

in a
WordTM

Volume 35 No. 6 June 2017

A Publication of The Society of the Divine Word, Southern Province

**Divine Word Missionaries Celebrate
Past and Future Service in Bay Saint
Louis and Techny, Illinois**

HOW MANY KINDS OF CELEBRATION ARE THERE?

by

Father Jerome LeDoux, SVD

Boom-boom celebrations of explosive, maybe thundering reports typically herald global celebrations of New Year's Day and the July 4 United States birthday celebration. The celebrations can be as personal and quiet as the numerous serene personalities around the world, or as varied and deafening as the noisemakers of the world who launch endless rounds of rockets and brilliantly-colored explosions that light up the night sky with fancy designs and configurations of their own.

Some sports venues stage their own scoreboard fireworks celebrations when a home run is struck, with live fire at the end of certain games. Much more frequent than fireworks are the end zone antics of runners or receivers who have scored a touchdown, even at the risk of being fined by the NFL, whose initials are often read as *No Fun League*. The slow, dramatic routines of some home run hitters likewise draw the ire of opposing players. Through it all, the fans enjoy just about everything.

We celebrate our entry into the world with annual parties and extravaganzas in some cases such as cruises. Some celebrate their birthday for a month, and I have seen one celebrate a big decade birthday all year long. "Suum cuique!" says the Latin, "To each her/his own!" Flaunting their wealth, some jetsetters celebrate all over the country and even all over the world, breakfasting nearby and eating dinner thousands of miles away. The defunct supersonic *Concorde* was a favorite carrier, and now a very quiet 12-seat business supersonic jet is almost ready to take over.

Yes, it takes money to do things in lavish fashion, but, thank God, most of us simple peons know how to put on the dog with very skimpy resources. One of the best definitions of "soul" is the ability to create special things from near garbage. That rings loudly of food creations as well as daily activities and celebrations.

Baptism is a big deal, especially in some countries like Italy, even showing up in unlikely situations like *The Godfather*. Whether faithful to or estranged from the Church, the chickens come home to roost on occasions like baptism. Just make sure that you exceed the church attendance of those three-time Christians who are seen in church only when they are hatched, matched and dispatched.

Steps up the school ladder are causes for celebrations, as are post-school job opportunities that can be anywhere from good to huge. Just beware, lest you fall into the quagmire of celebrating too frequently with the cup that cheers.

That brings us to marriage, the "match" stage. I have had hot discussions with more than a few couples who wanted to abbreviate their church ceremony and Mass in order to have more time for the far less-important, secular celebration in a fancy hall. The average wedding cost in the U.S. is \$26,720. Happily, one runs into rare couples who, forgoing expensive celebrations, make a down payment on a house.

Wedding celebrations are a given, but once in a while there are in-your-face celebrations like the bittersweet occasion of divorce where individuals are looking for meaning, interpretation and direction in their lives, not to mention the hope of someday finding true love and companionship in a soul mate sent from heaven.

Very special is the celebration of unique sounds of the oceans and seas with their crashing waves, their intermittent moments of peace and serenity punctuated by the chatter and songs of the sandpipers, sea gulls, robbing and cantankerous man-o-war pirate birds, and power-diving pelicans that always get their fish. With all that, we also celebrate the sounds of silence, reflection, prayer and meditation.

On land, we celebrate thousands of lakes – 12,000 in Minnesota – usually placid, but sometimes roiled by the storms we witness over the Great Lakes. The stuff of poetry, song, legend and books such as Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, hundreds of rivers crisscross the world's countries, sporting their interludes of gently-moving water that turns into raging floodwaters on occasion.

Seemingly pedestrian, but extra special is the advent of each day, for every day is a day of thanksgiving, a fresh segment of celebration, a vacation in disguise. For many decades, each day has been a holiday for me, another time of celebration. The rhythm and blues rock group *Rare Earth* had a 1971 hit, *I just want to celebrate another day of livin'*, that said most of what I feel about my relationship with today.

Finally, the dispatch part of "hatched, matched and dispatched" hits a zenith in the rare persons who plan their own wake – and attend it in advance! The low hits those who die dead broke. A New Orleans style jazz funeral is a fine celebration, but the best celebration occurs when one's life has preached her/his eulogy.

CELEBRATING PAST YEARS OF SERVICE

Every June the Divine Word Missionary priests and brothers of the Southern Province gather for a retreat. At the end of the retreat a celebration is held at which Jubilarians are honored. This year's celebration honored four priests and two Bishops.



Jubilarians are from left Donald Murrin, SVD; Agustinus Seran, SVD; Jerome LeDoux, SVD; Francis Damolah, SVD; (seated) Bishop Dominic Carmon SVD; and Bishop Terry Steib, SVD.



The members of Southern Province after Jubilee Mass

in a word or two

Divine Word Missionaries **celebrated the future** with the ordination of four young men to the priesthood. On May 20, 2017 Bishop Richard Pates, bishop of Des Moines ordained these men at Techny, Illinois. The four men will be missionaries to Chad, Chicago and Mozambique.



CELEBRATE THE SUMMER!

**IN A WORD WILL BE BACK IN
SEPTEMBER**

Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

IN A WORD is a publication of The Society of the Divine Word's Media Production Center. Rev. James Pawlicki, S.V.D., Director and Editor; Cathy Green-Miner, office manager; Father Brendan Murphy, SVD consultant.

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Electronic messages to our Internet address, editor@inaword.com. IN A WORD is not published during July and August.

Web page can be found at <http://www.inaword.com>