



SERVING CATHOLIC AND OTHER CHRISTIAN YOUTH
WITH A CHRIST CENTERED RETREAT FACILITY

EAGLE'S WINGS HAPPENINGS

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What's in your Bowl?

by Msgr. Elmer Holtman



I'm setting down to breakfast pouring milk into a bowl of bran flakes that I have generously covered with dried cranberries, blueberries, banana slices and walnuts. The thought suddenly comes to me, this bowl of cereal is a lot better traveled than I am. Mr. Kellogg doesn't state on the cereal box from where he purchased the wheat he had shipped to Battle Creek, Michigan. The wheat was processed and packaged, then warehoused in several distribution centers finally making it's way to the HEB shelves in Burnet, Texas. I pick up the cranberry bag which states the origin of the contents to some remote family-owned bog in Delaware. The little Del Monte banana sticker, in very fine print, gives it a Panama pedigree. The walnuts traveled from California's

central valley. The one that wins the best traveled award are the blueberries that have flown all the way from Chile. Only the Lord knows who and how many people it took to make this little bowl of cereal available for me here this morning. Oh yeah, I forgot to mention the dairyman who got up at four in the morning to milk the cows.

So just by something as simple as gazing down at my breakfast I become acutely aware of my dependence upon others; people whom I have never met or even seen.

A feeling of gratitude comes over me when I take my morning walk at Eagle's Wings, through the hundred plus acres of tree-covered rocky outcrops and twisting graveled roads and trails. Someone way before me had the idea that this might just make a wonderful place for a youth retreat center. They purchased the property and generously dedicated it for this purpose.

When I step into the chapel in the morning and flip on the light switch or air conditioner, I am reminded that without the generosity and talent of electricians and HVAC workers I would be sweating it out in the dark.

My very comfortable living quarters is truly a gift in my retirement years and living in residence allows me the pleasure of connecting with wonderful and generous co-workers along with youth and adults from throughout the diocese and beyond. It is such a pleasure to be present to celebrate the sacraments and experience the surprises which the Spirit brings to the weekends.

Hundreds and hundreds of individuals, businesses, engineers and architects, moved by the Spirit, joined hands to set the dream in motion.

And this is what you have brought to our bowl that is called Eagle's Wings. Thank you.



What's in our Bowl?



4th Quarter 10 years Ago

by Deacon Curt Haffner

I'm starting to feel older each time I write these ten-year-ago articles... so this will be the last one. I smile every time I walk or drive around the retreat center and remember what it once looked like and how different it looks today. It really was just a ranch complete with a 145 year-old settler cabin and roads that were barely passable in some parts and didn't even exist in others. We had electricity at some makeshift cabins that hunters had used when the property was leased during the fall for deer season. The deer got a break starting in the fall of 2004 and have ever since, as long as they stay on the property.

We knew we needed to start building but recognized that it would take millions of dollars to build the main campus and so we determined that we could begin smaller and work up to the proposed main campus. God's hand was all over this project and He was guiding and providing every step of the way. The area where the settler cabin was located seemed perfect for a lower cost start up and we thought we could do most of the work ourselves and with volunteers. At first we thought we could rehab the settler's cabin but further investigation showed us that it would not be cost effective or large enough. Instead we found a

plan for a six stall horse barn that we redesigned to provide meeting space, a prep kitchen, restrooms with showers and an upstairs sleeping area in the hayloft. Pretty good use of a 36' x 36' space.

We thought the cost to get power to the area would be prohibitive but we found that PEC could bring power for only \$600. A team of volunteers also put in the septic system and drain field.

We were then blessed by a mission group from Colorado Springs that normally did construction work in the Caribbean. They offered to help us get our first building started and so we laid out a 36' x 36' slab, roughed in the plumbing and contracted to have the concrete work done. It was finished in mid-October and the mission group showed up on November 1st to start framing what would be called Eagle's Nest. After 1 week our first building was beginning to take shape. Progress was slow but steady and well over a hundred people helped. The fourth quarter of 2004 was all about getting the retreat center opened for retreats and touching the hearts, minds and lives of teens at Eagle's Wings.

We believed God had a plan and we did our best to follow it. We quickly discovered that when we were following God's plan, things seemed to work.

When we thought we knew better than God is when things did not work. Our God is a patient God. We're still learning that lesson today. The first year was many things but for certain it was a lesson in trusting God and having faith. Ten years later we see the amazing results of what God can do when we trust Him and open ourselves to His plans.

God's plan continues to evolve for me and so I want to take this opportunity to thank every person, adult and teen, for the many ways you have blessed me on this journey of building and developing Eagle's Wings. There is still much more to do but the time has come for me to step back from the day-to-day operations as Executive Director and to join the Board of Directors. Eagle's Wings has an outstanding new Executive Director, Sherie Zebrowski, and a supporting staff that fully understands the mission of Eagle's Wings. This group of dedicated people wants to serve God and his people by providing the best in retreat facilities and retreat programs so that others can truly experience God's presence while they are here at Eagle's Wings. Yes it's true; he wants to raise you up on Eagle's Wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of his hand.



Seeking Grace Through Sacred Art

by Barbara King

It's been more than five years in the making and now visitors to Eagle's Wings Adoration Chapel can enjoy the calming beauty of stained glass as they reflect on the power of God's love.

In 2009, Father Elmer Holtman was approached by Betty and Paul Buratti of Spicewood. The couple wanted to celebrate the life of their dear family friend, Reverend Francis J. Chroma, who had died in 2007. The Burattis had a vision of a beautiful stained glass window and selected Eagle's Wings as the benefactor of the display of sacred art.

A small art committee was formed, and it was decided to place eight stained glass panels in the upper windows of the Adoration Chapel. The committee deliberated with artist David Yancey over a period of weeks, emerging with a design that would represent each of the Sacraments of the Church: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation,

Reconciliation, Matrimony, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick. The first panel, preceding the Sacraments and depicting the stump of Jesse, is based on Isaiah 11:1-11. In this reading, the Israelites find themselves in a state of desolation and separation from God at the time of the Babylonian exile. Yet from this desolation, God does provide. He sends forth Jesus, who brings to all of mankind "a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2-3).

The remaining seven panels, each featuring a symbol of one of the Sacraments, illustrates God's desire to share his grace, unconditionally, with each of us. A vine motif visually connects the panels to symbolize Jesus' words: "I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5). In communion with Jesus, each of us is urged to spread the beauty of God's

grace to others, to: "judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted" (Isaiah 11:4).

With colors both vibrant and earthy, the windows easily merge the reflective indoor environment of the chapel with the natural beauty that typifies the grounds of Eagle's Wings. Yancey began work on the panels in August of this year, and six of the eight panels are now in place. Four panels were sponsored by the Burattis; the panel representing Matrimony was sponsored by an anonymous couple in celebration of their marriage; and the panel representing Holy Orders was donated in honor of Father Elmer's priesthood. "I am humbled to think that I have been honored with the installation of this beautiful window", commented Father Elmer upon learning of the gift.

Two windows: (Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick) will be installed in early December.



Sign Up for Upcoming Eagle's Wings Retreats

December 13&14: Advent Family Retreat Price varies on family size (includes meals and materials).

Step away from the hubbub of Christmas preparations. Come join us as a family and experience Advent reflections, prayer, music, fun activities and Main Street Bethlehem in Burnet. Our emphasis is family dialog and experience. Presenter: Judy Hoelscher; Gifted retreat facilitator, musician and hospice chaplain.

January 26: Godstock Registration opens!! To register go to: www.ewrc.org

Save your spot -**MATT MAHER IS COMING** to Godstock. Godstock is April 11 – 12, 2015.

January 27: 9:30 – 2:30 The Art of Balance: doing God's work intended ONLY for you \$35 per person; Lunch is included. Explore how setting limits sets you free. Learn how to have fun with your new-found freedom. Enter the New Year with clarity, refreshment and energy as you discover how to set parameters around your expectations versus God's expectations, and reconcile your life's mission with that of God's commission for you and your life.

Presenter: Lori Mulady Burdick MA, LPC To register go to: www.ewrc.org

February 28 - March 1: Gifts & Fruits of the Holy Spirit \$70

Retreat is for youth or parishes preparing for Confirmation. Contact the Diocese of Austin to register.

It's a Wonderful Spiritual Life!

Eleven years ago, a group of people took a leap of faith that God would help build a retreat center for our youth of Central Texas. God has answered with a resounding yes & many stones have been laid for buildings to house our young people on their spiritual journey. Eagle's Wings wants to refocus our efforts toward programming to contribute to the spiritual lives of our youth.

We have all probably watched the Christmas movie, "It's a Wonderful Life". George Bailey was looking for a wonderful life. Our youth are searching for a better life in this chaotic world. Clarence, the angel, came to show George that his life was indeed wonderful. Would you consider choosing from our Christmas Wish List & become Clarence, the angel, for our youth? You can make a difference & contribute to the wonderful spiritual lives of our youth. **We can hear the bells ringing!**



Eagle's Wings Wish List for

'It's A Wonderful Spiritual Life for our Youth'!

- Presenter fees for Diocesan Confirmation retreats, our Godstock musical festival & days of reflections - \$5000
- Salaries for staff to implement grant writing to seek funds for programming - \$3000
- Publicity for retreats - \$1000
- Materials for retreats (resource books, DVD's, etc.) - \$800
- Materials for service projects - \$500
- Scholarships per person for a two-night retreat - \$63
- Stipends for each priest - \$50
- Bibles for seven youth - \$35
- Recreational items to build community
 - o Tether balls, ping pong paddles, etc. - \$25
 - o Volleyball nets \$299



May God continue to bless all of us abundantly as we celebrate the joy of the season and the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Have a blessed and joyful Christmas!

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