

# NAZARETH NEWS

ISSUE NO. 1

February, March, April 1996

## A SPIRITUAL SPRING CLEANING JOB

by Thomas A. Cash

There is no doubt that Spring is finally here, almost in time for Summer. And with Spring come all those Spring things. You know.... Spring things... like birds, sunshine, warmer weather, Easter!!!!, "Spring rain showers", mud puddles from the spring rain showers, dust and dirt when the mud puddles dry up, and sometimes, a lot of Spring Cleaning.

During the Easter Season, I was asked to speak at a parish in Terre Haute IN. The Gospel reading was the story of the Road to Emmaus, Lk24:13-35. I was struck by the phrase, "they were *restrained* from recognizing" Jesus. And that probably they were restrained because of "discussing as they went all that had happened." They were two ordinary people who were preoccupied. Too busy. Too much on their minds. Too concerned with what *happened* to Jesus to *recognize* Jesus.

Sound familiar? It does to me. Not enough time in the morning to pray. Got to get to

class, no time to talk to the guy at the corner. Have to prepare for my meeting, can't talk to my kid on the phone. The war in the middle East, the unabomber suspect, terrorism, another bombing in Ireland, etc. etc. There is so much clutter in our daily lives, so much distracting us, no wonder it is that we are sometimes restrained from recognizing Jesus around us?

At Nazareth Farm, I think we do a pretty good job of shifting the focus away from some of those distractions - of clearing out the noise. And in this Spring time, in this Easter Season especially, we have the invitation to shift the focus of our spirits. An invitation to see things less as inconveniences, obligation and the presence of evil in our world, and to see them more as opportunities and blessings and a need to rely more strongly on God.

If we can shift our focus from the negative, then, like the disciples, we can recognize Christ - in breaking bread, in casual conversation,

in the ordinary things of our lives. We can, like Mary, leave the tomb behind and talk to Christ in the garden. Or see Christ among us in the ordinary like the disciples on the road. Or like Thomas, turn away from doubt and exclaim, "My Lord and my God."

In this Easter Spring time, a time of hopefulness, I'm reminded too of a writing of Pope John Paul II. He writes that as the Church approaches the year 2000, we are in a Spring time of the Millennium - a Spring time of Christianity. That gives me much hope today, that we are becoming more a Church of hope, a people of the resurrection, that maybe we are shifting our spirits to be more attuned to recognizing Jesus, that we are rising in a Spring time with Christ.

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4/98

**BREAKING AND BUILDING**

by Matthew Emmick

As I reflect on my experience as a work site coordinator, I am struck by an ironic contradiction. In the two sites of which I have been a part, I have helped tear down a house and wall in a porch. I have found that by tearing walls down I have been able to build a friendship and in building a wall I have witnessed the destruction of the barriers humans put between each other.

At the first site, the owner of the house's brother-in-law would stop by several times a day. At first, I was put off by him. I knew it wasn't his property, but he was telling us what to do. However, by the end of the first day, I grew to respect and admire him. Hearing stories about his younger days as well as the history of the house and the area became an integral part of the workday. The more progress we made in destroying the house, the more progress was made in building a friendship. Even now that the site is finished I will continue to visit him regularly.

Conversely, by building artificial barriers around a house, I have seen the destruction of barriers between a lonely widow and those around her.

When we first started working at her house she seemed afraid and shy. Conversations with her were short and limited to mundane topics such as the weather. At this time her porch was dilapidated and the space under her house was wide open. As we closed these spaces with walls and underpinning, she became more open. She now spends the majority of the day talking to our work crews and her face lights up upon our arrival. We now share ourselves rather than simply have conversations. Everyday she would say "I wish you'd get finished soon." Now she says, - "Oh it'll get done one day," and has found new projects for us to do.

These experiences have made me realize that our ministry reaches far beyond hammers and nails. We are not here to merely provide services, but to build friendships and break down the barriers that separate us. In reflecting on this contradiction of simultaneous building and destroying, I am reminded of the ultimate contradiction of life: if we live, we must die, but in order to die, we must live. If our life is to be fulfilling, we must die to the things which prevent us from truly getting to know our fellow humans. If we die to the prejudices and attitudes which separate us from each other, we will have a wonderful life of rewarding relationships that will help us see the face of God.

In the Catholic Mass we pronounce another contradiction: "By dying you destroyed our death, by rising you restored our life." It is this model upon which our service is based. By destroying what is not needed, we build beautiful friendships, by building necessary barriers we destroy the things that prevent us from fully realizing the beauty of those around us. Working from this model not only allows us to perform service in its truest sense, but to enrich our own lives as well.

## **"O, BLESS THE LORD MY SOUL!" "GODSPELL" A HIT**

In March, Nazareth Farm hosted a production of "GODSPELL" in Clarksburg which was performed by St. Joseph's Music Ministry and Friends from New Jersey. The idea was born of past director Kay Hetherington who was in the play last year in New Jersey. She said, "I've been having dreams about doing "GODSPELL" in West Virginia..." and one year and many long distance calls later, many people from the area were able to share in the experience. Special thanks are due to Sr. Mary Clark and Janice Dugan, two local board members, and Thomas Cash of the Farm staff who worked hard to get this production off the ground and to Betty Krupp who came in from Chicago for the weekend. Thanks to many of the staff who pitched in a hand too. Thanks too, to St. Xavier University and LeMoyne College who both helped with royalty costs. And thanks to the cast and crew of "GODSPELL" who performed the show in New Jersey as an additional fund raiser before they came!

## AND THEN THERE WERE...

Can it already have been that long? Eric Hoch left us at the end of Holy Week to spend the summer in at home making a little money working at a winery before he goes off to Seminary in Berkeley, CA. Joe Hennessy left us soon after, about mid April, to return home and work for the summer on "the boats" on the Chicago river. Then it's off to Southern IL, University to play with the fish! Good luck to you two, this is always your home.

For us who are left behind,.... Moria is balancing the graceful and dainty duties of a volunteer coordinator with some gruff and tuff work at sites. Watch out folks, don't scrape and stack before it's time. She's also been accepted at Vanderbilt in the graduate program for clinical psych. Staff is letting her practice now on us! Alicia recently finished up what *was going to be* a simple project. We all know how those go. One thing led to another, and I think she's said for her last projects, she only wants to paint. We'll see. Thomas has some big discerning ahead of him. It seems that God has dropped one too many anvils on his thick skull and the message or call may finally be seeping through. Pray for him. Matt has been back in full force at home and on sites. Matt's car however, is not. It took a tumble off a cliff on Rt. 23 with Matt and Joe inside. They weren't hurt, but they *were* on their way to the doctor's at the time. And Jess, wow! What a woman. Dare I say "Every Woman?" Jess is cookin' and cleanin' up a storm and her bread is rising! James has been phenomenal at the work sites and most recently was in charge of a project re-roofing a section of *our own* roof. Imagine that? Fixing our own leaking roof? Butch has just about our entire Summer filled with work projects, and that's no small task. He reviews each application work, visits the people at the site, does some background checks, assesses the job, considers the safety factors, estimates our capability and the cost of the project, visits the site under progress, helps trouble shoot, and returns to the site after completion of the job to look it over and talk to the person or family to make sure the work is acceptable and deliver the invoice. All this and he still has time to drive bus, farm potatoes, and tell an occasional joke to make us laugh. I don't know what we'd do without him.

I don't know what we'd do without any of us really. Each staff person here tries to do what is required and so much more beyond that. It's not

## WISH LIST

If you're coming down this Summer, please consider bringing down some of the items on this wish list. We do need them, especially the tools, and chances are we'll use them the week you're here! Thanks to those who responded last issue. We received a 10" mitre saw from St. Paul's in Hingham, MA, and some paper products from groups from Canisius College, etc. Thank you!

### Things we wish for...

- a new director!
- 25" tape measurers
- 1", 2", & 3" paint brushes
- 5 - drill sets with various size bits
- clothes dressers
- a fax machine
- 3 power circular saws
- 3 power drills

uncommon to see some people working well past quitting time or into the evenings, giving 110%. But that's sometimes what happens when love for a place like this and a strong faith are put into action. Please all of you, pray for us as we continue to pray for you.

## MANY THANKS TO YOU!

Many thanks are due to so many people and groups who have shared their generosity with us. Here are a few. Thanks to Our Lady of the Presentation from MO who continues to tithe monthly to us. Thanks to Larry Lenne and St. Louis de Montfort from IN for including us in their tithing program. Thanks to Fr. Ken Budzikowski and St. Paul of the Cross from IL for sending a generous Lenten donation, and to Anna Lakers and St. Walter's Parish from IL for a generous gift. Thanks to the group from Hoban HS who sent in a dollar each (if each person on our mailing list sent in *one* dollar, we'd have well over \$3000 right there, it's true!). Thank you to St. John Vianney HS from NJ who gave us a donation for our new dorm project. And thanks to St. Paul's in MA, Fordham Prep from NY, and so many other groups and individuals who continue to support the Farm's mission.

### NEXT ISSUE...

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- New Season Up-dates
- Message From the Board
- Staff and Work Up-dates
- Your News! and more...