our nation.

# God's Presence among the Needy

By Iraida Hildago

**T**his year was my second year as a missionary in the Priest Fathers Latin mission to Tabasco, Mexico. I never thought I would go on the mission trip again, I thought I was only going to have the experience one time. However, I have found God's calling for me to share his love. It is incredible how one can feel God's presence so much there. It is in the faith of the people who don't have doctors or fire rescue but instead they firmly believe they have God.

When we arrived this past July 2010 we heard the bad news that about 30 people from the village where we stayed were involved in a terrible traffic accident where all died. The accident occurred while they were going to the city to get gas to bring back to the village; they got into a wreck with another vehicle and the truck burst into flames and all died.

When we arrived we found the community very united. Everyone helped the families who had lost loved ones. One of the experiences that I won't forget was visiting houses of people who had lost their families in the accident. I remembered last year when they often mentioned losing family members but I could not relate to the feeling.

This year before I left for the mission trip, my dog had just gotten a surgery and when I left he was still recovering. Once I arrived in Mexico City, I got a call from my mother saying that he had died. For the first couple of days I was very sad and cried often. However, I would have never thought that God would give me such a great lesson through that experience.

It was when I arrived at a house where the mother and father had lost three of their children and one of their grandchildren in this accident; now to me death didn't sound so unreal. I could not begin to know how much pain they were going

through. But, I could understand more of what their feelings were. There was nothing I could do but be there with them and show them my love for them.

One of the feelings that bothered me in this experience was impotence. Although, I wish I could do something and provide options for them, there was nothing I could do other than pray. That helped me relate more to them. They deal with that feeling on a daily basis.

I remembered visiting a house where a man had lost his vision completely and was asking for us to go to his house and pray for him. It was so hard for me to see how he accepted the fact that he just turned blind. They knew that they didn't have the resources to go to the city and see a doctor. Those feelings were the same feelings I had when I visited a house where the mother was locked up in a room just like a prison with a toilet inside and a hole where the family passed the food through. The reason why the family had her locked up was because she had psychological problems. When she would be let out of the room she would run away.

When we visited her house, Father asked for them to let her out for prayer. However, she could not concentrate on prayer; it was like she didn't understand anything we said. She would talk about how her husband used to beat her and kept describing what he did to her. As she looked at different parts of the house she would remember and tell us the different ways he hurt her. To me this was very hard. As a psychology student I know how much help she needs. In this little town nothing is done for the people with mental disorders other than to lock them up. The husband is very sorry for what he did, but like many men in the village the alcohol addiction takes control of their lives, and becomes the families' worst nightmare.

Once again there was nothing I could do, but I know that coming back each year, hearing their stories, giving them love and receiving all the love they have for us is more than enough for them.

*Iraida Hidalgo is a member of St. Rita Parish and a student at Spalding University majoring in psychology.*

## *Presencia de Dios entre los necesitados*

By Iraida Hildago

**E**ste año fue mi segundo año como misionera en la misión de los Padres Escolapios de América a Tabasco, México. Nunca pensé que iba a regresar por segunda vez a la misión, pensé que sólo iba a tener esta experiencia sola una vez. Sin embargo, he escuchado el llamado de Dios para compartir su amor. Es increíble cómo se siente la presencia de Dios en este lugar. Encontramos su amor en la fe de las personas que no tienen médicos o bomberos, sino que creen firmemente que tienen a Dios. Cuando llegamos en julio 2010, escuchamos la mala noticia de que 30 personas del pueblo donde nos quedamos sufrieron un terrible accidente donde murieron todos. El accidente ocurrió cuando iban a la ciudad para conseguir gasolina para la aldea. Un camión chocó contra el vehículo donde iban ellos, hubo una explosión donde todos murieron. Cuando llegamos encontramos a la comunidad muy unida y todos ayudando a las familias que habían perdido a sus seres queridos. Nun-



ca olvidare las visitas a las casas de las personas que habían perdido a sus familias en el accidente.

Este año, antes de salir de viaje para la misión, mi perro tuvo una cirugía, cuando me fui estaba recuperando. Llegando a la Ciudad de México, recibí una llamada de mi madre diciendo que había muerto. Los primeros días estaba muy triste y lloraba a menudo. Sin embargo, nunca habría pensado que Dios me daría una gran lección a través de esa experiencia. Fue cuando llegué a una casa donde la madre

y el padre habían perdido tres de sus hijos y uno de sus nietos en el accidente, hasta este punto, la muerte no sonaba tan real. No podía entender la cantidad de dolor que estaban pasando. Sin embargo, pude entender más sus sentimientos. No podía hacer nada más que estar allí con ellos y mostrarles mi amor. Uno de los sentimientos

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## *Meeting the Challenge to Minister to Hispanic Community*

By Frank Villalobos

**T**he Hispanic Community in Louisville is going through a very profound transition. One of the most important aspects of that transition is the programs being offered and being developed by parishes and the Office of Multicultural Ministry.

When you travel throughout the archdiocese, it becomes very obvious that parishes are noticing an increase of Hispanics in their community and in their pews. This presents a great challenge to those communities that have not had the opportunity to work or worship alongside Hispanics. Some may ask questions like, "How do you reach out to them? How do we keep them coming back? How can we be more welcoming to our Hispanic brothers and sisters?"

Let us take a look at the parishes that have had success reaching out to the Hispanic community.

The key to their success has been their willingness to go out to where the people live. Some parishes sent out parishioners to the homes and neighborhoods where they live. Sometimes it meant going into the inner city, going into the agricultural farms and the horse farms where they live and work. The parishes that have a thriving Hispanic Community have adjusted their formation program for children, began offering bible study for adults, and have begun youth ministry for teens.

The celebrations of the sacraments are important to Hispanics and their extended families and provide an opportunity for family gatherings and celebrations. Parishes have figured out a way where the sacraments are celebrated in a bilingual liturgy. They have also opened up the parish hall for community gatherings and private party celebrations. Evangelization, faith formation, and community building are great tools for welcoming and forming the Hispanic Ministry in a parish.

These parish communities are at a point in their development where they have recognized the following needs, a wider, more complete evangelization program, adult formation and children's formation, and community building pro-

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### *Presencia de Dios entre los necesitados*

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que me molestó de esta experiencia fue la impotencia. Aunque, me gustaría poder hacer algo y ofrecerles opciones, no podía hacer nada más que rezar. Eso me ayudó a relacionarse más con ellos. Ellos viven con este sentimiento diario.

Me acuerdo cuando visite la casa donde un hombre perdió la vista. Nos pidió que fuéramos a su casa y orar con él. Fue muy difícil para mí ver cómo él aceptó la tragedia de quedar ciego. No tienen los recursos para ir a la ciudad y ver a un médico. Lo mismo sentí cuando visité una casa donde estaba encerrada una señora. La tenían encerrada como si estuviera en la cárcel. Solo tenía un baño y un agujero donde la familia le pasaba la comida. La señora sufría

grams.

The archdiocese has heard their voices and has begun the process of meeting those needs. The Office of Multicultural Ministry is charged with the task to help identify, research, and develop programs that meet those needs.

In order to meet those needs, qualified lay persons are needed. This means that we need to identify ministers that come from the people; it means providing leadership formation courses in the people's language. For the past four years the Office of Multicultural Ministries has offered these Leader Formation classes to those identified by their parishes with leadership capabilities. Though this is a timely process and the need is so great, a basic Spanish class was developed and offered to those staff members and parishioners who currently minister to the Hispanic community.

The Leaders Formation program opens the door to ministry for many Hispanics and allows them to continue their formation into a specific ministry. A catechist training program is now being developed to assist parishes with Spanish speaking catechists. A marriage preparation program is also being evaluated so that in the near future it can be offered and will help in forming Hispanic couples for this ministry. With the Hispanic community being so young, a need to have bilingual or Spanish speaking youth ministers has been identified. Meetings have taken place between the offices of Multicultural and Youth Ministry to explore the possibility of offering a Youth Ministry program in Spanish.

There are fifteen parishes in our archdiocese that offer Hispanic Ministry and celebrate Mass in Spanish. Some may say "Why do we need this in Spanish, why don't they learn English?" I'll give you a simple explanation. In my case I was raised speaking English and Spanish but my praying and worshipping was only in Spanish. Though I consider English my first language, my relationship with God is in Spanish. It feels unnatural for me to talk to God in English. When I force myself to talk to God in English, I find myself switching over to Spanish without thinking about it.

Reaching out and providing opportunities for everyone to grow in their faith and spread the kingdom of God is what we are all called to do. Let us not quarrel about the language that we are offering it in but celebrate and rejoice that it is being done.

de problemas psicológicos, cuando la dejan salir se les escapa corriendo. Cuando hicimos una visita a su casa, el padre pidió que la dejaran salir para la oración. Sin embargo, no podía concentrarse en la oración, era como que no entendía nada de lo que decíamos. Hablaba acerca de cómo su marido le pegaba y la maltrataba. En cada cuarto de su casa parecía como si acordaba del maltrato de su esposo y nos contaba sus sufrimientos. Para mí fue muy duro, como estudiante de psicología yo sé cuánto ayuda necesita, pero en este pueblo pequeño, lo único que pueden hacer para las personas que sufren de esta enfermedad es encerrarlos. El marido está muy apenado por lo que hizo, pero igual a la mayoría de los hombres del pueblo, sufre de la adicción. El alcohol toma el control de sus vidas, es una gran pesadilla para las familias. Otra vez me sentí inútil, no podía hacer nada, pero sé que volveré el próximo año para escuchar sus historias, dándoles amor y recibir todo el amor que tienen. Yo sé que esto es más que suficiente para ellos.

# Mary: "The First and Most Perfect Disciple"

By Rev. Ronald Ketteler

**A**t the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) the Catholic doctrinal teaching on Mary the mother of God was incorporated into the final chapter of the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium, 1964)*. Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* was entitled "The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church." (LG nn. 52-68)

Expounding on St. Augustine's thought on the Virgin Mary as "the mother of the members of Christ," *Lumen Gentium* acknowledges that in the Catholic tradition Mary is "hailed as preeminent and as a wholly unique member of the Church, and as its type and outstanding model in faith and charity." (LG n. 53)

As a matter of record, Pope Paul VI formally conferred on the Blessed Virgin the title "Mother of the Church" in an allocution at the close of the third session of Vatican II.

The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* succinctly encapsulates the Marian teaching in *Lumen Gentium* and states that Mary is "the first and the greatest of all the disciples of Christ." (USCCA p. 143)

Thus, in the light of the direction in Marian theology adopted in the conciliar teaching, theologians in the post-conciliar era as well as later Church documents have developed an intensified emphasis on the biblical foundations of Marian theology.

Consequently, current studies in Marian theology which have been undertaken from a New Testament perspective have distilled a seminal insight drawn from the Gospels, namely, that Mary is "the perfect disciple" of Jesus.

In his *The Theology of Mary*, for example, theologian Donal Flanagan (1976) sketched in summary fashion the gospel portrait of Mary "as a hearer and a doer of the word." In short, according to the New Testament gospels, especially in the Gospels of Luke and John, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is viewed as "disciple, follower of Christ, receiver of his grace."

The title of Marianist Father Bertrand Buby's *Mary, the Faithful Disciple* (1985) sets forth that theme of Mary to encompass "the whole mystery of Mary as a person, as a believer, and as the first faithful disciple of the New Testament." Moreover, the paradigm of Mary as "the perfect disciple of Jesus" can correlatively serve to illumine the meaning of the discipleship of Christians in the world today.

In this regard, Sister Agnes Cunningham, S.S.C.M., in her *The Significance of Mary* (1988) links the interrelatedness of the Virgin Mary's motherhood to discipleship: "In her motherhood, Mary is the woman of faith par excellence. In her care and concern for the whole Christ, she shows forth the characteristics of a true disciple of the Lord." As "Mother of the Church" and "Mother of Divine Grace," Mary's "spiritual motherhood reflects the grace and virtue which are hers as one who believed in and followed Jesus in a pre-eminent manner."

The New Testament image of Mary as the perfect disciple of Jesus has mapped out fresh parameters for ecumenical dialogue. The publication of *Mary in the New Testament*, a study subtitled "A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars," was released in 1978. It was the fruit of the National Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue.

Without doubt, the scholarship of Sulpician Father Raymond E. Brown (d. 1998) had played an instrumental role in that dialogue. In "Mary in the New Testament and in Catholic Life" (*America* 1982), Father Brown, one of the editors of MNT, considered the return to biblical foundations as an opening for a renewed approach to the Marian doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. In ecumenical conversations such a methodology is capable of demonstrating "solid fidelity to Gospel lines of development in the central Mariological practices and beliefs."

In addition, insofar as authentic church teaching is concerned, papal and episcopal teachings after the Council have made important contributions to the catechesis of Marian doctrine and practice in the light of modern biblical studies.

Three such documents are especially notable: the U. S. bishops' pastoral letter *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith*, Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Mariialis Cultus*, and Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*. In particular, these more recent Church teaching documents have integrated the biblical theme of "Mary the preeminent and perfect disciple of Christ" with a relationship to the Blessed Virgin's role of spiritual motherhood.

*Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith*, a 1973 pastoral letter of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, referred to the image of Mary as the preeminent disciple of Jesus in these words: "As a perfect disciple, the Virgin Mary heard the Word of God and kept it. To the lasting joy of the messianic generations who call her blessed." (BYM n. 78)

The unique role of Mary the preeminent disciple was viewed through the

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lens of the concept of "Spiritual Motherhood."

A year later in 1974, Pope Paul VI issued the apostolic exhortation *Mariialis Cultus* on the subject of the correct development of Marian devotions.

In that statement Pope Paul VI proposed that the Virgin Mary be held up to the Catholic faithful as a model of Christian disciple on account of the manner in which "she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God (cf. Lk 1:38), because she heard the word of God and acted on it, and because charity and the spirit of service were the driving force of her actions." For these reasons, the Virgin Mary is seen as "the first and the most perfect of Christ's disciples"

That exemplary witness of the Mother of Jesus enjoys "a permanent and universal exemplary value." (MC n. 35)

In addition, Pope Paul VI pointed to the Gospel figure of Mary as "a mirror of the expectations of men and women of our time." In spelling out those expectations, especially the hopes of women in the contemporary world, Pope Paul VI considered the figure of the Virgin Mary as "the perfect model of the disciple of the Lord." In contemporary terms, the disciple, who as "a diligent pilgrim journeying to the heavenly city," is called to construct the temporal order, to work for liberating justice and charity, and to witness to "that love which builds up Christ in people's hearts." (MC n. 37)

On March 25, 1987, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical letter *Redemptoris Mater* ("Mother of the Redeemer"). This comprehensive papal teaching on Marian doctrine and theology masterfully blends biblical theology and church tradition.

As a historical note, Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J. (d. 2008) in "Mary at the Dawn of the New Millennium," his 1997 McGinley Lecture at Fordham University, stated that at the Council Pope John Paul II (then Bishop Karol Wojtyla) "favored the inclusion of Mariology within the 'Dogmatic Constitution on the Church'."

According to Cardinal Dulles Pope John Paul II identified Mary as "as the primary patroness of the advent of the new millennium," for "As the mother of Christ she is preeminently an advent figure — the morning star announcing the dawn of a new day."

The Marian theology of Pope John Paul II is rooted in a single over-arching concept — "that of motherhood." In his writings, then, Mary is visualized as "mother of the redeemer, mother of divine grace, mother of the Church."

Section 2 of Part 1 of "Redemptoris Mater" concentrates on the biblical theme — "Blessed is she who believed" (Lk 1:45). (RM nn. 2-19) These words of blessing were uttered by Elizabeth in her greeting to Mary at the Visitation. Elizabeth's praise of Mary's believing becomes a key to understanding the role of Mary in the redemptive plan of God.

Pope John Paul II stressed that "[i]n the expression 'Blessed is she who believed,' we can therefore rightly find a kind of 'key' which unlocks for us the innermost reality of Mary, whom the angel hailed as 'full of grace.'" (RM n. 19)

Section 3 of Part 1 of encyclical centers on another major theme, one taken from the Gospel of John — "Behold you mother." (RM nn. 20-24)

In the context of the Gospel according to Luke, Pope John Paul II initiated a theological meditation on the mystery of the mother of Jesus with a reflection on the nature of true kinship in the circle of discipleship, Jesus' eschatological family. In response to the praise of his mother voiced by an unnamed woman in Luke's Gospel — "Blessed is the womb that bore you ..., " Jesus declared: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it." (Lk 11:28)

Pope John Paul II crafted a theological exegesis based on Mary's "fiat" at the Annunciation — "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord: Let it be to me according to your word." (Lk 1:38) He explained that "[t]hrough faith Mary continued to hear and to ponder that word, in which there became ever clearer, in a way 'which surpasses all knowledge' (Eph 3:19), the self-revelation of the living God." (RM n. 20)

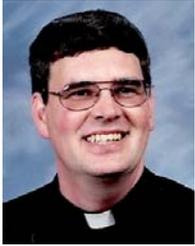
Here Pope John Paul II stressed the preeminent discipleship of Mary: "Thus in a sense Mary as Mother became the first 'disciple' of her Son, the first to whom he seemed to say: 'Follow me,' even before he addressed this call to the Apostles or to anyone else (cf. Jn 1:43)."

In her commentary on the divine maternity of Mary as presented in the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, Sister Agnes Cunningham unpacks the implications of that mystery: "In her divine maternity, Mary is a figure and permanent model for the Church." She concludes: "Mary is also present in the mystery of the Church as a model of faith, hope and charity."

Redemptoris Father Anthony J. Kelly's article "Mary: Icon of Trinitarian Love" is an incisive theological synthesis of the Marian presence in Christian life. The well-known Australian theologian has identified the wellspring of Marian theology and devotion when he writes: "If Christ is the Yes to all God's promises and the Amen to all our prayers (2 Cor 1: 18-20), Mary appears in the radiance of the divine affirmation of our humanity, just as her 'fiat', 'Be it done unto me according to your word' (Lk 1:38), is a radical endorsement of the Amen of the human surrender to the ways of God."

# Praying For Christian Unity

By Rev. Tony Bickett



**T**he Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Ecumenism* states that prayer is the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, a theme repeated by Pope John Paul II in his 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*.

Many communities host ecumenical community Thanksgiving prayer services each year. This is a wonderful time for

Catholics to join in public prayer with their Protestant Christian neighbors. Another opportunity will take place from January 18-25.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity began in 1908, as the Octave of Christian Unity, and focused on prayer for church unity. The dates of the week were proposed by Father Paul Watson, cofounder of the Graymoor Franciscan Friars. He conceived of the week beginning on the Feast of the Confession of Peter, the Protestant variant of the ancient Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter, on January 18, and concluding with the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul on January 25.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is an international Christian ecumenical observance kept annually between January 18 – 25. It is actually an octave, that is, an observance lasting eight days. Pope Pius X officially blessed the concept, and Pope Benedict XVI has encouraged its obser-

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vance throughout the entire Roman Catholic Church.

It is significant that it was at the end of the Week of Prayer, precisely on January 25, 1959, that John XXIII announced the Second Vatican Council which would officially open the Catholic Church to the ecumenical movement. In its *Decree on Ecumenism*, the Council declared: "This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name 'spiritual ecumenism.'" (DoE, 8)

The annual week of prayer for Christian unity is a great time to renew our commitment as individuals and as a Church to work for ecumenism. Each experience of prayer and gathering provides the Christian faith community with opportunities to grow in our understanding of one another as we celebrate our unity and common mission.

If churches in your area have not observed the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity before, or for a long time, consider gathering together a group of Christians who would be willing to work together on ways to pray together in your community. Ask your parish and two or three congregations in your immediate area to plan a unity prayer service. Share the plans in your community for the celebration on or near the Sunday within the Week of Prayer. Publicize your plans in church media (parish bulletins, congregational newsletters, or bulletin boards) and in local newspapers, and radio. At the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity try to get a commitment to pray together for the next year. You could also consider promoting other prayer services throughout the year as well as bible study, lectures, social justice projects, etc. Excellent resources can be found at [www.geii.org](http://www.geii.org).



*One in the Apostles' Teaching, Fellowship, Breaking of Bread and Prayer (cf. Acts 2:42)*

The 2011 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity materials were originally prepared by Christians in Jerusalem, who chose as a theme Acts 2:42, 'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.'

This theme is a call back to the origins of the first church in Jerusalem; it is a call for inspiration and renewal, a return to the essentials of the faith; it is a call to remember the time when the church was still one. Within this year's artwork the four elements of the 2011 theme are depicted: the Word as passed on by the apostles, fellowship or *koinonia* which was an important mark of the early believers whenever they met together, the 'breaking of the bread' as it remembers the New Covenant which Jesus has enacted in his suffering, death and resurrection and the offering of constant prayer. These four elements are the pillars of the life of the church, and of its unity.

The Joint Working Group wished to give prominence to these basic essentials in our prayers to God for the unity and vitality of the church throughout the world. The Christians of Jerusalem invite their sisters and brothers around the world to join them in prayer as they struggle for justice, peace and prosperity for all people of the land.



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## ***Cumpliendo el Reto de Asistir Pastoralmente a la Comunidad Hispana***

By Frank Villalobos

**L**a comunidad hispana en Louisville está pasando por una transición muy profunda. Uno de los aspectos más importantes de esta transición son los programas que se están ofreciendo y que están siendo desarrollados por las parroquias y la Oficina del Ministerio Multicultural de nuestra arquidiócesis.

Cuando se visitan a las parroquias en nuestra arquidiócesis, se observa un obvio incremento de hispanos en las comunidades y en las bancas dentro de nuestras parroquias. Esto presenta un gran desafío para las comunidades que no han tenido la oportunidad de trabajar o de orar junto con los hispanos. Algunos pueden hacer preguntas como, "¿Cómo podemos llegar a ellos? ¿Cómo le hacemos para que sigan viniendo? ¿Cómo podemos ser más acogedores hacia nuestros hermanos hispanos? Demos un vistazo a las parroquias que han tenido éxito en el alcance de la comunidad hispana.

La clave de su éxito ha sido su voluntad de ir a donde vive la gente. Algunas parroquias envían feligreses a las casas y a los barrios donde viven los hispanos. A veces eso significaba entrar en el centro de la ciudad, entrar en las fincas agrícolas y las granjas de caballos en donde viven y trabajan. Las parroquias que tienen una floreciente comunidad hispana han adaptado sus programas de formación para los niños, ofrecen estudios bíblicos para adultos, y han comenzado la pastoral juvenil para los adolescentes. Las celebraciones de los sacramentos son una parte importante para los hispanos y sus familias y brindan una oportunidad para reuniones familiares y festejos. Algunas parroquias han encontrado la manera en que los sacramentos se celebran en una liturgia bilingüe. Además han hecho disponible el salón parroquial para las reuniones comunitarias y celebraciones privadas. La evangelización, formación de fe, y la formación de la comunidad son grandes herramientas para acoger y formar el Ministerio Hispano en la parroquia.

Estas comunidades parroquiales se encuentran en un punto en su desarrollo en donde han reconocido las necesidades de una evangelización más amplia y completa al igual que la formación y los programas comunitarios. La arquidiócesis ha oído la voz de estas comunidades y ha iniciado el proceso de satisfacer esas necesidades. La Oficina Multicultural está a cargo de la

tarea de ayudar a identificar, investigar y desarrollar programas que satisfagan esas necesidades.

Con el fin de satisfacer esas necesidades se requiere de laicos calificados. Esto significa que tenemos que identificar ministros dentro de la comunidad y proveer cursos de formación de liderazgo en el idioma de la comunidad. Durante los últimos cuatro años, la Oficina del Ministerio Multicultural ha ofrecido estas clases a aquellos que han sido identificados por sus parroquias con capacidad de liderazgo. Sin embargo, preparar a líderes es un proceso lento, se tarda mucho para que una persona sea preparada para trabajar en el ministerio de la iglesia. Por esta razón se desarrolló una clase de español básico y se ofreció al personal parroquial y a los feligreses que hablan inglés y que realizan ministerio hacia la comunidad hispana.

El programa de formación abre la puerta a muchos hispanos y les permite continuar su formación en un ministerio específico. El programa de formación de catequistas está siendo desarrollado para ayudar a las parroquias a tener catequistas que hablen español. Un programa de preparación para el matrimonio también se está evaluando para que en un futuro próximo se pueda ofrecer para formar parejas hispanas en este ministerio. Siendo la comunidad hispana tan joven, la necesidad de tener ministros bilingües para el ministerio de adolescentes ha sido identificada. Se han llevado a cabo reuniones entre la Oficina del Ministerio Multicultural y la Oficina del Ministerio de Jóvenes para explorar la posibilidad de ofrecer un programa de Pastoral Juvenil en español.

Hay quince parroquias en nuestra arquidiócesis que ofrecen ministerio hispano y celebran misa en español. Hay personas que preguntan ¿Por qué necesitamos esto en español?, ¿por qué no aprenden inglés? Les voy a dar una simple explicación. En mi caso, fui criado hablando español, esto es, rezando y atendiendo la misa en español. Aunque considero inglés mi primer idioma, mi relación con Dios es en español. No es natural para mí hablar con Dios en Inglés. Cuando me esfuerzo a orar en inglés, sin pensar me encuentro orando en español automáticamente.

Todos somos llamados a ayudar a nuestro prójimo y proporcionar oportunidades para que todos puedan crecer en la fe y extender el reino de Dios. No disputemos sobre el idioma que estamos ofreciendo, sino hay que alegrarnos y celebrar porque se está haciendo.