

The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY



SUMMER 2008

The MESSENGER

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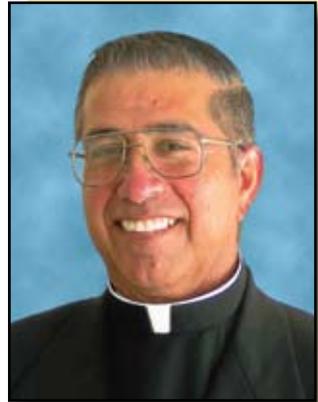
Dear Readers,

As summertime approaches, we cannot help but to reflect on how fast time goes by. Yet, all along God has been there. Jesus kept his promise to send the Holy Spirit to help us recognize the hand of God in our lives, to help inspire us, and to help us see the blessings we receive. Let us open our hearts to that Spirit to help us make the most of our vacation time, keeping in mind the basic call from Jesus Christ that we are to love one another as the Father has first loved us. This is not a burden but a joy for the followers of Jesus Christ. May the blessing and love of our heavenly Father be yours in abundance.

Sincerely in the Holy Family,

Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.

Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.
Provincial



Very Rev. Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

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HOLY FAMILY LIFE

Who me, pray? ...With her?

by Jim & Susan Vogt, MA, CFLE

Down to earth questions and answers about praying as a couple



Q. Why bother?

A. As you probably know, 46-48% of marriages end in divorce.

But did you also know that:

- For couples who worship together each Sunday only about 20% divorce.
- For couples who also regularly pray together at home marital stability is even greater.

OK, so praying together can be divorce insurance but it sounds kind of awkward to me. Sure it's fine for priests and nuns or really holy people, but we're just a normal married couple.

Q. But we go to church on Sunday and say grace before meals. Isn't that enough?

A. That's great! Of course these prayer times are important and valuable, but they are different from couple prayer. There is a certain intimacy and vulnerability that comes from opening your heart to God in the presence of your spouse.

Q. OK, we might give it a try, but where do we start?

A. There is no wrong way to pray and the desire to try is prayer in itself. First, some preliminary decisions:

Decide a time

Presumably both of you are very busy. Isn't everyone these days? So finding an agreeable, semi-reliable time is essential. After experimenting with several times of day, my husband and I agreed on first thing in the morning (about 15 min. before the first child is expected to awake). Since Jim is a morning person and I'm not, his job is to wake me and say it's time.

Decide a place

Anywhere will do, but it's nice to have a bible or whatever reading you plan to use handy. If clutter is endemic to your home, at least find a place where you can cover it or turn your back on it. Personally, I like to have a window that I can look out of and see the sky. If it's dark, lighting a candle can be inspiring.

Decide how often

Ideally, daily is the way to go since there is a rhythm and regularity to it. In our own marriage, however, we have made peace with a less than ideal but workable goal. We commit to weekdays since that's more predictable than the weekends. We figure Mass takes care of Sunday. We also make exceptions for illness, being out of town, pregnancy (when almost any time felt nauseous), or unexpected interruptions like crying babies. It's not perfect, but we feel we're doing OK if we meet our bottom line of doing it more often than not. God wants our attention not our guilt.

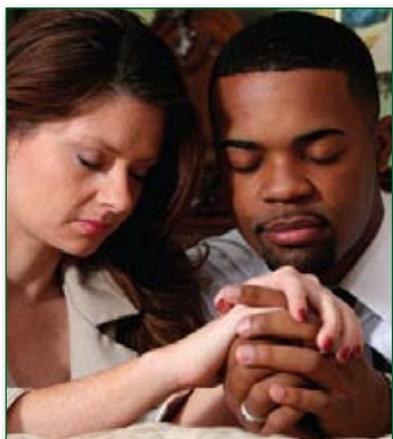
Q. So what do we do once we're sitting together?

A. There are many ways to pray depending on your style and preferences.

Here are a few:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Memorized prayers | <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection on today or tomorrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading scripture | <input type="checkbox"/> Guided meditation (from a book) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing in a journal | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading an inspirational book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rosary or devotions | <input type="checkbox"/> Meditation on a spiritual theme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liturgy of the Hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Your own creation |

Rank the above styles from 1 to 10 and find the ways that appeal to both of you.



Q. Hey, we're not theologians. What do we do with the information above?

A. Keep it simple. After trying to be creative and experimenting with a variety of styles, my husband and I found that for regular couple prayer to work for us it had to be very simple. Eventually we settled on the following format:

One Model – 5 Easy Steps

1. Jim finds the scripture reading of the day (since he's more awake than I am)
2. One of us opens the prayer with a phrase like "Lord, we come before you at the start of our day."
3. One of us reads the scripture out loud.
4. We sit in silence for awhile. (We may think about the scripture, the upcoming day and how we will live it out, or perhaps put some thoughts in a journal). Inevitably for me, some time is spent daydreaming. I'm not proud of this, but I would do you no favor to suggest that you fail when not fully concentrating. Sometimes I just offer up the distraction and figure I'm honoring God by the effort I made just to show up.
5. At the appointed ending time, each of us makes a petition flowing from our silent prayer.

Q. Can you simplify “simple”?

A. How about after the alarm goes off (before you get out of bed) hold hands and offer a prayer for a good day, help with a particular problem, or thanksgiving. Likewise, at night, after turning off the light, hold hands and offer a prayer of thanks for anything that day.

Q. What if my spouse just isn't into couple prayer? (S)he is a good person and we pray individually but we just aren't going to be able to do it together.

A. Don't beat yourself up over this. Sure, couple prayer is good and can bring you closer together, but God's love is bigger than any prayer form. Pray for each other in your own way. I know two women whose husbands did not want to join them in prayer, so they called each other daily at an appointed time and prayed over the phone. Strange I suppose, but do what feeds you.

Q. How do we find the scripture of the day or other books, after all we don't live in a church?

A. To find the scriptures of the day, go to www.usccb.org/nab

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(United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)



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Forever
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Missionaries of the Holy Family

Where there is a Will... there is a Way to make a Difference.

Having a will is important. It provides you the opportunity to have your decisions today help care for your loved ones in the future. It also provides you the opportunity to support the Missionaries of the Holy Family with a bequest to enable our mission into the future. Legacy gifts are so special that we have the **Family Forever Society**. To receive a booklet on preparing your will and to learn more about the **Family Forever Society**, please write us at: Missionaries of the Holy Family, 3014 Oregon Avenue, Saint Louis, MO 63118 or call us at (314) 577-6300.

*If you are remembering the Missionaries of the Holy Family in your estate plans please remember us as: **Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Family – North American Province***



MISSION REFLECTION

Adventures of a Missionary Priest

Contributed by Rev. James Lienert, M.S.F.

San José in San José de Carranza



Profile #11 San José Mission. Chapel measures 25' X 67'



Fr. James Lienert, MSF is best known as Padre Jamie because of his 33 years of service in Mexico. He served as pastor for the parish of La Esmeralda in Coahuila, Mexico which was roughly 5,500 square miles! (~50 miles by 110 miles). The main church was in La Esmeralda, but the numerous communities in the parish also needed pastoral care and many did not have a place of worship. During his years in Mexico from 1967 to 2000, Padre Jamie led the construction of 28 chapels. Each chapel, like the community it was built for, has its special endearing attributes. Since his return to the United States in 2000, Padre Jamie has learned the technology of the computer. He is an avid email communicator and now has documented about the communities he served in Mexico. Samples of these vignettes will be featured in the Messenger Magazine. Full versions will be available at our website. Enjoy!

This chapel is dedicated to San José (St. Joseph) simply because it is in the ejido (cooperative) of San José de Carranza. This is called San José de Carranza to distinguish it from San José de Madero. Both are in the County of Sierra Mojada.

San José lies nestled on the northeast edge of a long and wide range of low mountains which are about half volca-



nic and half limestone in origin. The mountains closest to San José are volcanic basalt. From here, looking northeast, one sees the mountains of El Pino about sixty-five miles away across a wide and almost level plain.

A little more than a mile back from San José there is a high limestone peak which on the maps is designated as San José, but everyone else calls it Picacho del Corazón, the Heart Peak, because from one angle it does resemble a heart.

A wide dry wash comes out of the mountains behind San José, and in this

dry wash there is an abundant supply of excellent water only about twelve feet below the surface. First the Hacienda and later the village of San Jose was built around this source of water. When I arrived in 1967 there were a total of maybe a hundred and fifty souls. When I left the population had increased to around four hundred. The houses are scattered haphazard over an area of about five acres because there is little level ground for practical streets, and in most cases there is an ample distance between the houses.

When I first started going to San José, Mass was celebrated in different places. The very first place was in a mud and wattle (ocotillo) hut belonging to Doña



Isidra Márquez de Coronado. She was about the most ambitious lady in San José, both in a material sense and in a religious sense.

A mud and wattle hut is common for a poor family that starts to build a home; the first rooms would be for sleeping and sort of living space. The kitchen would be under a porch roof or, like this one, in a mud and wattle hut. By this time Doña Isidra had added the kitchen to the house, and the hut was used for storage. After a few times more people started coming to Mass, and the hut was

too small. Another family had a larger room for celebrating Mass, and at other times the altar was under a porch roof and the people under the sky.

This San José Chapel is the first chapel in whose construction I was the sole promoter. It would be about 1969. San José is by far the largest ejido in the parish, and the people there are the most organized and progressive. They were the first to accept the challenge of building a chapel. They made all the adobes and did all the labor; I provided the lumber, cement, metallic doors and windows, and the sheet metal roof.

The roof was not properly anchored down, and a few years later a whirlwind lifted intact the entire sheet metal roof still attached to the stringers, and deposited it several hundred feet away. Replacement material was ordered post haste, and as luck would have it, while we were repairing the roof there were three days of a constant chilly drizzle. This time we anchored the roof to the adobe walls. Ironically, several years later there was a hail storm with such large stones that they actually punched small holes in the 28ga tin.

In the course of years there were many improvements to the chapel. The very first thing was a ceiling of stretched cloth. Later this was replaced by a ceiling of Styrofoam. When we had new pews made for the church in La Esmeralda, half of the old ones, made of a single board for the seat and one more for the backrest, were taken to San José.

Several years later we decided to build a separate building behind the chapel for catechism and other uses.

The next improvement was building a stone wall at some little distance from the chapel to keep the burros and goats at a respectful distance, and plant some trees and oleanders. The final improvement to the chapel was primarily to change its appearance from a sheet metal gabled roof warehouse to that of a place of worship. Again it was one of the locals who built a very nice façade of local bedded limestone with a tinge of tan. On one end of the façade there is an arch for the bell. Previous to the bell era, I carried along in the back of the pickup a four foot length of air-hammer drilling bar. Of course there was always a hammer in the pickup. These rods, hard steel, are not too bad a substitute for a bell. It was impossible to maintain a definite Mass schedule in the outlying communities. But I would always arrive a few hours early, drive around, and announce that there was going to be Mass at a certain time.

At the very first we used kerosene lamps in the chapels for lighting. Very soon I acquired a compact 300w Honda generator which was carried around in the tool box of the pickup, along with extension cords and light bulbs. After a couple of years the generator was abandoned and all the chapels were equipped with butane gas mantle lamps. These do give a fairly good light. Later, when most all of the chapels had been built, there were funds to equip each chapel with its own small portable generator.

All in all, the people of San José, like in most all places, are a great people. 

More details and stories of the people of the St. Joseph community are available in the full story available online at www.msf-america.org



YOUTHFUL OUTLOOK

Helping at Church ... Helps us too

Contributed by Frankie Calvo

I think going to church is really important for a family. It has made a dramatic change in our family's life. My parents help out at the church a lot. They joined a group about seven years ago called the "Movimiento Familiar Cristiano (MFC)" (Christian Family Movement). It is a group for the family that has really helped us become closer as a family. I remember that one day MFC was having a retreat for people age 15 and older. I went to the retreat and it changed my life and the way I thought. The MFC started a youth group and I am currently a leader in that youth group and I am going to be a leader for the same retreat that I went to. My parents have always told me to be an example for my little sister and

it is true; once I joined the youth group she wanted to do something that would get her involved with the Church, so she became an altar server. All of my family members are involved with the church in some way or another. These experiences have helped me grow closer to my little sister and parents. My family can't say no to helping out at church; at Christmas my sister and I were Joseph and Mary at the twelve-o'clock Mass. My parents helped out with the posadas. Volunteering at Church has really helped us grow closer as a family. This is what the Church has done for me, and my family and I are really glad that it was worked out for us 



Frank Calvo, Age 16

Frank is a junior at Donna High School in Donna, Texas. Frank has played basketball since 7th grade and most recently has been on the High School Junior Varsity Team. Academically, he greatly enjoys his Advance Placement World History class which can lead to college credits. At this point in time Frank is thinking about a career in the field of law. He and his family are members of St. Joseph's Parish.



VOCATIONAL THOUGHTS

Signs of a Vocation

by Martin Pable, OFM Cap.

How to know you have a vocation to the religious life?

I was asked to share with you some thoughts on how a person knows they have a vocation to the religious life. God does not just jump out of the sky and tap

us on the shoulder or knock us off a horse the way He did with some people in the Bible. Ordinarily God uses very ordinary instrumental means to let us know how He is calling us, and that is always a mysterious thing. It is very personal to each one of us. I can't give you any absolute rules for this. He respects our freedom and he wants us to use our heads and hearts in trying to discern our vocation. Remember that famous line in *A Man for All Seasons*, where Thomas More says something like "God made the animals to serve Him by instinct blindly, but He made man to serve Him wittingly." That is, to use his wits.

In the history of the Church, you will consistently find spiritual writers and theologians saying that there are certain natural signs that God uses by which He inclines us, and draws us toward a vocation. The Church has always looked for those signs. If a person has those signs in some

degree, then there is a good chance he/she is called.

The First Sign is a Desire for the Life



The first sign I look for in myself or in anyone looking for a sign of a vocation is "Do I have a desire for the Life?" Am I inclined, am I drawn toward it? Does it give me a certain amount of satisfaction to think about it? I want to stress that, because

God does not draw us to a vocation against our will; it is something that is extremely important. I have talked to people who said "I want to be a priest, or brother, or sister, not because I want to, but because I think I should; because I think God wants me to. The one thing God wants of us is to be free in our decision - He wants us to freely choose our vocation. That desire is some kind of spontaneous attraction and it is one indication that a person is called. But that is not enough, because a lot of people have an attraction to religious life - the other two signs are also important.

The Second Sign is the Right Motivation

The second sign is “I want the life for the right reasons.” This is a question of motivation. What motivation is behind my interest and attraction? Here the Church looks for some very positive spiritual reasons, for example, “I want the religious life because I want to serve God in a very direct way or I want to further the love and knowledge of God. Any or all of these spiritual, religious reasons are adequate motivations. That is what we look for - something based on faith - that is a spiritual motive - not because I see this as a very cool outfit like joining a pop group. A number of inadequate reasons can creep in here, for example:



- Another inadequate reason is loneliness. A person has a very difficult time making friends and he feels very alone most of the time. He might see religious life as an instant friendship establishment, where all he has to do is walk in and he has a whole bunch of instant friends and that protects him from all the hard knocks of being a lonely person in the world. Again, that is not a faith or spiritual reason; a very understandable reason but not enough.
- Or say a guy has had some unhappy love affairs or difficulties with girls so the best thing to do is get away from them and flee to the monastery – “if I can’t be happy, at least I can save my soul.” But again, that would be an inadequate reason.
- A person sees religious life as some kind of security blanket; after all, religious life does have some security: you know where your meals are coming from, you have a bed, a certain kind of life insurance, social security in your old age, a place to live, a roof over your head, lots of things that people in the world have to struggle for. If a person has a lot of doubts about whether he can make it in the world and therefore thinks the monastery is the place to go, chances are he is not really called.
- Another inadequate reason would be if anybody looks to religious life as a kind of glamour experience or an instant status symbol. You stand up there and say “The Lord be with you” and the whole Church has to say “And also with you.” Look at all that power-experience! If that’s what motivates a person, the Church will say that’s not enough. Instant status-seeking or instant ego-tripping is not a motivation for religious life.

It should be rather obvious that lots of us can have some of these reasons somewhere in the back of our minds. None of us have a pure spiritual motive for most things we do. There is always a mixture of this kind of inadequacy in our lives and that's O.K. You can live with a certain amount of this and there may be a mixture of motivations in one's desire for religious life, but the primary driving force ought to be something deeper.

So far we have two signs -attraction and motivation for the right reasons. There is still something missing.

The Third Sign is Fitness for the Life

The third sign is fitness, by which I mean the ability to live a religious life, to live it comfortably, cheerfully

and generously, without a constant drain on your inner resources or tensions. Lots of people, very good people, have tried the life but found they just didn't fit in - they couldn't live it. Some people are just not cut out for it anymore than some people can't teach or be airline pilots or engineers or salesmen. Religious life just doesn't suit some people - they haven't got the skills or the ability to handle the job. God respects the individual gifts of each person.

Do you think any of these signs apply to you? [MJ]

*Used with permission
Diocese of Joliet Vocation Office
Nora Labanauskas*

Appearing in parishes soon...



Missionaries of the Holy Family Information Centers. This year is the 100th Anniversary of Founder Fr. John Berthier's death. His cause for sainthood is in process. To commemorate this anniversary, Information Centers on the Missionaries of the Holy Family will be located in parishes and missions currently served by the community.

AROUND THE PROVINCE



◀ Fr. Phil Sosa visits with the Eloy and Cynthia Lopez family.



▲ Fr. Francois, a Missionary of the Holy Family priest, arrived in the United States in January from the Madagascar province. He is located in Saint Louis and is learning the English language while assisting at St. Wenceslaus parish. He speaks French and Malagasy. Shown here he visits with a family in Saint Louis.

Fr. Francois ▶ attended a Matt Maher concert. Shown here, Fr. Francois was fortunate to have his souvenir CD "Empty and Beautiful" autographed by Matt Maher!



▲ Over 30 supporters gathered to share time with Missionaries of the Holy Family members during an evening in early April. Pictured are (l to r): Jerry Wasser, Mark Hickman, MD, Fr. Jim Wasser, MSF and Margaret Wasser.



▲ Fr. Francois celebrated a Memorial Mass for his mother who passed away in April, a few months after his arrival here in the United States.

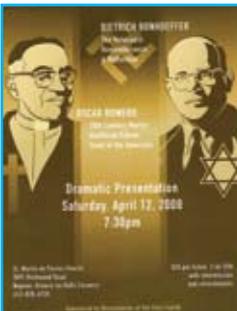
◀ Deacon George Miller, Associate Director of the Friends of the Holy Family, is shown here making audio recordings of the daily Prayers for the Friends. This will be available on the new website when it is launched in the fall.

AROUND THE PROVINCE

▶ The Missionaries of the Holy Family Apostolate Board and Province Council members met in Saint Louis. Pictured are: (*front row l to r*) Fr. Jim Wasser, MSF, Fr. Phil Sosa, MSF, Fr. Alberto Treviño, MSF, Walter Lukaszek – Board Vice President;; (*2nd row l to r*) Fr. Jim Wuerth, MSF, Fr. David Tonary, MSF, Fr. Richard Oberstar, MSF, Paul Mahabir – Board President, Fr. Dan Hawkins, MSF; (*back row l to r*) Terri Quebedeaux, D.P.M., Fr. Camillo Botello, MSF, Ed Koeninger, Jr., John Harper. *Board Members not pictured* are Mark Hickman, M.D., Gracie Mirabal Martinez and Bobby Mirabal.



Fr. Feddy Himawan, MSF ▶ with staff and parishioners of Holy Family Parish. (*clockwise*) Mrs. Estolia Campos, Amparo Saenz, Deacon Raymond Ybarra, Amelia Lankford, Fr. Feddy, Irene, Standing: Elvira Cordova and Mary Urrutia.

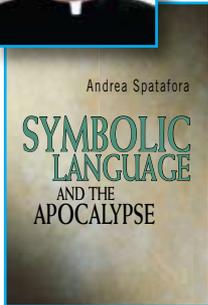


▶ Fr. Dan Hawkins, MSF organized and sponsored a special event honoring and reflecting on the sacrifices of Oscar Romero and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

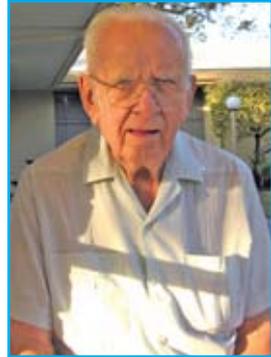


▶ When gathered together the Missionaries of the Holy Family celebrate Mass as a community. *Shown from left to right* at Fathers Wasser, Hawkins, Ronan, Tonary, Wuerth, Sosa, Treviño, Oberstar, Beegan and Botello.

AROUND THE PROVINCE



◀ Fr. Andrea Spatafora, MSF is having a milestone year! In December he was appointed as Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Saint Paul, Ottawa (which is a Pontifical University). In February, Fr. Andrea also published *Symbolic Language and the Apocalypse*. Fr. Andrea serves the Missionaries as the Vicar of the Province. In March Fr. Andrea celebrated his 50th Birthday! In October Fr. Andrea will celebrate his 25th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood.



▶ Fr. Ed Zaborowski, MSF is residing at Padua Place retirement home. Fr. Charles Zeyen, MSF (*not shown*) is also staying here. Residents at Padua Place are retired Catholic priests and bishops.



◀ Fr. Phil Sosa visited with Eva and Alfredo Adame at their home on one of his trips to Texas.



▶ The Formation House of the Missionaries of the Holy Family is where men discerning their vocation live with other members of the community. Fr. Jim Wasser, MSF is the Formation Director. Shown are (*l to r*) Dominic Alvarez (student), Bill Brown (volunteer) and a former student.



▶ Carlos and Celia De La Cruz with their Holy Family Plaque presented to them by Fr. Phil Sosa, MSF.



PARENTS TIME OUT

The Myth of Being Right

Contributed by Dr. Ray Guarendi

Dear Dr. Ray,

I have two sons, ages eight and five. Sometimes I hear and read so much about how I should discipline them that I don't know whom to listen to. How do I know what is right?

– Confused Mom

One of the most widespread childrearing myths preying upon parents these days is the right way myth. This is the false notion that there is a “psychologically correct” or “right” way to handle every situation or behavior. Use the proper phrases and Elvis will turn down the stereo with not so much as a whimper of protest. Employ the perfect logic and Ripley will immediately stop lying. Deny just the right privilege and Dusty will rush to the bathtub before mold sets in. The irony of this myth is that those parents most victimized by it are those trying hard to be good parents.

good parents... get caught up in a cycle of second-guessing and self-doubt...

Consequently, they get caught up in a cycle of second-guessing and self-doubt, which leads them to agonize over even the most everyday childrearing decisions. Is there a more right approach they haven't considered yet? What if they're saying something in the wrong way

at the wrong time? Their worry over being less than perfect is the very thing, which reduces the quality and enjoyment in their parenthood.

In fact, the question “is this right?” is meaningless. It only leads to confusion, frustration, and ultimately guilt. The question to ask is: How well is this working—in your home, with your child, your value system, and your tolerance level. This question will save you from the fruitless, pinballing search for that one surefire approach—as if such a thing exists in childrearing—and lead you towards more common sense based approaches that may work.

Maybe Uncle Matt has a blissfully high level of tolerance for Bruno's nagging to flip the channel over to big time wrestling. He tells you simply to ignore Bruno and by next week he'll wear down. But you believe your rights are being infringed upon by the mosquito-like droning, and you tell Bruno any more will lead to his removal from the room. Who is right? Actually, either approach can work;

the choice depends upon who is parent. Since you are, you don't have to wait until next week for peace if you choose not to.

If your *No TV until homework is done* rule is working well—with kids “well” is defined as about 50% of the time—then by all means, keep it. No matter who warns you that you're wrong—expert, relative, friend, your rule-victimized daughter—don't tamper with success. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Likewise, if you've been persevering with an approach that is somebody else's idea of right, but which has borne little fruit for you over a fair

trial period—usually several weeks to months—then it's time to regroup and pursue another course. My Norbert might learn to curtail his penchant for pinching through a simple, boring stay in a dining room chair for each pinch. But your iron willed Bruno needs to live in the chair for a week, type a 500-word apology, and lose two weeks' worth of TV's *Wild Kingdom* just to confine his pinching to only one hand.

You, your youngster, and your home are unlike any other. Judge your discipline by what serves well your uniqueness. 



Dr. Ray Guarendi

is the father of ten, a psychologist, a popular Catholic radio personality and guestspeaker offering parenting advice in concert with Catholic values. More information about Dr. Ray's books and tapes can be found on the internet at www.DrRay.com

Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi





DEAR FATHER

Ask Father John

By Rev. John Carl Lombardi, M.S.F.

Dear Father,

If purgatory isn't in the Bible, does it mean I won't go there? I play golf with a group of evangelical Christians who say that there is no mention of purgatory in the Scriptures. As a Catholic I would like to know what is the need of purgatory and how does our Catholic Church base its teachings on it.

Purgatory exists because God is both just and merciful. At the moment of death, most of us are not completely sanctified, even though we are justified, or saved, by having been baptized into Christ's Body. By doing so we received God's supernatural life into our souls, having accepted Him by faith and not rejected Him by unrepented mortal sins.

Therefore for most of us, there must be some additional change, some purification between death and heaven. This is purgatory.

Just because the word "purgatory" does not appear in the Bible does not mean

***"Trinity" does not appear in
Scripture either,
but the teaching is there***

that the Church's teaching about purgatory is missing. The word "Trinity" does not appear in Scripture either, but the teaching is there, and so is the teaching about a place of purification after death.

We Catholics traditionally point to the Second Book of Maccabees, where Judas Maccabeus, upon learning that some of his soldiers died in battle while wearing pagan amulets, led his men in praying for the souls of the dead, then took up a collection that he sent to Jerusalem to provide for a propitiatory sacrifice for them.

"In doing this," Scripture says, "he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin" (2 Maccabees 12:43-46).

Evangelicals do not accept this passage because they do not accept Second Maccabees as divinely inspired. But there are other biblical passages we can cite that they do recognize.

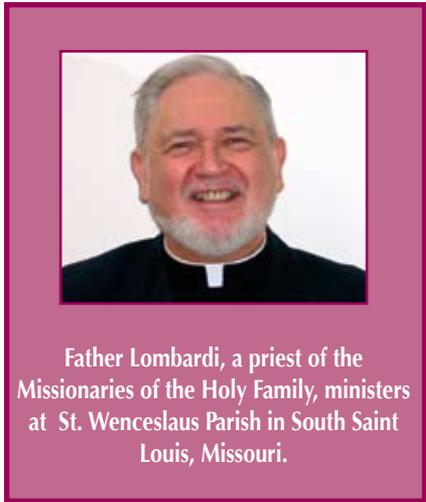
For example Jesus warns those who do not make peace with their neighbor that they will be thrown into prison and they “will not be released until you have paid the last penny” (Matthew 5:26 and Luke 12:59). These words of Christ refer to the need for complete purification from all attachment to sin before we can enter heaven.

Peter J. Kreeft in his book “Catholic Christianity” (Ignatius Press) describes purgatory as “heaven’s wash room.” He also tell us that: “Unlike heaven or hell, purgatory is only temporary. Purgatory takes away the temporal punishment still due for our sins after Baptism. Living our faith and true repentance have already saved us from the eternal punishment due to our sins, that is, hell.

There are only two eternal destinies, not three: heaven or hell, being with God or being without Him.”

Kreeft further states, “The reason for purgatory is not the past, not an external legal punishment for past sins, as if our relationship with God were still under the old law.

Rather, its reason is the future; it is our rehabilitation, it is training for heaven. For our relationship with God has been radically changed by Christ; we are His adopted children and our relationship is now filial and familiar, not legal. Purgatory is God’s loving parental discipline.” 



Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi





A PROFILE OF SERVICE

Very Rev. Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

Interviewed by Guy Parasch

If you were born the day after Christmas, you might ponder the idea of a special connection with the season. For Felipe Sosa, Jr. who was born on December 26th, 1941, his birth date is simply a pleasant complement to the fact that he is very happy with his life as a priest and devotion to the Holy Family. He was born in Harlingen, Texas the first born of nine children to Elvira and Felipe Sosa. His two youngest siblings died at birth, but he continues to remember them in prayer. Growing up with three brothers and three sisters made home life busy, but wonderful. From oldest to youngest is Louis, Raul, Estella, Margie, Mary Jane and Pete. Phil received his first sacraments at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Harlingen. He was baptized on the Feast of St. Philip and St. James. While Phil had a desire to be an altar boy, the church was too far away to make it practical. As the city grew, the parish opened a mission church – Our Lady of Assumption – that was nearer to their home and the family attended there. Attending 7:30am Mass on Sunday was a popular plan for him and his friends because the rule in the family was that Mass came first; then someone could go

fishing or hunting. Phil and his brothers could count on Mom and Dad asking questions about the readings to be sure they attended Mass. One Sunday, when Phil was a freshman in high school, he went to Mass with his friend, Ramon Garcia, at Assumption Church and the priest, Fr. Pasqual Lanese, OMI, spoke on vocations. In that day and age young men could attend high school seminaries. After Mass, Ramon teased Phil by asking if he wanted to head off to the seminary and Phil taunted Ramon with the same. Neither one had the inclination to consider it, they knew they were having too much fun and of course there were girls. There was however, something memorable about that Mass. Phil had not heard anyone speak about vocations before and it planted a seed or maybe the seed was already quietly growing. Years before this, Phil's grandmother, Refugia, was known to pray regularly that her family would be blessed with a priest. Refugia attended daily Mass and she was one of Phil's most spiritual influences when he was younger. When Phil was a youth, his grandmother was walking as usual to daily Mass, but it was



a very foggy and misty morning. Maybe she didn't hear the car or maybe the car didn't see her, but when she was crossing the street she was hit by a car and passed away. Clearly her prayers and intercession were answered with Phil's vocation, which finally took hold at career day in his junior year of High School.

Each student picked two careers that they wanted to learn more about. Phil

***Phil selected the Navy first
and then
Religious Life second.***

selected the Navy first and then Religious Life second. Before Career Day arrived, his buddies questioned each other on their picks – when Phil was asked he distinctly remembers talking mostly about his Navy choice and avoiding mentioning his 2nd choice of religious life – no one else said they selected it. In fact when pressed by friends to learn about his second choice he says he “lied” and said something else. He thought if he shared his interest in the priesthood that people would label him with a “better than thou” attitude and he humbly knew that wasn't the case. When Career Day arrived and the time came to move to the room for his second choice, he had a surprise! He walked into the room for Religious Life and he found many of his friends. They too had been embarrassed to mention it. This was a moment of real encouragement. He no longer felt alone with his interest and his fear of being labeled “better than thou” went away. Fr. Pat Gallagher from the diocese was there that day and was encouraging to him. Over the next few months, Phil worked with Fr. Gallagher to complete



Very Rev. Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

40 years of Priesthood

Born: December 26, 1941

Age: 66

Hometown:

Harlington, Texas

Hometown Parish:

Our Lady of Assumption

Confirmation Name:

None (Retained Philip)

Patron Saint:

St. Teresa Lisieux, *The Little Flower*

Ordained:

June 1, 1968

Education:

(1-11) Harlington Public Schools

Seminary:

Minor - Holy Family Seminary,
St. Louis, MO

Major - Holy Family International,
Rome, Italy

Pontifical College

Josephinum, OH

Hobbies:

Fishing, outdoors and driving.

Motto:

*“Do ordinary things in an
extraordinary way.”*

from St. Teresa Lisieux

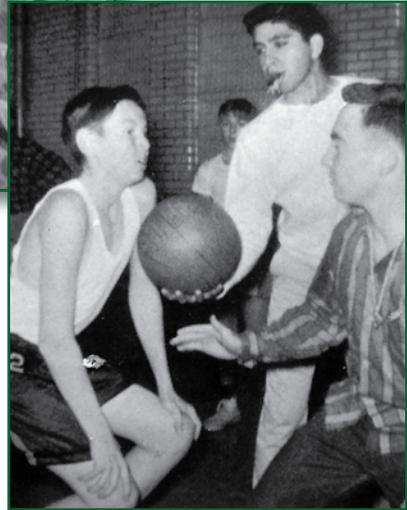
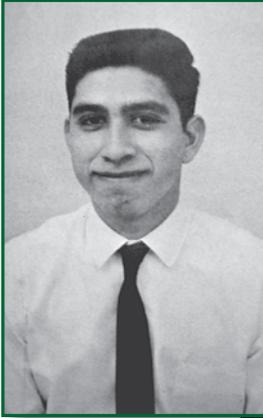
Last Book Read:

At Sea with God by Margaret Silf

and submit his application to attend the diocesan minor seminary for his last year of high school. After a summer filled with anticipation and weeks of waiting for the response, Fr. Gallagher received the diocese's answer and met with Phil. Their answer was no. This was a depressing and confusing answer. There was a

of age this was his first time away from home, he was leaving his family, community and his high school. He boarded the Missouri Pacific railroad and 24 hours later he arrived in Saint Louis. Fr. Joseph Mathey, MSF met him at the train station. Phil enjoyed his senior year at the Holy Family Seminary and graduated in

1959. He decided to continue onto college at the Holy Family Seminary for 2 more years. Before the start of his third year, he chose to pursue his vocation towards the priesthood with the next step.



technicality required by the diocese that had not been met.

Fr. Gallagher still believed in Phil's call to the priesthood and suggested that he speak with his parish pastor, Fr.

***Fr. Gallagher still believed
in Phil's call to
the priesthood***

Clemente Grzenia, MSF who was with the Missionaries of the Holy Family. Fr. Clemente was welcoming to Phil and helped him quickly submit his paperwork to the Holy Family Seminary in Saint Louis, MO. Within three days there was a response. YES! Phil had to move quickly because the semester would begin soon in Saint Louis. At 17 years

He began a year of prayerful discernment and reflection, called a Novitiate year. He moved to the Missionaries of the Holy Family Novitiate House in Hillman, Minnesota for a year. At the conclusion of his novitiate year (Aug. 1962) he took his first vows and entered the Missionaries of the Holy Family. He then continued his studies towards his Bachelors degree, but since he was a member of the Missionaries he could

not return to the Holy Family Seminary with the lay students. He moved to the Missionaries of the Holy Family House of Formation in Farmington, Missouri. Here he lived the religious life in community under the temporary vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Life in com-

in the United States designated by the Vatican as Pontifical Colleges.

After graduation in May of 1968, Phil had the pleasure of returning to his home parish of Our Lady of Assumption for his ordination. On June 1, 1968 Fr.

Philip Sosa, MSF was ordained by +Bishop Humberto Medeiros. Fr. Phil's first assignment was in Los Angeles, California as a Hospital Chaplain while stationed at St. Camillus Parish. From there he was appointed pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish



munity followed the rule of the community which emphasized Prayer, Work and Study. He completed his last two years of Philosophy while in Farmington being taught by the Missionaries of the Holy Family. In 1964 he received his Bachelor of Arts from Saint Louis University. Phil was honored by being offered to continue his studies in Rome at the Missionaries of the Holy Family's International House of Studies. The final two years of his Theology studies were back in the United States at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. There are only a handful of colleges

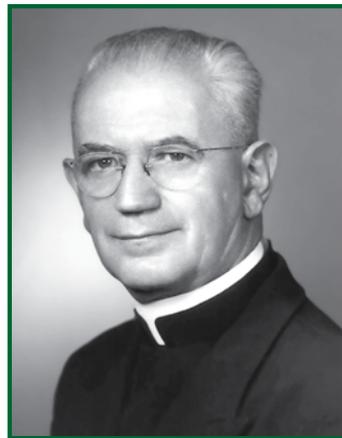
in Cuero, Texas. Although he was only there for 6 months, he felt those were some of the most rewarding months of his early priesthood. He worked with Bro Richard Comstock, MSF and four Missionary Catechist Sisters. As a team of six they worked with lay people in the parish and reinvigorated parish life. After this assignment, Fr. Phil moved to Saint Louis in 1972 and became the

Novice Master for three years (responsible for those men in their Novitiate year). The Novitiate House was no longer in Minnesota and was now in Saint Louis at the Seminary. In 1975 Fr. Phil was appointed Rector of the Holy Family Seminary, which by this time had been educating students for nearly 28 years. In 1978, the Congregation held its regularly scheduled Provincial Chapter where the members elect the leadership of the Province. Fr. Phil was elected Provincial – at the age of 36 he was the youngest Provincial to date. For the next three years, his guiding vision as Provincial was “a return to the roots of religious community living”. There had been a gradual drift over the years that needed a “course correction”. Step by step Fr. Phil worked with the priests and brothers of the community to bring life in the Province back to its roots, and it was well received which resulted in Fr. Phil being elected for another 3 year term then again for a third 3 year term.

Over these nine years as Provincial, Fr. Phil recalls that his role model was **+ Fr. Joseph Mathey, MSF.**

In 1987, after his nine years as Provincial, Fr. Phil had the joy of returning as Pastor

to his home parish, Immaculate Heart of Mary for four years. He followed this with five years as Vocation Director and then served as Pastor for St. Joseph’s in Donna, TX. In 2007, he was again



+Rev. Joseph Mathey, M.S.F.

elected Provincial and resides in Saint Louis, Missouri... at least most of the time. Fr. Phil enjoys the open road and travels a great deal by car to visit members of the Province and it brings him back to his hometown as well. The family has been blessed with the love and care of both parents, but recently in 2006 his father, Felipe, passed away. His mother, Elvira, lives in Harlingen and cares for Pete (the youngest sibling) who has had Cerebral Palsy since birth. At 54 years of age, Pete has far exceeded life expectancies given by the doctor. Fr. Phil credits his Mom’s loving care for Pete’s long life. Fr. Phil pointed out that while there

are challenges and sacrifices with Pete’s condition, Pete is an absolute blessing to the family. Through Pete’s condition, family members have all learned about a deep and joyful form of love. 

Fr. Phil Answers Some Questions

Q: Why are you a priest?

A: Because I have a sense of fulfillment in being of service to other people and because of faith. A love of God and a relationship with Him that has grown stronger during my life through all the ups and downs.

Q: What most concerns you about the priesthood today?

A: Simply the shortage. Men are missing their calling.

Q: In your opinion what is the biggest change in the priesthood over the years?

A: Vatican II changed the liturgy. The laity has become more involved in the life of the Church.

Q: What is the key to being a successful priest?

A: What has helped me be a good priest has been how the laity have allowed me to be a part of their lives and they are a part of mine. For example – on the 25th Anniversary, friends from the places I served made the journey to Texas to celebrate. It just showed me how my “family” has grown through my service to God.

Q: What have you enjoyed most about being a priest?

A: Being a part of peoples lives. My “family” has grown beyond blood relations.

Q: What do you like least about being a priest?

A: Confrontation that turns negative.

Q: What do you know now that you wish you knew when you were younger?

A: ALOT! From a religious life perspective, I have learned how much I really enjoy serving in a parish. I am frequently drawn into administrative responsibilities, but parish service is a joy.

Q: What has been your most memorable experience as a priest?

A: The most memorable times as a priest are those times that have helped me grow as a person. As a priest it is not uncommon to receive a call in the middle of the night from the local hospital because someone has asked for a Catholic priest. When that phone rings at 2 am in the morning, my reaction used to be one of resistance and frustration. I did not want to get out of my comfortable bed, get presentable and go to a hospital. Over the years, time after time, I have found the joy in these calls to the hospital. They are so important for the patient and the family. Administering the sacraments is a special honor in these situations. Making a difference at such a critical moment in their lives is a privilege. These experiences have made me grow as a person to understand the joy in sacrifice.

Q: Hopes for the future.

A: Increase in membership for the Missionaries of the Holy Family and vocations in general.

Q: Did you have doubts when you were discerning your vocation call?

A: At one time I was going to leave, but it was for the wrong reason. I felt pushed away and that is not how the Holy Spirit works. I stayed, worked through the challenge, and it became a wonderful defining experience for me.

Q: Message to those sensing a call to religious life.

A: Do not be afraid, do not be embarrassed, pray about it, open your heart to the Holy Spirit.

Q: What do you hope to do that you haven't done yet?

A: Go to Hawaii!



OUR FOUNDER

Founder of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Family His Purpose and Work

The Founder of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Family, Father John Berthier, M.S., was born in Chatonnay, France on February 24, 1840. As a boy he learned about the apparition of Our Lady of La Salette and his interest in Our Lady of La Salette never faded. John showed a desire for religious life when he was very young and prepared for the diocesan seminary by studying Latin. On October 23, 1858, at the age of 18, he entered the seminary in Grenoble. As a deacon, he joined the Missionaries of La Salette at the mountain of La Salette on July 14, 1862. Despite health issues, his strong will and trust in God helped him to arrive at his goal. On September 20, 1862, at the age of 22, John Berthier was ordained a priest by Bishop Ginoulhiac.



Father John Berthier, M.S.

For decades Fr. Berthier enjoyed his summers at the mountain, La Salette, ministering to the visiting pilgrims. He celebrated Mass, preached, heard confessions and explained the message of Our Lady of La Salette. There were few staff members, so in addition to priestly duties, he did a variety of manual jobs to help care for the pilgrims. In the win-

tertime the snowfall prevented pilgrims from reaching the Sanctuary of La Salette, so Fr. Berthier traveled to parishes, colleges and religious communities throughout France preaching missions and giving retreats. Those who heard Fr. Berthier were moved by his modesty, education and humility.

Two thoughts remained on Fr. Berthier's mind. First, he wanted to promote the message of La Salette to help lead people to the Lord. Second, he saw a lack of missionaries in the Church. This Bible verse was on his mind: "The harvest is abundant, but laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest," (Mt 9:37-38). During his missions throughout France, he met many men who wanted to become priests, but in general they were considered too old to begin their studies.

Fr. Berthier wanted to offer these men a path to become a priest and made plans for a school. Because of the political turmoil and anticlerical wave in France, he could not do this at the Sanctuary of La Salette. After encouragement from Pope Leo XIII to follow his work for late vocations, Fr. Berthier, at the age of 55, went to Grave, Holland and on September 28, 1895 he founded the Institute for Late Vocations. With the permission of the Holy See in Rome, this became the Congregation

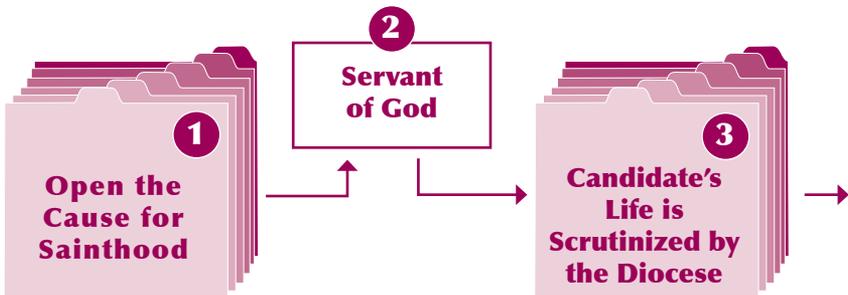
of the Missionaries of the Holy Family. While there were many challenges, Fr. Berthier had a deep confidence in God and persevered.

In 1908, just thirteen years after the Institute began; Fr. Berthier witnessed the ordination of twenty-five priests. Additionally he saw nearly two hundred seminarians as members of the Missionaries of the Holy Family. Fr. Berthier now judged that his presence was no longer required and desired only, according to his own words, "to disappear from the face of the earth."

The first days of October, 1908 were particularly difficult for him. On October 16, early in the morning, his last agony noticeably began. Repeatedly he said: "I wish to say one more Mass!" He celebrated Mass, but he himself was the victim of his sacrifice, because a few minutes after he had uttered these words, he gently breathed his last, surrounded by his spiritual sons. His institute was still very young at the time of his death, but he had trained the missionaries well. Today there are over 900 priests, brothers and seminarians serving throughout the world. 

The Steps to Sainthood

Beginning here and continuing on the next 2 pages are the steps to **The Cause for Sainthood**. The narrative explanation of these steps is on page 28.



The Cause for Sainthood

The process of “sainthood” is formerly called the process for canonization. The candidate for sainthood must first be proposed to the local bishop and typically this does not happen for at least 5 years after the person’s death. Once the bishop accepts and “**opens the cause**” **1** for canonization, an investigation into the person’s life and work is begun and the person can be called a **Servant of God**. **2** This is an exhaustive study of the candidate’s written works and, when possible, interviews with those who knew or worked with him. **There is careful scrutiny of his life**, **3** virtues and weaknesses. Only one who has lived the Christian life in an extraordinary manner can be seriously considered for canonization. If the diocesan process is positive, all the information is forwarded to Rome to the **4** **Congregation for the Causes of Saints** – where there is a waiting list of causes to be reviewed. *Fr. Berthier is number 242 on this list. A miracle attributed to his intercession would make his case be considered much sooner.*

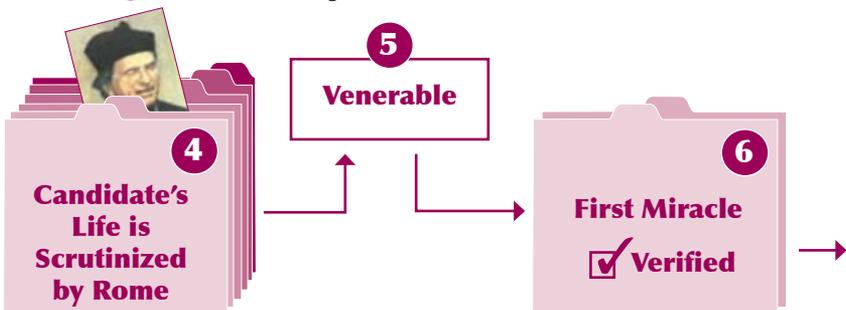
Here a new investigation by professional historians and theologians begins. Once complete, the evidence is reviewed by the congregation. If favorable, the case is forwarded to the pope who decides if the person is a role model of Catholic Virtue. If so, the Pope proclaims the person **Venerable**. **5**

Next a miracle must be verified to have occurred after the candidate’s death and be attributable to the candidate’s prayerful intercession. God’s act of a miracle in this situation is seen as affirmation and cause to continue the sainthood process.

After **the miracle is verified**, **6** the Pope declares the candidate as **Beatified** **7** and referred to as **Blessed**. **8**

Before someone can be canonized as a saint, the Vatican’s Congregation for the Causes of Saints must be presented with evidence of a second posthumous miracle. This miracle must be verified before the canonization can proceed and it must have occurred after the candidate’s beatification. This second verified miracle is seen as God’s final affirmation.

This final step to sainthood is not taken lightly – canonization is considered to be an infallible act of the Pope. That explains the rigorous process – there cannot be errors in the selection of saints. Sainthood is not revocable. The Pope proclaims the person **Canonized**, **9** the candidate is given the title **Saint**.



Prayer for Fr. Berthier's Beatification



Father in Heaven, you found it fitting
to choose your servant,

John Berthier

to foster a zealous devotion to Our
Lady of LaSalette and the Holy Family
of Nazareth, and to be an untiring
apostle in the education of belated
vocations.

Grant me this favor

(Here mention your intention)

...so that I may praise you all the
more, and obtain for myself and oth-
ers, your blessing on this earth and
eternal life in heaven.

Grant, O Lord, that **John Berthier**
soon may be privileged with sainthood, in order that he may serve as a
model of the virtues he practiced so faithfully during his life.

Amen

For a novena: Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be to the Father with
this prayer, for nine consecutive days.

Anyone receiving special favors through the intercession of Father Berthier,
please notify:

Very Rev. Father Provincial, M.S.F.,
3014 Oregon Ave.
Saint Louis, Missouri 63118-1412

Imprimi Potest:

Very Rev. Philip Sosa, M.S.F.
Provincial, North American Province



In the evening you say,

***'Tomorrow will be fair, for the sky is red'; and, in the morning,
'Today will be stormy, for the sky is red and threatening.'
You know how to judge the appearance of the sky, but
you cannot judge the signs of the times.***

Matthew 16:2 (NAB)



**Missionaries of the Holy Family
3014 Oregon Ave.
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