



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

EAGLE'S WINGS HAPPENINGS

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Through Whom Does God Speak?

by Msgr. Elmer Holtman

“Lord, you ain’t carried me this far to leave me now.” These are the words I heard robustly sung by a African American woman, twenty years ago, at a Sunday liturgy in San Francisco. This experience struck a note in me then and continually haunts me since. How have I been able to not only maintain but grow in my faith during the fifty years of my ordained ministry? What kept me together when I started my ministry in 1964 and experienced Vatican II changes in the church and a sometimes divided American society, many resisting the signing into law equal rights for every person? All my prejudices to both the changes in the church and society had lost their cover. My weaknesses were quickly being exposed. I had a lot of questions and very few answers.

I have been endowed with a temperament that can be comfortable moving forward with less than a definite answer, trusting that my directions will be made clear along the way. This is where I get my staying power. But the downside of that modus operandi are the surprises I get when the necessary details have not been considered. A good example of this is when I am sitting in the third hour of confessions not having asked how many



The early years on the home place.

were coming on this retreat. But when it is over I am glad I could be there. The shaky experience I had at the beginning of my priesthood has trained me to be open to last minute changes and to “keep truckin” without clear directions.

Another thing I have noticed is that my motivations are not always the purest at the beginning. They have to go through the fire of mistakes and disappointments before they are tempered into real service to others. For example, what first attracted me to retire here at Eagle’s Wings was having a comfortable place to live in retirement, a beautiful quiet place in the country where I could piddle in my garden and work in my shop and associate with like-minded friendly people. Alterations of my motivations were in order



50 Years of Priesthood

when I realized that my calendar is sometimes more busy than at the parish. I’m just as happy now and all that it took was some self-reflections on my original motivations and a little attitude adjustment.

Sometimes God speaks to us in most mysterious and memorable ways. For me it would be a ten second Gospel song lyric sung twenty years ago. Finally I have realized that any change and spiritual growth to which I have evolved over the years has come by simply being available to others while knowing and accepting my own sinfulness, faults and failures. “My grace is enough for you, for in weakness power reaches perfection. And I so willingly boast of my weaknesses instead, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Cor. 12:9)

2nd Quarter, 10 Years Ago...

by Deacon Curt Haffner

Springtime had arrived and the bluebonnets were in bloom. The land that was to become God's retreat center was coming to life and God's plan was starting to unfold. Fr. Elmer had arranged a lunch meeting with Don Collier. Katie had talked with Don several years earlier when he was working for the Diocese of Austin about the need for a youth retreat center. We never imagined our paths would cross again. Joe Noonan, Katie, Fr. Elmer, and I over a lengthy lunch explained to Don what our vision was for a youth retreat center and what had been already accomplished. Don listened carefully to the numerous plans and smiled at us occasionally as he considered

the complexity of the undertaking. When we finished Don told us that he knew exactly what we needed.....a project manager! We asked him where we might find that individual and he responded; you're looking at him! God had just blessed us with someone who knew how to bring order to the chaos.

Don's first order of business was to build a master plan for what the retreat center should look like. He introduced us to a retired architect, Don Logan, who agreed to donate his time to help us. We began a series of meetings with Don and Don. They would ask lots of questions about how we thought a youth retreat center should look. The



First Retreat, St. Luke parish

things to consider seemed endless.

During this planning phase, Don Collier began to assemble a team of professionals that would eventually number over 20. Slowly during the months of April, May and June, the beginnings of a master plan were coming together and we could see that God was blessing the effort. We also were beginning to understand more clearly that God's plan for his retreat center was going to involve a lot of people.

June 1st arrived and Katie and Curt moved from Temple to their home on the ranch which was already in the beginning stage of evolving into a special place where teens and adults could come and be refilled with the peace and love that God wants to share with us. Eagle's Wings was beginning to take shape.



St Thomas More First Service Project



First Retreat Mass

8th Grade Retreat

by Deacon Curt Haffner

St. Helen's Catholic School, St. Mary's Cathedral and St. Ignatius joined together for a one day 8th grade retreat emphasizing spirituality in leadership and collaboration and how those skills would be important when starting high school. The retreat was custom developed by the staff at Eagle's Wings for the group coming on retreat. The retreat was designed to be fast paced with talks and activities emphasizing the theme of the retreat. Guided reflection and discussion time was included to process the lessons taught through the talks and activi-

ties. The response by the students and the teachers was very positive. The staff at Eagle's Wings is looking forward to seeing another group of 8th graders from St. Helen's, St. Mary's and St. Ignatius. Students commented, "They seemed to re-

ally care about us and the choices we would make going into high school!" ALL the SHCS students said, "Returning to Eagle's Wings for the 8th Grade Class next year should be a 'done decision' ! It was the best thing about our 8th Grade year!"



Building Teamwork



Hearing God Talk

Godstock 2014



Sherie Zebrowski Named Co-Director

Meet the newest member of our staff! Please join us in welcoming Sherie Zebrowski as our Co-Executive Director. Sherie is a graduate of Villanova University with a degree in Business Administration and Finance, and received her MA in Theology from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. In addition to her

leadership experience in business, she has been involved in faith formation ministries and religious education for youth and adults for over 23 years. Sherie has also been an active member on the Board of Directors of Eagle's Wings Retreat Center for the last two years. We are excited to have her on our team.



Upcoming Retreats

St Joseph Catholic Church - Honey Creek	June 12-15
St John Catholic Church - Marble Falls Teen Retreat	June 19-22
Northpoint Bible Church Leander - Boot Camp	June 23-27
Crosstraining - Diocese of Austin	July 16-20
Together Encounter Christ - TEC	July 28-30
Together Encounter Christ - TEC	Aug 31 - Sep 1
St. Peter Catholic Church - Boerne	July 24-27
St Matthew Catholic Church - San Antonio	July 24-27

Eagle's Wings Wish List

- Walkie-Talkies - \$700
- One ton Hand Chain Hoist- \$150
- Receiver hitch for Ranch Truck - \$250
- Deep-well impact sockets - \$120
- 3 Ton Floor Jack - \$150
- 1/2 inch HD drill - \$130
- Dump Trailer - \$6000
- Power for Outdoor Chapel - \$1500
- Commercial food processor - \$2100

Giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father. *Ephesians 5:20*

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