

# ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT NEWSLETTER

## PASSIONTIDE 2014 No. 150

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### FROM BISHOP DOLAN

#### Mexican Journal

##### Friday, March 14th

I'm up at 3:30, reluctantly, more than for the early hour. For the first time I felt a kind of regret for leaving my Lent and my parish for the Mexican missions. But they are as "sheep without a shepherd," and the best penances are those God sends. So, reproaching my Jonah-like tendencies I head off for my Nineveh, Mexico, a land Lenten all year 'round, albeit one which has not known Lent for a long time. Bad start: we are coughed out of the belly of the plane just as we were ready to depart: mechanical. Four hours later, we do leave. Thanks to the wonders of cell phones and Minis, I'm able to adjust my itinerary for the delay, including the unforeseen night in Mexico City. A long, tiring first day.

##### Saturday, March 15th

I finally arrive at La Paz, South Baja California (three hours time difference) after noon. It is mostly a newish tourist town, on the water, drawing many visitors from the American Northwest and Canada. That evening we visit Father Hernan Vergara's newly built and most impressive Church of Christ the King, outside of town in a typical colonia with its ramshackle construction (to our eyes) and unpaved streets. The interior of the church, which seats 90, is gleaming with marble-like tile, and filled with members of the Carmel Confraternity, wearing their large scapulars on the outside, as is the custom, for the weekly Mass in Our Lady's honor. Everybody wants to go to confession, so the long Ember Saturday Mass is delayed. Still I preach a little to encourage the very edifying faithful. Their zeal encourages me.

##### The Second Sunday of Lent

A 20-year-old cantor has come from Atlalauca, in Morelos State, which has a fine liturgical tradition. The nuns have taught Rocque well, and he handles the Gregorian beautifully for the High Mass. An appropriately Pentecostal wind, unknown in those parts, blows up as Mass starts. We don't lose power (as we did in Argentina on December 8th) but the traffic lights on the way back were out. The locals handled the ensuing "Mexican standoff" with admirable order and restraint. The scene at the Communion rail was somewhat less orderly, however, as we proceeded to Confirmation after Mass. We were supposed to have ten, but the numbers jumped to 25, all jostling and dripping candle wax on the Communion cloth. I must remember to announce "apagar las velas, blow out the candles" in self-defense. But the entire morning was really most edifying, full of reverence



*His Excellency, Bishop Dolan, is welcomed to Dos Ríos, Veracruz on St. Joseph's Day with the traditional Recibimiento. At the head of the welcoming citizenry is St. Joseph borne on a flower-covered bier.*

and calm. Frijoles and pulled beef are prepared for lunch for everyone, but the wind drives us inside, even as it cancels the planned outing on the bay. That evening I return to church where most of the congregation awaits a conference on surviving as a Catholic today. Some good questions close the evening. An excellent first visit.

##### Saint Patrick's Day

The only thing Irish about it was its international and missionary character, but that's enough. La Paz has given two priests to the Church, Father Hernan, and Father Arnoldo Villegas, whom I visited in Tijuana, at the top of Baja California, for Epiphany in 2013. I met his mother on this trip, and offered Mass Monday at the Vergara home where Fr. Hernan keeps a small oratory. I used a Belgian chalice from †Father Schoonbroodt for the Mass. Father Vergara's mother and sister offered us a nice breakfast afterwards, before we flew to Mexico City. There we met Father Roberto Mardones and Father Martin Gomez, and had a nice dinner meeting at a crowded but excellent Argentinean restaurant. It's not St. Patrick's Day there, of course, but the feast of "Blessed" Benito Juarez, one of the country's Masonic anti-Catholic dictators. The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe is our final destination of the day, and we have a time of it finding parking. It's dark as we approach the horrible Novus Ordo building which houses one of Christendom's great-

est relics and enduring miracles. Father Mardones leads us in a rousing “O Maria, Mater Mia,” which momentarily drowns out the drone of the Novus Ordo going on above us. Still, we had to see and salute the Queen of the Missions. How *young* she looks this evening, how beautiful. May she accept our consecration, and bless our apostolic work.

### St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Day begins with Holy Mass in a lovely chapel built above a cement depot, unlikely place, but a good hiding spot should one be needed. Gold vestments are prepared, so I offer the Mass of the Saint, by exception in Lent, with its Gospel about fleeing from one place to another. The family entertains us to breakfast afterwards on a beautiful rooftop patio. I haven’t visited these generous and devout Catholics for 20 years! The father kindly leads us afterward through Mexico City’s traffic maze to the Toll Road for Puebla. We stop to visit St. Michael the Archangel’s shrine in Tlaxcala, where he appeared in 1631, and then head on to Tepeaca and the Niño Doctor, the Holy Child Jesus, Doctor of the Sick. The devotion grows each year, drawing more and more people to Him who alone can “doctor” us, in soul and body. They’ve closed the street in front of the newly refurbished church to make it a pedestrian mall. Our Lord on His high throne graciously received us, and all of our petitions for all of our sick. We cross the volcano to arrive at Orizaba, Vera Cruz for day’s end.

### Saint Joseph’s Day

There is time for a Rosary as we drive out to the little village of Dos Rios. It has the Faith today because an old priest, Father Carlito, was once exiled there by his bishop for his resistance to the changes. It still keeps the true Catholic, uncompromised Faith, despite a group of very Novus Ordo nuns assorted witches and devil worshippers, and a small group of Pius X faithful who worship weekly in a large, empty church. The *Recibimiento*, or welcoming procession, is a fine art here. First, the firecrackers, and then some ladies approach to douse me with confetti, which sticks to my biretta pom-pom all year. Then I receive a wreath around my neck, and a canopy over my head, and off we go, the band playing triumphantly, St. Joseph on his floral bier swaying in the lead. Much of the town seems to turn out. The church is packed to overflowing for the high Mass and sermon. The people smile when I speak about the duties of the father as the head of the family, as that is one of the favorite themes of the pastor, Father Martin Gomez. But what an example St. Joseph gives us. The Confirmations are again far more than anticipated – about 50 – and are given down the aisle. Too noisy for me, I stop and ask for silence (and wait for it) before asking the Holy Ghost to descend with His Seven Gifts. It seemed only right. Everybody got fed after Mass, but we are in the very simple concrete priests’ “dining room.” In retrospect, I should have resisted the roast pig, but the name “*marrano*” was too intriguing. We are back in Mexico City in time for a little supper at the Argentinean restaurant. If they’ve given the world Bergoglio, at least they make up for it with their wonderful beef. Father Hernan’s brother kindly puts us up in a nice hotel for our final night.

### Thursday, March 20th

We clergy separate with many promised prayers, thanks and blessings. It was an excellent trip, fruitful and very well organized. I am free to read and write and pray and think on the plan, which makes the long trip home pass quickly. Almost exactly a week later, I return to Dayton airport late that night, laden down with a fresh supply of statues and stories, having again striven to do just a little good in some corner of the Lord’s vineyard.

Each year in Lent, my dear friends, I ask for a little alms for our small school, which does so much for its students, as well as for the whole Church, with its beautifully sung and served Masses, which you can follow on the Internet ([www.sgg.org](http://www.sgg.org)). Won’t you make a Lenten offering to help support this so important apostolate?

God bless you!

– Most Rev. Daniel L. Dolan



(Above) Bishop Dolan along with Fathers Mardones and Vergara at Guadalupe. (Below) Confirmations in La Paz, Baja California Sur.



### **Easter Novena of Masses**

Remember your loved ones during Easter Week in a

*Novena of Masses* beginning on **Easter Sunday, April 20th**, at St. Gertrude the Great Church.

*Please use the enclosed envelope to list your intentions.*