

"I will bless the Lord at all times." Psalms 34:2

www.graceinaction.org
January 2010

celebrate
January

GRACE IN Action

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™

- 1 Mary, Mother of God
holy day of obligation
- 3 Epiphany
- 4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- 21 St. Agnes
- 25 Conversion of St. Paul
- 28 St. Thomas Aquinas

modern disciple

Teachers help foot tuition tab



t Assumption School in Los Angeles, Catholic schoolteachers have gone above and beyond their usual yeoman's duty.

"Almost all school families here are below the poverty level," said Carolina Gomez, the school's principal since 2003. "A lot of parents, because of the economy, have lost their jobs."

The school – which receives a substantial subsidy through the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Together in Mission campaign, along with scholarship money through an education foundation – had lowered tuition for families in need. Still, at the beginning of the school year, enrollment had dropped significantly.

"When I voiced this to our teachers, they decided they would adopt two students each and pay their tuition," Gomez said. "I've never heard of that before, but that's how dedicated our teachers are."

Margarita Banuelos teaches fifth grade at Assumption. "What these kids experience is so extreme: violence, graffiti, gangs, drug use – it's out there. Here, the kids feel very secure, and that's part of why parents want to bring their kids here."

Banuelos and her fellow faculty members don't make a high salary to begin with, yet the teachers willingly offered to make personal sacrifices on behalf of their students.

"Catholic teachers are called," Banuelos said. "This to me isn't a job. It's my family. It's a mission with my co-workers, the students, the families. We love this place. We're blessed with everything we have. *Blessed.*"

Her attitude is typical of this school: "In the world we live in right now, having students receive Catholic education – especially in the inner city – is a blessing," said Gomez. "Here children are treated with dignity and respect and learn along the way how to provide service to others." In their generous teachers, the students have great role models, advocates and believers. "I have such hope for what these kids will do in the future," Banuelos said.



Carolina Gomez



Margarita Banuelos

James Baca photos

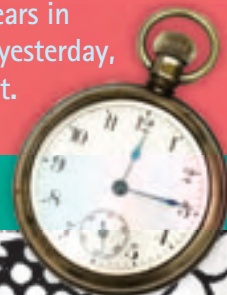


try this Remember your angels

"Our Father in heaven has charged his angels to come to our assistance during our earthly journey which leads us to our blessed fatherland, so that, protected by the angels' help and care, we may avoid the snares upon our path, subdue our passions and, under this angelic guidance, follow always the straight and sure road which leads to Paradise.... Every one of us is entrusted to the care of an angel.... During our earthly pilgrimage we may often run the risk of having to face the natural elements in turmoil, or the wrath of men who may seek to do us harm. But our Guardian Angel is always present. Let us never forget him and always remember to pray to him." – Pope John XXIII's 1959 meditation on the feast of Guardian Angels

For a thousand years in your sight are as yesterday, now that it is past.

– Psalms 90:4



sowingseeds

Put your trust in God

“Stewardship flowing from a personal and communal relationship to Christ holds a particular attraction to people. It is, ultimately, the pull and the power of the Gospel come alive in our times and circumstances.”

— Stewardship: A Disciple's Response
U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship



Our times and circumstances challenge us profoundly these days. For many of us, these days represent some of the most difficult times we've been faced with, to date. There's plenty to fear: war, natural disasters, economic woes, lack of job security, crime. The list goes on. As Christians, however, we're called not to fear, but to trust in God's providence. "Trust in the God who provides us richly with all things for our use" (1 Tm 6:17-19). When we trust God, we can see beyond the darkness to the Light of the World. When we trust God, we feel not vulnerable, but protected. When we remember that God is with us, we're empowered to live in love, uphold the Gospel call and let stewardship flow.

In these times and circumstances, what are your greatest fears? List your fears; then give them to God, asking the Lord to replace your fear with trust.

the waywe pray

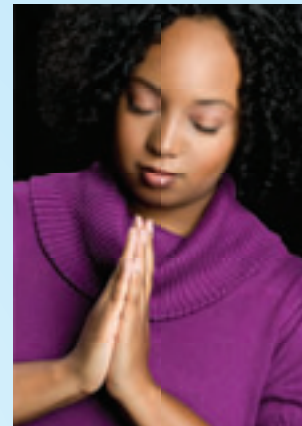
Pray for desire to pray



Dear Lord, give me a growing desire to pray. It remains so hard for me to give my time generously to you. I am still greedy for time — time to be useful, effective, successful, time to perform, excel, produce. But you, O Lord, ask nothing else than my simple presence, my humble recognition of my nakedness, my defenseless confession of my sins, so that you can let the rays of your love enter my heart and give me the deep knowledge that I can love because you have loved me first, and that I can do good because you have shown me your goodness first.

What holds me back? What makes me so hesitant and stingy, so careful and calculating? Do I still doubt that I need nothing besides you? Do I still want to build up some kind of reserve in case you might not come through? Please, Lord, help me give up these immature games, and let me love you freely, boldly, courageously and generously. Amen.

— Father Henri Nouwen



Shutterstock

faithfact

Plug in to electronic catechism

It can't seem to find time for adult religious education, deepen your knowledge of the Church through www.keepthefait.org, a service like iTunes for Catholics. The website has a huge selection of MP3 audio downloads. For the devout and the doubtful, carefully selected material explains and defends Catholic teaching with fidelity to the magisterium and the pope. Presenters include priests and laypeople. Topics range from "Angels" to "War." Most of the sermons, lectures and devotional talks are free or cost just \$1. If you're not in the new media groove, ask a young person to help you with the technology. Or, for a more familiar format, opt for audiocassettes.

OurSundayVisitor



Copyright © 2010 Our Sunday Visitor, Inc. Permission to reprint required from publisher. Grace In Action, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750 Phone: 800-348-2440. Fax: 260-359-9117. E-mail: giaction@osv.com
Please visit our website: www.graceinaction.org

kidscorner

Make time to read



Make time in your busy schedule to read to or with your children. If you're looking for a new book for the new year, "God Made Hugs (Ready, Set, Read! Beginning Readers)," by Sally Anne Conan, is educational, inspirational and entertaining for Catholic kids.

This book includes memorable rhymes and also charming watercolor illustrations by Kathy Rogers, who delightfully depicts various animals and represents ethnic diversity in the people pictured. A glossary at the back of the book helps young readers master 50 words. Check it out at your public library, or purchase at a neighborhood bookstore or online.

Do you have a favorite book for Catholic kids? Log on to www.graceinaction.org and add your title and author. We'll post a list of literary recommendations for little ones.



Illustration by
Quincy Benton