

in a
WordTM

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Service of Religious Brothers Invaluable to the Church

HUMAN BODY, THE WONDER OF THE WORLD

by

Father Jerome Ledoux, SVD

About the beginning of May, a near imperceptible narrowing of my left eye caught my attention. Completely new to me, I watched it day by day until it became apparent that the narrowing was slowly progressing. Appendicitis and tonsillitis aside, since I had never had a malady that did not correct itself, I expected the problem to reverse itself at some point.

To the contrary, the slit became smaller with the passage of the days and weeks. It was observed by my SVD confreres at our annual June retreat in Bay St. Louis without many remarks. Again, at OMM Church, it was noticed by most without remarks being made, until the time came when it grabbed everyone's attention and piqued the curiosity of all.

Everyone wanted to know, "What happened?" Frankly, I had no clue about what might have caused it. My speculation was that I had contracted some phase of what is sometimes called "the truckers disease," brought on by many truckers' habit of cruising with their left front window down, inviting the air to rush past the left side of their face.

Urban legend or not, the reasoning is that such a face-beating over time weakens the facial muscles, making them susceptible to viruses that may morph into something like Bell's Palsy, a temporary weakness or paralysis of the muscles on one side of the face. For decades, my left front window down, I cruised many tens of thousands of miles, often in hot weather.

"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. So is a lot," said Albert Einstein. Yes, I think that, except for my intellectual dipping into all sorts of things, I could and should have jumped on the case much sooner by contacting someone like Ophthalmologist Dr. Sam. But only God knows whether that would have made any substantial difference in the outcome.

Realizing at length in August that medical science had to be put into the equation, I called Ophthalmology Associates and was put in touch with Eye Surgeon Sam Abdul-Rahim who at first suspected that the problem was a cyst. But then he scheduled a CAT (computed tomography) Scan of my left eye to determine what was going on around the eye.

Results from the CT indicated a swollen lacrimal (tear) duct. Since Dr. Sam wanted to know what caused the swelling, he scheduled me for surgery to obtain a flesh sample from the tear gland on which a biopsy could be done. Under general anesthesia propofol – the drug that took Michael Jackson's life – I was out like a light for two hours. Thank God, only two.

Rising from my cot to put my clothes on, I was stunned to feel very strong, so that I flexed my muscles, reflecting that my strength had waned for three months. "Samson's hair has grown back," I smiled, feeling the rippling effect throughout the muscles of my body.

Alas, I arose the next morning only to find that my renewed muscular surge had all but disappeared, leading me to say, "It seems Delilah has cut Samson's hair off again."

Dr. Sam called about 2:15 Thursday afternoon, September 19 with the biopsy report on the flesh sample taken from the lacrimal (tear) gland above my left eye. "The report shows that the gland has developed follicular lymphoma," he told me. "This would be the one if you had to choose the least troublesome and the most curable of all the lymphomas.

"I will contact your primary doctor. She will connect you with an oncologist who will determine what course is to be taken. From what I have seen of similar cases of orbital lymphoma, the oncologist will arrange for radiation of the lacrimal gland. This remedy has worked very well for all the cases of this kind that I have seen."

Faithful Frank "Paco" Norvel chauffeured me to my next rendezvous with Dr. Sam Monday, September 23. The doctor entered with his usual radiant smile and removed the eye pad that I had worn – with twice-daily changes – since September 10. What a relief, even though the eye was nearly closed! I was told to anoint the eye for only four more days.

Amid all this, Paco mentioned my book, "War Of The Pews," to the doctor. To our surprise, he said, "Oh, I know all about the book. I purchased it online through Amazon."

Dr. Sam sent the results of the biopsy to Rowena Maclin, D.O., my primary physician who forwarded them to the Center For Cancer And Blood Disorders where I must appear for a series of daily radiation beginning October 22 at 8:45 a.m. That should take care of all of it. No restrictions were placed on my activities as long as my body feels up to the task.

As you have noticed, this is more a column-report than just a column. I will keep you posted on whatever developments take place with my left eye or the rest of me. As always, many thanks for your prayers and thoughtfulness, and may God ever bless you and yours.

"God is love, and all who abide in love abide in God and God in them." (1 John 4:16)

The Biblical Apostolate and Collaboration with the Laity

by

Brother Bernie Spitzley, SVD

The Society of the Divine Word (Divine Word Missionaries) is composed of Priests and Brothers. Divine Word Brothers are an integral part of the service provided by the SVD. Unfortunately, little attention is given to the Brothers.

The front cover photo is of three SVD Brothers who serve in different parts of the world. From left to right are Brother Bernie Spitzley, SVD who works in Jamaica; Brother Guy Mazola, SVD from the Congo who is now part of the SVD Generalate in Rome; Brother Roberto Duarte, SVD who serves in Ecuador.

In the following article Brother Bernie, who is from Westphalia, Michigan, writes of his work in the Biblical apostolate in Jamaica. As a religious Brother he is an example of the important service Brothers bring to the universal Church.

For more information and illuminating stories of SVD Brothers in action go to www.svdvocations.org

This article is taken from that website.



This year, the Church marks the 50th anniversary of the inception of Vatican II. After changes in the liturgy, the next most significant change was the role of the laity. No longer mere observers or bystanders, the laity has an energetic role thanks to an emphasis on Baptism.

We in Morant Bay, Jamaica, recognize the increasingly prominent and active role of the laity in the Catholic Church as a positive development that has grown over time. Lay people are invited to assume leadership positions and share in our spirituality as Divine Word Missionaries. This collaboration in ministry is evident in the biblical apostolate.

Biblical ministry in the Jamaican civil parish of St. Thomas is very much alive and established. Each church has weekly Bible sharing sessions—some at homes, others in neighboring clusters. We also have three Bible sharing communities: Golden Grove, Emmaus and the Mustard Seed Community. We will never build a church at these sites, but we do have vibrant faith communities that are Bible-based and have trained laity.

Yes, the people rely on us to help with transportation, but so much of the sharing, the actual ministry, is done *by the people with the people*. We emphasize the formation of the laity, the grassroots leaders who make it run.

This is done by making it simple. We create age-appropriate activities for the children, youth and the adults. We use the

Bible as a tool, a resource that helps the families become more biblically literate and familiar with the great stories of the Bible. Bible sharing becomes relevant to the group when the people are able to connect faith and Scripture with the events in their daily lives.

Our experience in doing Bible sharing with the groups is that the Word of God is not static; it is alive and active! The Bible becomes a source of the living Word of God. Members speak of how the Bible is important because as a part of our daily lives, it feeds, strengthens and guides us through the perils and joys of our lives on the way to salvation.

A challenge we have found is that at first lay people are passive subjects in relation to the Word of God. However, in time, they become empowered to be hearers of the Word of God and with practice and support from the community, *proclaimers* of the Word.

We invite all people, no matter their social, cultural, or economical background to hear the message of salvation so that they can come and join us in the fullness of the Catholic faith.

The biblical apostolate is a pastoral activity that provides ways to help faith seekers and the faithful come to know what the Bible is, why it exists, its value in the life of the individual and within the community. Yes, the biblical apostolate is alive and well in Morant Bay with the laity as leaders!

in a word or two

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For questions: Contact A'dell Lee at 202-526-9270.



EVANGELIZATION IN LITTLE ROCK

A Report
by

Margaret Douglas

Sunday, August 25, Saint Bartholomew Feast Day, a day when all parishioners, friends and neighbors gathered in celebration of our patron Saint. Looking back this was a day that slowly but surely in-stilled a sense of pride for all. Approximately five months ago the seed of a celebration was planted by our clergy, Father Francis Damoah, SVD, and Deacon Kirke Herman. The different organizations of the church begin working spiritually, as well as, physically to make the celebration special.

Word went out to the surrounding churches and neighbors to mark their calendars and join us for a spiritual awakening. Our youth department was challenged to begin a liturgical dance group for the special occasion.

The men's group of St. Bartholomew begin meeting every Saturday morning to clean an over-grown lot, a lot that no one had even in vision as a place to sit with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Out of this effort another group was formed, the garden club, weeds were pulled, mulch laid and flowers planted around the grounds of the church, rectory and the rock wall across the street from the church.

The Care Committee and Ladies' Auxiliary join together to exchange ideas for a meal that would feed the physical needs of all that gathered. A meal prepared by hands of love that prepared over flowing pans of spaghetti, ham, chicken, baked beans, salads and rolls. Not to mention the hot dogs, hamburgers and black bean burgers that were grilled by the Men's Group. The meal ended with a on a sweet note with a red and white sheet cake, cookies and pies.

On the day before the celebration the youth department met for their final practice and all of their hard work proved successful. The liturgical dancers, as well as, the youth choir gave a performance to be remembered. Following practice they cross the street and decorated the fence with red and white decoration spelling out St. Bart Day. The ladies' auxiliary added the same colors to the fence of the newly clean St. Bartholomew Park. What a beautiful way to start the celebration.

The Indian Liturgical dancers were our special guest, also performing during the offertory service and leading the procession in our walk around the neighborhood following the mass. **We walked with drums beating, dancing, singing, smiling and waving all the way.** The procession was joined by members of the neighborhood who also joined us for the meal.

Our home bound members prayed for us throughout the planning, working phase, as well as, the day of celebration. Prayers that continue to carry us from 107-2013, one hundred and four years of celebrating our patron Saint Bartholomew.

Channel 4 TV station came to cover our picnic at St. Bartholomew Park near the rectory and many people saw themselves in the television for the first time. We were able to feed some of the poor people in our neighborhood with food and drink. Apart from the food, the youth also had fun with some games in our park.

We are trying to put some of St. Barth's activities on YouTube and DVD for our parishioners. We are in contact with Word Publication managed by Frs. Soney and Manning, SVD's, to see whether our Sunday services could be seen by parishioners by using U-Stream. Our communication team in our parish is working hard to see how best we could reach as many of our parishioners as possible with modern new technologies available to us.

-Margaret Douglas

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.

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