

Behold Your Mother

Newsletter of the Brothers of the Beloved Disciple

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Hell and Heaven in an Inner-City Parish



Pastor's car window smashed and vandalized



Youth help youth find Jesus

Cora (not her real name) grew up with an abusive father and was angry with her mother for not divorcing him sooner. But Cora's step-father was worse. He began abusing her sexually when she was twelve. Two of her cousins are in a long term prison sentence for evading police in a car chase and firing at the police car. Her grandmother, sole support and love, had died. This beautiful seventeen-year-old thought of herself as trash and her life as hopeless.

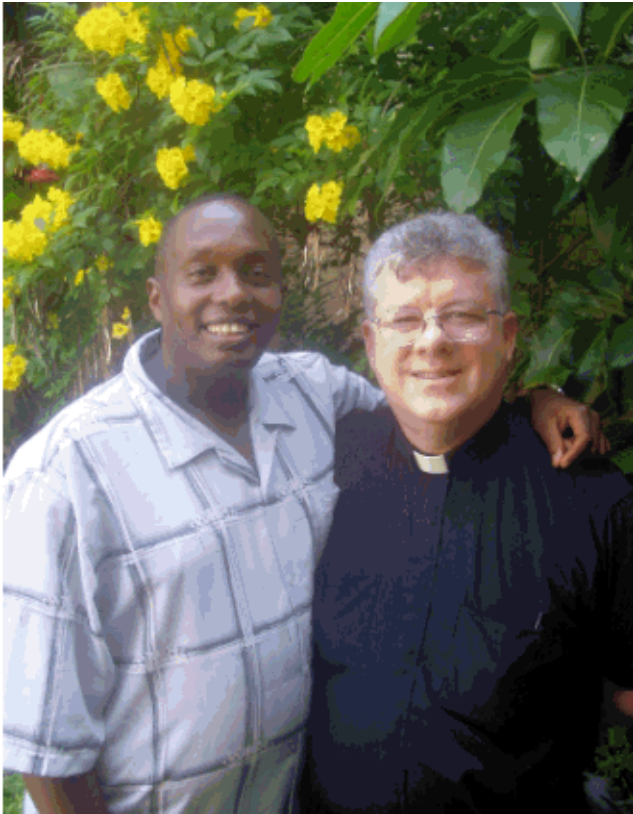
As I listened to her story my heart broke, but what deflated me and angered me at the same time was that I knew Cora was only one of thousands of youth in the inner city, and scores in our parish boundaries, who are living in hell. Not the hell that they created, but the hell into which they were born and now have to gasp for air in the fetid sulfur fumes of pornography, drugs, alcohol, gangs, drive-by shootings, adultery, fatherless homes, sexual promiscuity and abuse, suicide. Yes, suicide. This past summer a friend of mine, whose husband walked out on her and her six children, lost two of her sons within the same month—not to a car wreck or drowning in the floods we had. Suicide. A third suicide of a friend of theirs followed within six weeks.

Recently I went with six other priests (including Fr. Will) to hear confessions at a youths' ACTS retreat. It was not

the sins of these young children of God that depressed me. It was the hell they are living in. I came away shaken and deflated. But as I sat in the car waiting for Father Will to finish absolving his last penitent, I had to face another reality. It was the young people who were ministering to these kids. Teen-agers themselves, they had met Jesus, they had experienced his forgiveness and his healing, and they were eager to share it with their peers. Many of them, too, had been broken and without hope, but in the darkness they had found the Light of the World.

This is the kind of parish the Brothers of the Beloved Disciple are ministering in. There is the bad news of sin, but "where sin abounded, grace has abounded even more" (Romans 5:20). We are helping the parish plug the dike and rebuild the dam. Life in the Spirit Seminars, English and Spanish Prayer groups, ACTS retreats, Youth and Young Adult groups, the "Hombres in Cristo" and "Mujeres in Cristo," and other initiatives are evangelizing and forming evangelizers to share the saving power of Jesus Christ—to get God's children, of whatever age, out of hell—not a future hell but the hell they are living in right now.

– Father George



Emmanuel, af friend of Fr. Joseph Mary from Africa, visited us recently. He has been very active working with the AIDS ministry in Kenya.



Christopher Amen, attending Montana State University and home with his parents here for the summer, visited the community. He's a distant cousin of Father George.

Father Bob, Father George Summer Conference Speakers

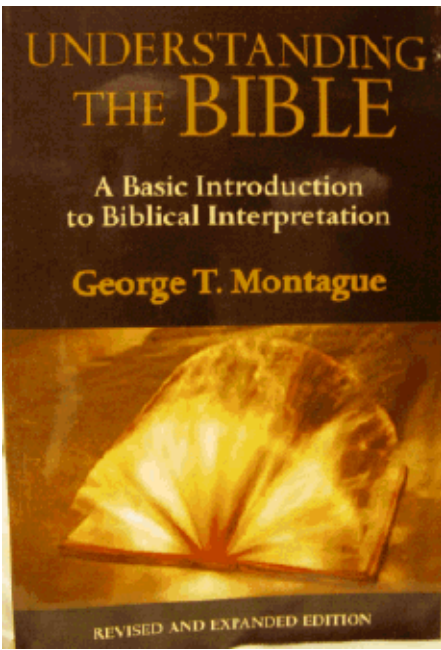
Father Bob Hogan and Father George Montague spoke at Catholic Charismatic Conferences this summer. Fr. Bob spoke at the Regional Charismatic Conference held in San Antonio at the Gonzalez Convention Center on April 14 (Photo to the right), and Fathers Bob and George spoke at the Priests, Deacons and Seminarians Conference at the University of Steubenville, Ohio, June 11-15. One of their topics was "A Case Study in a Charismatic Parish."



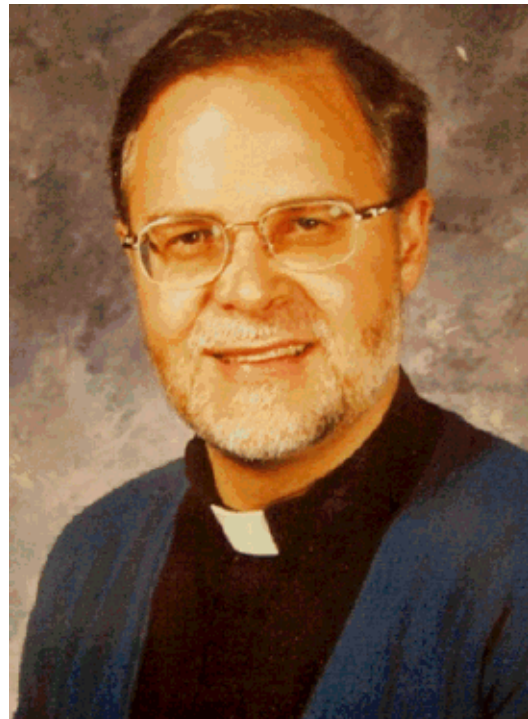
What God asks is our fidelity, not our success.
--Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

To purchase *Understanding the Bible: A Basic Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, revised and expanded edition, by Fr. George Montague, send a check for \$19.95 + \$2.00 postage (\$21.95) to:

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Fr. Bob Hogan

Fr. George's Book Released by Paulist Press

Father George's Book, *Understanding the Bible: A Basic Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* has just been released by Paulist Press in a revised and expanded edition. It is being used as a university and seminary textbook. Fr. George traces the development of interpretation of the Bible from biblical times to today. The Bible at times re-interprets previous events or texts. Then he shows how the Fathers of the Church interpreted the Bible, then the Middle Ages, the Reformation and the Enlightenment and modern philosophical approaches, all in the context of the Church's teaching in Vatican II and beyond. The book is available through your bookstore or directly from Father George. \$19.95 plus shipping.

ACTS Retreats Multiplying

At least two new retreat houses are being built in the San Antonio area, mainly to accommodate the growing number of parish ACTS retreats. Like many other parishes, St. Mary Magdalen has found this a Spirit-blessed tool for evangelization. It has brought many to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and with that a return for many to the sacraments and an involvement in ministry in the parish. ACTS stands for Adoration, Community, Theology and Service. The retreat format was begun by two charismatics at Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in San Antonio twenty years ago.

New Life, New Roles for Father Bob

Father Bob Hogan's vows in the Society of Mary have been suspended so that he can become a member of the Brothers of the Beloved Disciple, and he has been accepted by Archbishop Gomez into the process of incardination into the Archdiocese of San Antonio, to which the new community of the Brothers of the Beloved Disciple is attached. That means that he, along with Fr. Will Combs, will be canonically full members of the Brothers of the Beloved Disciple, which is in the first stage of becoming an Institute of Consecrated Life.

Father Bob has also been selected as a member of the National Service Committee of the Charismatic Renewal. Since August 1 he is working with Bishop Thomas Flanagan as an associate liaison for the Charismatic Renewal in San Antonio.

Father Will Visits His Catholic Roots

I truly am in awe of all that is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic in our Church. Why did I become Catholic? Well, there are many reasons why: the continuation of Sacred Scripture, salvation history and apostolic authority, the lives of the saints, the beauty of Mass and the devotionals, the richness of the Eucharist, the unity and universality of the faith throughout the world and my powerful experience in South America.

From 1990 to 1992 I studied abroad in Ecuador. It was there that I lived for a while among the Tigua Indians,

studied at the Catholic University in Quito and was rescued by my adopted familia from prison after spending a weekend in jail for helping a man push his pickup truck. (Little did I know that the man had stolen the pick up!). Through such experiences I realized that I not only need Jesus to be saved but also his family in the Catholic Church. So on December 27, 1991, feast of John the Beloved Disciple, I officially joined our Church. Alleluia! I finally left Ecuador seven months later with tears in my eyes for the land and people I grew to call home. The Lord has since then sent me elsewhere and eventually to my new home in San Antonio: the Brothers of the Beloved Disciple. But 15 years later this past July I was blessed to make a personal pilgrimage to my Catholic roots in Ecuador. The brief week passed by like a month as I surprised my Tigua compadre and goddaughter, visited the chapel of my first communion and celebrated Mass with my madrina and family in Quito. What a miracle it was to celebrate Mass in the very dining room where I used to wonder what could possibly be my vocation in life. Two memorable experiences were visiting the Compañía de Jesús Church in downtown Quito that is now renovated into a museum. Mass is still celebrated there but the tabernacle is empty. How ironic: the inside of the church was entirely covered with the wealth of gold and yet empty

without the Eucharist. I then stepped outside and saw a beggar without any arms or legs. Truly the Eucharist and the poor are one of the greatest reasons why I became Catholic in Ecuador.

The other touching experience was visiting friends in Latacunga who are zealous Evangelicals and convinced that we Catholics are not Christians. However, after some pan y café I led them in praise and worship and a new experience of Jesus together.

On my return in the Miami Airport I sat with a group of teenage Evangelical missionaries who were on their way to witness in Peru. After singing and praying with each other, I urged them to work for the unity of all Christians and not be so condemning of us Catholics. They assured me that they were simply inviting all to a personal relationship with Jesus.

Amen! And yet it struck me that the Holy Spirit is calling us all not only to a personal (evangelical) relationship with Jesus but also a universal (“catholic”) relationship with his family. So in our pilgrimage through life, may we all grow in truth, charity and awe of Christ who is truly all in all.

– **Father Will**
