



Goodbye, and Thank You

By Jennifer Mucher, M.A.



Jennifer and Celina at Jennifer's farewell dinner hosted by the Norbertine Community.

It has been an incredible year, a little over a year, here with you at the abbey. I wanted to thank you all for your generosity and hospitality as I navigated this new ministry and office. Thank you for your patience and prayers. It is bitter-sweet writing this knowing it means goodbye. As I'm sure most of you know, I am leaving my work and life here in New Mexico. I will be getting married September 24 and moving to Raleigh, NC shortly after. I have begun looking for work in the Diocese of Raleigh but know that nothing can compare to my spiritual home here at Santa Maria de la Vid Abbey.

I appreciate the invaluable experience I gained while employed here. I am honored that you entrusted me with the care and work of this new ministry. I have personally grown and expanded my skills and knowledge. I thank you, again, for the opportunity to work alongside you and your community here in the South Valley as we work together to serve God's people. I cannot adequately convey my thanks and appreciation for having worked with you; nor, can I truly express my sadness at leaving such a special place. It has been an honor for me to learn from you and share in this work.

It has been a true joy to have shared this year with you – seeing Br. Zac's vestiture, Deacon Stephen's ordination, mourn with you for Fr. Nick, and share in an entire liturgical year's worth of celebrations and feasts, and other various excitements and disappointments.

Please know you all remain in my prayers, and please pray for me as I begin this new journey in my life.

Our New Program & Communications Coordinator

Hello! My name is Celina Chavez and I am excited to be on board with all of the efforts and happenings here at the Abbey. Jennifer is amazing, and I am honored to join in the work God called her to be a part of a little over a year ago. I am a parishioner of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Community in Albuquerque, NM. I have a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Speech and Hearing Sciences from the University of New Mexico, and I am working towards beginning courses for the Master of Theological Studies Program with St. Norbert College through the Abbey as a New Mexico campus.

My twin sister and I are the youngest of five girls. Our three older sisters are each married with seven children between them, and our parents recently celebrated their 33rd wedding anniversary. How blessed we are that our family continues to grow in size and love!

I have been active in parish ministry and Catholic non-profit ministry for the past ten years or so, specifically as part of the youth choir for the Sunday evening mass at my parish, and as part of the ACTS ministry and Emmaus Journey ministry. With Emmaus Journey ministry, I have been called to work among young adults and women. As part of core groups for both Emmaus Journey Young Adult Mission and Emmaus Journey Women's Ministry, I have been blessed to be involved in mission trips to Poland as well as to facilitate and participate in formation retreats, faith-sharing breakfasts and small Christian communities.

I feel truly blessed to begin in ministry here on a professional level and look forward to all that God has in store for this office and community.



Br. Zac presenting on St. Augustine at Doubt and Faith.



Christ in the Community: ABQ Rail Yards.

Where We've Been...

Recognizing a central focus of our activity in accompanying young people in discernment, we hosted a number of men's "come and see" retreats and one co-ed discerning ministry in the Church retreat. We sponsored four young adults to participate in the Catholics on Call program at the Catholic Theological Union and are walking with them for a year of ministry immersion and formation. Fr. Graham continued to assist in several youth retreats and campus ministry endeavors—including presentations and liturgies at New Mexico Highlands University, Benedictine College and Texas A&M. Locally, we organized Consecrated Life Week this past April. Brother Zac was invited to present to the C.A.F.E. group at UNM.

We still continued to produce our own programming to engage new and diverse populations in the life of the Abbey. These included the kick-off of our Theology on Film series facilitated by Deacon Stephen and Brother Zac, a series on Saints in the Making, and our ongoing liturgies for the Year of Mercy.

Taizé in the Desert celebrated its fourth anniversary in the archdiocese this previous June. We are encouraged to see several youth groups, other parish groups and many familiar faces attend! The joint effort between our office and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries to have this evening of prayer each month has been a true blessing! We look forward to the collaborative opportunities the future holds in which we may continue to work with the archdiocese.

Our collaborative efforts continued to grow as we co-sponsored a Young Adult retreat with the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries on life transitions. The Archdiocese was also a co-sponsor for our all-Norbertine facilitated Doubt and Faith Series where Fr. Graham, Br. Zaccary and Deacon Stephen, and Fr. Matthew Dougherty were featured presenters. Also in cooperation with the Archdiocese we launched the Christ in the Community movement, inviting Catholics to come together as a visible and subtle presence at various city events. The first four gatherings brought together Catholics in specially designed T-shirts at the Albuquerque Rail Yards, Isotopes Park, Civic Plaza and the Growers' Market. Fr. Graham facilitated the first of the Archdiocesan Catholic Chat series of the school year. In August we established a relationship with another partner when our office became an organizing sponsor of the Emmaus Journey Young Adult Ministry Leadership Conference.



Christ in the Community: Civic Plaza for Summerfest!



Taizé in the Desert.

Upcoming Events

October

- 22 ASF Youth Conference
- 26 Theology on Film*
- 27-28 Cathedral Staff Retreat

November

- 2 All Souls' Day Liturgies*
- 4 Holy Hour and Reconciliation*
- 4-6 Incarnation Confirmation Retreat
- 7-11 Benedictine College Visit
- 10 Catholic Chat^
- 11 Art Exhibition Opening*
- 11-13 SEARCH Retreat
- 18 Taizé in the Desert^
- 18-20 Young Men's Retreat*
- 19 Newman Youth Group Visit to Abbey
- 29-12/2 Texas A&M Visit

December

- 2 Holy Hour and Reconciliation*
- 2-4 Men's Discernment Retreat*
- 9 Café Communio^
- 16 Taizé in the Desert^
- 17 Young Adult Advent Retreat^
- 19-22 Taos Parish Mission
- 28 Theology on Film*

*proprietary programming

^collaboration with the Archdiocese

Jubilee Year of Mercy

Since our small intimate gathering for Holy Hour on February 5th, awareness of this opportunity for prayer, adoration and reconciliation has grown significantly! We thank our music minister, Orlinda Torres, for her faithful service these past several months! We have one more service planned for this Year of Mercy on November 4th, as well as one planned during Advent on December 2nd.

We continue to have visitors and groups of visitors to the abbey specifically to make pilgrimage during this grace-filled year.

Please keep your eyes and ears open to give them a warm, com-

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Our prayer intention table at the Abbey.

Where We're Going...

We are in the process of planning three more Christ in the Community events with the archdiocese which is especially exciting as we enter one of the fuller holiday seasons of the year. These next several months may further provide opportunities to expand and assist this movement in other parts of New Mexico (including Las Vegas and Portales). We also have three archdiocesan young adult retreats (Advent, Lent, Summer) and a few abbey "Come and See" retreats planned. These retreats invite young adults to be present to the Norbertine way of life and charism while also encouraging their own sense of identity in Christ.

In addition to our part in a few upcoming Catholic Chat events, to continuing our Theology on Film series, and to our involvement in other parish and ministry retreats and conferences these next months, we are preparing to host a month-long *Year of Mercy Art Exhibit* and a pop-up coffee house event called *Café Communio*.

Our hope through all of our planning and involvement is to support the increase of the young adult presence in the community and the bridging of gaps to the larger community. Any and all Norbertines are welcome to observe and/or assist with any of these events and ideas. Join us!



Consecrated Life Week at the UNM Aquinas Newman Center.

Experimentation to Engagement

By Fr. Graham Golden, O. Praem.

What a whirlwind our first year and four months have been! Who could have imagined the breadth and speed with which our new outreach into the world of young adult ministry would grow? From the development of solid relationships with campus ministries in Texas, Kansas and here in New Mexico, to the growth of meaningful collaborative relationships with the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and Emmaus Journey, there seems to be no shortage of opportunity for our life as an Abbey to make a meaningful contribution to the lives of others near and far.

In addition to the strengthening growth of our ministry with and among young adults in general, we have seen a steady and consistent increase in vocation contacts both locally and through our campus ministry outreach in other states. This reality is nothing short of the work of the Holy Spirit. Slowly but surely we continue to foster meaningful relationships with those in discernment and walk with them on their journey of faith. Some are even expressing active interest in participating in our new college postulancy program!

This momentum and success was darkened by the departure of Jennifer Mucher, our program coordinator, who contributed in talent, energy, and spirit to our burgeoning attempts to follow the Holy Spirit during our first year of operations. The sadness of Jennifer's departure has been brightened by the addition of Celina Chavez to our ministry. Celina hit the ground running and has not stopped. Her insight, diverse skills, and heart are already building upon the invaluable work of Jennifer and are proving to be an essential element to our ability to move forward as we continually assess and discern next steps in a growing and often difficult to define field of ministry.

Our first year was characterized by scattered experimentation, following any opportunity that presented itself and trying out various and diverse ideas. From that experience, and in conversation and discernment with our ministry partners, we are attempting to have a clearer and more focused approach this coming year. We are focusing principally on three levels of engagement: evangelization, faith formation, and discipleship.

The evangelization efforts are attempting to engage young Catholics in the midst of their daily lives, activities, struggles and interests to bring them together to foster community and discover the value of a shared identity of faith. These include Christ in the Community events, Catholic Chat, Café Communio, and Theology on Film.

Our formational initiatives hope to invite those who have a desire for deeper and more intimate spiritual experiences to participate in retreats ranging in focus from liturgical seasons, to gender-specific themes, to discernment and ministry. Finally, our discipleship efforts seek to accompany those who wish to respond to their spiritual encounters by actively living a life of ministry in the Church. These include our participating in the Emmaus Journey Leadership Conferences, our Catholics on Call ministry formation, and our college postulancy program.

Our liturgical programming and upcoming art exhibition to close the Year of Mercy are ongoing efforts to heighten the visibility of our Abbey and explore its role in the wider community that surrounds us. Of course we continue to offer support for youth and young adult ministries both by inviting groups to the Abbey and assisting in their formation programs.

I am grateful for the continued enthusiasm and support of our community. One of the greatest challenges we face may in fact be the success we have seen. This ministry must continue to be reflective and responsive to the needs it attempts to serve and not become self-referential. It also stands in a unique position to help form the continued growth and evolution of our life as an Abbey as we as a community seek to live a life relevant to and inspiring for a new generation.



Team-building activity at this year's Emmaus Journey Young Adult Mission Retreat

What Would You Like To See?

We are hoping to heighten the visibility of the Abbey and connect more people to the contemplative center of our life in community and prayer. Together we have many ideas and larger visions, but if you think of something that might help us in our efforts or something you'd like to see happen that might improve our community outreach, vocational outreach, and/or to improve our presence and notice out in the community please let us know.