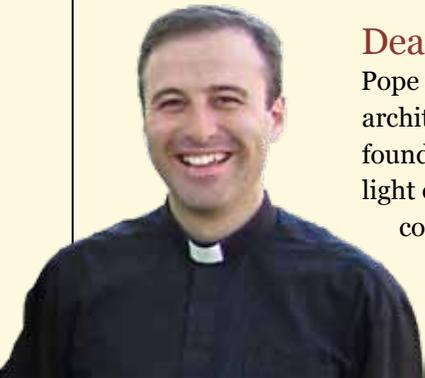


FRIENDS

DISCIPLES OF THE HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY



Dear Friends,

Pope Francis recently wrote that “faith makes us appreciate the architecture of human relationships because it grasps their ultimate foundation and definitive destiny in God, in his love, and thus sheds light on the art of building; as such it becomes a service to the common good.” *Lumen Fidei*, 51. These words describe the essence of the Friends, because our friendship is rooted in faith and we care for the common good of the Church and the world.

With the support of your prayers and generosity, the life of the Disciples has continued to bear fruit. You have given

a warm welcome to Fr. Luis Granados, Fr. Armando Marsal and Br. Fernando González, now serving at St. Mary Parish; the Disciples Exchange Program is entering its sixth year; and 11 men are in formation to become priests and religious with the Disciples. The theme that echoes throughout the issue of this newsletter is that of family. As we pursue the vision of a family-friendly parish at St. Mary Parish, I am reminded anew that the Disciples are also a family. We live our priestly ministry as religious in community together and not as individuals.

And we have also established a new house in Alexandria, Virginia. Fr. Javier and Fr. Leopoldo’s work at St. Mary, provided a “school” of growth for them and then sent them forth in response to the invitation from the Bishop of Arlington to minister at Queen of Apostles Parish. Fr. Ignacio de Ribera, who was also helped by the Friends to get his Ph.D., has been hired as Assistant Professor at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. They all live together in a rectory hoping to develop the family-oriented vision of the Disciples at their parish.

As we settle into the routine in our community life, I see that we are not merely four priests and one brother each ministering with his own ideas. We are a community of five, religious brothers together, with the common vision of the Disciples. We bring both our training and experience in ministering to families to the parish and also our experience of being a family ourselves.

May God bless you during this Advent Season. May the contemplation of the Holy Family strengthen your family life.

Fr. Alvaro Montero, DCJM

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GIVING THANKS. BEARING FRUIT.

An Update from the Disciples in Alexandria, Virginia



Alexandria – Fr. Javier, Fr. Ignacio, and Fr. Leopoldo

American, Latino, Ghanaian, Ethiopian, Vietnamese and Filipino families fill the pews at Queen of Apostles in Alexandria, Virginia. The parish is located in the southwest region of the Capital Beltway and near I-395, an important corridor to the Pentagon and Washington D.C. More than 1.7 million people make their home within the Beltway while the entire D.C. metropolitan area population reaches 5.8 million – more than the state of Colorado. It was in this busy and thriving metropolitan area that the Disciples of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary recently established a house and assumed responsibility for a growing parish.

Fr. Leopoldo Vives, DCJM left St. Mary Parish in Littleton in June 2013 to become pastor of Queen of Apostles. Fr. Javier Nieva, DCJM followed in August to serve as Parochial Vicar. Fr. Ignacio de Ribera, DCJM arrived to reside at the parish and begin his tenure as assistant professor in the School of Philosophy at Catholic University of America. Together they are a community, bringing the family-oriented vision of the Disciples to their ministries in the parish and university.

Queen of Apostles was established in

1963 and is now home to over 1,400 families. The parish K – 8 school was founded a few years later in 1966 with a current enrollment of 173 students. Together, they serve the multicultural Catholic population of the Diocese of Arlington. The neighborhood surrounding the parish is a growing one filled with an often shifting population of military, federal government and private sector workers. One thing that immediately struck Fr. Leopoldo and Fr. Javier was the diverse parish and neighborhood demographic. The parish offers Mass, sacramental preparation, and prayer groups in both English and Spanish. A solid core of parishioners have been involved in the parish for many years while others come and go depending on their current work assignment. The parish has had 6 pastors in the past 10 years, so the presence and commitment of the Disciples will bring some longed for stability and support to the parish and school.

The Disciples have been warmly welcomed by the parish and by the Diocese of Arlington. Fr. Leopoldo notes that like St. Mary Parish, Queen of Apostles has an Adoration chapel, school, and solid liturgical ministries. The style of the liturgy is

traditional. As pastor, he is finding that his daily responsibilities differ quite a bit from those of parochial vicar, “The only thing that is the same is that you hear confessions and celebrate the Mass!” He is humbled by the authority and the leadership given him by the bishop of Arlington and the Superior General of the Disciples and the trust shown by people of the parish. He has goals of bringing the Disciples’ family-oriented vision to the parish along with improved management, support for the school, and overall stability. Fr. Leopoldo works with an office staff of 4 full-time and 1 part-time workers. He notes that Littleton was a great school for him on learning to manage a parish. He misses all of us in Colorado but does not miss altitude sickness. Your prayers and support for his new responsibilities as pastor are greatly appreciated.

Fr. Javier has dived right into his duties as the sole parochial vicar for the parish. His main ministry focuses on the sacramental care for the parishioners: Eucharist, confessions, visits to the sick and spiritual guidance. He also helps with supervising the Religious Education program, the altar servers, and family and children groups. He says the school Mass every other week. He is struck by the cultural diversity of the area, the traffic and the housing density. There are no 14ers to climb so he plans to visit a lot of museums and historical landmarks instead.

Fr. Ignacio is currently teaching two classes at Catholic University. He helps with the daily and weekend Masses in the parish. Together the three Disciples live out religious life in community just as the remaining Disciples do in Littleton, Rome, and Spain.

2013 has been a year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of Queen of Apostles with the motto, “Giving Thanks. Bearing Fruit.” Fr. Leopoldo is grateful for the fruit borne by St. Mary Parish that makes possible his ministry at Queen of Apostles, “Our moving to the D.C. area is a gift that expresses our growth. Sending us to a new area in the U.S. is a generous sharing of St. Mary Parish. Having a second parish in the States shows how much the Disciples are committed to serving and growing in the U.S. In some ways, what Queen of Apostles will be in the future is a fruit of the life of St. Mary Parish.”

Notes and well wishes can be sent to Fr. Leopoldo and Fr. Javier c/o Queen of Apostles Catholic Church, 4329 Sano Street, Alexandria, VA 22312.

ON FIRE FOR THE LORD!

St. Mary Parish continues to be blest with the presence of the Disciples and the gifts that each of them brings to our parish and school. In this issue of the Friends newsletter, we meet new arrivals Fr. Armando Marsal, Fr. Luis Granados and Br. Fernando González and find out what sets them on fire for the Lord.

Fr. Armando Marsal, DCJM Parochial Vicar

"Fall in love with Jesus!"

Fr. Armando is passionate about his desire and the desire of the Disciples for each of us, "Fall in love with Jesus. Come to holiness. Understand the plan of God for you and accomplish it. Be active in charity. Follow Jesus who pleads with us, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' (John 13:34)"

Anyone who has interacted with Fr. Armando knows that these words describe the focus of his own heart. Such was not always the case, however. Born third of ten children (3 brothers and 6 sisters) in a strong Catholic family, he rejected the ways of God and of the Church when he reached the age of 12 and became consumed with partying and girls. In his providential care, God used one of those relationships to bring Fr. Armando back to himself and to the Church and lead him to the priesthood and religious life.



Fr. Armando Marsal

At age 25, after a painful break-up with a young woman, Fr. Armando found himself in a church near his home. For the first time in many years, he prayed from the heart. He turned to Mary for help. It was a moment of profound conversion; he had such an experience of the presence of God that his life changed totally. He returned to Mass, began to pray, had a renewed passion for his studies, and found new friends. The happiness he had been seeking for years through worldly pursuits was instead given to him by the pure mercy of God.

It was at this time that he met Fr. Luis de Prada, who later became the first superior general of the Disciples. The year was 1982, and the first seeds of the Disciples were beginning to form. He understood God was calling him so he went to the seminary. He knew his gift to God needed to be total and that he was called to embrace the religious life with its call to



Littleton - Fr. Armando, Br. Fernando, Fr. Alvaro, Fr. Juan, and Fr. Luis

obedience, poverty and chastity. During the process of formation he experienced a battle with his old way of life but God's mercy prevailed and the battle was won. Fr. Armando was ordained to the priesthood on July 3, 1993 and made his final religious vows on January 6, 1996.

After ordination, Fr. Armando served in Spain, Rome and Falls Church, Virginia. His work included formation for seminarian Disciples, university teaching, parish work and giving Spiritual Exercise retreats to the Missionary Sisters of Charity. In 2010, he moved to Littleton. After serving at St. Michael and St. Pius X Parishes and Centro San Juan Diego, he began his assignment as parochial vicar at St. Mary Parish in July of 2013.

Fr. Armando brings his profound understanding of the human heart, theology of the body, and the inter-connectedness of the body, sexuality, affectivity and love to his ministry. His specific areas of parish ministry include Ignatian Retreats, RCIA, and Marriage Preparation. His greatest joy

as a priest and religious is following Jesus and helping others to do the same.

Fr. Luis Granados, DCJM Parochial Vicar

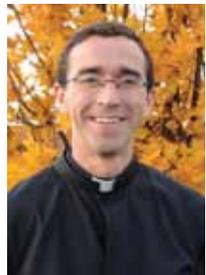
"I thirst!" (John 19:28)

It was during a weekend retreat in Madrid that Fr. Luis Granados heard the call of the crucified Christ, "I thirst. I need you to be my arms." It was the confirmation of God's call that was always there from the beginning. Fr. Luis was born on April 30, 1978 into a family with four older brothers and, later, two younger sisters. His family was active in a large Catholic family group which was led, in part, by some of the Disciples. From the age of 8, the Disciples were a joyful presence in his life. He would spend several weeks in the summer at their mother house in Cuenca helping with various projects and was struck by the witness of

joy and simplicity of poverty that he saw. World Youth Days were another important part of his formation beginning in 1989 at age 11 when he traveled to Santiago de Compostela, Spain with his older brothers.

One by one, three of those older brothers entered the Disciples (Fr. Juan Antonio, Fr. Jose, and Fr. Carlos). After discerning his personal call to the priesthood and religious life, Fr. Luis entered the Disciples at age 18. Shortly after, his mother was diagnosed with cancer at age 52 and passed away in July 1998. Her example set a solid and profound foundation for the vocation of her sons.

After his final vows on September 13, 2003 and his ordination to the priesthood on May 14, 2005, Fr. Luis moved to Rome and earned his Doctorate of Sacred Theology (S.T.D.) at the JPPI Institute for Marriage and Family life. He subsequently worked for the Institute and upon



Fr. Luis Granados

Continued on page 4

returning to Spain he worked with the Families of Bethany program, was a professor of moral theology, worked with the JPPII Institute in Madrid, and cared for new Disciples including Br. Felipe and Br. Fernando.

Fr. Luis came to St. Mary's in August of 2013 and is excited about the mission of the parish. His focus is family ministry which he sees as applying to all in the parish since we all express our vocations in the context of family. Even as a priest, he is called to be a spiritual father and as a religious, he lives in a community—a family. He stresses that the priests of St. Mary Parish are a community of four, not four priests each doing his ministry individually.

His ministry in the parish is expressed through his work with the Families of Bethany program where he works with “Cana” (the married couples) and “Tobias” (the newly married couples). He assists with Youth Ministry, Baptism preparation, the publications of the Disciples and vocations. One sign of a fruitful parish is vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

It is his desire that we all know the happiness that comes through a gift of self. One of his biggest joys of being a priest and religious is seeing the mercy of

God at work in others and being an instrument of the Lord in that work.

Br. Fernando González, DCJM Theology Student

“You have given all to me. To you, O Lord, I return it.”

Br. Fernando is spending this year in Littleton taking classes at St. John Vianney Seminary, improving his (already excellent) English, and working with children and youth in the parish. Br. Fernando was born on June 6, 1990 and is the third child in a family of 3 girls and 2 boys. He grew up in a family which was active in a Catholic family group through which he knew Fr. Juan Antonio Granados, DCJM, the group's chaplain.



Br. Fernando

As he was growing up, Br. Fernando went to Sunday Mass because he had to but in the 10th grade something changed for him. He began to make friends in the family group (including Br. Felipe) and became actively engaged in his faith. In the 11th grade, he attended a



Fr. Luis and Br. Fernando hiking in Spain

retreat and was struck by a talk given by an elderly Jesuit priest challenging the listeners to make a total radical gift of self.

Br. Fernando began to see the many gifts from God and privileges in his life—his good family, friends, school. What could he possibly give back to God in return? He had received all and wanted to give all. After prayer and discussion with his spiritual director and his friend Br. Felipe, Br. Fernando entered the Disciples 6 years ago at age 18. His parents are generous and happy in supporting his vocation.

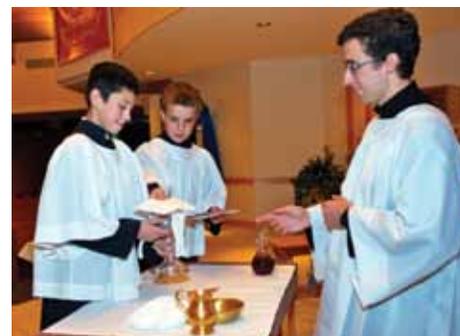
Br. Fernando loves being part of a religious community—a family—and is happy to be spending this year in Littleton. He is impressed by the parish—the commitment of the parishioners to the ministries of the parish and the support of the parish and school staff.

Your Gift Counts! Forming New Disciples

As a Friend of the Disciples, you are helping to form priests for the future of the Church! Men like Fr. Juan, Br. Felipe and Br. Fernando go through an average of 8 years of rigorous spiritual and academic preparation before ordination. Currently 11 men are in formation with the Disciples and that number is sure to grow. With God's grace, the time will come when a house of formation will be established in the United

States (hopefully in Colorado). You can help us plan for the future – a future that benefits St. Mary Parish directly. Last year, \$75,250 of your generous donations went toward tuition, room and board and other costs for the men in formation.

That amount covered a little over 68% of the approximately \$110,000 total cost for the year. That cost per year will increase with time but with your help we can meet the challenge. What a privilege to participate in the process of bringing to birth new priests through both your prayers and financial contributions. Thank you for your continued generosity.



2013 – Br. Fernando serves at St. Mary Parish



1983 – Fr. Armando as a student greets Blessed John Paul II



Disciples
of the Hearts of
Jesus and Mary

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