



NATIVE MINISTRY

NEWS

"Our Lady of the Snows" Mass was celebrated May 17 at St. Anthony's, with Archbishop Hurley officiating. The Native group held a potlatch in the church basement after the Mass.

Six Native women participated in a Cursillo at Meier Lake on May 19, 20, 21 and 22.

The Tekakwitha Conference will be held August 9-14 this year in Collegeville, Minnesota, at St. John's University. There will be six representatives from the Native Ministry attending that conference. Fund raising plans are being developed to help participants with the expenses.

The Native Ministry Core Group meetings will continue throughout the summer at various homes of members. Further information may be obtained from Benny and Mary Snowball at 337-5370.

by Janice Hudetz



"THUNDERING THIRTIES" GROUP ORGANIZED

If you are Catholic, single and over 30, there is a new organization in Anchorage for you. Presently named the "Thundering Thirties," the group first formed in late winter when about 40 single Catholics from five parishes in Anchorage met in St. Patrick's Tara Lounge. The group hopes to enrich three areas of the members' lives -- social, spiritual and service.

Several summer activities have been planned. They include a barbecue, a home Mass with a potluck following, a bike trip and a weekend canoe trip on the Delta River.

The group's activities are publicized on the church bulletin boards and in the parish bulletins of the Catholic churches in Anchorage. Please watch for upcoming events and join in the fun.

If you would like to be on the mailing list for the "Thundering Thirties Newsletter" or would like more information about the group, please call Joan Emmendorfer at 337-1077 or Pat McDearmon at 333-7202.

THREE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES JOURNEY IN FAITH TOGETHER

"What is a Christian?" "Priesthood of Believers" and "Confession of Sins" -- these were all topics covered by the three Christian communities of St. Mark Lutheran, St. Christopher Episcopal and St. Anthony Catholic the past 7 months. The journey in faith and dialogue began last December, and has developed into a real "family affair" of learning and understanding.

Like all families, our three communities have, over the past 500 years, experienced times of misunderstandings and hurt. We have found, however, through our continued dialogue and Advent and Lenten prayers, that we have a great commonality of faith and manner of worship. The new friendships that have evolved because of the dialogue have been fantastic. It also presents us with the opportunity to share a great family meal. (Have you experienced the desserts provided by our Lutheran brothers and sisters?)

With your active participation, the triple promise of the "Eastern Churches" (Eastern Anchorage) will continue to grow and, prayerfully, lead to our eventual reunion. These dialogues, brought to you "live" by laypersons like yourselves, will begin again in the fall. Will you take the time and join with the family, or will you find a handy excuse? Take up the cheer --- AC, RC, LCA! Come learn and share with your family. "It only takes a spark (you) to get a fire going." Will you share that "spark" and share of yourself? Join with us in proclaiming together that we are truly "One in the Spirit, One in the Lord!"

by Mark Pavolka



Speech is God's gift. We shall have to account for it. It is through words that we communicate with each other and that we reveal what we are. We haven't the right to be silent, but speaking is a serious matter, and we must weigh our words in the sight of God.

-- Michel Quoist

WOOD SCULPTURES ARE LIVING GIFTS, PROCLAIMING STORIES OF LOVE

When a pair of remarkable sculptures appeared in St. Anthony's Church recently, I marveled (along with everyone else) at the immense beauty of the carved panels. Being an unseasoned admirer, I was unfamiliar with the Regat name when their gifts to the parish were acknowledged at Mass.

St. Joseph and St. Francis are the creations of Jacques and Mary Regat, professional local artists. In their ten years working together professionally, they have sculpted artwork that has been exhibited all over the U.S., appearing in public buildings and private collections throughout the country. They are considered the leading sculptors in Alaska today.

When I met the Regats, they welcomed me with a generous inside look at their craft. I felt immediately at home in their studio which houses a collection of finished sculptures, as well as works in various stages of completion. Their talent overlaps into a variety of media, with designs that lend themselves naturally to wood, soapstone and brass. Jacques and Mary also produce lithograph prints from some of their designs.

The design is the heart of a creation. Jacques and Mary spent over a month perfecting the designs for St. Joseph and St. Francis. They spend hours researching a subject, and then sketch the discoveries of their study into the design itself. Thus the sculpture becomes a story, and the stories of St. Joseph and St. Francis are memorably recounted in the detailed design of each panel.

The images surrounding Joseph identify his work as a carpenter and his vocation as a father. There are hands and a fish...the first tools of man and the first symbol of Christianity. Delicate leaves recall an old legend: it was a custom that a young man would leave his staff at the Temple for a sign of God's blessing on his engagement. The story tells that leaves grew up around Joseph's staff, a sure sign of God's favor. Included in the panel is a lily-of-the-valley, a symbol of the Feast of St. Joseph, May 1.

There are nails foreshadowing the death of Jesus, and a field lily, a symbol of purity.

St. Francis is shown at the time of his conversion, welcoming the leper as a brother. The bell around the leper's neck warns others of his unclean condition. There are Brother Sun and Sister Moon, and Brother Fire and Sister Water, all from The Canticle of Brother Sun, written by Francis. Birds recall that Francis is the patron saint of animals, along with the dove of peace nestled in his arms.

The Regats indicated that the real challenge of this undertaking was to match the designs of the panels; Francis needed more fluid lines, while Joseph required sharper lines to shape the tools of his trade. Many hours later, the designs are ready to be enlarged and transferred to the wood. Jacques and Mary chose a combination of bass wood and redwood for these sculptures.

Next, the artists begin to carve along the lines, bringing the wood to life. Jacques and Mary work together on the sculptures, in a harmonious blending of their skills and talents.

When the carving is completed, the pieces are finely sanded, then carefully stained. Sometimes stains need to be applied over and over again because each area of wood accepts the stain differently. The challenge is to allow the wood its nature, yet achieve the desired result.

Finally, the sculptures are oiled and sealed, and delivered to be mounted. Tom Gittens supplied the men and the scaffolding to mount the 4'6"x7'6" panels inside the church.

But the story doesn't end there. For the people of the parish it is only the beginning. Each time someone sees these sculptures, they step into the lives of two special men. Jacques and Mary Regat breathed new life into the wood from which they carved St. Joseph and St. Francis. Their gifts are living gifts, proclaiming stories of love for every person who worships in our midst.

by Ann Lee