

# Los Éxitos Logrados con la Ayuda de Dios, Hermanos Agustinos

El diácono, Fernando López-Castillo, O.S.A., continúa su viaje ahora con la misma determinación y compromiso que demostró cuando tenía 17 años, edad en la que emigró a los Estados Unidos, en 1978.

En aquel entonces, había dejado su pequeño pueblo en Michoacán, México, después de que su padre fue asesinado. Necesitaba encontrar trabajo para mantener a su madre viuda y hermanos. Él le prometió que lo haría; y cumplió su promesa.

Hoy, él está estudiando teología en el Seminario de San Juan, Camarillo, California; en preparación para convertirse en un sacerdote Agustino. Espera terminar sus estudios en mayo del 2013.

A finales de 1980, comenzó a trabajar con un grupo de jóvenes hispanos en su parroquia como un ministro laico. Después, formó un grupo más grande en la comunidad de la parroquia hispana, evangelizando y organizando retiros y clases para los jóvenes y sus padres. En el 2000, fue aceptado en el programa de los Agustinos para pre-principiantes en San Diego.

Durante su pre-noviado, el Diácono Fernando estudió muy duro el inglés en el San Diego City College para mejorar su conocimiento del lenguaje - una necesidad para leer y orar en inglés en el Noviciado.

Después de terminar el noviciado y graduarse del San Francisco City College, comenzó los estudios para el Diaconado Permanente, a la vez que continúa tomando cursos universitarios y participando en diferentes ministerios. Él fue el administrador del Hogar Infantil, orfanato de los

Agustinos cerca de Tijuana, y más tarde se convirtió en director espiritual de la Sociedad Hispana en la parroquia de San Patricio, en San Diego.

También se desempeñó como capellán de un hospital y cárcel.

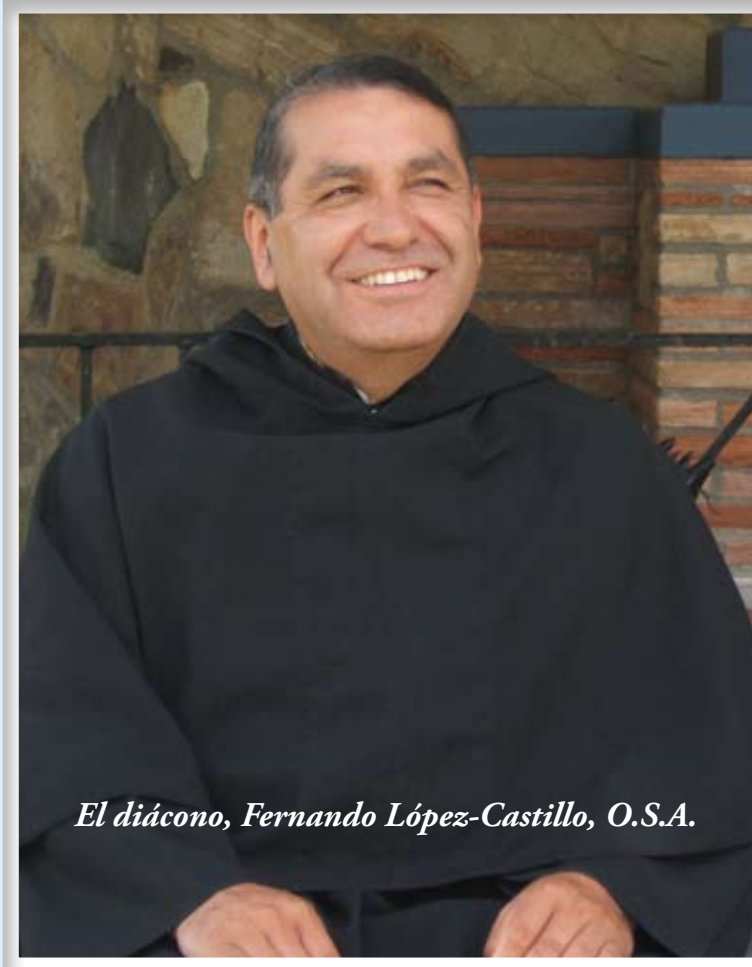
Él dice que fue capaz de gestionar todo lo relacionado con la práctica diaria de oración centrada - y con el apoyo y aliento que ha recibido de sus hermanos agustinos. "Ellos han estado allí para mí cuando yo estaba haciendo mis ministerios," dice, "y ellos han estado allí para mí cuando tenía que hablar."

Después de su ordenación al Diaconado Permanente en los primeros días de su ministerio en San Patricio, el Diácono Fernando comenzó a discernir su vocación al sacerdocio. "Empecé a pensar que yo sería más efectivo al ministrar como sacerdote a la gente en la parroquia,

recuerda el Diácono Fernando. "Los feligreses preguntaron si podía oír confesiones, y me sentí mal de que no era capaz de ayudarles en ese sentido."

Cuando entró en el Seminario de San Juan, el año pasado, dice que se sintió un poco extraño al principio, pensando que él era el único estudiante mayor. Pronto descubrió que estaba equivocado. "Me siento cómodo aquí. Es un lugar maravilloso y bendito. El personal y mis compañeros son geniales," dice.

Él está esperando con alegría a su futuro como sacerdote. "Este último paso será el mejor de todos. Voy a tener la oportunidad de tener a mis hermanos Agustinos caminando conmigo y ayudarme a descubrir a mi hermano Jesús en cada persona a la que estoy ministrando," concluyó.



El diácono, Fernando López-Castillo, O.S.A.

## Hearing God's Call to a New Life in Community

When Maxime Villeneuve began discerning a call to the religious life, it's not surprising that the Augustinians were his first stop.

"The fraternal and common life, the camaraderie are what most appeal to me about Augustinian spirituality," says Max. "I don't have any biological brothers, and so it's interesting that God would be calling me to an Order in which I'll have many brothers."

This summer, Max began his year-long trial run as a pre-novice at the Augustinian St. Rita Cole Street House in San Francisco. During the year, he is completing his philosophy credits and getting into the rhythms of common life and prayer.

Max, 24, was born in Houston, Texas of French Canadian parents. He was reared in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and finally, San Francisco, where he graduated from Bridgemont High School in 2005. At Bridgemont, he played soccer, basketball and baseball and says he remains a huge sports fan. With his French Canadian lineage, he is an avid hockey enthusiast.

In 2009, Max graduated from San Diego State University with a B.A. in religious studies, serving there as president of the Newman Club. For the last two years, he has been working as Director of Faith Formation at Blessed Sacrament parish in San Diego, where he was responsible for CCD, Confirmation and Adult Faith Formation events in the parish. He says the job was a perfect fit for him.

After meeting Brother Mark Menegatti, O.S.A. during his freshman year at SDSU, Max was invited to dinner occasionally at the Augustinian Monastery, where he became acquainted with several Augustinians.

"I know some of the Augustinians better than others, but what has always been clear to me is that each of them has a very deep interior life," reflects Max. "The men I've met are confident in themselves. They have a great love and devotion for God and His people."



Maxime Villeneuve

### Yes! I would like to learn more about the Augustinians.

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# Spiritu

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## Vocations Update

Our Augustinian Western Province continues to be blessed with vocations to the brotherhood and priesthood. A careful look at the statistics of the Province shows that 30% of those presently professed in the Province are new members within the past 12 years.



By Fr. Tom Whelan, O.S.A.  
Vocations Director,  
Province of St. Augustine

This is unique, because no other Augustinian Province in the developed world has 30% of its men as new members. Three factors have helped in the influx of new men:

- ◆ The enthusiasm of a number of Province members in inviting men to consider a vocation with us;

- ◆ The enthusiasm of our communities in having men discern with them by inviting them regularly to prayer and supper;

- ◆ The good experience enquirers have during the vocation discernment weekends held twice yearly at St. Augustine Monastery, San Diego.

We presently have four students in theological studies: Brother Fernando Lopez, in his final year of studies at St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, and Brother Mark Menegatti, in his final year of studies at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago.

Mark, a Los Angeles native, grew up in San Gabriel and began discernment with us through the community at Our Mother of Good Counsel.

Fernando came to the Los Angeles area from Mexico when he was 17 and later met the Augustinians when he was active at St. Pius in Buena Park, when it was staffed by our Irish Augustinian brothers.

Additionally, finished with second year theology and doing a pastoral year in San Diego, is Brother Carlos Medina, a native of Colombia who migrated to the San Francisco Bay area with his family when in middle school. He discerned as a pre-novice in San Francisco during his senior year as a philosophy major at U.C. Berkeley.

Starting his first year of theology is Nick Porter, also from Los Angeles, who discerned with the St. Augustine community when working in San Diego after graduating from U.C. San Diego.

Presently living at our house in San Francisco are three men preparing for the novitiate: Agustin Gonzalez, who is a native of Mexico; Max Villeneuve, a Texas native who grew up in California and discerned with the St. Augustine community in San Diego; and Cole Dryden, a native of Los Angeles who has discerned with the Good Counsel community.

The men in formation are reflective of the diversity of background of the California population, as well as the fact that the majority of the people in the state were not born here.

*"Helping poor people is an expression of our faith, which understands that it is God who feeds and nurtures us, and who desires to provide the same attention for the poor people of the world through us."*

*St. Augustine, Sermon 39, 4.*

## Augustinian Students Extend Helping Hands to Most Vulnerable



Villanova students work on Habitat for Humanity project.

With warm hearts and an adventurous spirit, students at St. Augustine's High School (Saints), San Diego, and Villanova Preparatory School, Ojai, are discovering the sense of fulfillment that comes from reaching out and helping others.

At both schools, students are taking part in a variety of Christian service pursuits, often going beyond the schools' required service hours. Their experiences are at once eye-opening and consciousness-raising for them.

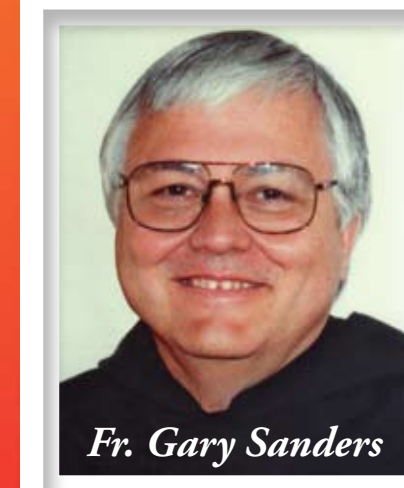
"Service and service learning allow me to teach justice not by 'telling kids about it' but rather by

*(continued inside)*

## My Augustinian Heroes

*As in all strong families, the older generations of Augustinian friars in the West Coast Province have always given much to the younger members. Those who have gone before serve as role models and mentors, inspiring, passing along insights, teaching by example. Spiritu asked a few friars to tell us about their Augustinian heroes.*

**Here is an appreciation of Fr. Harry Neely, O.S.A. by Fr. Gary Sanders, O.S.A., Prior Provincial and Editor of Spiritu:**



Fr. Gary Sanders

I first met **Fr. Harry Neely** in 1960 when I was in the fifth grade at St. Rita's school in San Diego. He used to be the Sunday "supply help" at the parish and I was an "altar boy" (the term we used then.) He could see that I was nervous serving my first Sunday mass, and he asked me my name. At the end of the mass, he told me that I had done a good job, and he thanked me for serving. Even though I knew that I had flubbed in a few parts of the ceremony, I remember him making me feel good by not pointing out the obvious. I also remember the parishioners at the parish referring to him as the "singing priest," not because the other priests didn't sing but because he was the only one who sang well — beautifully, in fact — a gift that he still has today in his 84 years of age.

In 1963, I was a freshman at St. Augustine's High School (Saints), and I was a member of the school's Schola Cantorum, which seemed to practice little and sing at mass even less. I remember Fr. Neely being at the microphone at every Friday school mass in the gym, leading the music. One such time has been frozen in my memory. The whole school was in the gym on this mass day in November and just before the offertory, he invited everyone to pray for President Kennedy, who had just been assassinated.

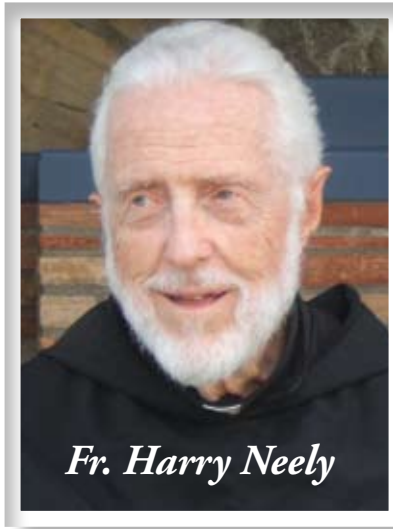
Harry Neely was at Saints the first three of my four years at the school. He was my favorite

*(continued inside)*



## AUGUSTINIAN HEROES (continued from front page)

Augustinian teacher. He taught me Latin II and III. As is the case today, he was a very popular teacher. For many of us, he was the most approachable and friendly priest or teacher we had ever met. He had time for us. What set him apart from the others is that he called us by our first names — no other teacher at Saints did that while I was there. We felt a special bond with him; I know I did.



Fr. Harry Neely

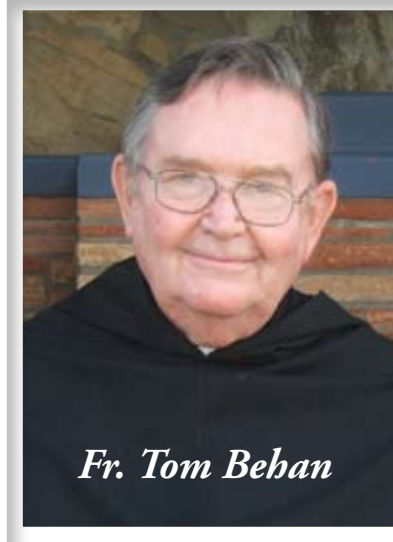
Because he was such a “nice guy,” it seemed unbelievable to us that he had been made the school’s disciplinarian when I was a junior at Saints. His mild manner and compassionate demeanor did not seem to fit the job. Yet I don’t remember any major problems with him in this capacity; in fact, I think his personal approach to life had a calming effect on the student body. The fact that he was transferred from Saints after that particular year was not lost on the students.

During two years of my seminary training Harry Neely was my spiritual director. He has been my friend and confidant for the decades that have followed. I never needed his friendship more than on November 25, 2000 when he called to tell me that my brother John (another Augustinian priest) had died of a massive heart attack. When I presided and preached at John’s funeral, I asked Harry to position himself next to me and help me if I made some mistakes celebrating the liturgy. I did and he gently guided me in my grieving to the right words and pages.

I admire Harry because he is unapologetically adherent to his spirituality, which is steeped in the Augustinian tradition and — perhaps to the consternation of a few — the traditions of an ever-ancient, ever-new church. He is a Latin scholar and celebrates the mass in Latin every Sunday. He also

brings communion and hears confessions to the homebound all over San Diego. In one sense he is retired, in another he is the most appropriately busy priest I know.

I now live in the same community as Harry. Most nights, after evening prayer, members of our community gather in the common room upstairs. It is my favorite part of the day. For 45 minutes we regale each other with the events of the day. Once in a while we will even get on a political observation or discussion of liturgy. In these areas Harry and I are polar opposites. Yet even in minor disagreements I admire Harry’s expounded articulation of his point of view — or what he deems as truth. In these matters, Harry says things so clearly and so well that I know exactly wherein we differ.



Fr. Tom Behan

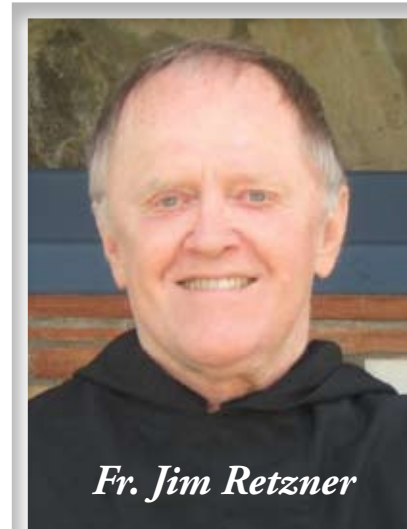
Where we do not differ is in our love for community of life and the importance of humor therein. More than any other Augustinian, Harry can get me laughing — something appreciated by

Harry but not necessarily others in the room. He is also the person I go to for advice or when I need a calming listener to a Provincial’s not-always tranquil woes.

For many gifts mentioned, and many others not, Fr. Harry Neely is one of the Augustinian friars I most admire. He has helped make me a better Augustinian priest, and for this I will always be grateful.

### Fr. Gary singles out a few other of his friar heroes in the Province:

I will always be grateful to **Fr. Tom Behan** because he has a sense of life and humanity about him. He gets excited over Christmas and his birthday, and shares who he is with



Fr. Jim Retzner

**Retzner** very much. He lets his epilepsy become neither a crutch nor an excuse.

Instead he has an ability to transform his difficulties into being an even more compassionate minister.

### Br. Mike Bube

continues to bring reality into my world. He is compassionate and forgiving. While he sometimes seems emphatic about his opinions, I know that he is a person who speaks in the imperative but means a weak subjunctive.



Br. Mike Bube

### Fr. Tom Whelan, O.S.A., the Province Vocations Director, shares recollections of several Augustinian heroes:

**Fr. John Glynn** (deceased) was for me a model for the teaching ministry. He taught me geometry and 3rd and 4th year Latin in high school. He worked us hard but his classes were always fun. Later, as a teacher myself, I wanted to have

others — whether it’s the description of a trip he’s taken, a restaurant meal he enjoyed, or even if he made a mistake.

I am the only person in the Province who had the privilege of being taught [freshman and sophomore religion] by **Fr. Jim Hannan**. I liked his class because I always knew what to expect, and I learned a lot from him.

I admire **Fr. Jim**

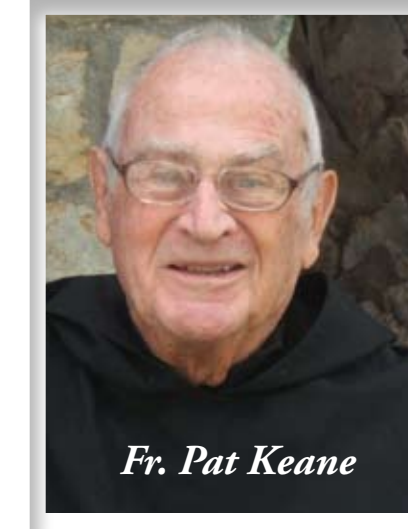
some of the impact he had on students. I tried in my own teaching to be friendly with my students like he was with us, and to make a point of making conversation with them outside of class time.

**Fr. John Blethen** (deceased), who also taught me in high school, was a model for me of zeal for helping poor people both at Villanueva and at the orphanage. I admired how he became both bi-lingual and bi-cultural.

**Fr. Pat Keane** (recently deceased) was always a model for faithful living of community life: prayer, meals together and recreation on a constant basis. He was also a witness for overcoming obstacles without complaint. (Fr. Pat suffered from progressively worsening post-polio syndrome.)

I remember being with Fr. Pat and Fr. John Keller on a trip to the Trinity Wilderness around the summer of 1974. We stayed at Carter’s Lodge, which was in the middle of the wilderness area and did some hiking every day. We tried to pick walks which would not be too challenging for Pat. One was up a winding but fairly gentle trail, which near the end had loose, very flat stones — like flint — as the trail bed. The last 50 feet of the trail became quite steep, and not content with seeing the view from below the summit, Pat scrambled up the last 50 feet on hands and knees, as a sign of his great determination not to be stopped by obstacles.

Another “touchstone” person for me over the years is someone who is still living: **Fr. John Keller**. I have enjoyed his friendship, going on vacation with him once every three or four years. I have always been impressed with his flexibility and adaptability, doing well in many varied positions: teacher, administrator, pastor, campus minister, community leader. He has also done great work in caring for



Fr. Pat Keane

our elder members at St. Augustine.

He has a talent for making things happen. I remember about 15 years ago I had signed up to take a week of Spanish classes in Ensenada, at a school where the students stayed in the homes of local families who spoke only Spanish. Then John called me after I had planned that and asked if I would like to spend a week at the beach during the summer. So I told him about my plan for Spanish class and said, “But if you can find a white stucco cottage right on the beach in the Ensenada area, with red bougainvillea vines and a red tile roof, I will commute to school from there and have the afternoon and evening there with you.” About two weeks later he called and said: there is a cottage, with white stucco walls and red bougainvillea, but a flat roof... will that do?”

### Fr. Alvin Paligutan, O.S.A. has this to say:

There are three friars whom I greatly admire. Thank you to Fr. Harry Neely for being like a spiritual father to me. I admire Fr. Tom Whelan for his years of high school teaching experience, vocation and formation work and his holiness of life.

Also, I am grateful to **Fr. John Keller** for his community care and devotion to our province, high schools and parishes as well as passing on to me much-needed information on education-related issues. This helped me in writing and completing my Master’s thesis/culminating project at the University of San Francisco’s School of Education.



## EXTENDING HELPING HANDS (continued from front page)

exposing them to some of the results of a lack of justice and enabling them to connect the dots themselves,” said Fr. Kirk Davis, O.S.A., Director of Christian Service at Saints. “Hopefully, this will form young minds to look out for those at the margins.”

Josh Kruse, Campus Minister at Villanova, says Christian service is one of the best ways for Villanovans to experience the Augustinian core values — unity, truth and love. “Through service, students build unity by working alongside their peers whom they may not normally hang out with during school. Students learn the truth about the suffering, poverty and ecological problems in our world. Students also learn to love those who are less fortunate, as Christ loves them.”

### Myriad Service Opportunities at Villanova

Last year, Villanova’s Campus Ministry and College Counseling teamed up to sponsor the first-ever Christian Service Fair. Many nonprofit organizations from around Ventura County set up booths on campus, educating students on service opportunities and signing them up as volunteers.

Campus Ministry sponsored two Habitat for Humanity trips last year in which students did hard physical work on behalf of others. With Bowls of Hope through Many Mansions, students helped raise more than \$3,400 in money and canned goods for the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. Students provided more than 150 Christmas gifts for needy children at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Santa Paula.

Haley Yanez helped troubled children at a carnival in Tulsa during the Student Augustinian Values Institute. “The

children were really sweet and happy despite their challenges,” said Haley. “I learned that no matter how hard your life is, you can still be positive about all that you do have.”

Maddy Sullivan sews dresses for small girls in African orphanages. “I want to help people who I feel need it the most, and I love making little dresses, knowing they will bring smiles to young girls,” said Maddy.

### Many Students Join Campus Service Organizations

Long-established student service organizations at Villanova harness the energy and enthusiasm of students on behalf of others year in and year out:

- ◆ For more than a decade, *Friends of Hogar Infantil* has been a standout organization on the Villanova campus, committed to helping support Hogar Infantil La Gloria, the Augustinian-operated orphanage near Tijuana, Mexico. Each year, the group raises thousands of dollars to help meet the needs of the youngsters and for maintenance of the facility.
- ◆ Project A.F.R.I.C.A. (Aid for Relief in Countries Afflicted) works in concert with *Invisible Children* to raise awareness and fundraise for displaced children in Uganda. Members of Project A.F.R.I.C.A. have also raised funds to support high school students and their schools in northern Uganda.
- ◆ The Interact Club is Rotary International’s service club



Saints students hard at work in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala.

for teens which focuses on performing service both locally and internationally.

Villanova’s Interact Club currently sponsors three students through P.A.C.E. Universal, a vocational and educational program for impoverished girls in India. Interact’s local community service projects have included

assembling Christmas food and gift baskets for needy families, and volunteering at Ojai Day, Martin Luther King Day, Ojai Youth Day and at local homeless shelters.

### Christian Service a High Priority at Saints

At St. Augustine’s High School, freshmen collect canned food for the poor. Sophomores spend one day during the school year serving the poor at St. Vincent de Paul Village, San Diego’s largest hot meal program. Juniors will be visiting residents at Nazareth House, a local senior care facility. Seniors complete their required service hours with a single nonprofit agency. Options include soup kitchens, meal delivery to the sick and elderly, or after-school tutoring or recreation.

St. Augustine’s also has a Hogar Infantil Club, members of which do monthly service visits to the orphanage. “When I go to the orphanage, I really enjoy it,” said a frequent visitor. “I enjoy talking to the kids. They’re always happy to see me.”

Several students are active in the IRC (International Rescue Committee) which has a summer student “ambassador” program. IRC works in refugee resettlement and has an urban farm in San Diego, a model of urban sustainability.

### Traveling Far and Near to Aid Needy

It has been under Fr. Kirk’s leadership that groups of Saints students have been participating in innovative Christian service adventures that they’ll remember all their lives:

- ◆ In the Intersession period early this year, 12 students embarked on a two week service-cultural immersion trip to San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala, accompanied by Fr. Kirk and Fr. Alvin Paligutan, O.S.A., religion teacher at Saints.

The Saintsmen worked daily, mornings and afternoons, some of it hard manual labor. They harvested coffee beans, sifted and sorted coffee beans at a processing plant, worked with saplings at a nursery, sifted sand for construction and lugged a lot of heavy rocks.

“This trip was a once-in-a-lifetime eye-opening experience for all of us...” said junior Robby Baughman. “The trip has made me realize that we don’t need our physical possessions to find happiness. It is in our family, friends and relationship with God where we find our true happiness.”

- ◆ This year, on “Alternative Spring Break,” 24 students and three faculty chaperones traveled to New York City for a week combining service, sightseeing and college visits. Service included work with the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty and Bread & Life, an agency in Brooklyn that runs a dining room, food pantry and other services.

- ◆ In May, 12 students participated in a four-day “Urban Plunge Weekend—L.A.” The group stayed at Dolores Mission Parish in Boyle Heights. They prepared breakfast at the Mission, volunteered at an elementary school’s after school program, toured Skid Row and served dinner at the Union Rescue Mission.

