

Stay Involved

We want to know how you've been. Do you have a special prayer request or an idea for a discussion group? Let us know who you are and what you are up to by filling out the information below. Also, you can always use the form to send in a donation.

(Please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell _____

E-mail _____

Tell us about the retreats that you have enjoyed most: _____

Your PIM thoughts here: _____

Keep In Touch

Do you have comments or questions about Partners in Ministry? Please contact us at:

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A Message from Kay and Pat

By Sisters **Kay Kolb** and **Pat Miller**, SSND

We wonder if all the rest of you who might be getting older (some people don't, you know...) notice that time flies progressively faster as there seem to be more things on the fire. How to fit in things like mowing the lawn and cleaning out the garage — with getting out flyers to the "troops" so that there WILL be a program starting in August and September! Anybody got any helpful suggestions?

We are excited, though, because for the first time in a while, there is a major shift in OUR* program this year. As you know if you've received and "digested" the materials that have been flowing your direction, **Partners in Ministry** this year will be Thursday nights at **St. Joseph Parish in Arlington** and coordinated and facilitated by **Christy and Ray Szempruch** with Kay and Pat as back-up. Partners also will be held on Saturdays at **St. Mary in Graham** and coordinated and facilitated by Kay and Pat with Christy and Ray as back-up.

In addition, four times this year **Partners Two** will be at **Most Blessed Sacrament in Arlington**. This program is for folks who have been through Partners or the Lay Ministries Program and want more time together to discuss the many issues that surround our faith life, our home life, our political life — our *REAL lives*. Some 50 people have already expressed interest in this program, and if you want to come, you have to let us know at (940) 382-3594 or e-mail ebhouters@aol.com.

If we have your e-mail address, we'll send you materials by that method; if not, the same materials will come to you snail-mail. The article in this newsletter by Ray Szempruch (*See Page 2*) may be typical of the topics that we will explore together. In addition to renewing and strengthening our ties with each other, we hope to explore ideas that we've not had time to discuss during the regular program.

We hope you are having a really relaxing summer...and even though the first paragraph would indicate that we are NOT, please know that we love what we do and thoroughly enjoy getting back in touch with all of you through our little Occasional Newsletter.

**Note: OUR means all 750 of us who are receiving this newsletter and who "claim" the Partners in Ministry/Lay Ministry endeavor as our particular challenge.*

The Occasional Newsletter

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Full-Time Christians author Droel leads successful Glen Rose Retreat

By **Julie Elliott Payne**
MOAB Committee

This year's annual Glen Rose retreat, *Full-time Christians: The Real Challenge of Vatican II*, was presented by **William (Bill) Droel** in April.

Droel, the founder of the Chicago-based National Center for Laity and editor of the newsletter *Initiatives*, spoke about our Catholicism as a "world-affirming spirituality."

Ray Szempruch gave Droel nothing short of a moving introduction and a call to action for the rest of us, saying "This man has his finger on the pulse of what we are about. He can help us ... to give a new resurgence of Catholicism as a power that should help this country to move forward in the direction it needs to go."

Droel went on to lead an in-depth and encouraging discussion about living a spiritual life that is based in hope.



"Our tradition is an invitational tradition — a way of looking at the world, a way of living."

See Page 3 for a sampling of photos that Ed Houters took at the April retreat.

Calendar

Please plan to join us for the following events:

Aug. 14: 10 a.m. to noon for the Tuesday Morning Seminar

Aug. 25: 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. PIM at St. Mary in Graham

Sept. 6: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. PIM at St. Joseph in Arlington

Sept. 29: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. PIM II at Most Blessed Sacrament in Arlington

Oct. 13: Beginning at 8:30 a.m. for registration for the OPEN WINDOW. The topic is Social Justice: Simone Campbell from Network (A Catholic Lobbying Group in Washington).

Dec. 1: PIM Prayer Day in Graford or Mineral Wells

Dec. 21: Winter Solstice Celebration at the Catholic Renewal Center

Check Us Out!

You can now read *The Occasional Newsletter* online at OccasionalNewsletter.wordpress.com.

Join us for PIM 2007-08

By **Debbie Johnson**
MOAB Committee

St. Joseph in Arlington and St. Mary in Graham are pleased to be the host parishes for the **2007-08 Partners In Ministry** program. Sisters **Kay Kolb** and **Pat Miller**, SSND, along with **Ray and Christy Szempruch** will facilitate the program, which began in 1977 as the Diocesan Lay Ministries Program.

To date, more than 2,000 individuals in the Fort Worth Diocese have completed the program.

This program is for those choosing to deepen their faith and spirituality in the workplace, the home and their everyday lives. It is an opportunity to nurture personal spiritual growth. Areas of reflection and study include:

- **SCRIPTURE** - The Word of God through the Bible, current and applicable today,
- **VATICAN COUNCIL II** - Familiarity with the direction begun through the Documents of that Council and appreciation of the overall vision of the People of God, and
- **TODAY'S THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS** – Use of pertinent books and articles for discussion about discipleship within and beyond the Church.

The Graham sessions at St. Mary's will be from 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. one Saturday each month beginning **Aug. 25** and ending **March 15**.



The Arlington sessions at St. Joseph's, which will be coordinated and facilitated by Christy and Ray with Kay and Pat as back-up, are set for 7 to 9 p.m. weekly on Thursday evenings beginning **Sept. 6** and ending **Dec. 6** for the Christmas break. Sessions will resume **Jan. 24** and continue through **April 3**.

Both the Graham and Arlington groups will gather **April 25-26** for the annual PIM Retreat in Glen Rose with others who have participated in PIM in past years.

For more information, please contact the hosting churches or check the web site at www.ministriesoutreach.org.

Please register by Aug. 20 so enough books can be ordered and materials prepared.

Examining differences, divisions in our Church

By **Ray Szempruch**

I am pretty sure you all tap into National Catholic Reporter and John Allen's online column, so I don't need to encourage you to read him. I just wanted to point out a recent column about the address of Daniel Finn, the outgoing president of the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) as it offers us insight into the quandary of the "us vs. them" thing.

There is a related article referred to at the end of his column. Finn's lament and Allen's Amen: "Being a dissenting voice to a dismissive audience will never bridge divides."

Maybe one of our Partners in Ministry Two sessions could review the traditional vs. progressive battle array of *ideologically defined ghettos*. Both Bishop Vann's pastoral letter and material like John Allen's help lay out the problem.

The pay off might be: we — as informed Christians — may have more power (the ability to influence individuals and institutions' behavior) if we acquire more understanding in this area of entrenched attitudes and patterns of behavior in order to realize an ecclesiology of communion.

To quote a line in the related John Allen article: "An understanding of power, Finn suggested, among other things leads to an appreciation of the importance of maintaining relationships in obtaining one's aims. He quoted a maxim among community organizers that the most powerful person in a community is usually the one with the longest list of phone numbers."

A mother of a priest feels...

By **Peg Kennedy**
MOAB Committee

Our son, **Tom Kennedy**, was ordained on July 7, 2007, and as his mother, I have been asked many times, "Aren't you proud?"

I confess that is not what I feel, but so far, I haven't found adequate words to express what I DO feel. Having been a Catholic way more than 50 years, I confess to still feeling inadequately "trained" in the right way to feel. Doesn't every Catholic mother know the feeling of pride that comes with having this wonderful blessing bestowed?

Instead, **Kahlil Gibran's** Prophet expresses better how I feel in uncharted spiritual territory: "Your children are not your children...though they are with you yet they belong not to you... their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow which you cannot visit...you are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth...."

My predominate feeling is gratitude for a wonderful unearned gift and thanksgiving that our son has found his spiritual home and calling as Father Tom.



Father Tom

Read Gibran's full quote on Marriage and Children to understand what his father might say when asked the same question as his answer would not be anything like mine.

A mother reflects on her son's First Communion

By **Monica Moen**

What a mystery a person is! Why in this place, in this time, to this people...for this people? The what for is easier. In every place, in every time, to every people, each person is given to us for Love. My son, **Adam Louis**, has set all this pondering in motion.

When Adam was baptized seven years ago, it was a wonderful event for our Faith Community. Such planning! Our generous **Father Gus Melito** drove up from Dallas as did several SSND friends. Family and friends flew in from Montana, Minnesota, Colorado and many more places. Local Denton friends sang and baked and printed programs and snapped photos. The theme was "the Kingdom now and yet to come." It was so appropriate to baptize Adam within the context of that Faith Community.

All of us - whether Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, unchurched or agnostic - bonded in the hope of Love that we held for Adam and the recognition that the sacred moment we celebrated would be a transcending moment of Love for ourselves as Community.

And now my precious Adam has called forth our Faith Community again for his First Communion. There was minimal planning this time around. Adam did the preparation, learning to recite the Ten Commandments, the Seven Sacraments and the Apostle Creed. He made his First Reconciliation and religiously says his Act of Contrition daily.

Many friends and family chose again to travel and join our local family to celebrate our Eucharist. And what a beautiful realization of Thanksgiving and Unity Adam did celebrate with his First Communion. By partaking of this Holy Communion,



Adam Louis

may we discover the Mystery of who we are by remembering the following two Scripture passages:

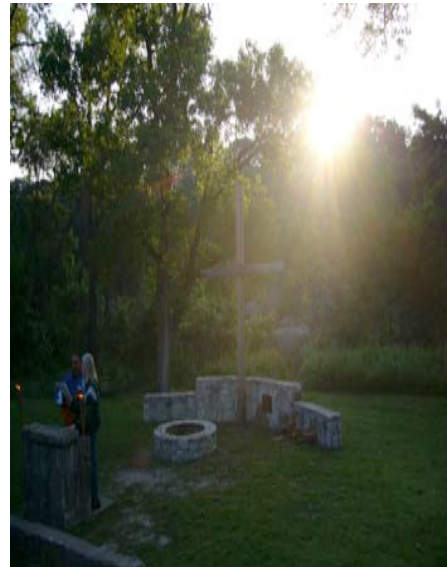
- "God's bread comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." John 6:33
- "It is in them that I have been glorified. I am in the world no more, but these are in the world as I come to you. O Father most holy, protect them with your name which you have given me that they may be one, even as we are one." John 17:11

How blest Adam is to be in this place, in this time, with this people! What a mystery we are!

A look back at the 2007 Glen Rose Retreat



Photos by Ed Houters



Congratulations to all of our 2007-08 PIM graduates.



Remembrances of Walt and Wilma Kurzawa

By John and Kay Huggins

Our first memory of Walt was his steady and persistent encouragement that Kay and I attend Montserrat men and women's retreats in 1981. Kay and I had our hands full with our hyperactive two-year-old son, so spending three nights away from home was a tremendous burden on both of us. But after more persistence from Walt, we both agreed time away from daily routines would be good for both of us.

Wow, what could we say! Our spiritual roots grew deeper with the sounds of Montserrat silence. Without question, Montserrat retreats were defining experiences in our spiritual walks on this earth, thanks to **Walt and Wilma**, his wife.

Another important remembrance of Walt was his steady encouragement to attend the **Diocesan Lay Ministries Program**, now called **Partners in Ministry**. If we had thought a three-day weekend retreat was a sacrifice, one weekend session each month for two years was just too much. But, again Kay and I agreed our Catholic horizons needed to be broadened. So, the adventure began.

The Holy Spirit with help from **Sisters Pat and Kay** opened some doors and fresh air came in. We met some truly spirit-filled souls, learned new songs and learned so much about our religion and deepened our faith. Truly, participating in Lay Ministry was another defining experience in our faith journeys, and we owe so much to Walt and Wilma.

A third remembrance of Walt and Wilma was their persistent encouragement to attend Father Dick Weaver's Bible study sessions. This started in 1985 and lasted a good 10 years. We can't tell you how many hours we spent learning from **Father Weaver's** historical and biblical knowledge and understanding. Those classes were still another defining faith-building



experience, all thanks to Walt and Wilma.

And that brings us to the present. Our pastor, **Father James**, expressed his appreciation of Walt and Wilma, when he spoke of their loving families, daily prayer life, sense of humor and enjoyment of good books.

They passed into eternity, she on Nov. 15, 2006, and he on March 31, 2007.

Words cannot adequately express our heartfelt gratitude to them for the wonderful ways they helped our faith and knowledge grow.

We know you can hear us. So, thank you, Walt and Wilma, for touching our lives and the lives of so many others.

There's A Signpost Up Ahead. YOU.

By Larry Peplinski

Being an evangelist is being a signpost. We point the way to the Lord such as a compass needle points to the direction of True North. That's where many make the 'mistake' - they mistake the finger pointing to the moon with the moon itself. We know we are not the Lord, but as his people, we are to have Christ-like features or qualities as it were, about us that show us as being different from others.

There are people who believe that Jesus existed and call themselves Christians just because they feel they live decent lives. Yet, ask them questions concerning where they stand on issues such as the death penalty, health coverage to those without insurance, providing care for the poor and homeless, just to mention some hot button social justice matters, and you'll likely hear a variety of answers generally more responsive to their political stance than to how the Lord would answer such questions.

And as his signposts, our answers, our whole outlook on life should closely resemble his to the highest degree possible. Or do you feel it is all right to believe in our Lord and profess ourselves his and hold opinions and views counter to his? Something to think about, you know. Who would be able to find True North if the needle were pointing Easterly today and maybe Westerly tomorrow? The needle has to point consistently toward the True North for it to have any use as a compass.

In the same idea, we need to be real, 'consistent' examples of God's Love, the Lord, if we are ever to be any use in pointing others toward the Lord. And a very big part of being a real example is in how we demonstrate and live out the Godly attribute of forgiveness. That's right, you can be a signpost to Christ by the way you show forgiveness.

Dear Ones, this is difficult if attempted alone.

That's why we have the Lord to rely upon. We can forgive because we were first forgiven. Sadly, there are too many who want to be like Jonah. We want vengeance, we want things to work in our favor and we don't want God to be so merciful to those who have somehow hurt us. We want God to, how do you say, smite them and smite them real good! We want God to take care of the 'bad' people for us. We don't want God to offer his mercy to them just like Jonah didn't want God to show the Ninevites mercy. And I say 'we' knowing full well there are exceptions to the rule.

There are 'full-time' Christians who have seen past all the 'personal threats to their individual nature' and strive to be Christ-like regardless of what society says. I pray that you are such a signpost to others! God Bless.