

The FIAT

Faith In Action Team Newsletter

January 2010

Hearing the Call



by Fr. Javier
O'Connor, dcjm

People wonder how I became a priest and a religious. How did my vocation come about? January is the month of vocation awareness so it is a good time to tell the story of my vocation.

I was raised in a good family with 2 older brothers and 1 younger sister. I attended a Jesuit school—all boys at the time. The school was simple but beautiful with many images of Mary and the Saints and a big devotion to Mary.

In 7th and 8th grade, I had a teacher who loved the missions. He got the boys excited about the idea of such a radical life. I was very involved with sports—especially team handball. For me it was a way of good character formation. In high school especially I had coaches who helped us boys grow in good ways.

After high school came a time of thinking about the important choices in life. My direction was not so clear for me. In Spain at the end of high school, we take an aptitude test to help us choose our career direction. My test recommended the military. Part of this appealed to me—to be with other people and spend time outdoors. I knew I somehow wanted to help others by teaching or forming them but was not clear how. To begin, I entered law school in Madrid. Law school seemed to have more options. I went to a public university so I could get to know other kinds of people.

In the middle of all this came the idea of being a priest. Of course not! I had my dreams of having a family and career so this idea seemed ridiculous. That summer I began to prepare to apply to military school but the idea of becoming a priest kept coming to me. I talked to my mother. She was surprised but called her brother who was a Jesuit and who gave silent retreats. My dad volunteered to drive me to the retreat where I had some good moments but still it was not clear. I went back to law school for the second year and sometimes got together with the friends I had met on the retreat.

Then I read the book *Three Religious Rebels: The Forefathers of the Trappists* by Fr. M. Raymond, OCSO. I totally identified with this call to a radical religious life of men who wanted to be an icon of Christ and be so generous with God. I knew this is what I wanted to be. This was the moment of big conversion for me. I finished that year of school and then went to the seminary. I knew I was in the right place. By now I was getting together with other men who also had a hunger for a more consecrated life. We prayed a Novena to Mary Immaculate and began to live in community and follow the call to the religious life. This was the beginning of what was to become the Disciples of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. After I completed my studies, I was ordained on December 15, 1990.

Fr. O'Connor is a parochial vicar at St. Mary Parish



At a Glance

January is Vocations Month

Student Youth Rosary

Starting Thursday, January 7
3:15pm—3:45pm
1st and 3rd Thursdays
In the Church

Covenant of Love:

Sacramentality of Marriage

Friday, January 8
6:30pm in Marian Hall
Childcare available
RSVP to Dora 720-283-4737

Priest Appreciation Reception

w/ Fr. José Noriega, dcjm

Saturday, January 9
5:30pm—8:00pm
Marian Hall

Holy Hour for Priests

Tuesday, January 19
7:00pm at All Souls Parish

Parish Book Club

The Restless Flame:
A Novel of St. Augustine
Tuesday, January 19
7:00pm in Marian Hall

“The time spent by a priest on prayer and listening to Scripture is never time lost to pastoral care or time withheld from others. People sense whether the work and words of their pastor spring from prayer fabricated at his desk.”

—Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)

Happy New Year!



It's that time of year again when the self improvement gurus attempt to convince us that we need a "resolution" to ring in the new year. I've been known to entertain some short lived resolutions in the past. For instance, I once resolved to clean and organize all my closets with a newborn in the house, like that was going to happen. One year I signed up for 5:00am workouts with a masters swim team knowing full well that it would take an act of congress to get me in the pool that early in the morning. Every year I feel compelled to say "this year I am really going to better myself." However, I also hear a voice in the silence of my heart that forces me to question whether what I am considering will really make me a better person? Will this bring me closer to Christ, closer to Heaven? The answer to these questions is ultimately "no."

The means to accomplish true self betterment is by absorbing God's word as often as possible. The holy word of God is a gift to us. Why not start out each day reading this gift, meditating on it throughout the day and falling asleep with it on our pillows. The Catechism states that "The Church "forcefully and specially exhorts all the Christian faithful...to learn 'the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures...Let them remember, however, that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that a dialogue takes place between God and man. For 'we speak to him when we pray; we listen to him when we read the divine oracles.'"

In addition to the Holy Bible, there are many additional resources that can aide us in our spiritual quest for the divine word of God. The Magnificat is one excellent resource that provides scriptural reflections, official texts of the daily mass, meditations, essays on the lives of the saints and prayers drawn from the Liturgy of the Hours. There are also many Catholic websites that can e-mail daily readings, which I find personally very helpful as a busy mom. Whatever way we choose to seek God's word is not significant, it is essential that we seek it daily and fervently.

So as the new year begins and we are tantalized by the newest craze for self improvement, let us resolve to listen to our hearts and to feed our souls first with the word of God daily. This is the way to true self betterment and ultimately the way to our Father in Heaven. Happy New Year and God Bless.

by Jen Hehn

Feast January 26

Saints Timothy and Titus



Two of Apostle Paul's closest collaborators were, Timothy and Titus. Three letters traditionally attributed to Paul are addressed to them, two to Timothy and one to Titus.

St. Timothy was born at Lystra of a Jewish Mother and Gentile Father. Timothy is a Greek name which means "one who honors God". The fact that his Mother had contracted a mixed-marriage and did not have her son circumcised suggests that Timothy grew up in a family that was not strictly observant, although it was said that he was acquainted with the Scriptures from childhood.

When the Apostle Paul was passing through Lystra at the beginning of his second missionary journey, he chose Timothy to be his companion because "he was spoken of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium."

Paul refers to Timothy 17 times in his letters. One may deduce that Paul held him in high esteem. The figure of Timothy stands out in Scripture as very important pastor.

Saint Titus, whose name is Latin in origin, was Greek by birth, that is, pagan. Paul took Titus with him to Jerusalem for the Apostolic Council where the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles that freed them the constraints of Mosaic Law was solemnly accepted.

In the letter addressed to Titus, the Apostle Paul praised him and described him as his "true child in a common faith". After Timothy's departure from Corinth, Paul sent Titus there with the task of bringing that unmanageable community to obedience. Further information from the Pastoral letters describes Titus as Bishop of Crete.

To conclude, we know that through the writings of St. Paul that Saint Timothy and St. Titus played very important roles in carrying out Paul's missions and founding and pastoring of many Churches.

by Meg D'Costa

What is FIAT? FIAT (Faith In Action Team) is a school organization sharing spirituality in daily living and in becoming leaders that follow Christ. Fiat is a Latin word that means, "let it be." Just as Mary, Joseph and Jesus said "yes" and accepted their earthly missions, let us strive each day to accept God's calling for us in our lives. FIAT is a group for all parents of St. Mary's School! Read this newsletter aloud with family, use the suggested resources and spread the faith! Any questions or comments can be e-mailed to Meg D'Costa at odc234@aol.com.