

# ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT NEWSLETTER

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### FROM BISHOP DOLAN

My dear Friends,

On the third Sunday of October we keep Mission Sunday each year. I thought I would write to you with a little report of a recent mission trip I made to Mendoza, Argentina; my first visit to Fr. Ariel Damin and his young assistant, Fr. Alberto Martinez. They belong to a little DeMontfort-style religious congregation called the Missionaries of the Rosary, and take care of perhaps 150 souls in this semiarid region of Argentina. Fine wines and olive oil are produced in this dry and dusty land, symbolic surely of the spiritual harvest which awaits.

The trip was a long and fairly uncomfortable one, with its fair share of delays, 24 hours in all. Early on I met a woman who recently converted to the Novus Ordo in Dayton, but was somewhat put off by the priest, who projects a rock star persona in his trendy, protestant style services, and refers to the altar as "the stage." She wanted to volunteer her services in the choir, but was driven off the stage because she had failed to attend the regular and mandatory anti-abuse classes of the Cincinnati Archdiocese. Mandatory for the laity, when they should be for the clergy and bishops who still engage in cover-ups! Odd to consider that even some of our own former faithful have fallen back into this religion!

Fr. Damin's flock are mostly recent converts from the Novus Ordo, quite simple and mostly poor to dirt poor, and all very warm and generous. The priests are very close to their people and spend many an hour instructing, visiting and confessing them. Their headquarters is a humble old adobe brick building, once a store, attached to a house, to which some simple rooms have been added. The chapel, dedicated to the "Virgin of Lourdes," perhaps seats sixty or so, and is richly decorated with three altars. A room is rented for Confirmations, of which there were twenty this year, with eight First Communions, in order to accommodate everyone.

How the Fathers manage to get by, and get around, is a marvel to me. We have a hard time getting the occasional ride to the airport, but these priests are too poor to be able to afford a car in the miserable Argentinean economy. (They are stuck in some boondoggle of a "lay away" plan for a car, which they can neither complete nor ever abandon without losing all their investments.) Still, they get around, as the



*His Excellency delivers a sermon to the faithful in Mendoza, Argentina on the occasion of his October visit there. The enthusiastic welcome and generous hospitality was heartwarming.*

poor faithful share what they have in the way of time and gasoline. Somebody is always giving the priests a ride! It truly it a close knit family.

Both the accent in Argentina and the vocabulary differ widely within that country and from other countries, but this time I think I was able to understand, and make myself pretty much understood, *Deo gratias*. Fr. Damin is an excellent preacher, one of the best I have heard. The Fathers are as well both blessed with good singing voices, and will be working on teaching more Latin chants to the faithful. They love to sing, and accompany much of the standard low Mass with a great variety of vernacular devotional hymns, some quite moving and beautiful.

They all have a good sense of humor, these Argentinians, and didn't mind at all that I called them "vampires," as they eat so late at night, 10 to 11 o'clock or later. By preference Argentinians would eat red meat at every meal, but it is expensive. The men honored me with a delicious late night barbecue or "Asado," featuring home-made sausages and different cuts of beef. The ladies sponsored a tea one afternoon, complete with cookies and crust-

less sandwiches, and the young people joined me for a lunch or “almuerzo.” Thus I got to know just about everybody over my week-long visit. Although the spring weather was unexpectedly overcast and cold, the warm welcome and enthusiastic attitude of the priests and faithful provided plenty of sunshine.

Thank you for your support in alms and Mass stipends for this poor but Rosary-rich mission. The priests pray all day long, and daily before the Blessed Sacrament Exposed, and I am sure this accounts for their success. They are gratefully praying for you as well.

Yours in Our Lady of the Rosary,

— Most Rev. Daniel L. Dolan



*Due to Bishop Dolan's missionary visit to Argentina in early October, this year's Rosary Sunday high Mass and ceremonies were celebrated by Father Charles McGuire. Pictured above is Father blessing roses just prior to the outdoor Rosary procession. Immediately afterward, the annual Rosary Sunday Breakfast was held in Helfta Hall with good Father McGuire giving a very nice presentation to all the attendees.*



*(Above and top right) Bishop Dolan administered the sacrament of confirmation to Catholics of quite diverse ages. Many of these souls have recently found their way to the real Mass and the real sacraments. In addition to the many confirmations that were administered, several young people received Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament for the first time. What a blessing it was for these Argentinians to have a truly Catholic bishop visit them and nourish them with sound doctrine and certainly valid sacraments! A far cry from what a good number of them were accustomed to receiving from expatriate Bergolio and his coreligionists in the Novus Ordo.*

*On his first Sunday back at St. Gertrude the Great after returning from his missionary visit to Argentina, Bishop Dolan blesses the St. Benedict medals that the two new postulants of the Sisters of Our Lady of Reparation will wear.*