

AMA INTERNATIONAL

Volume 2, Issue 4
January, 2003

A LETTER FROM YOUR DIRECTOR

Dear Volunteer,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
I hope that the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child has filled you with joy and peace.

2003 has brought with it some stormy, snowy weather to those of us in New England. I know it is summer where some of you are, so please know that we are jealous!

We are happy to report that our recent fund-raising mailing to the AMA Alumni and their families has been very successful thus far. In addition to the efforts of Sr. Francis Joseph, the Concert Committee and the AMA Board in Philadelphia who are in the process of planning the AMA Benefit

Concert to be held in March, we hope that we can raise enough capital to cover our costs and continue to build for AMA's future.

We have welcomed two new AMA's to Cana House in Worcester recently. Camille has finally arrived from France after facing some visa snags. Lismarie, sister of Lily (a former Cana volunteer), brings the number to a busy and happy five!

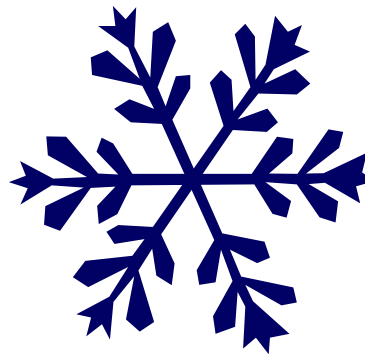
The applications for 2003 are starting to come in, so we are in the process of interviewing potential candidates. Please pray for our candidates during their discernment process!

Thank you Clif for your newsy e-mails from Cochabamba! I also appreci-

ate your pictures...If you all could send prints, we would love to display them at the Concert in March. I'm looking forward to hearing more from Joe and Evan during January!

May your ministry continue to flourish and may you remain happy in giving!

Peace,
Beth



A Moment In The Life of a Volunteer

Clif Burt writes about a blessed Christmas spent at Amanecer in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Thanks Clif! And Happy New Year!

Tonight I accompanied the Sayaricuy and Winay boys as they went Christmas caroling. They wore traditional

Bolivian ponchos and caps. They sang songs which I did not recognize, in Spanish, accompanied by guitar and drum. We walked, singing, to the site where the kids would dance and sing, a small tienda with a large nativity scene in front. The boys lined up in front and

began to sing, some playing zamponas. I took pictures as they sang. Afterwards, the owners came out and gave us all hot chocolate, then gave the boys little bags that contained popcorn, suckers, and other goodies.

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*The purpose of all prayer
is to find God's will*

and to make that will your prayer.

Catherine Marshall



The World Peace Prayer

*Lead me from Death to Life,
From Falsehood to Truth.
Lead me from Despair to Hope,
From Fear to Trust.
Lead me from Hate to Love,
From War to Peace.
Let Peace Fill our Hearts,
Our World, Our Universe.*

MOTHER MARIE EUGENIE: ASSUMPTION EDUCATION

(Taken from Marie Eugenie Milleret by Helene-Marie Bories, R.A.)

After a move to two houses in the Latin Quarter of Paris, the first Assumption School was established. The students were settled in one building, the sisters in the other. With fourteen young girls at the beginning of the school year, Marie Eugenie wrote a book in which she outlined the aims of Assumption education. She insisted on the importance of faith in Jesus Christ for the students in order to keep them as close to Him as possible. She also stressed the importance of preparing future Christian wives and mothers—essentially the future of the faith. She was mostly concerned with the formation of good judgement, a critical spirit, a rightness of thought—especially in the light of faith—and of confidence in grace.

Marie Eugenie's Counsels in Education book stemmed from a broad vision of life which is best captured in letters. These excerpts from letters to Father Lacordaire

will give you the best flavor of what she believed and wanted for the Assumption.

I believe that we are placed in this universe to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God in ourselves and in others.

I believe that Jesus Christ has saved us to make us free to work according to His Word.

I believe that each of us has a mission on earth. It is simply a question of seeking how God can use us to make His Gospel known and lived.

I believe that we must do it courageously and by means of faith... the poor means of Jesus Christ, surrendering the success of it to Him.

I believe in a truly Christian society where God, although invisible, reigns everywhere and is preferred to everything.

I believe that this society is not a utopia, because "the Son of Man will one day draw everything to Himself".

To make known Jesus Christ, the liberator and King of the world, to teach that everything belongs to Him, that He wants to form in each of us the great work of the kingdom of God (and wishes) each of us to enter into His plan:

-either to pray

-or to suffer

-or to act.

I must confess to you that this is for me the beginning and the end of all Christian education.

"True holiness consists in doing God's will with a smile."

Mother Teresa



A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM SR. CRISTINA, R.A.

This excerpt of a letter from Sr. Cristina Gonzalez, Superior General of the Religious of the Assumption, seems to speak directly to AMA's throughout the world. You have gone to the crossroads of the world. You are seeing and acting and proclaiming hope. May your journey continue to be blessed in the new year!

.... "The mission of the Son is ours today. Today, the birth of the Son of God in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, reminds us that we too are men and women born in Bethlehem by faith in Jesus. Through the father's love we receive life by the breath of the Spirit who transfigures and fashions us into the image of the Son. He sends us today to the crossroads of the world to give witness to this eternal life, to proclaim that we all have been born in Bethlehem. He sends us to see and hear the joys and sufferings of all our brothers and sisters, citizens of the same homeland.

It is not enough to know what is going on around us. In fact, we know only too well. Like the shepherds, we have to go and see—see the places near us where life is in danger, where the image of God in our brothers and sisters is veiled or disfigured...See and Act...See and Proclaim hope...See and give of oneself...Let us see and act, let us go forward together. Let us look with our hearts full of ardor and hope. May our hearts be re-born at the Source of Life manifested in Jesus of Bethlehem, of Nazareth and of the whole world, of all peoples, of all races, of all tongues.

Jesus has not been born, is not born, so that things can continue the same as before. He has come that we may change. He wants peace and well-being for all peoples. We are born with him so that we can change the world and make it better. May the commitment that we are going to renew this Christmas night, as community, as family.. become a new birth from on High, a welcome to the Life that is offered us so that we may become, in our turn, those who communicate LIFE in our everyday existence.

Merry Christmas to you all for today a Savior has been born to us, a Son, a brother, in the city of David."
Sr. Cristina, Auteuil, Christmas 2002

"You can't believe in yourself if you don't get to know the other person. If you want to find out how good or how bad or how wonderful you are, serve."
Annelies Atchley



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“Making Jesus Christ Better Known And Loved”

For more information on the Assumptionists, go to www.assumptionists.com and www.archivesaa.com. Two more great ones: www.innerexplorations.com and www.beliefnet.com. ENJOY!

Everyday Simplicity **Robert J. Wicks**

(This excerpt was taken from the book *Everyday Simplicity: A Practical Guide to Spiritual Growth* by Michael J. Wicks)

Openness

Loneliness and alienation are cogent reminders of how fragile and valuable life is. While our natural response to such experiences is to close ourselves in a defensive posture, there is also a way in which these experiences can open us up. This happens when we begin to acknowledge and welcome God in a humble way. At times of crisis we know how much we take for granted, how precious life is, and how easily we can be set off the course we think is so permanent.

When we feel our heart is breaking or the energy for life is slowly draining away from us, if we can see beyond the feelings of loss and alienation, if we can be open to hope, we may experience a softening of our soul. We may actually notice “the gestures of God who reaches out to us”. While our pain will not be less, it will not be without meaning.

While we sometimes notice

these gestures or gifts suddenly, more often the search requires daily discipline. Without this discipline, we may miss the possibility amidst the quiet suffering. We can take part in the dynamics of hope if we can make a covenant with the living God to stay awake. So often we sleep through life. If we only snap out of our complacency when struck by a loss or confronted by the fragility of life, any talk about a spiritual life will be magical. There is no magic, though. Yet, when we do remain awake, we can sense the gestures of God. Sometimes we can even be awestruck. And this awe is available to us when we are attentive, open, supple, humble, and once again, awake. It helps us to embrace even further what we call a spiritual life. We live as we never have before. We pray as if our lives depended on it because finally in the loneliness and alienation that comes our way, we recognize that they actually do.

For Reflection

Even the predictable turns into surprise the moment we stop taking it for granted. -David Stendl-Rast

David Stendl-Rast in his book *Gratefulness* says that we leave the house each day with a mental list of what we will be grateful for in the day ahead. He suggests instead, throw away the list and be grateful for the many gifts that we have been missing in life. **What are some of the ways you can be more awake to the presence of God in your life and open to the daily gifts you are being given—even in the loneliness you may be experiencing now?**

