



This cross is taken from the mural painted by Ioan Gotia, a DCJM brother in formation, in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit in our house in Rome. The mural is inspired on a mosaic from the Church of St. Clement in Rome. It depicts Jesus on the cross as the tree of life, the source of abundant fruit and gifts to the Church.

We will never get tired of saying
“THANK YOU”

because you never cease to help us. Our parents surely taught us to give thanks from our early age. When we say “thank you” to our parents we recognize their biggest gift: that their love was open to the goodness of our existence. And this experience happens too with our friends: they give us life when they consider our existence a great good. Thank you for helping us grow with your help, the most important of which is your constant prayer and your shared faith in our vision. We will never take this for granted as it is the biggest help you give us.

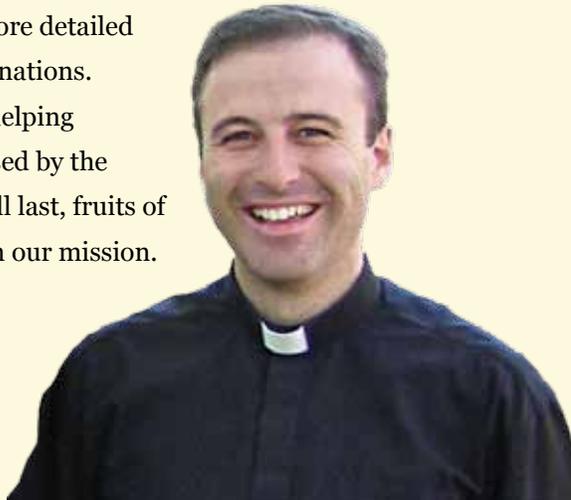
This year, we have also been blessed with your great financial support. Two tangible fruits are the publication of “The Fifth Candle of Advent” and the soon to be released “The Educational Covenant”, both books written by members of the Disciples. Your support has also funded the education of Br. Felipe Carmena, one of our religious brothers studying in Denver for one year. Our new web site is now fully launched thanks to your help as well. In this Newsletter you will also find a more detailed explanation of the use of your donations.

I pray that your sacrifices in helping our mission are abundantly blessed by the Lord and we all see fruits that will last, fruits of eternal life. Thanks for sharing in our mission.

With friendship and gratitude,

God bless you!

Fr. Alvaro



Fr. Alvaro and his parents after his first Mass.

When God Calls a Son

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Newly ordained deacons with Bishop Yanguas after the ceremony.

Deacon Juan’s previous and next steps

There are several phases in the formation of the religious priest, and the beginning and end of each phase is marked by a milestone, if you will. The person enters a religious order as a postulant, which typically lasts a year. This period is followed by the novitiate, which lasts at least for one year. The novitiate reaches the end with the temporary profession of vows (poverty,

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WHEN GOD CALLS A SON

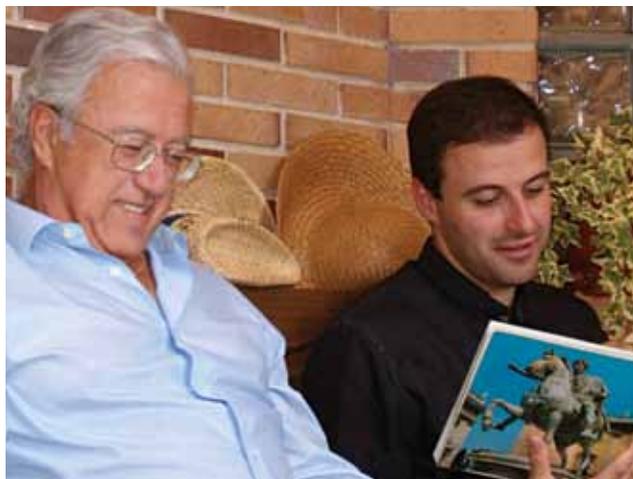
Teresa Baranda mother of Fr. Alvaro Montero, DCJM

The reaction to a vocation within a family is as varied as there are kinds of families, and it is even different for each member of the same family. One might classify the reactions as: very good, good, alright, resigned, bad, bewildered, and horrible. It is true that the easiest and most desirable response for all, and for the child who is called, would be acceptance without reservation, even a joyful acceptance—but I would say that this is not the most common.

It is only human for us parents to find it difficult to adjust to the vocation of a son or a daughter, and the Lord knows it! When God calls a child, this mystery penetrates our lives in an inevitable and radical way. This call invites us to participate, along with the child and through their vocation, in the fruitfulness of the Church. This is all much easier said than done, of course. One thing is to talk about your child being called to a religious vocation, but living it is another matter.

For my husband and me, our personal journeys facing the vocation of our son were different, but one was not less complicated than the other. They say that as a good father, the Lord has a plan for each of one's children. Honestly, in those moments, I did not see my son's vocation as such a great plan. But the Lord offered me a way – I went to a Spiritual Exercises retreat in Toledo (Spain), where I waited for the Lord and his mother, Mary. In his hand, and the hand of Mary, my heart was little by little softened until finally I relented and gave my Fiat to the Lord. I returned home with peace.

Jaime's reaction to the vocation of our son Alvaro fell under the category of "horrible" and I have to confess that to assimilate it into our lives was no easy task. For Jaime, the vocation of our son fell like a ton of bricks. He had placed very high expectations on his son, and he had projects, plans and dreams for him. He did not want to lose him to the priesthood. Years of silence and sufferings shared out of love and respect required a big effort on the part of all, but it was precisely this that made us grow in love, patience and hope. During all those years, the father-son relation-



Fr. Alvaro and his father, Jaime Montero

ship was always marked by respect and restrained affection. We all perceived Jaime's suffering, but still his heart, too wounded, remained inaccessible. First vows, renewal, perpetual vows...still we waited.

It seemed that something was beginning to move when Jaime attended the Diaconate ordination, and afterwards we had a small get together at our home, but

"The story of a family can resemble the building of a big and beautiful puzzle comprised of countless pieces."

still we had to continue waiting. Our son's priestly ordination in Cuenca took place on December 18, 2004. At that time, Jaime believed that he has lost his battle, when in reality he was closer than ever to winning it. He attended the ceremony as a specta-



Fr. Alvaro and his family after his first Mass.

tor; he watched, but did not kiss the hands of his son, now a priest. It hurt the son very much – he had to keep waiting.

The story of a family can resemble the building of a big and beautiful puzzle comprised of countless pieces. When difficulties oppress us, the Lord leaves us to look and look again, searching for that difficult piece that seems not to exist, but is necessary to integrate the situation in our lives. It is always His intervention which shows us the missing piece, and where it goes, so that we may continue.

Three days after the ordination, on December 21, 2004, Alvaro celebrated his first Mass in the church of Saint John Chrysostom, in Madrid. At the end of the Mass, before the kissing of the hands, he wanted to approach Jaime and me to kiss our wedding bands, symbols of the love that generated his existence. Jaime had always liked the bands for two reasons: for their simplicity and because they had no end. It was through this simple, yet beautiful, gesture of humility and filial gratitude, the Lord showed us what and where was the missing piece that seven years ago we were all looking for and had not been able to find. The missing piece was our wedding bands! The piece that seemed not to exist, not only was in sight of all, but we were wearing it! That was when father and son came together in the embrace that everyone had been waiting for. The ceremony ended with Jaime leading the line to kiss the hands of our son, and priest, Alvaro. The next day, Jaime told us, "Now I can talk about the issue without animosity and if someday this son of ours arrives to be a saint and they write his life, they would put Chapter III: "His Father, the Barbarian." That was Jaime.

In those moments we could not foresee that 44 days later, on February 3, Jaime would pass away suddenly in a car accident. He wanted the Lord to take him with the memory of that embrace. Now I am wearing the two wedding bands, and I am sure that the strength of their meaning helps us and will help each of us to integrate into our lives the significance of this new Mystery in our family history.

The Disciples Exchange Program

"We want to offer young people the opportunity to open themselves to another culture, another language, and another family. It takes effort to learn to adapt, to establish new relationships, to assimilate a new language, and to share their faith with a new family and new friends. This effort will expand their hearts, broaden their minds, help them grow in new virtues, and make them great."

- Fr. José Noriega,

Superior General of the DCJM

The Disciples Exchange Program began in July of 2008 when 11 Spanish students came to Littleton, CO to learn English, take part in the life of St. Mary Parish, and live with American host families. The program has expanded in the past six years to include Spanish classes offered at St. Mary during the month of July for local students and an opportunity for American students to go to Spain soon. The number of Spanish students participating in the program has increased each year, with many students returning for a second or third summer.

This past summer, Veronica Badajoz Nuñez, a preschool teacher at the Disciples' Stella Maris elementary school outside of Madrid, participated in the exchange program to improve her English. When Veronica was asked about the benefits of spending part of her summer in Denver, she responded, "First of all, improving my English while being immersed in a spiritual environment. Secondly, living with a new family that offers and teaches you so much, and lastly, making new friends and soaking up the American culture through daily activities and field trips, with the added presence and joy of the Disciples." When asked if she had been surprised by anything during her visit, she replied, "I was pleasantly surprised by the family composed of all the members of St. Mary Parish. One of the customs that I enjoyed tremendously was the beautiful habit of sharing a community breakfast after Holy Mass with your fellow parishioners each Sunday. That was wonderful!"

The Disciples Exchange Program not only benefits the students who participate, but it has been a blessing for the American host families as well. Many of the families who have participated in the program enjoy

it so much that they continue to host students for multiple years. Here is what one of the host families had to say about the program:

"Hosting a Spanish student is a wonderful experience for both the student and the hosting family. Our family has hosted two different students, one for three summers and the other for one summer. Since the hosting time is for one month, it is not too long and not too short. It gives the student and family enough time to experience several American cultural activities together. In addition to hosting, we were able to send our daughters to Barcelona to stay with our student's family. This was an experience of a lifetime for them. Our summer exchanges have brought new friendships into the family as well as given us a unique global experience that most people do not have the opportunity to have.

-Tony and Debbie Sacco,

St. Mary Parishioners

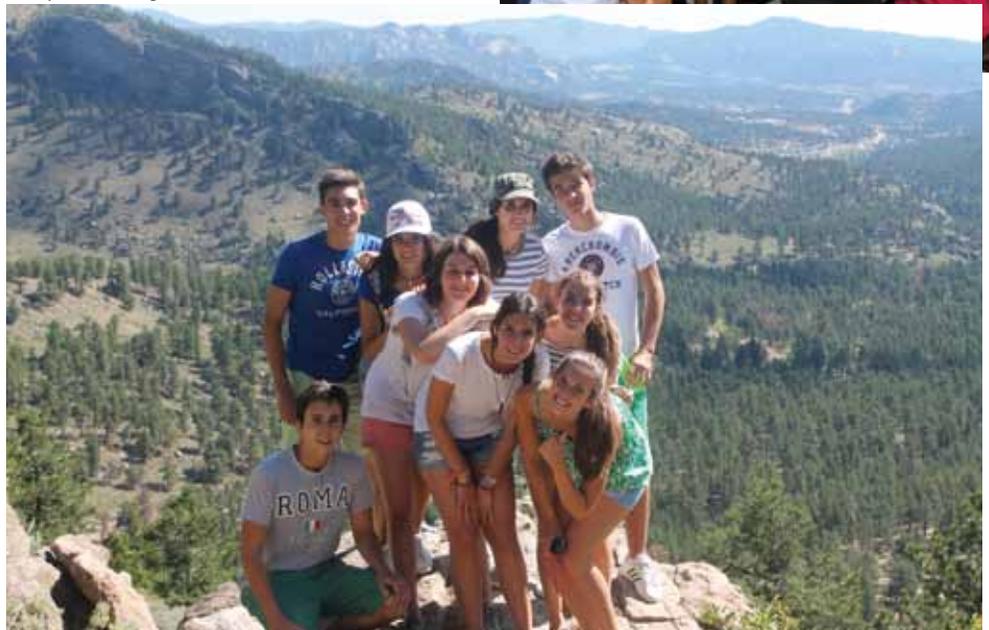
Group hike during YMCA retreat.



Exchange student with hosting family.

Will you consider being a part of this life-changing opportunity by opening your heart and home to house a student in the future? With your help, we can say "yes" to every student who wants to participate in the program. If you are interested, please contact Fr. Javier Nieva at frjavier@stmary-littleton.org or 303.798.8506. You can find out more about the Disciples Exchange Program at dcjm.org.

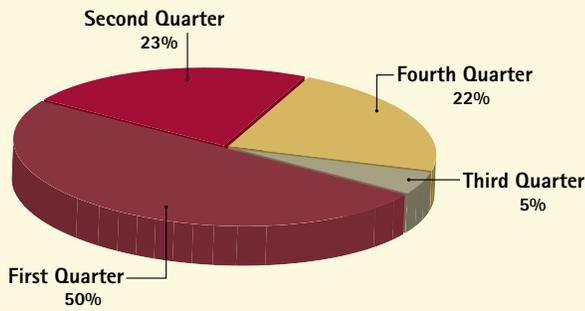
A meal during the YMCA Retreat.



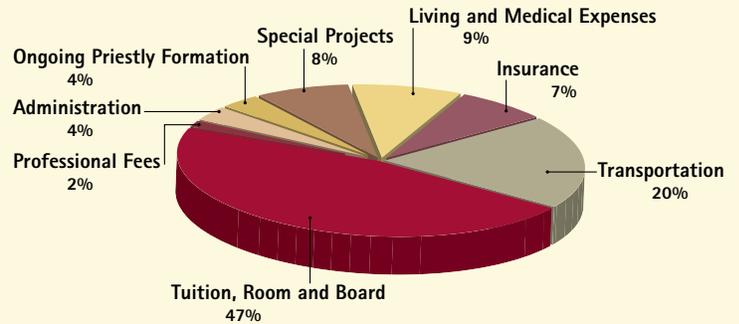
Friends of the Disciples FINANCIAL REPORT

Year Ended December 2012

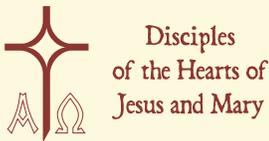
DONATIONS



EXPENSES



Total Donations		Total Expenses		EXPENSES	PERCENT	Expense details
First Quarter	\$ 80,432.	Living and Medical Expenses	\$ 14,325.	8.88%		Administration: printing, postage, equipment, and development and distribution of Friends program support materials
2nd Quarter	36,927.	Insurance	11,861.	7.35%		Insurance: automobile and liability insurance for the Littleton, CO community
3rd Quarter	8,065.	Transportation	32,409.	20.09%		Living and medical: includes medical insurance as well as ordinary needs (clothing, food, etc.)
4th Quarter	35,905.	Tuition, Room and Board	75,250.	46.64%		Ongoing priestly formation: includes community retreats, books and other resources
Total	\$161,329.	Professional Fees	2,699.	1.67%		Professional fees: immigration paperwork, legal fees
		Administration	5,887.	3.65%		Transportation: airfare, fuel, vehicle maintenance (purchase of used car)
		Ongoing priestly formation	5,797.	3.59%		Tuition, room and board: local and overseas
		Special Projects	13,101.	8.12%		Special projects: web site, costs associated to special celebrations (XXV Anniversary, Perpetual vows, deaconate)
		Total	\$161,329.			



Friends of the Disciples, 6853 S. Prince St. Littleton, CO 80120 dcjm.org

Deacon Juan's previous and next steps

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chastity and obedience), which are renewed until they are professed perpetually approximately 5 years after the first profession. In preparation for the priesthood, the religious brother receives the ministry of Lector and Acolyte. It is only after this that the religious brother is admitted into the Order of Deacons, which require a promise of obedience to his bishop and promise to pray daily the Liturgy of the Hours, the official prayer of the Church, for the whole world. For a person called to the priesthood, his deaconate is called a transitional deaconate, which may last at least six months. The deaconate is followed then by the priestly ordination. It is a process that in the Disciples may last 7-9 years. The entire process is a period of discernment so that both the individual as well as the Church can confirm the vocation.

On October 13, the Community of St. Mary Parish has been able to witness with the Disciples, the renewal of vows by Br. Felipe as well as the profession of perpetual vows by Br. Juan. On December 22, 2012, Br. Juan was ordained a Deacon. The ordination took place in Cuenca, Spain, where he was accompanied by many of

the disciples as well as a few of his family members.

Since his ordination, Deacon Juan has been working actively as the Campus Minister for our school and parish. He assists with the religion classes throughout the various grade levels. In addition, he is playing a larger role in the youth ministry, leading D-groups, organizing various activities, ranging from a pilgrimage to the Cathedral in Denver as well as to Rome. As a deacon, he is able to perform baptisms, funerals, and weddings as well as to proclaim the gospel, preach and to celebrate Communion Services. It is an important phase in his formation as he prepares for the priestly ordination. As a Disciple, he is receiving a tailored formation under the direction of the local and the superior general to delve more deeply into the sacraments and the life of the faithful through theological readings as well as classic novels, films, parish administrative practices and homiletics.

We hope to have news very soon regarding Deacon Juan's priestly ordination. It would be a truly a blessing to be able to witness it here at St. Mary's.



Procession of the newly ordained deacons with the Bishop.