

# ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT NEWSLETTER

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## FROM BISHOP DOLAN

My dear Friends,

Life at St. Gertrude is busy each October, with Rosary Sunday and daily devotions, Forty Hours and this year, the final Fatima procession for the 100th anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun. But I'd like to write to you about my missionary trip, since Mission Sunday too falls in October. You know how this bishop and our poor mission priests count on your charity. Bishop funds are nearly depleted. Please send some more.

**September 29:** St. Michael goes with me to Mexico. I haven't traveled to the Hispanic world for some time, and the packing and preparations seemed tiring. I supposed they are, but worth it. Two suitcases are permitted for international flights. This made enough room for vestments, rosaries and the religious articles one cannot send to Argentina. A smooth flight to the city of "the angels," fittingly enough for the day. Easy border crossing into Mexico. It's the other way that's impossibly long. Nice early dinner with the fathers and some of the faithful. That evening back at Father Villegas' rectory in Tijuana, we stay up late talking as Father Martin Gomez reviews the long, devoted and sometimes sad history of the Trento priests I've known for years. Pray for priests!

**September 30:** Saturday there are many confessions. Father Gomez is a big help – I do about 1 ½ hours myself in a little nook under the stairs. This afternoon there's a nice barbecue, Mexican style, for married couples and the clergy. I give a little talk about marriage and the modernists, and we have a good discussion in the pleasant, breezy yard of the Gutierrez family. Vocabulary phrase: no desanimarse, not to get discouraged. Ever. This chapel has lots of fine Catholic families.

**October 1:** Rosary Sunday sung Mass, confirmations, comida (parish lunch) and a charming little play on Our Lady of Guadalupe presented by the catechism children. We head off for always hot Mexicali (99°) through the



*On Rosary Sunday, October 1, Bishop Dolan offered Mass and administered confirmation in Tijuana at Father Villegas' beautifully appointed church. Devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary plays a very important role in the daily lives of these dedicated Catholics.*

beautiful Rumorosa Mountains. Much progress since last time. The church is almost closed in. Nice outside dinner under the stars, and then a long wait to cross the border, some three hours. And so to bed.



*In Tijuana, Bishop Dolan poses with the children following their little performance depicting the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe.*

**October 2:** Beautiful trip across the Imperial Valley and up the coast to Los Angeles. It takes a long, long time to check in for my Santiago, Chile flight. Lots of people with lots of luggage, and young Argentineans from monied families, but who look like 60's hippies. Typical prison type experience with T.S.A. They shout at you as you shuffle along, and drug dogs sniff. No petting, no stopping. Service on the Chilean airlines, LAN, is still pretty nice, old world. Fitful sleep. I lose my little finger chaplet as I finally drift off to sleep.

**October 3:** It's spring in Santiago. A whole planeload of people are returning to Argentina after shopping or visiting in Chile. The Argentina Customs agent notes approvingly my "SANTERIA" (their word for religious articles, which means pagan superstitions for us) and is pleased I've come from the United States. Father Damin meets me. He has no car himself, so we make a few stops for errands on our way back. Welcome siesta after lunch. Johnny the sacristan engaged in antiphonal snoring next door, but I'm so tired I sleep through. Evening Mass, with a little sermon on Santa Teresita and the priesthood. She is every priest's favorite.

The week passes quickly with prayer (the priests pray a lot: Office (Matins, Lauds and Prime recited together), daily Exposition, Rosary, meditation and spiritual reading in common, devotions...), ceremonies, spiritual talks and visits with priests and people. Father Leandro of Brazil has left the Society to join us, and we get to know each other. We go out for some Asados with parishioners, the classic Argentinian barbeque. Very good, "muy rica!" We celebrate Father Damin's birthday on First Friday.

Two beautiful old statues of Our Lady are new to the poor but so prayerful old little chapel in the dusty vineyard. One statue wept for three days during its restoration. Tears of joy! Confirmations and First Communions during a nice Mass on First Saturday. The people seem to follow the sermon. Rosary Procession down the dusty road afterwards, the men talking turns hefting the heavy Our Lady of Lourdes, a beautiful statue. Father Damin animates the occasion with cries of "Viva el Rosario!" etc., and other little edifying interjections. The sun is hot, but nobody seems to mind. The obligatory photos with proud family concludes the day, after a beautiful Ave Maria was sung outside. A longstanding practice, the Traditional Catholic ladies here all wear pants. Difficult to eradicate. We agree to work on this seriously for the

next visit. Marylike modesty is always a battle to re-establish.

Monday, October 9. Already time to pack. A nice final almuerzo, or lunch. The expected line at the airport does not materialize. I fly United to Houston. They are not so charming as the Chileans, but plenty of room for a good sleep. I follow the flight path on the screen after I finish my prayers, and I see Lagos in the corner of the map. Not so far! Before I nod off, I think: "I must visit Father Nkamuke and his flock one of these days..." They have five seminarians now.

Thank you for your interest, your prayers, and your help to propagate the Faith! Don't forget to send us the names of the Poor Souls you would like remembered. They may be sent in at any time in November. We will have the intention to pray for those souls whose names will be sent in this month.

– **Most Rev. Daniel L. Dolan**



*A young man is one of many confirmed on Rosary Sunday by His Excellency, Bishop Dolan following the high Mass in Tijuana.*

#### ALL SOUL'S REMEMBRANCE

Don't forget to remember your loved ones by sending us the names of your beloved dead. In addition to remembrance on *All Soul's Day*, November 2, those names sent to us will remain on the altar for the entire month of November.