Changing Times in Belize

At Work: Fr. Bob Weiss, Fr. Mike Gallagher
We all have to proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel. In God’s great plan, every detail is important, even the hidden witness of those who live their faith with simplicity in everyday family relationships, work relationships, friendships. (These) are the saints of every day.

One cannot proclaim the Gospel of Jesus without the tangible witness of one’s life. Those who listen to us and observe us must be able to see in our actions what they hear from our lips, and so give glory to God!

I am thinking now of some advice that Saint Francis of Assisi gave his brothers: preach the Gospel and, if necessary, use words.

~ Pope Francis
Bridget Brennan Heads Ignatian Volunteer Corps in St. Louis

Bridget Brennan is the new director of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps in St. Louis, a Jesuits of the Missouri Province-sponsored ministry of retirees serving the poor while growing in Ignatian spirituality. She arrived on May 6.

Brennan, 71, is the former executive director and founder of St. Louis Healthy Families, a nonprofit that did education, training and advocacy for healthy relationships. Before that, she created in 1986 and operated until 2004 a family life ministry at St. Francis Xavier (College) Church in St. Louis, including marriage education and relationship skills, spiritual direction and retreats.

Jesuit Brother is New President of New Orleans School

Brother Lawrence Huck has been named the first staff president of The Good Shepherd School, a Jesuit Nativity school in New Orleans that works with at-risk, underserved children.

Huck, 44, a native of New Orleans, taught high school theology at Jesuit High School of New Orleans and served as campus minister at Jesuit High School of Tampa.

He also taught at Berchmans Academy of the Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau, La., only a short walk from St. Charles College where, for two years, he oversaw renovations for the New Orleans provincial.

Book Chronicles 200 Years of Southern Jesuits

Centuries of Jesuit ministry in the southern U.S. are being chronicled as stories to be published next year in a singular, permanent record.

“Biographies of the Southern Jesuits: The First 200 Years,” will feature Jesuits and their works in the South and Southwest since the 1700s.

The book will include stories of the original Jesuit Mission Band that traveled throughout the province proclaiming the Gospel, and those of early French Jesuits who evangelized Native American nations in the region.

The book will be published in July 2014, as the New Orleans and Missouri provinces unite to form the new Central-South Province.

Advanced copies may be reserved by contacting Michael Bourg at 1-800-788-1719 or mbourg@norprov.org.

Transitions

New Orleans and Missouri Jesuits on the Move

Fr. Pat Quinn will become associate pastor of St. Matthew Parish in St. Louis; he has been minister of the Bellarmine House community and part of the Saint Louis University campus ministry program.

Fr. Scott Hendrickson will begin theology studies at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. He did his regency in Managua, Nicaragua at the Instituto Loyola and worked at the Escuela de Guadalupe in Denver.

Joseph Woltaer will begin the residency at De Smet Jesuit High School in the fall.

Jesuit Brother Headed to Vatican Observatory

Later this summer, Jesuit Brother Robert Macke will travel to Castel Gandolfo, but not for vacation in one of Italy’s most iconic towns and home to the pope’s summer residence. Macke, who has a doctorate in planetary science physics, is about to fulfill a dream he’s held since entering the Jesuits 12 years ago, “to integrate my faith life and my life as a scientist,” he said.

In August, he will join the Vatican Observatory team and Jesuit community in this place 15 miles outside of Rome. At 39, Macke just completed his studies at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, the end of the road in his academic formation, and is about to embark on his first assignment.

He will work with the Observatory’s collection of meteories, those interplanetary particles that survived passage through the Earth’s atmosphere and struck ground. He’ll study their physical properties and pursue other research projects, and over time, begin to take over the task of curating the Observatory’s meteorite collection.

“The assignment is open-ended,” he said, “so, in theory, I could be there until they send me to the infirmary.”

Looking back, being missioned to the Jesuit-run Observatory seems to have been his destiny. When he acknowledged the call to religious life in graduate school at Washington University in St. Louis, he knew nothing about the Jesuits. Initially, he didn’t consider brotherhood; the assumption was that he’d be a priest.

It wasn’t until after Macke met several Jesuit brothers, including the American research astronomer and planetary scientist, Guy Consolmagno, that he recognized a resonance with the brothers. Consolmagno is curator of the Observatory’s meteorite collection and invited Macke to spend the summer of 2004 doing research with him. He made subsequent research visits in 2009 and 2012.

“I later understood that the call to life in the Society of Jesus was not the same as the call to sacramental ministry and that I had the former but not the latter,” he said.

The Vatican Observatory was founded by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 as a sign to the world that the Catholic Church supports the pursuit of science. Macke sees no inherent conflict between faith and science, and during the last two years in Boston, he led a faith and science discussion group at his alma mater, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

“There is only one truth,” he said, “and both faith and science reflect that same truth in their own ways.”

By Cheryl Wittenauer

Search for New Saint Louis University President Begins in the Fall

A search will begin this fall for a successor to Saint Louis University President Lawrence Biondi, who announced in May his intention to retire.

Fr. Biondi, 74, arrived at SLU more than a quarter-century ago and is one of the longest-serving presidents at an American Jesuit college or university.

His tenure has been marked by campus expansion, construction and improvements; a 10-fold increase in endowment; and establishment of innovative initiatives such as the Center for World Health and Medicine and the launch of the first Center for Sustainability at a Jesuit university.

President Begins in the Fall

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By Cheryl Wittenauer
Fr. Raul Navarro was born in Mexico City where he spent his early years before moving to the United States at age 12. The family settled in New Orleans, where he and his three siblings attended local schools. After graduating from Redemptorist High School, Navarro studied at Loyola University New Orleans, earning a bachelor's degree in geology in 1983.

At Loyola, he became acquainted with the Society of Jesus and also found a place that would become his academic and professional home for nearly two decades. After graduating from college, Navarro worked at Loyola in administrative and accounting positions and earned two master's degrees, in education and in business administration. Along the way, he was active in campus ministry and volunteered for student retreats while discerning a Jesuit vocation. In 2002, Navarro entered the Society of Jesus. He spent two years at the New Orleans Province novitiate, followed by philosophy and theology studies at Loyola University Chicago.

As part of his regency assignment, Navarro taught at Houston's Strake Jesuit College Preparatory and helped open the Cristo Rey school in that city. Following regency, he was missioned to the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley, Calif., where he earned a Master of Divinity degree.

He includes among his memorable formation experiences his long experiment in Guadalajara, mission trips to Mexico City and a trip to the Philippines, his first visit to his parents' homeland. The 53-year-old Navarro will serve at Immaculate Conception Church in New Orleans.

Fr. Jeremy Zipple spent his early years in Oklahoma and Mississippi, and after graduating in 1996 from Hattiesburg (Miss.) High School, he pursued higher education at Boston College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics with a minor in film and music.

At Boston College, he worked in campus ministry, played piano for student liturgies and volunteered at a homeless shelter. He also came to know the Jesuits and appreciate how the Society of Jesus offered a model of the priesthood that combined secular pursuits with a life of faith.

Upon graduation in 2000, he taught math and music to middle school students in Metuchen, N.J., and joined the Society of Jesus in 2002. While in the novitiate of the New Orleans Province, Zipple found an avenue for his interest in film production, working on a PBS documentary on the great Jesuit missionary, St. Francis Xavier.

In 2004, he began studies at Fordham University in New York, and earned a master's degree in philosophy three years later. He did a three-year regency assignment with National Geographic Television in Washington as a writer, producer and director, and contributed to documentaries on a lost Mayan civilization and the quest for King Solomon’s mines.

In 2010, Zipple returned to Boston College to pursue a Master of Divinity degree at its School of Theology and Ministry while serving as a deacon at St. Joseph's Parish in Belmont, Mass. He will return to Boston to continue work on his Licentiate in Sacred Theology.

At 35, he hopes to continue making documentaries on Jesuit, religious and cultural themes.
The Jesuits in Belize focus most of their energy on St. John’s College and two parishes: St. Martin de Porres in Belize City and St. Peter Claver in Punta Gorda. University students spent their spring break in March helping build a teachers’ residence. Fr. Jesús Riveroll leads the Jesuits in a morning Mass at St. John’s College where Fr. Tony Vega serves as evening dean at the junior college and Bro. Glen Kerfoot teaches theology. Fishing boats bob in the Caribbean waters off Belize City. St. John’s College has steadily built up its classroom buildings and now accommodates nearly 1,900 students. Many Jesuit priests continue the long tradition of driving into the districts near Belize City to lead small congregations at Sunday Mass, including Fr. John Maher, who has been providing the sacraments to people in Burrell Boom for more than 20 years. Lay people such as Telésforo Paquiel, principal of the St. Peter Claver primary school, and teacher Tracy Ramirez play key roles in sustaining the Church’s mission.
Tough Assignment in Punta Gorda
Belize Jesuits face change in southern town and villages

Story and Photos by Thomas Rochford SJ

The sun rising over the Caribbean waters across the lawn from the Jesuit residence in Punta Gorda, Belize, awakens Fr. Louis McCabe and sets a busy day in motion. The pastor of St. Peter Claver Parish, who last year took on one of the most difficult assignments in the province, walks down the stairs of the plain concrete house and gets into his Toyota truck for what will be a long day celebrating Mass at parish grade schools in the villages of Indian Creek and Silver Creek.

Besides his responsibility for the parish church in this southernmost town in Belize, the 72-year-old McCabe also has charge of 30 grade schools with more than 5,000 students. It’s a big change from his earlier stints as Missouri province vocation director, high school teacher, provincial executive assistant and community superior.

Missouri Jesuit pastors have accompanied people in the Toledo district, the country’s southernmost and least-developed region, since 1895, maintaining a regular round of sacraments, pastoral counseling and school supervision. McCabe faces the additional challenge of helping people negotiate a wave of transitions that threatens the traditional identity of Mayans, Creole, Garifuna and other groups who were once protected by the district’s very isolation at the far end of Belize. Technology and improvements in transportation changed that.

In the 1970s, pastors like Frs. Jack Ruoff and Bill Messmer spent weeks at a time walking from village to village to celebrate marriages, baptize children and offer other sacraments in areas without easy access. Now the priests get around in four-wheel-drive trucks, but traveling to distant villages is still not for the faint-hearted or frail, especially when rain washes out the roads leading to them.

Even the furthest villages are no more than a two-hour drive from Punta Gorda now, and the drive time will shrink once work is completed on a new highway connecting Belize and Guatemala. The road will also will accelerate influence from the outside. The simple fact that buses now connect the villages to the town of Punta Gorda increases the impact of other cultures on village life.

The town of Punta Gorda and the villages are two different worlds. People speak English and Garifuna in town, Mayan languages Ketchi and Mopan in the villages. Few people know both languages. Ketchi and Mopan are the only languages spoken in the villages.

In some cases, religious cultures are clashing. In the villages, aggressive proselytizing of Catholic communities by evangelical Christians has led to internal divisions. For instance, some sects encourage their members to stay away from others, including other evangelical Christian groups, and discourage them from participating in the traditional village practices of shared labor and conflict resolution.

Evangelical Christians believe that having statues of saints amounts to worshipping idols and that burning incense is a pagan practice. Both are discouraged.

According to McCabe, a significant number of evangelical pastors are former Catholic catechists attracted to evangelicalism by payments of cash or consumer goods.

“IT’s easier to be Protestant, not so priest-dependent,” said Sean Powers, a Jesuit scholastic who went to Belize in January after finishing his philosophy studies. He thinks that most village people want, but don’t know how, to be Catholic in a community of many denominations.

Powers thinks consumerism has a role in the decrease of religious practice in Belize, calling it “naive” to underestimate its impact.

The Jesuits are right in the middle, representing a religion that long ago took root in the district. Jesuits do what they can to accompany people and strengthen local leadership to handle the cultural changes.

Catechists from the villages lead services most Sundays since McCabe and Fr. Mo Murray, the assistant pastor, can visit each of the 30 villages only a few times a year. Each year, the parish sponsors several cursillos or training sessions in Christian leadership for potential catechists. Men and women must participate in all of them over a two-year period before they can become catechists.

Powers led a cursillo in Dolores village on a recent Saturday, working with Pedro Chi, a teacher whom McCabe has hired to be head catechist for the parish.

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for the catechists to reflect on “ways that our village churches can be more welcoming and make sense. He ended by asking them to think about practices that Catholics take for granted.

“Where are the men during a Catholic service?” he asked. “Outside the door, standing on the veranda. When you are standing outside the church, it is hard to hear the Word of God from the catechist!”

Powers encouraged the catechists to speak in a way that is inviting and makes sense. He ended by asking them to reflect on “ways that our village churches can invite people in for Sunday worship, for leadership, for service projects.”

After Powers finished his presentation, Chi spoke to the group in Ketchi for 45 minutes. He placed a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the altar to reinforce the Church’s practice of remembering saints. Later, Chi noted that one of the catechists who had come from a village that removed church statues looked uncomfortable as Chi spoke.

Primary school teachers are another key group. “They are an incredible fount of wisdom, ready to drop their guard and share what they have learned in their life experience,” said John Rogers, a Jesuit volunteer serving as director of retreat ministry for St. Peter Claver Parish in Punta Gorda. He spends much of his time offering one-day spirituality retreats for primary school teachers.

His early-morning drives to the villages include pick-ups of people along the way. Rogers, who often starts the retreats with songs from the Catholic charismatic tradition, likes integrating spirituality into the rest of life and encourages the teachers to do the same.

He finds the teachers very responsive and resilient, and sees them as leaders of their communities.

McCabe worries that the parish may lose contact with youth once they finish primary school, so he has asked another Jesuit volunteer, Greg Cassoli, to coordinate programs for youth ages 12 to early 20s in the whole district.

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In most ways, St. Martin de Porres in Belize City, Belize, is a typical Jesuit parish. Dynamic preaching and lively music draw people from all over the city to be part of a nourishing community. Parishioners are a mix of ages and economic status, with a few millionaires sitting alongside unemployed people. Naturally, the school is important.

What sets St. Martin’s apart is the desperate violence in its neighborhood, the south side of Belize City. In 2012, Belize achieved the unwelcome distinction of having the fourth-highest murder rate in the world, 10 times that of the United States, according to UN crime reports. Eighty percent of the country’s violent murders occur in Belize City, and the city’s south side is its most violent section. Last year, between Ash Wednesday and Easter, Fr. Matt Ruhl, the Jesuit pastor, buried five men who were murdered and who were themselves murderers. Even the priests’ residence has been broken into.

Drugs fuel the violence after cartels from Guatemala and Mexico moved into Belize and made it a key transit point for drugs headed north to the United States. In January, four men had their throats slit.

“There was panic, the city shut down like a storm was coming. It was eerie and weird,” Ruhl said.

Law-abiding people tend not to go out at night any more, making normal parish routines more difficult. “In the whole Missouri province, this is the worst real estate,” far worse than metropolitan St. Louis’ most crime-ridden neighborhoods, Ruhl said.

Ruhl responded to the violence ravaging the city by organizing a 300-mile march along the length of the country to promote “a culture of peace.”

“I wanted to start a peace movement by organizing the Bishops’ March for Peace, so that people would think about things that could be done to promote peace,” he said.

He was especially concerned about St. Martin’s youngsters. The parish has 700 grade school students and 90 in its pre-school. Some students already exhibit violence. Many have absent fathers, and some of their mothers, out of economic necessity, have resorted to prostitution.

Ruhl challenged his parishioners to take action. On Feb. 1, he led walkers from the Sarstoon River, the country’s northern border with Mexico, to the Toledo district bordering Guatemala. It took 13 days. Eight people made the entire walk. Others walked portions of the route.

“The walk is more than putting one foot in front of the other for 300 miles,” said Tanya Usher, one of the organizers.

“St. Martin’s is a welcoming place — peaceful, vibrant and active — that keeps me coming back.”

“When you walk, you talk, you pray, you inspire others. Our primary goal is to walk, talk, pray and get inspired as a Church and ultimately as a country in order to win hearts for peace. It is about raising awareness, engaging and empowering others. It is about discovering how best to address the horrible social ills in our country.”

Usher, recruited by Ruhl to chair the walk, represents the young, talented leadership that gives the parish hope. A graduate of Saint Louis University with a degree in biology, she has been a parishioner at St. Martin’s for 11 years and worked for the government of Belize in Washington, D.C.

“Violence hasn’t changed my life in any way,” she said. “I have not been personally affected, I have been robbed. I run in the evenings and have had my cell phone stolen, things like that, but I have not been violently injured or anything, thank goodness.”

She remembers as a child walking home from primary school, a distance of three miles, but she won’t let her own daughter do that.

“I don’t think there’s any violence on my street, but things have changed enough that I don’t trust the way my mom could have trusted back then,” she said.

— Continued on page 28
On a Monday morning in early May, the 20 senior Jesuits of Ignatius Residence in New Orleans began a journey not unlike that of the Israelites after the first Passover. After Mass, they ate breakfast “in haste with their cloak tucked into their belt dressed for travel, sandals on their feet, and walking staff in hand.” By 9 a.m., they had loaded into cars and set out for their new home, a freshly renovated space at St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, La.

Fr. Rodney Kissinger, one of the men who made the journey, wrote to friends, “We are making our last preparations for our grand exodus through the desert and Mount Sinai to the promised land flowing with milk and honey.”

The three-day transfer of furniture, personal belongings and people went smoothly thanks to the careful planning of Ignatius Residence superior Fr. Jim Bradley, aided by Br. Terry Todd and the Ignatius Residence staff. By week’s end, everyone was settling into their permanent rooms in the new assisted living wing, St. Alphonsus Rodríguez Pavilion. They found the familiar, too. Stained glass windows from the Ignatius Residence chapel in New Orleans were installed in the new Pavilion chapel, and the large crucifix that once hung in the college’s original main chapel is now behind the altar of the new place of prayer. Most of these Jesuits knelt before that very crucifix when they pronounced first vows decades ago.

“So I end up where I started as a novice,” Kissinger, 98, said. When the elder men gather for meals, they are joined now by novices and other Jesuits who work at the college’s Spirituality Center, and nearby Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House and St. Charles Borromeo Parish.

At the traditional afternoon social hour, seniors gather in a specially designed area with comfortable seating, a small kitchenette and a serving counter, for hors d’oeuvres and conversation before dinner.

Living quarters in the Pavilion are simple but comfortable with private bath, phone, cable TV and Internet connections and other amenities. For most of the men, views out their windows might bring back memories. The Pavilion occupies the part of the college that once housed the dormitory and dining room for the novices of yesteryear.

After months of expectation and preparation, the senior Jesuits completed their Exodus. “We have crossed the Jordan, shouted down the walls of Jericho and entered the Promised Land,” Kissinger wrote. “Just like at the Wedding Feast of Cana, the Lord saves the very best wine till last. It surely has been true in my life.”
Daughters of Charity Gifts Benefit Midwest Jesuit Archives

By Cheryl Wittenauer

Last summer, the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in St. Louis invited David Miros to assess the authenticity of a purported Peter De Smet vestment in their archival collection.

Miros, director of the Midwest Jesuit Archives in St. Louis, told the sisters that the intricately beaded vestment appeared to be the real thing, and likely was a gift from a Plains Indian tribe to the mid-19th century Jesuit missionary.

How the Daughters of Charity obtained the vestment remains something of a mystery, although it is likely that De Smet gave it to the Daughters as a gift, in the same way that he gave mementos from his friendships with native people to European benefactors of the missions.

The Jesuits and the Daughters of the 1800s era in St. Louis likely had a cordial relationship. An early location of what is now the Jesuit-sponsored Saint Louis University was only blocks away from Sister Olympia’s School, an institution the Daughters ran.

In June, the Daughters announced they will give the vestment to the Jesuits of the Missouri Province. The gift comes on the heels of a May 5 appreciation dinner hosted by the province honoring the Daughters for a separate, major gift that will help greatly in the eventual future expansion of the Midwest Jesuit Archives.

The Daughters in January donated a state-of-the-art, high-density, compact archival shelving system, a dry-gas fire-suppressant system, and two display cases, valued in the thousands of dollars, according to an estimate obtained by the women. The Daughters asked only that the Jesuits cover the cost to transport the systems from their former archives repository in St. Louis to the Midwest Jesuit Archives, a distance of a few miles.

The Daughters recently moved their archives repository from St. Louis to a new facility in Emmitsburg, Md., where their religious community in the U.S. took root in 1809, and decided not to take the systems with them. Miros said the gift eliminates the need to purchase the systems as the Midwest Jesuit Archives grows its collection.

At the May 5 dinner, Miros gave the Daughters a mounted, framed copy of a page from a mid-1800s Catholic almanac that cited Sister Olympia and her work.

The Midwest Jesuit Archives collects, identifies, appraises, describes, organizes and preserves the historical records of the Chicago, Missouri and Wisconsin provinces and the Jesuit Conference.

In July, 2011, four of the five U.S. provinces of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul merged into one based in St. Louis. They also decided to merge the archives of the four former provinces into one archives based in Emmitsburg, Md., the former provincial headquarters of the Southeast Province.

The Daughters’ collections are in a new state-of-the-art repository, complete with exhibit galleries and a reading room for researchers, spokeswoman Belinda Davis said.

Overcoming Obstacles

Jesuit Institutions Mark First High School Graduations

By Dan Thelen

An invitation to Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School’s first-ever graduation shows gleeful grads suspended in midair celebration.

Four years ago, the inaugural class of 83 young men and women began a high school experiment that combined rigorous academics with off-campus employment to help offset tuition costs and give them a taste of work life.

The school, in a poor southeast Houston neighborhood, was still being renovated on opening day.

David Garcia-Prats, dean of academics at Cristo Rey, said this first class of students showed they could grow with the school and overcome challenges.

“They pioneered our sports program, AP classes, student council and more,” he said. Students struggled with the expectations of the school initially, “but now, higher education is seen as important, and the students have developed a different level of expectation for what they can do and achieve.”

In this neighborhood where 70 percent of Hispanic and African American students drop out of high school, 66 of the original 83-member class graduated high school and were accepted into college.

Graduate Christian Anté said he was attracted by the school’s commitment to the community, something he’ll carry with him.

Anté, who was president of student council and the National Honor Society chapter he helped establish, will begin undergraduate studies this fall at Georgetown University with hopes of pursuing a law degree in the future. He believes that his work experience with three companies prepared him for life after high school.

“I have a full resume because of Cristo Rey,” he said. “I was able to learn things not typically taught in a classroom, things that are practical and important for excelling in a work environment.”

Garcia-Prats said the college-prep school tried to be a Jesuit institution first, teaching students what it means to be “men and women for others.”

In New Orleans, The Good Shepherd School, a Jesuit Nativity school, is celebrating the high school graduation of 12 students who were Good Shepherd’s first kindergarten class.

The K-7 elementary school, built in the shell of an old furniture store in New Orleans’ central business district, offers a holistic, Catholic education to children exposed to drugs, violence or poverty, where a parent may be absent, incarcerated or dead, and helps them realize their full potential.

This has been a really good class, because all 12 have stayed on course,” said school president and chairman Ronald Briggs, who has followed their progress over the years.

All 12 of the graduating seniors were accepted into college, but one opted to enlist in the Navy.

Teacher Matt Deboer said the school’s enrichment activities, parenting workshops, extended days and year-round schedule provide the support students need to thrive. The school even organizes academic and social opportunities to promote graduates’ continued success.

High school graduates Tamera Coney and Andrew Joseph, who will enroll in the fall at LSU University and Cornell College respectively, credit their Good Shepherd teachers for helping them maintain strong academic records in high school.

“The teachers always had time for you,” said Joseph, who grew from “troublemaker” to the “go-to-leader” of his class, and like many graduates, volunteers his time to inspire and serve Good Shepherd students.

“The atmosphere there helped me become the mature young adult that I am,” he said. “Without their guidance, I don’t think I would be the person I am today.”

Dan Thelen works in advancement for the New Orleans Province.
In the swatch of notes that became the Spiritual Exercises, Master Ignatius wrote out only two prayers. The first one is a generous response to Christ’s epic battle to establish the Kingdom. St. Ignatius urges someone making the Exercises to pledge to live and labor with Jesus in a prayer that begins, “Eternal Lord of all things,” and ends with joining Him come whatever might.

St. Ignatius suggests praying the second prayer after a quiet, great-spirited contemplation on self and all creation. That exercise is usually called the “Contemplation to attain the love of God,” but actually, it’s about learning to love the way God loves. The contemplation comes in the Fourth Week of the Spiritual Exercises as they focus on the Resurrection of Jesus.

This second prayer is the Suscipe, or Take and Receive.

St. Ignatius advises us to remember two things before the contemplation begins. First, that love is done – as Ignatius says, it “shows itself in deeds rather than in words.” And second, that love is always a mutual sharing between the lover and the beloved – giving and receiving, receiving and giving.

With that in mind, I turn to see how God loves by going through the four moments of the contemplation. I consider that all that I have and am, even beyond what I can see, is God-given. Ignatius suggests reflecting on the incredible beauty and richness of God’s creation. I might remember places I have lived and people who hold a special place in my heart. And the point is that all these blessings are God’s gift to me. God gives and gives.

So if I want to love the way God loves, I want to give. But what have I to give God who gives me everything?

This is where the prayer starts. I can give God my love, a gift that has to be freely given. So I start: “Take, Lord, and receive my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will – the core of myself. I say, “and receive,” asking the Lord to accept my love, knowing that God will.

The Suscipe: Learning to Love the Way God Loves

By Joseph Tetlow, SJ

Then, consider that God does not give gifts the way we do: we give a gift and then leave. But God remains in His gifts. God is entirely present throughout the universe and in every molecule of all the worlds. Loving the way God loves requires doing the same. Giving one’s self to the Lord means giving “all that I have and call my own.”

There’s more, because God is not “in everything” the way a color is on a wall. No. God is always active in His gifts, in the first place continually keeping them in existence as the Creator of all. Now, this is a stunning reality, because it means that everything I do, God does. So Jesus said that He “can do only what He sees the Father doing.” I may not see God “doing” with me, but “in Him we live and move” as well as have our being.

Here is a wonderful truth: God gives me my very self, which I in turn am free to give back to God. So the prayer says: “You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it,” meaning my self. Amazingly, I am loving as God loves.

The final consideration is obvious. If God gives Himself and keeps staying with me, God is sharing His Divine Self with me. Think of a mirror aimed at the sun. The mirror is full of blinding light, even though it has none of its own, because the sun shares its light, freely. It loses nothing by sharing its light – but its light is its very self, and it shares its light generously, freely, steadily.

It’s like that with God and each of us. I am full of life that reflects God’s life. Every thing I do, God is doing with me, or really, it’s the other way around. (See why sin is so bad?) I think, and I share God’s infinite thinking. I act freely, and I share in the divine free action. I love, and I share in the God of Love, whom I love.

Fr. Joseph Tetlow, an expert in Ignatian spirituality, is a writer, lecturer and retreat director in St. Louis.
Confirming a Vocation

Tertianship in West Africa

By Brooke A. Iglesias

Fr. Ross Romero is back in Omaha, Neb., where he is on tenure track as a philosophy professor at Creighton University. But from January to late June, while on leave from his teaching post, he lived a world away in West Africa, first in Ghana, later in Nigeria, for his tertianship, the final phase of Jesuit formation that allows a Jesuit to step back from his regular work to pray, reflect and develop a deeper sense of self.

In an email from Africa, he recalled a stranger extending Nigerian hospitality as he walked on a busy city street in Benin City, sensing all eyes on the rare sight of this white Western Jesuit.

“A very dark man about my age walked up to me and said, ‘Welcome foreigner. You look beautiful to me. You are very welcome here,’” recalled Romero, still amazed by the gesture.

“Later in my Examen, I thought back on this experience and thought that this is precisely the kind of Kingdom that Jesus is laboring to bring about. Wouldn’t it be great if we in the U.S. had that kind of response to immigrants?”

His first stop was Cape Coast, Ghana, home of the English-speaking Jesuit tertianship in Africa, where he lived in community and studied the Society’s constitutions, worked with the poor and made the full 30-day Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

He said he’s still “unpacking things” in his mind that the retreat stirred up, and that during the retreat, he was led through periods of encouragement, energy and inspiration as well as moments of darkness, isolation and fragility.

In the end, he came to see that he’d chosen the right path as a Jesuit and priest.

“The physical environment for the retreat was another matter. Food and water were sometimes scarce. It was hot, even with fans, and it grew hotter when the Ghanaian government reclaimed the power grid and imposed an unpredictable power schedule. Illness from the physical toll prompted one tertian instructor to return to his home province.

“Whatever interior distractions were present were nothing compared to the exterior ones,” he said, recalling the mind-numbing humming of neighbors’ generators and the near-constant speaking in tongues that boomed from loudspeakers of two nearby Pentecostal churches.

“There were more demons exercised during these 30 days than during any retreat in history,” he joked, “and while I am not sure that I have the gift of interpreting tongues, I do have the grace to not be annoyed by those who speak in them, which in the end, is probably just as useful.”

During his tertianship, Fr. Ross Romero (above, right) visited Ghana’s seacoast, where slaves were loaded onto ships for transport to the Americas.

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An opportunity to reflect on sin and salvation arose with a visit to Ghana’s coastal “slave castles,” European-built fortresses where abducted Africans were branded, chained, shackled and held for slave shipment to the Americas.

“The horror of these places and the inhuman treatment is overwhelming,” he said. But there, Romero was able to consider parts of the Exercises that explore sin and the salvation that Christ’s passion and death provides.

“What I understand now more clearly is that Jesus wants to expiate sin,” he said. “He wants, above all else, to take on for us the sufferings that we endure in this world, and he will do it whether we want him to or not because his love for us is so great. All I can try to do now is to try to help him in expiating sin in the mission of reconciliation, in and through the Society of Jesus.”

During Holy Week, he worked at two poor parish outstations in Ghana’s capital, Accra, washing feet on Holy Thursday, and leading Good Friday Stations of the Cross through a neighborhood near a junk yard. At the Easter Vigil, he helped Fr. David Ogun baptize more than 50 people at a Jesuit parish there.

“During the homily, Fr. David got carried away by the spirit and lots of people were dancing and singing throughout the church,” he said. “I found myself in a conga line with the altar servers dancing through the aisles!”

For the second half of his experience in Africa, Romero traveled east to Benin City, Nigeria, to preach and direct retreats at the Jesuit Retreat Centre for lay people, women religious and Jesuit scholastics and novices. His Pentecost Sunday Mass drew more than 1,000 spirit-filled Nigerians, the largest single Mass he’s ever celebrated. “Lots of fun with the preaching,” he wrote. “I went over 30 minutes and they were happy.”

Romero said he didn’t have time to explore other parts of Africa before returning to Omaha on June 22, but left feeling “that I know the Society of Jesus better for having come here.”

Brooke A. Iglesias is editor of the Southern Jesuit in New Orleans.
Michael Gallagher: A Voice for Refugees at the U.N.

By Brooke A. Iglesias

As an attorney for a refugee asylum project in south Texas in the 1990s, Fr. Michael Gallagher was often tapped by U.S. immigration authorities to represent the very people they were prosecuting whom they believed had a good chance for victory. They recognized the talent of the Georgetown University Law School graduate, whose passion for justice worked was shaped by the 1960s fervor for civil rights as well as time in India exposed to poverty on a massive scale.

Today, the 64-year-old Gallagher represents the interests of refugees around the globe as the Jesuit Refugee Service’s representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

No longer in the field among 43.7 million displaced people living in desperate conditions, Gallagher spends much of his day in his Geneva office, reading reports and policy papers and monitoring developments, especially those related to armed conflict in the countries the JRS serves, or, as in the case of Somalia, where some of the refugees it serves in Ethiopia and Kenya come from.

In 2001, after having completed master’s work in refugee studies at Oxford University, Gallagher was assigned director of JRS initiatives in Zambia. In 2006, he was named Southern Africa regional advocacy officer for Angola, the Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe. He was assigned to his current position in 2009.

In his Africa days, he would post news from various countries to the refugee camps via satellite phone so that displaced persons could track developments in their home countries to the refugee camps via satellite phone so that displaced persons could track developments in their home countries.

Before his work with JRS, Gallagher was an attorney for a refugee asylum project in south Texas in the 1990s, the Las Americas Refugee Asylum Project in El Paso, Texas, and was the provincial’s assistant for social and international ministries. In the late 1980s, he directed the poverty law center at Loyola University New Orleans.

Today, on infrequent trips out of the office, he trains field worker teams in the nuances of international humanitarian and human rights law to assist in their advocating on refugees’ behalf.

Back in Geneva, he works with Lutheran World Federation, World Vision, the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Islamic Relief and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and is part of a U.N. working group that is fighting against fear of the foreign or stranger through draft commitments for faith leaders.

He also works with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to solve challenges that develop in the field and cannot be resolved locally.

Globally, nearly 44 million displaced people – more than half of them children – live in desperate conditions within and outside of their own homeland or in detention centers, separated from their families by violence, persecution and natural disasters, according to UNHCR. They live in places like the Dadaab refugee camp complex, a patch of African desert near the Kenyan-Somali border dotted with thousands of make-shift shelters of tents, scraps of tin and tarp held with twine, home to nearly half a million people.

“All their familiar supports are gone,” said Gallagher, who noted that most refugees are women, children and elderly. Most of the men either are fighting or are already dead, he said.

About 1,400 JRS staff and other volunteers serve refugees in 50 countries through a network of 10 regional offices that extend from the Americas to Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Asian Pacific region.

Their companionship of refugees in education, emergency aid, health care and social services informs his advocacy as he represents their interests to UN agencies and non-governmental organizations in Geneva.

In some cases, the physical presence of field teams even can provide protection to refugees and help prevent attacks in dangerous situations.

“Accompaniment gives a person an opportunity to share,” he said, and those interactions between refugees and JRS field staff can lead to resolving problems.

Gallagher said the work of JRS field staff almost always involves collaborating with people of various cultures and religions. JRS workers in Thailand are mostly Buddhist. Ethiopian volunteers are Christian and Muslim. In Syria, he said volunteers providing meals and other life-saving assistance are all over the political spectrum. “Most people are brought together by a desire to assist those who have left everything behind,” he said.

Gallagher also represents JRS to Diplomatic Missions in Geneva, where he works closely with the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations.

He exchanges information with other representatives of non-governmental organizations and sometimes lobbies countries to press for legal or policy change to help refugees.

“An example of this would be encouraging some European countries to consider funding rule of law programs in Eastern Congo where our teams encounter victims of sexual violence on a daily basis, but where, regrettably, impunity for these crimes is the rule rather than the exception,” he said.

JRS advocates for resolving humanitarian needs, “where there must be a response to danger, where the state lacks the ability or will to assist those who are suffering,” such as Sudanese child soldiers, or women, gay people, war victims and others who are persecuted or violated, he said.

JRS also works with developing countries to address food security, education and challenges posed by climate change. Refugees helped in either case all share the need for community, safety and basic human rights, he said.

Last December, Gallagher, writing for the UNHCR, dissected the parable of the Good Samaritan to answer the questions of “who is my neighbor?” and “who must I love as myself?”

“The victim’s circumstances, apart from the fact that he is traveling to Jericho, are not known,” he wrote. “The only real consideration is responding to the needs of a neighbor.”

Gallagher said the parable compels everyone to reflect on who needs help, what type of help is needed, and “how complete” that assistance should be.

The Good Samaritan, in his model of accompaniment, completely restored the traveling stranger he found suffering. For the millions of refugees who need help, the work of Gallagher and his JRS colleagues is a sign of such hope.

Brooke A. Iglesias is editor of the Southern Jesuit in New Orleans.

For more on the mission and work of Jesuit Refugee Service, visit www.jrs.net.
Scott and Kathleen Hummel were convinced they could make a difference in the lives of a special population of kids in St. Louis.

Young, and with only a few years of professional work experience between them, the recent masters in social work graduates were smart and idealistic.

But they needed a mentor and networker to help them launch a nonprofit that would fill a hole in services for abused and neglected kids in St. Louis. Kathleen Hummel, who worked with adolescent girls abused a decade earlier, saw firsthand the effects of having carried that burden and trauma in their formative years. The couple dreamed of starting an organization dedicated to intervening early in the formative years. The couple dreamed of starting an organization dedicated to intervening early in the formative years.

They found that support in Fr. Bob Weiss, who, 20 years after helping the Hummels start Our Little Haven as a founding board member, is still providing wisdom, guidance and support. The 88-year-old Missouri Province Jesuit was honored April 14 with the Our Little Haven Heart and Soul Award for his "extraordinary vision, leadership and service for those in need" at the agency’s 20th anniversary celebration in St. Louis.

In the early 1990s, Weiss’ involvement was pivotal: he introduced the couple to potential donors and supporters; he found them a building and negotiated a purchase despite their lack of funding and credit; and he lent his name and credibility to their project, becoming the Hummels’ “Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval,” Scott Hummel said.

“IT was (Weiss’) spheres of influence,” he said. “He’d walk into a room and we’d tag along and meet people we might not otherwise have met,” he recalled. “We were trying to buy a building with no money or credit. We didn’t know what the hell we were doing. We were a bunch of idiot kids but little sparks would happen.”

Hummel said Weiss also set the tone for Our Little Haven with a comment that still resonates.

“We can’t afford to think that we’re bringing Christ to these kids,” Hummel recalled Weiss saying. “In fact, Christ’s face is behind those tears that the kids are bringing to us.”

“It really established who’s serving who,” Hummel said.

Weiss’ relationship with the Hummels goes back at least as far as the 1980s when young Scott Hummel and his father drove to Kansas City, Mo., to check out Rockhurst University as a possible place for Scott to attend college. Scott Hummel’s father was a St. Louis University High School graduate and knew Weiss. So when the men showed up on campus and ran into Weiss, the then-university president gave them a tour. They’d have subsequent encounters. Weiss said he had “lots of dealings” with Scott and other members of a fraternity party house just off campus. And when Weiss visited St. Louis, he’d stay with Scott’s parents.

Scott and Kathleen, also a Rockhurst University graduate, eventually attended Saint Louis University’s graduate school of social work, and married and resettled in St. Louis. A couple years into their first post-graduate school professional work, they wrote a letter to Weiss explaining their hopes to start a nonprofit, and invited him to a spaghetti dinner at their house to brainstorm with several Rockhurst friends who also wanted to help. The original board members were all Rockhurst alumni and alumnae who had settled in St. Louis.

Initially the Hummels were looking to house infants who had been exposed to drugs, alcohol or HIV. Weiss said he approached people in his network and ultimately was led to three houses in the city’s Central West End neighborhood that were owned by a Catholic religious order. He negotiated the sale with the order’s provincial in Chicago, what Hummel described as a “collar-to-collared type of conversation,” and helped them raise funds and pay off the loan. They’d eventually buy two more buildings.

“‘I’ve been supportive of them and encouraging, and offered them some practical advice,’ Weiss said. ‘I didn’t have anything to do with the operations.”

In prepared remarks at his recognition, Weiss said the “hand of God was surely with us as we set about acquiring our first house, which we purchased from the Servites who trusted us although we had no security for the loan. I feel so blessed to have witnessed God’s hand guiding this couple as they formed a board and gathered co-workers and supporters – many of them Rockhurst classmates and their parents and friends.

“Through all the years, I have had a privileged opportunity to watch the program grow and prosper and adapt to changing circumstances – always focused on helping God’s abused, abandoned and needy little ones.”

Our Little Haven in 2010 ended its residential program, while broadening its other services. It has grown from serving 30 children a year to 600 last year from birth to age 10.

Among its services, the agency operates Our Little Academy, a therapeutic pre-school. It also provides case management and arranges for foster care and adoption, and offers a pediatric mental health program.
Ruhl had to stop walking after 150 miles because of feet problems, but he remained upbeat about the march.

“My desire is that the walk inspires all the citizens of Belize, to say ‘Look, it is just a small minority of people who are causing the trouble,’” he said. “The overwhelming majority of Belizeans are peace lovers, and they just have to stand up and take control of their country. Belize is more beautiful than a lot of Belizeans know. I love my St. Martin de Porres’ students. They gladden my heart.”

Ruhl looks forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of St. Martin's founding in 1966. In the 1960s, population growth to an area developed from former mangrove swamps made a new school and parish necessary.

St. Martin’s began as an outgrowth of the existing Jesuit parish, St. Ignatius.

Today, the parish campus includes a church, three primary school classroom buildings, a pre-school and a parish center. Since Ruhl arrived two years ago, he has worked to transform the campus into a clean and safe oasis amidst a rough neighborhood of unkempt homes and littered streets – one of the toughest in Belize.

The campus has newly planted trees, a neatly tended lawn, and a white picket fence along the sidewalks.

“Parents appreciate the safe environment for their children,” the pre-school’s director, Tomas Smith, said.

St. Martin’s has three feeding programs for children in the school and surrounding neighborhood.

Health care, home construction and other services for the poor got their start at St. Martin’s before spinning off to other locations. The parish still operates a school, pre-school and day care center and provides services for seniors and neighborhood youth.

The parish grade school plays a crucial role in stemming violence in the community. According to Usher, many Belize City youth in the public schools don’t show up for class and the community lacks an effective truancy program. She said the schools fail to teach discipline and respect for others, especially women.

“Everyone has a cell phone, even the poorest person on the street has a smart phone with Internet and YouTube, so violent material is more readily accessible,” she said.

Usher thinks that education is the key and she praised St. Martin’s for its school but criticized the Church for not being more practical.

“Praying won’t fix the problem” of poverty, crime and lack of jobs, she said. “What more can the church do? Follow up. Yeah, this walk was a great thing, but what’s next? What are we going to do, how are we going to build on it?”

She sees St. Martin’s as a welcoming place that is peaceful, vibrant and active that keeps her coming back, and she appreciates that Ruhl recruited her to chair the peace walk.

“I am a young person, I always want to help, but what can I do?” she asked. “I think there are lots of people like me who want to do something and are willing if you just offer them the opportunity.”
the following people have been permanently enrolled in the Jesuit Association and are remembered in the prayers and works of the Jesuits of the Missouri Province.

Robert S. Allen
Frank Aronstam
Geraldine Gillen Aronstam
Kurt Austermann
Byron Baker
Susan Vennevelh Barrett
Victor Becvar
John Bender, III
Catherine Ann Benady
Louis Bonacorsi
Lavonne C. Bonge
Judith Ann Bouget
Pat Breitenbach
Lake Brescia
Gloria Joy Budman
Robert Butler, St.
John Callahan
James Cappel
James "Bob" Chunn
Robert Chunn
Philomena (Phil) Connell
James T. Covington
Margaret Corzine
Rosalie Cullen
Terry Cusick
Philip Arthur Davis
Taylor Stith Desloge
Ronald E. Doering
Ted Dubuque
Richard Dunphy, SJ
Thomas H. Effertz
Richard Feld
Julie Fischer
Rita Flynn
Bill ferry
Leonard Goldstein
Alan L. Hagg
Richard Held
Brian Heinrichsen
Ann Hedges
Margaret Hand
Stephen Hanuske, Sr.
Clarence Johnson
Bernice Jones
Joseph Vincent Keagy
Mary Carol Paradise Koke
Paul & Anne Kolisch
Dennis Koscielniak

Blanche R. Kriegshauser
Patricia E. Lackey
Frances Oakley
Frederick M. O’Connor
Bonnie Bowdern O’Keefe
Erin Irish Orleans
Raymond A. Pasco, SJ
Di Hoef/Petkilo
Luanna Pfifer
Gloria Mary Pieroni
Kelly Prossley
Daniel Reavy
Margaret (Peggy) Keady Reavy
Heiberta Villa de Reyes
Stacy Reynolds
William H. Rice
Donna Bovler Schaefer
Rita T. Scheu
Delores Scherner
Philip Francis Scherrer
Frederick Schuller, SJ
David Schwartz
Quantin Sharp
James M. Sheehorn
Ellen Spengeum
M.E. “Babe” Speilak
Patrick Speilak
Alice Spies
Margarette Steele
Richard Stith
Dodie M. Stutz
James M. Trim
George Trakle, Sisters
Patricia Anna O’Brien Walsh
Matt Winschell
Janet Zellmann
Various Other Individuals

Your prayers and assistance for the Jesuits of the Missouri Province support ...
This year, the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus celebrates the 150th anniversary of the decree establishing the province along with the jubilees of Jesuits who have reached important milestones in their ministry to the people of God as priests and brothers. Please plan ahead to celebrate in St. Louis, Kansas City or Denver.

JUBILARIANS 2013

Sept. 7 – St. Louis
Sept. 14 – Kansas City
Oct. 26 – Denver