

GREETINGS FROM CUPERTINO

No. 5 – JANUARY 2007

On December 8 we joined Marianists throughout the world in celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception as a day of intercession for all those who touch our lives – family and friends, students and alumni, collaborators and benefactors. Then came the great feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12. This is a special feast in California and above all in the city of San Jose de Guadalupe! The Marianists of Cupertino celebrated five birthdays beginning with Brother John Samaha on the 5th, followed by Father Jack Rielly on the 12th, Father Dave Schuyler on the 14th, myself on the 18th and culminating in the celebration of the 90th birthday of Brother Charles Boglitz on the 22nd.

Various choral groups came to inspire and entertain us as we moved through Advent. In addition we had the Wednesday outings scheduled by Mrs. Grace Pancipanci, seconded by Brother John Schlund. Some attended another function at the Maryknoll Retirement Community nearby. Brother Tom Deasy showed movies regularly and there was more than usual interest in both college and professional football. Brother Charles Ehrenfeld keeps watch on the Steelers while most of the fans follow the 49ers and Raiders. Father Joe Stefanelli and I are the lone supporters of the toothless Bengals. Brother Bob Wade continues to support the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame.

Early in the month a giant Christmas tree appeared in the community room at Villa Saint Joseph. Later Christmas decorations brightened our chapel and the dining room which also serves as our worship space for special occasions. Our Christmas marathon celebration began with the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve on the 24th and the first Mass of Christmas in the evening. On December 25 we celebrated the Mass of Christmas Dawn before Morning Prayer and the third Mass of Christmas Day before our midday social and dinner. Then all was calm.

It proved to be the calm before the storm. December 27, Feast of Saint John the Evangelist, a special patron of the Society of Mary, brought quite a surprise. During the night there was an electrical power failure; it was the first time I experienced this here since my return. Later we learned that as many as 350,000 in the Bay Area were electrically deprived at some point during the storm. Villa Saint Joseph functioned well, however, thanks to the generators that have served us faithfully over the years. We had to make

some adjustments, of course. The emergency lighting does not include the chapel, so we celebrated Mass in the intimacy of the community room. The birds enjoyed this surprise as well, joining in the singing – and punctuating the silence, too. It was not until 7:00 in the evening that our part of Cupertino was back online. Our cooks did a great job of improvising for breakfast and lunch.

A festive dinner had been scheduled at the Alcalde House, home of Brother John Haster, Father Dave Schuyler, Father Joe Stefanelli and Brother Tom Suda. The storm did not cancel this celebration which began in candlelight. Most of the community attended, but I stayed in the quiet darkness of the San Juan Residence, remembering my experience of last May in Eastern Africa where I learned to cope with power outages on several occasions.

The storm brought less rain than expected but the high winds tore up the furniture on the deck at Villa Saint Joseph, including a bird house that had survived many earlier storms. Meanwhile, the park where I walk exchanged a dull brown for a bright fresh green thanks to the light rains we had in December.

Father Jack Rielly made another visit to the hospital but returned with his usual bounce and hearty appetite. He is now living at Villa Saint Joseph, thanks to Brother Gene Frank who graciously gave up his room there and joined us who live at the San Juan Residence. While Brother Paul Fennelly is temporarily medically grounded I inherited his role of driving Father John Bolin from the Bordeaux House to the Villa for morning and evening prayers. Brother Gene Frank and Brother John Samaha pick up other driving assignments, in particular taking Father Bill O'Connell for regular physical therapy sessions.

When my services are not needed I get a great workout walking to and from the Villa which is much faster than driving! The trees along the stairway between the Villa and the San Juan Residence make a great canopy if there is any rain and the climb is short and invigorating. I am inspired by Father Joe Stefanelli's climb from the Alcalde House to the Villa three times a day for prayer and meals. Brother Charles Boglitz is bedridden most of the time, but showed up for his birthday and Christmas. Moreover, the nurses accompany him on daily walks through the hallway. Brother Joseph Wasy stays more and more in his room rather than come to chapel and/or the dining room.

Brother Richard Dix made another quick visit to review the progress on the sale of the property and the remodeling of the Marianist Center. Progress continues steadily on that project and prospective buyers continue to explore the San Juan Residence and the Villa Saint Joseph. Brother Tom Suda does so many things so well on the project, including a new sign at the entrance and the installation of a magnificent mail box to serve all of us (note the address above). Brother Richard also gave us an update on activities around the Province. Later in the month I participated in a conference call to help prepare the coming meeting of the Provincial Chapter. Brother Howard Hughes has reached the West Coast and is a guest of the San Francisco community until the completion of the Marianist Center. He sent the organ from the former New York Provincialate along with various hymnals and books to enrich our liturgies.

A good friend of the Marianists from Saint Anthony's Maui and Chaminade University, Mrs. Kay Stone, visited Father John Bolin, Father Tom Hogan and Father Jack Rielly right after Christmas. Then Father Tim Eden and his mother arrived, just minutes before the power outage. We closed out the month – and the year – with a Holy Hour, the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Family and a social anticipating the New Year. I completed a special project in December. For many years I have remembered our jubilarians in prayer throughout the year and tried to write to each on the occasion of the actual anniversary of first profession of vows or ordination. It is a special way for me to be in contact with the Society of Mary throughout the world. I thought I was busy as an associate pastor on Maui, but being retired is even busier. I was surprised by the number of e-mails, cards and letters received this year. Having a birthday, Christmas and the feast of Saint Stephen all within eight days makes for a concentration of wonderful greetings. May you begin 2007 with great expectations and find them realized day by day in the New Year.

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