

August, 2007



Adsum

Adsum is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends and benefactors.



Ordinations in Guadalajara, Mexico

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Among the various apostolic work this summer, my visit to Guadalajara, Mexico, was very significant, and I would like to share my experience with our readers. It had been three years since I was last there to administer the sacrament of Confirmation, to give clerical tonsure to the Carmelite seminarians and to receive the religious vows of the Carmelite Sisters and also the Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence. These last mentioned Sisters were founded by the late Bishop Carmona in August of 1990.

During the last week of July, I administered the sacrament of Confirmation to 94 children and adults. And as many of the Mexican people are very family-oriented, the church was filled with family and relatives, and it was necessary to have two groups in order to accommodate everyone. This was not the largest group to be confirmed as in years past but it was certainly a significant number. Back in the 1990's I had confirmed some 450 children and adults for a traditional parish in northern Mexico.

What is always significant about my visit to Guadalajara is the stay at the Carmelite monastery. For this reason I have had seminarians accompany me. On this trip, Rev. Mr. Randy Welp assisted me and was able to see firsthand how cloistered Carmelite religious live. All the religious orders have significant things about them. The Franciscans are noted for their poverty, Benedictines for their life of prayer, Dominicans for preaching and learning, but the Carmelites, among other things, practice perpetual abstinence (never eating meat).

When we ate at the monastery, their refectory was very simple. Long wooden tables, a wood stool, and a large wood cross was all that was there. One supper meal was a special occasion after the ordinations to the minor orders in which we had fish, fruit and vegetables, and some very substantial bread.

My room was on the third floor near their chapel so I could hear them chanting the Divine Office early in the morning and in the evening. When I would make my morning meditation and pray my Divine Office in their chapel, the Carmelites knelt at their prie-dieu like statues with their hoods over their heads.

Even though their life is one of extraordinary sacrifice, they were always tranquil and cheerful. They experience a peace that the world cannot give. This visit reminded me of the various passages and illustrations from the *Imitation*

of Christ by Thomas a Kempis: "They were strangers to the world, but near and familiar friends to God. . . Outwardly they were in want, but inwardly they were refreshed with divine graces and consolations."

One consolation for myself is to know that as their spiritual father, these Carmelite priests, brothers and sisters remember me in their prayers. That is a very comforting thing to know!

In addition to the Carmelite religious, there are two Franciscan priests whom I also assist. One Franciscan seminarian received the clerical tonsure.

The Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence truly live a life dependant upon the providence of God. The first time that I met them was at the funeral for the late Bishop Carmona in November of 1991. After his death the Sisters relocated from Acapulco to Guadalajara and it was there that they established contact with me a year later. Since then, I have assisted them over the years by giving them spiritual and practical direction, making canonical visits to their convent, and receiving their religious vows. I have always been edified by their spirit of humility and docility.

For those of our readers who have called or written to myself over this summer, I must apologize for any delays experienced. Between phone messages, emails, letters and faxes, the 24-hour day is not long enough for me to respond to everyone promptly. When I returned from Mexico (where my cell phone could not be serviced), I had 31 missed calls.

In less than two weeks, Mater Dei Academy will begin its 20th year of education here at Mary Immaculate Church. The Sisters of the Congregation of the Mother of God headquartered here in Omaha are very busy preparing for another school year, not just in Omaha, but also Colorado, Minnesota, and Michigan. During this past summer they traveled to various parishes to teach Catechism and also held their annual Girl's Summer Camp with over 60 girls.

This year we will have new seminarians coming and we look forward to getting back into the seminary routine after a very busy summer.

Thank you again for your prayers and support and be assured of our appreciation and prayers for all of our friends and benefactors.

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



*Clerical Tonsure for
Fray Gabriel de la Cruz, O.F.M. Conv.*



Minor Orders for the Carmelites



"Suscipe me, Domine . . . Receive me, O Lord"



*Sister receives the Crown of Roses and a Ring as she
takes Our Lord as her Spouse forever.*



Sisters of Divine Providence founded by the late Bishop Carmona

More Answers to Today's Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

Holy Communion for the Mentally Retarded Child

Question: What course should be followed in allowing a mentally retarded child to receive Holy Communion?

Answer: The questioner presents a problem which occurs quite frequently, and yet is not easy to solve. According to the discipline prevailing in the Latin Church, a child who is so defective intellectually as to have no understanding or appreciation of the Blessed Sacrament may not be given Holy Communion even in danger of death. The Code prescribes that outside the danger of death (for in danger of death all that is necessary is that the little one be able to distinguish the Blessed Sacrament from common food and to adore the Body of Christ reverently) a child must understand according to his capacity those mysteries of Faith that are necessary for salvation by necessity of means, and approach the Holy Eucharist with the devotion suitable to his tender years.

In practice it is often difficult to apply these rules to children who have not attained to normal intellectual development. Evidently, those who are classified as idiots (with an I.Q. less than 20) should be excluded from the reception of the Holy Eucharist. But this same rule should not be applied to morons (with an I.Q. from 50 to 70) nor even to all imbeciles (with an I.Q. from 20 to 50). Those persons who are charged with the spiritual care of retarded children who offer any hope of reaching the required mental capacity for Holy Communion should be prepared to give them a long course of instruction, patiently repeating over and over again the necessary doctrines. When this work of zeal has been properly performed, many of those children who at first seemed incapable of the minimum knowledge required for First Communion may eventually manifest the requirements for even the frequent reception of the Blessed Eucharist. Such, at least, is the belief of those who have had considerable experience in caring for children of this type.

Thus a religious engaged in the care of mentally retarded children wrote:

The mentally deficient child can arrive at an appreciation of religious truths if given instruction adapted to his mental capacity. Those children who have been given formal religious instruction over a period of years are found to possess a degree of knowledge and ability for practical application of the truths of Catholicism sufficient to permit them to receive the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation. From

the data obtained in the study it would seem that a period of three years or more of religious instruction prior to the reception of the sacraments is desirable for those children on the higher level of the imbecile group and also those in the moron group.

At the convention of the National Catholic Educational Association in 1952, Monsignor Feider, chaplain of St. Coletta School, Jefferson, Wisconsin, made this statement: "Our patients range in I.Q. from 30 to 80, with an average of about 50. According to our experience, all patients with an I.Q. of 40 or higher can, with proper direction, be brought to the sacraments. I also find that most of those in the range from 30 to 40 I.Q. can be trained to be communicants." On this same occasion Monsignor Feider stated that about 95 per cent of those who have been admitted to the sacraments in his institution are daily communicants.

It should also be noted that the decree *Quam singulari*, in which St. Pius X rendered the Holy Eucharist available to children as soon as they reach the age of reason, contains the comforting assurance that they need not possess the full use of reason. "Nor is the full use of reason necessary, but the incipient use is sufficient—that is some kind of use of reason (*aliqualis usus rationis*)."

In this connection it is useful to quote the prescription of the Code regarding those who have the right and duty to judge the fitness of a child for Holy Communion: "Regarding the sufficient disposition of children for First Communion the judgment should pertain to their confessor and their parents or those who take the place of the parents. It is the duty of the pastor to see to it, even by an examination if he prudently judges it opportune, that children shall not approach the Holy Table before the use of reason or without sufficient disposition."

Those who have the spiritual care of mentally retarded children should not be too ready to decide that a child is not sufficiently intelligent to receive Holy Communion. I am inclined to say that any child who can express ideas in speech, even though very simply and confusedly, can be presumed to be capable of receiving Holy Communion if proper training is provided.

ADSUM, a publication by the seminarians of **MATER DEI SEMINARY** for the reading enjoyment of friends and benefactors, is sent free of charge to all who request it. If you are interested, please provide your name and mailing address to:

MATER DEI SEMINARY
7745 Military Avenue
Omaha, NE 68134-3356