

# FLORIDACatholic

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OF MIAMI

## Merry Christmas



Acrylic painting by Daniel Zorrilla, 19. See related story, Page A5

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- Christmas activities in parishes and schools.
- News about the Church in the United States and the world.

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#### 'All for the glory of God'

Bishop Fernando Isern takes over as Pueblo's bishop in a ceremony witnessed by nearly 3,000, including about 70 clergy and parishioners from Miami.

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#### A world of Christmas traditions

All celebrated right here in south Florida.

Page A2



# A world of Christmas traditions

All celebrated right here in south Florida

Florida Catholic staff

**MIAMI** — Midnight Mass is big. So is eating. Santa is so-so.

That is a very general characterization of the myriad Christmas traditions brought to south Florida by Catholics belonging to the dozens of ethnic and language groups that populate the Archdiocese of Miami.

Representatives of all these groups will gather at St. Mary Cathedral Jan. 3, 2010, at 10 a.m. to mark the feast of the Epiphany and the start of Migration Week, which honors immigrants in the U.S. and around the world.

After the Mass, members of each ethnic community will share their dances and their dishes with each other — and anyone else who wishes to attend the celebration.

In the meantime, here is a sampling of some of the traditions as submitted by representatives of the ethnic groups who replied to our query.

## CHINESE

Bernadette Chik, president of the Chinese Apostolate at St. Jerome Parish in Fort Lauderdale, said Chinese Catholics celebrate Christmas very similarly to American Catholics.

"On Christmas Eve, we will get together for a Christmas dinner. After the dinner, people will gather at home and enjoy spending time with our families and friends. Some people will (go caroling) in the neighborhood or to the homes of the parishioners. Then we will attend the midnight Mass to welcome the coming of the Baby Jesus."

## FILIPINOS

"Christmas is one of the biggest holidays in the Philippines," said Janet Macasero, contact person for the Filipino Apostolate. "Our country is known to celebrate the world's longest Christmas season, which starts with Christmas carols as early as September and ends on Epiphany."

By November, Filipinos have begun decorating their houses, offices, schools, shopping malls and streets with the traditional lanterns called *parols*, which are star-shaped and multicolored. There are also Christmas trees and Christmas lights and men dressed up as Santa Claus who roam the malls or are present at Christmas parties.

In keeping with the tradition of giving, Filipinos have their own version of exchanging gifts, something similar to secret Santa called *Manito Manita*. Gift exchanges can take place on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or the feast of the Epiphany, depending on the family's own tradition.

"Yes, we do celebrate Santa which is a Western influence," Macasero said. "Children are asked to hang a sock or a pair of socks and wish that Santa Claus will grant the gift they want."

One of the biggest traditions, aside from the Advent novena known as *Simbang Gabi*, is *Noche Buena*, a family feast that takes place after midnight Mass but whose preparation begins early in the morning of Christmas Eve.

*Noche Buena* means "good night" in Spanish and is "very much like an open house celebration," Macasero said. "Family, friends, relatives and neighbors drop by to wish every



COURTESY PHOTO

Members of the Filipino apostolate pose after last year's final Simbang Gabi Mass at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Miami Shores.

family member *Maligayang Pasko* (Merry Christmas). Food is in abundance, served in buffet style" and the celebration continues until the wee hours of the morning.

Typical *Noche Buena* foods include *lechon* (roasted pig), ham, *queso de bola* (ball of cheese), *pansit* (noodles), barbecue, rice, *adobo* (chicken or pork in soy sauce/vinegar gravy with seasonings), *lumpia* (egg rolls), *suman* (sweet rice wrapped in banana leaves), *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* (native rice cakes).

Dec. 25 also is the day when chil-

dren visit their grandparents, aunts, uncles, godmothers, and godfathers to pay their respects, a tradition called *pagmamano*. Macasero explained that the children do this by bringing their adult relative's hand to their forehead and saying "*mano po*." The adult then blesses the child and gives him a gift, usually candy, money or a toy.

"Celebrating Christmas Eve in the Philippines is one of the most important family traditions. It is a

PLEASE SEE **TRADITIONS, A3**

## SIMBANG GABI

Spiritually, Christmas Day in the Philippines is ushered in by *Simbang Gabi*, which means "night Mass" and is also known as *Misa de Gallo*. This is an Advent novena consisting of nine Masses celebrated at the break of dawn, which is characterized in the Philippines by the crowing of the rooster, or *gallo* in Spanish — hence the name of the Mass.

"The *Simbang Gabi* begins as early as 4 o'clock in the morning from Dec. 16 to 24," said Janet Macasero, contact person for the Filipino Apostolate. "A local band goes around town playing Christmas songs and inviting people to worship. Going to Mass this early for nine consecutive days not only strengthens relationships among family members, but also intensifies our faith. It is the time where we prepare spiritually for Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ. After the Mass, the band continues to play and a variety of delicacies are served in the parish hall for everyone's delight."

Filipino immigrants brought the tradition with them to the U.S. but since it is not practical to hold the celebration at dawn, local parishes hold it at night, after people are done with their work. In the U.S., *Simbang Gabi* usually runs from Dec. 15 to 23.

Some dioceses hold all nine Masses in the same church, but the tradition in south Florida, spearheaded by the Filipino Apostolate since 1996, is to celebrate the novena in nine different churches.

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## TRADITIONS

FROM A2

night with practically no sleep and a continuous celebration moving right into Christmas Day," Macasero said.

### KOREAN

Father Franciscus Jae Jin Cho, director of the Korean Apostolate, says Christmas back home in many ways resembles Christmas in the U.S.

"We gather at church on Christmas Eve and celebrate Mass. We have a singing competition and plays, and Sunday school children prepare special shows for the congregation. We have Santa Claus come in to distribute toys to children."

On the spiritual side, "We make sure that every parish member (re-

ceives the sacrament of) confession before Christmas. Priests distribute worksheets for parish members to answer" and invite guest speakers to give conferences.

"We also give prizes during Christmas Eve Mass to those who completed the worksheet," Father Jin said. "This way we prepare for the coming of Jesus."

Rice cakes are a food item traditionally associated with Christmas, as is the exchange of gifts on Christmas Eve. Koreans also have a big meal on both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

"Because the Korean style of Christmas is very similar to that of America, we don't have much difficulty keeping the tradition," Father Jin said.

### POLISH

In Poland, the "whole day of Dec. 24 is special," said Father Klemens Dabrowski of the Society of Christ, pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish Mission in Pompano.

The day before, families start

to decorate their Christmas trees, which remain up until Feb. 2. Churches are decorated with Nativity scenes in the tradition of St. Francis of Assisi. And families gather before midnight Mass on Christmas Eve for the big *Wigilia*, a supper consisting of as many as 12 different dishes, all meatless.

The *Wigilia* starts with prayer and the breaking of *oplatki*, a special wafer which symbolizes forgiveness. Christmas carols, known as *koledy*, are sung after the meal.

"*Koledy* are special," Father Dabrowski said. "Nobody has as beautiful (carols) as we have."

He explained that Polish families traditionally exchange gifts on two occasions: Dec. 6, the feast of St. Nicholas, "is Santa for children," when they awake to find candy under their pillows; Santa comes for everybody after the *Wigilia* supper. "On Christmas Day there is plenty of food and it is time for rest," Father Dabrowski said.

After Christmas, the priests visit every home and bless the occu-

pants, a tradition known as *koleda*.

### VIETNAMESE

"Vietnam is a country under the communist regime, so the religion is not so strong," said Father Isidore Baky, director of the Vietnamese Apostolate, which is based at St. Helen Parish in Fort Lauderdale.

He said Vietnam, with 8 million Catholics out of a total population of 85 million, ranks second in that part of the world in terms of Catholic population, right after the Philippines.

Despite communism, however, "the climate of Christmas (has begun to spread) over the country, especially in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh

City," Father Baky said. "A month before, all the shops begin selling stars and decorating materials. On the streets of many Catholic areas, people set up many mangers or Christmas scenes which are very big and beautiful, so on the Christmas vigil, the people go out to see them."

The Vietnamese eat the same traditional foods at Christmas that they eat at other holidays. Unlike American children, however, Vietnamese kids do not wait up for Santa or the Magi. There is no exchange of gifts at Christmas.

"Almost all churches have midnight Mass, and people celebrate at home," Father Baky said. ■

## HOLIDAY MASSES

### HOLIDAY MASSES IN OTHER LANGUAGES

- The Chinese Catholic Apostolate will host a special Christmas celebration Saturday, Dec. 20, 11 a.m., at St. Jerome, 2533 S.W. Ninth Ave., Fort Lauderdale. Father Joseph Bai and Father Peter Lin, Chinese priests who are currently studying at St. Thomas University, will celebrate the Mass, which will be followed by a luncheon and party. For information, call 954-801-1977.

- The Filipinos began celebrating their traditional *Simbang Gabi* novena Dec. 15, each night in a different archdiocesan parish. The final Mass will be celebrated Wednesday, Dec. 23, 6:30 p.m., at St. David, 3900 S. University Drive, Davie, with Archbishop John C. Falavara as the celebrant. For more information, call 954-981-7843.

- The Koreans will celebrate Christmas Eve Mass on Thursday, Dec. 24, 9 p.m., at the Retreat Center, 3781 S.W. 39 St., West Hollywood. The Mass will be followed by a big meal. For information, call 954-474-9091.

- The Poles will celebrate their traditional *Wigilia* supper and midnight Mass on Thursday, Dec. 24, at Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish Mission, 2400 N.E. 12 St., Pompano Beach. The supper will be served at 10 p.m., followed by the celebration of Mass. On Christmas Day, Masses will be celebrated at 9 and 11 a.m. at the mission in Pompano, and at 3:30 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish, 8670 Byron Ave., Miami Beach. For information, call 954-946-6347.

- The Vietnamese will celebrate Christmas Mass on Friday, Dec. 25, 2 p.m., at St. Helen, 3033 N.W. 33 Ave., Lauderdale Lakes. Before Mass, children will perform a Christmas scene and the Mass will be followed by a reception in the parking lot featuring traditional foods and entertainment. The entertainers will include two famous singers from Thuy Nga agency, who will perform with local Vietnamese singers. For information, call 954-714-9860.



COURTESY PHOTO

Father Klemens Dabrowski of the Society of Christ, pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish Mission in Pompano, speaks to children during last year's "Wigilia Supper", the traditional family and community meal that takes place Christmas Eve before midnight Mass.

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# God's word reminds us of Christmas' true meaning

My dear friends,

"Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."

We can all recite, at the very least, the opening words to this famous poem that has become a part of many families' Christmas tradition.

But do we know as well the opening words of Isaiah that will be read at midnight Mass on Christmas day? "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom, a light has shone."

How about Luke's infancy narrative, also to be read at midnight Mass?

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the

whole world should be enrolled. ... And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child."

Or how about the opening words of the Gospel of John, to be read at the other Masses on Christmas day? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

I imagine going to Mass on Christmas is as much a part of your family's traditions as the tree, the exchange of gifts and sitting down to Christmas dinner or a *Nochebuena* feast.

But do you really hear the

readings at Mass? Or are you so preoccupied with the material trappings of Christmas that you find it difficult to concentrate on the word of God? Could it be that you have heard those readings so often that you no longer savor their meaning?

I hope not. I hope you realize that those readings are messages from God. They are meant to remind us that we are loved and cared for, no matter how much time has passed or how distant we are from one another.

They are meant to bring us good news, the greatest news of all: that God so loves us that he sent his only Son to be like us, to be born and die and feel in his own flesh the hope and joy, the pain and agony of our earthly existence.

Why not use some of these Scriptures as prayers before our holiday meals? Have mother, fa-

ther or children read the Christmas narrative before opening the gifts as a reminder that Jesus is the real gift of Christmas. All other gifts are supposed to remind us of Jesus. Reading the Scriptures beforehand can make that message very clear.

Let God's own words remind us of the meaning of this holy season.

Make room for God in your life this Christmas. Listen carefully to the words of Scripture. Make the reading of his word a part of your annual holiday tradition, not just at Mass but in your homes as well.

And may the words of the angels to the shepherds become your Christmas blessing now and always: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Merry Christmas! ■



FROM THE  
ARCHBISHOP

John C.  
Favalora

## Why do religious need money?

Questions and answers about the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious

**MIAMI** — Every December, parishes in the Archdiocese of Miami join parishes across the nation in taking up a collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious. Why was this collection started? Where does the money go? Following are answers to those and other frequently asked questions. More information is available at [www.retiredreligious.org](http://www.retiredreligious.org).

**Q. What is the Retirement Fund for Religious?**

**A.** In 1988, Catholic bishops in the United States launched the Retirement Fund for Religious to address the significant lack of retirement funding for Catholic nuns, brothers and priests in religious orders. The National Religious Retirement Office, formerly the Tri-Conference Retirement Office, was established to coordinate the annual collection and to distribute the proceeds of this collection to religious institutes in need.

**Q. Why do men and women in religious orders need retirement funds?**

**A.** Traditionally, women and men religious worked for small stipends

that furnished only the basics of daily living. There were no retirement plans or pensions, and care for elderly members was provided largely by younger members.

Over the last few decades, however, elderly religious have begun to outnumber younger religious, and the income of those engaged in compensated ministry can no longer keep pace with the growing cost of elder care. Over the next 10 to 15 years, the number of religious aged 25 to 74 is expected to decrease sharply. With this decline, the income of religious institutes will drop precipitously, resulting in significantly less income available to support senior religious.

The problem has been compounded by skyrocketing health care costs. Today, there are more than 35,000 women and men religious over age 70, and more than 5,500 religious require skilled care.

**Q. Where does the collection money go?**

**A.** Since 1989, the National Religious Retirement Office has distributed more than \$557 million to religious institutes across the nation, including more than \$493 million

to help underwrite the direct care of elderly religious. Almost \$64 million has supported efforts by religious institutes to stabilize retirement savings and to develop comprehensive retirement strategies.

Religious are careful stewards of the funds received through the collection and strive to maintain a low cost of care. For example, the October 2008 MetLife Market Survey of Nursing Home and Assisted Living Costs reported that the national average rate for a semiprivate nursing home room was \$69,715. By comparison, the cost of skilled care for a religious in 2008 was just over \$55,000.

**Q. How much has been raised by this collection?**

**A.** The 2008 collection raised more than \$28.2 million. Since 1988, Catholics have donated nearly \$589 million to the annual appeal. Approximately 95 percent of these donations are distributed almost immediately to support the care of senior religious.

The 2008 appeal, for example, enabled the National Religious Retirement Office to distribute more than \$23 million to 483 religious institutes. The office also distributed close to \$3 million in targeted financial assistance to support self-help projects, such as collaborative health care facilities, initiated by religious institutes.

"The collection has been the

most successful campaign in the history of the Church in the United States, which is testimony to the gratitude many feel for the services they have received from religious orders," said Sister Janice Bader, a Sister of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Mo., who serves as executive director of the National Religious Retirement Office.

"I am continually heartened by the overwhelming generosity of Catholics to this fund each year," she said. "Even in these difficult financial times, Catholics across the nation find a way to give back to the women and men religious who sacrificed so much for our Church and our world."

**Q. How much have Miami's Catholics given to this collection?**

**A.** In 2008 alone, Catholics in the Archdiocese of Miami contributed \$138,707 to this collection. The Guadalupe Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, who work in the archdiocese, received financial assistance made possible by the retirement fund. In addition, religious who serve or have served in the archdiocese but whose institutes are headquartered elsewhere may also benefit from this fund.

**Q. What does the National Religious Retirement Office do, aside from coordinating the collection**

PLEASE SEE **COLLECTION, A8**



COURTESY PHOTO | GLORIA NIEC

Daniel Zorrilla, 19, poses at in the Schott Communities art room with the acrylic painting that adorns the cover of this Christmas edition of the *Florida Catholic*. He started painting only a few months ago.

# Cover artist just started painting

**ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO**  
Florida Catholic staff

**MIAMI** — Diego Zorrilla said he always liked the arts but never realized he had artistic talent until he took a painting class at the Schott Communities for Persons who are Deaf or Disabled.

Zorrilla, 19, who has spina bifida and uses a wheelchair, painted the cover for this Christmas edition of the *Florida Catholic*.

He lives with his family in an apartment on the Schott campus in Cooper City, where he also volunteers a few days a week.

A native of Venezuela — his dad is Peruvian and his mother is Venezuelan — Zorrilla recently graduated from high school and said he plans to start college sometime next year.

"I've been wanting to be a graphic designer for a while because I love art, any kind of art," he said. Although he took art classes in high school, "I never thought I could be this good."

In fact, he said, someone who visits the Schott center just told him she wanted to set up an exhibit and auction off some of his works.

"He just started painting about a month ago. He just had this innate talent that he did not know about," said Gloria Niec, director of development for Schott Communities.

She said Zorrilla "started volunteering in the fall as a receptionist. Then he saw people in the art class, saw the artwork that they did, and we said to him, 'Diego, why don't you take an art class?' From the very beginning he exhibited extraordinary talent and creativity."

Zorrilla said the message of his acrylic painting is "Santa and Baby Jesus together, celebrating his birth."

Located on a 27-acre campus in Cooper City, Schott Communities strives to create an environment of dignity and care in which persons who are deaf or disabled are encouraged and challenged to grow in self-acceptance and independence.

The center offers a number of pro-

grams and services, including art classes for adults with disabilities; socials for those with disabilities; sign language classes; counseling services and Welcome to My World, a sensitivity training program.

Schott also has two residences on the grounds, a group home and apartments for the deaf or those with disabilities. For more information on Schott Communities, go to [www.schottcommunities.org](http://www.schottcommunities.org). ■

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**CHRISTMAS MASSES**  
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**CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES**  
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**CHRISTMAS MASSES**  
8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m.

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### CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

4 p.m. (prelude music), 4:30 p.m. (vigil Mass), 11:30 p.m. (sacred prelude), midnight

### CHRISTMAS MASSES

7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., noon

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### ■ San Pablo

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### CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

5:30 p.m. (family), 9:30 p.m. (music), 10 p.m. (Nativity of the Lord)

### CHRISTMAS MASSES

8 a.m., 11 a.m.

## MIAMI

### ■ Good Shepherd

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### RECONCILIATION

Dec. 18th, 8:15-10 p.m. (Bilingual)

### CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

5:30 p.m. (English), midnight (trilingual)

### CHRISTMAS MASSES

10:30 a.m., noon (Spanish), 7 p.m. (Spanish)



### ■ Our Lady of Charity National Shrine

**Ermita De La Caridad**  
3609 S. Miami Ave.  
[www.ermidadelacaridad.org](http://www.ermidadelacaridad.org)  
305-854-2404

**CHRISTMAS EVE MASS**  
11:30 p.m. (Bilingual)

**CHRISTMAS MASSES**  
Noon (Spanish), 3 p.m. (bilingual), 8 p.m. (Spanish)

### ■ St. Hugh Parish

3460 Royal Road  
[www.st-hugh.org](http://www.st-hugh.org)  
305-444-8363

### RECONCILIATION

Confessions: Dec. 24, 4:30 p.m., 4:45 p.m. (Spanish)

**CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES**  
5:30 p.m., midnight

**CHRISTMAS MASSES**  
9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., noon (Spanish), 5:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. (Spanish)

## MIAMI BEACH

### ■ St. Joseph

8670 Byron Ave.  
[www.stjosephmiamibeach.com](http://www.stjosephmiamibeach.com)  
305-866-6567

**CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES**  
5:30 p.m., midnight (English/Spanish)

**CHRISTMAS MASSES**  
8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m. (Spanish)

## MIAMI SHORES

### ■ St. Rose of Lima

415 N.E. 105th St.  
[www.stroseoflimamiamishores.org](http://www.stroseoflimamiamishores.org)  
305-758-0539

### RECONCILIATION

Confessions: Dec. 21, 7 p.m.; Dec. 22, 10 a.m.; Dec. 23, 10 a.m., 7 p.m.; Dec. 24, 10 a.m.

**CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES**  
5 p.m., midnight

**CHRISTMAS MASSES**  
7 a.m., 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m. (Spanish)

## MIAMI SPRINGS

### ■ Blessed Trinity

4020 Curtiss Parkway, [www.blessed-trinity.org](http://www.blessed-trinity.org)  
305-871-5780

### RECONCILIATION

Penance Service: Dec. 21, 7 p.m.

**CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES**  
5 p.m. (children), midnight (bilingual, caroling begins at 11:30 p.m.)

**CHRISTMAS MASSES**  
8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m. (Spanish)

Dec. 31 Vigil Mass, 5 p.m. (English); Jan. 1 Holy Day Masses, 8 a.m., 9 a.m., 11 a.m. (Spanish)

## OAKLAND PARK

### ■ Blessed Sacrament

701 E. Oakland Park Blvd.  
[www.saintanthonyfl.org](http://www.saintanthonyfl.org)  
954-564-1010

### CHRISTMAS EVE MASSES

4 p.m. (vigil), midnight (music starts at 11:30 p.m.)

### CHRISTMAS MASS

10:30 a.m.

Dec. 26, 4 p.m. (no 8 a.m. Mass)  
Dec. 27, 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 7 p.m.

### NEW YEARS MASSES

Dec. 31, 4 p.m. (vigil; no 8 a.m. Mass)  
Jan. 1, 2010, 10:30 a.m. (no 9 a.m. or 7 p.m. Mass)

Jan. 2, 4 p.m. (vigil; no 8 a.m. Mass)  
Jan. 3, 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 7 p.m.

## TAVERNIER

### ■ San Pedro

89500 Overseas Highway  
305-852-5372

**CHRISTMAS EVE MASS**  
Midnight

**CHRISTMAS MASSES**  
9 a.m., 11 a.m.



# 'All for the glory of God'

Bishop Fernando Isern takes over as Pueblo's bishop in ceremony witnessed by nearly 3,000, including about 70 clergy and parishioners from Miami

DANIEL SOÑÉ

Florida Catholic correspondent

**PUEBLO, Colo.** — Just prior to the ordination of Miami's Father Fernando Isern as bishop of Pueblo, Colo., the city experienced its coldest temperatures in five years: 16 degrees below zero, with ice, snow, and freezing winds.

But the chilly greeting from the environment was completely eclipsed by the warm welcome Pueblo's Catholics gave to their new bishop, the former pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Miami.

"The cold weather doesn't represent our warm hearts. We will take good care of him," Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Denver told the crowd gathered Dec. 10 at Colorado State University-Pueblo's Massari Arena.

Archbishop Chaput was part of a large delegation of visiting bishops and clergy from the region who took part in the ceremony at which Bishop Isern was ordained a bishop and installed as successor to Bishop Arthur N. Tafoya, who is retiring after leading the diocese for nearly 30 years.

"I think Bishop Isern is going to be great, but he's got some big shoes to fill," said Adele McAfee of St. Mary Parish in Walsenburg, Colo.

Bishop Isern will now lead a diocese that covers the whole southern half of Colorado and has about 100,000 Catholics. But he has significant pastoral experience, including nearly nine years as pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes, one of the largest parishes in the Archdiocese

of Miami.

Many of his former parishioners traveled to Pueblo to see him become a bishop and share with their Colorado counterparts the blessings they have enjoyed since 2003.

"He is a wonderful prayerful man. We are happy for the people of Pueblo because they are gaining a really good priest," said Joe Naranjo, who attended the ceremony along with his wife, Mayda.

The couple has known Bishop Isern since his arrival at Our Lady of Lourdes. Joe Naranjo said Bishop Isern takes with him a lot of prayers, support and the grace of God.

During the ceremony, tears escaped nearly every member of the 70-person delegation from Miami, including Bishop Isern's mother, Hilda Isern. "I'm usually a calm person, but I couldn't help my emotions," she said.

"I am overwhelmed by the mercy of God. He will do great things with the power of God and the protection of Our Lady," said Miami Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Estevez, who has known Bishop Isern for many years.

A combination of tears and thunderous applause filled the arena when Bishop Isern took up his crosier and sat in the *cathedra* or bishop's chair, officially becoming shepherd of Pueblo.

The nearly 3,000 in attendance witnessed a practically once-in-a-lifetime event, as he is only the fourth bishop to shepherd the diocese, which was established in 1941.

Bishop Isern consecrated the

bread and wine as he has done countless times, but this time he did so with a red zucchetto upon his head, pectoral cross near his heart and ecclesial ring on his finger.

"I heard this was a once-in-a-lifetime event and I wanted to come and see it," said Lauren Tiltner, 18, a student at CSU-Pueblo. "I'm so glad I was a part of it."

Archbishop Pietro Sambri, apostolic nuncio to the United States, has participated in more than 70 installation ceremonies, but said their significance only increases for him. "Each one gets better and better."

Miami Archbishop John C. Favalora said it is a privilege for the people of south Florida to share Bishop Isern with the people of southern Colorado.

"I am proud that I had a part to share in the ceremony that made him bishop," Archbishop Favalora said.

While his fellow priests and former parishioners beamed with pride, Bishop Isern said he was humbled by both his new calling and the love he has received from friends, both old and new.

"I feel tremendously blessed to have dear friends come from so far to see me and to be welcomed by this wonderful diocese," he said.

Bishop Isern has chosen for his episcopal motto *Caritas Christi Urget Nos* (The Love of Christ Compels Us), which he considers characteristic of his approach to his ministry.

He said he accepted this new path in his life, "All for the glory of God. All for his glory." ■

'The cold weather doesn't represent our warm hearts. We will take good care of him.'

— Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Denver



PHOTOS BY DANIEL SOÑÉ | FC

Bishop Fernando Isern smiles during the vespers service that preceded his ordination and installation as the new bishop of Pueblo, Colo.



Bishop Arthur N. Tafoya, left, retiring bishop of Pueblo, Colo., exchanges an embrace with his successor, Bishop Fernando Isern, during the vespers service that took place Dec. 9, the evening before Bishop Isern's ordination and installation.



After the vespers service Dec. 9, Bishop Fernando Isern, second from left, poses in Pueblo's cathedral with three priests who have close ties to his former parish, Our Lady of Lourdes in Miami: from left, Father Alejandro Rodriguez Artola, Father Richard Vigoa and Father Luis Largaespada.



# Her son, the bishop

Hilda Isern, 86, who was surprised at her son's vocation, describes him as quiet, studious but a lover of the outdoors, especially sailing

DANIEL SOÑÉ

Florida Catholic correspondent

**MIAMI** — No one knows the Father — Father Fernando Isern, that is — better than his mother, who bore him in her womb for nine months and watched him grow into a man.

There were two surprises, however, that not even her mother's intuition could detect: that her only son would become a priest, and then a bishop. He was ordained as bishop of Pueblo, Colo., on Dec. 10.

Eighty-six year old Hilda Isern, Bishop Isern's mother, knows what every mother knows about her son: his interests, his hobbies, his grades and his favorite food. But his entering the seminary, she said, was "a complete surprise."

It wasn't until Bishop Isern graduated from Florida International University with a degree in business administration that he told his mother he planned on entering the seminary. The following year, 1983, he entered St. John Vianney College Seminary, which is adjacent to the parish they attended, St. Brendan.

"He was very active. He belonged to the young adult group there," Isern said.

Although she never expected him to become a priest, it did fill her with joy when she found out. "I am so proud of him," she said.

She described her only child as a good student who always got good grades, "a quiet boy who didn't talk much about himself. I never had any trouble with him."

Bishop Isern, however, is not exactly the quiet, studious type. He loves the outdoors, particularly the water. When he was a child, his mother enrolled him in swimming classes at a public school, kindling his love of the waves.

"He learned to scuba before going to FIU, but I was never a big fan of it. I like the boat though," Isern said, referring to her son's sailboat.

"When he was younger he would anchor his boat out there and swim onto the beach, then swim back out to sail more," she said from her home in Aventura, on the northeastern end of Miami-Dade County.

In an interview earlier this year with the *Florida Catholic*, Bishop Isern said he likes to sail on his days off, which is also when he visits his mother. "It's just great and relaxing to be out there," he said.

Pueblo's new bishop also used to be an avid cyclist.

"At the time we lived on (Southwest) Eighth Street and 95th Avenue, about a mile from FIU. So he



PHOTOS BY DANIEL SOÑÉ | FC

Hilda Isern greets Bishop Arthur N. Tafoya, retiring bishop of Pueblo, Colo., during the vespers service that preceded her son's ordination and installation as Pueblo's new bishop.



Hilda Isern, Bishop Fernando Isern's 86-year-old mother, looks on during Bishop Arthur N. Tafoya's speech at Sacred Heart Cathedral Dec. 9.

would ride his bike to there all the time," said his mother, adding that he has loved cycling since he got his first bicycle at the age of 7. "He had a little bicycle at first, then a bigger one, and he was riding to FIU and to St. Brendan's all the time."

Soon after graduating from the college seminary, he relocated to the regional seminary in Boynton Beach.

"He had a car so he could visit me and go out on his boat," Isern said.

During his visits, both then and now, she would cook him some of his favorite foods, staples of Cuban cuisine. "I make him black beans and rice, and pork steaks," she said.

Although her son is moving about two-thirds of the country away from her, she said the telephone does not make it seem so far. "We can still talk on the phone as we do now. So, I'm not so worried. Besides I can go visit him."

Isern decided to stay in Aventura, even though her son offered to move her with him to Pueblo.

"It is too cold for me over there. I have my friends here and my neighbors, my parish," she said. "However, we decided that I can go and snowbird over there during the summer when it is warmer. I can cook for him then."

"I'm looking forward to it," said Bishop Isern, who may be trading tropical breezes for mile-high mountains but is not about to give up his mother's cooking.

His mother and some of his cousins were present in Pueblo when he was ordained a bishop. She said she planned for the trip by packing plenty of warm clothing.

She said she also looked forward to hearing his homily, as she has done countless times since he was ordained.

"I love his homilies. They just get into me. I don't know if it is because he is my son, but he is a great priest." ■

## Catholic Charismatic Conference Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church

11291 S.W. 142nd Avenue  
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Weekend will include inspired teachings; uplifting music; healing service for those in need of physical, spiritual or mental healing and good fellowship.

Country Inn & Suites and Best Western Hotels are offering a **special room rate** until Feb. 1st for those attending.

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**Catholic Charismatic Services — 954-961-1856**

2010-1218



# 'America's Church'

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception marks 50 years as place of worship, pilgrimage for all American Catholics

DANIEL SOÑÉ

Florida Catholic correspondent

**WASHINGTON** — Quick: Name the largest Catholic Church in the United States.

If you said the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, located in our nation's capital, you are right.

The shrine, which just concluded its 50th anniversary celebration, is known as "America's Catholic Church" because its mission is to be a place of worship and pilgrimage for every American Catholic.

"It has no parish community of its own; but rather counts every American Catholic among its numbers," wrote Gregory Tucker in his book, "America's Church."

"No single bishop claims it as his cathedral," Tucker continued, "rather, it is the church of all the nation's bishops. Its work is not supported

## FIND OUT MORE

- The shrine is open 365 days a year, offering six Masses and five hours of confession daily.
- The shrine is located at 400 Michigan Ave., N.E., Washington. It is accessible by Washington's Metro system, on the Red line, Brookland/ CUA stop.
- For more information, go to [www.nationalshrine.com](http://www.nationalshrine.com).

by a single group or organization, but is carried out through the cooperation of people throughout the country."

The idea for a national shrine was first proposed in 1846, when the U.S. bishops declared that a Catholic church should be built in Washington "after the manner of the great cathedrals of the Old

World from subscriptions of every Catholic parish in America."

The cornerstone of the shrine was laid in 1920, with the crypt level completed just before the Great Depression and World War II halted construction. Construction of the upper church, that is the superstructure, began in 1955 and was completed four years later. No steel structural beams, framework or columns were used. The entire structure is made of arches and domes in brick, stone, tile and mortar.

The shrine was dedicated Nov. 20, 1959, and named for the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States.

From that time on, it has ranked as the largest church in North America and one of the 10 largest churches in the world. The interior is 399 feet in length, longer than a football field and 25 percent longer than St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Its dome has a diameter of 108 feet — more than twice that of St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice — and rises 159 feet above the nave floor.

The shrine, which sits on the campus of The Catholic University of America, receives over 1 million visitors each year. They come to admire its Romanesque-Byzantine architecture and its collection of contemporary Church art — the largest in the world — as well as to worship. The shrine has plenty of places for prayer and meditation, with more than 70 chapels and oratories, many of them dedicated to the various titles of the Blessed Mother — from Our Lady of Czestochowa, patroness of Poland, to Our Lady of Charity, patroness of Cuba.



ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO | FC

Participants at the annual Mass for life in 2008 leave the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at the end of the three-hour ceremony. The basilica was filled wall-to-wall with people, most of them teenagers and college students.

In 1990, Pope John Paul II elevated the shrine to a minor basilica, which means it belongs to the entire Catholic Church. Both John Paul II and Benedict XVI have visited the shrine, as did Mother Teresa.

And every January, the shrine welcomes thousands of Catholics, many of them young people, who gather there for the annual Mass on the eve of the March for Life. ■

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## COLLECTION

FROM A4

and distributing the proceeds to religious institutes in need?

A. In addition to sponsoring the annual appeal, the National Religious Retirement Office offers assessment tools, educational programming, services and resources that enable religious institutes to evaluate and prepare for long-term needs. The office also coordinates an extensive network of volunteer consultants, including experts in elder care and financial planning, to help religious institutes plan for the ongoing care of senior members. The office is sponsored by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. ■





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COMMUNITY EVENTS

**St. Vincent flea market,** Friday, Jan 15, 2010, 1-4 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 16, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., 6350 N.W. 18 St., Margate. Drop off items Jan. 11-13, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; no TVs, VCRs, computers, monitors, or printers. For pickup of heavy or large items, call 954-972-0434.

**Yves Congar Award,** Sunday, Jan. 17, 2010, 7:30 p.m., Barry University, 11300 N.E. Second Ave., Miami Shores, Andreas Building, Room 111. Winner is Dominican Father Donald J. Goergen, author, theologian, currently prior of St. Dominic Priory, House of Studies, St. Louis. 305-899-4887.

**White elephant bazaar,** Jan. 15-17, 2010, St. Mary Magdalen, 17775 N. Bay Road, North Miami Beach. Books, toys, jewelry, homemade items, dishes, puzzles, much more. 305-931-0600 or gschmitz@surfandbuy.com.

**St. Rose of Lima carnival,** Jan. 22-24, 2010, 415 N.E. 105 St., Miami. Rides, games, food, silent auction, entertainment, fun for the whole family. 305-758-0539.

**St. Stephen flea market,** Saturday, Jan. 23, 2010, 7 a.m.-2 p.m., 2000 S. State Road 7, Miramar. Spaces: \$25. 954-987-1100.

**Archbishop Curley Notre Dame Art Gallery,** 4949 N.E. Second Ave., Miami, "Young Artists" opens Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2010, 7 p.m., featuring selected works from student artists in neighboring Catholic middle schools. 305-751-8367, ext. 29; www.acnd.net, or news@acnd.net.

CONCERTS

**St. Martha-Yamaha Concert Series,** 9301 Biscayne Blvd., Miami Shores. Tickets include after-concert reception with artists. \$10 general admission; \$20 Blue Circle. www.saintmartha.tix.com or 305-751-0005: Saturday, Jan. 23, 2010, 7:30 p.m., violinist Alexander Markov performs with

pianist Paul Posnak.

FAITH EDUCATION

**"Living Pentecost: A Process of Spiritual Growth,"** Saturday, Jan. 23, 2010, 9:30 a.m., English; 11 a.m., Spanish, St. Catherine of Siena, 9200 S.W. 107 Ave., Miami. Adult formation for parish ministers. 305-274-6353.

**Religious education classes,** sponsored by archdiocesan religious education department, 305-762-1107 or religedu@theadom.org:

- Principles of Christian Morality, Mondays, Jan. 11-Feb 8, 2010, 7-9:15 p.m., St. Kevin School, 1225 S.W. 42 St., Miami. Taught by Michele MacEachern. Registration: \$35; textbook, Catechism of the Catholic Church. R.S.V.P.: 305-223-2469.
- Foundations of Catholicism, Mondays and Wednesdays, Jan. 20-Feb. 3, 2010, 8:15-10:15 p.m., Our Lady of Lourdes School, 14000 S.W. 112 Terrace, Miami. Taught by Deacon Michael Plummer. Registration: \$35. R.S.V.P.: 305-213-2156.
- Christology, Saturdays, Jan. 30-Feb. 20, 2010, 9-11:45 a.m., St. Agnes, 100 Harbor Drive, Key Biscayne. Taught by Martin Madar. Registration: \$35; textbook, "Christology: True God, True Man," Loyola Press. R.S.V.P.: 305-361-1378.
- Life issues workshop,** Saturday, Feb. 6, 2010, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., St. Andrew, 9950 N.W. 29 St., Coral Springs. Lunch will be served. R.S.V.P.: 954-981-2922.

MASSES /PRAYER SESSIONS

**Communal penance service,** Wednesday, Dec. 23, Our Lady of Mercy, 5201 N. Military Trail, Deerfield Beach. Mass and penance service in English only, 9 a.m.; in English and Spanish, 7 p.m. Individual confessions arranged upon request. 954-421-3246.

**Christmas/New Year's Masses,** St. Catherine of Siena, 9200 S.W. 107 Ave., Miami, 305-274-6333:

- Thursday, Dec. 24: 6:30 p.m. Christmas vigil Mass (English); 11:15 p.m. choir performance (bilingual) followed by midnight Mass.
- Friday, Dec. 25: 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Masses in English; 12:30 and 6 p.m. in Spanish.
- Thursday, Dec. 31: 7 p.m. vigil Mass in Spanish; 11:15 p.m. bilingual Mass to welcome the New Year
- Friday, Jan. 1, 2010, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God: 10:30 a.m. in English; 12:30 and 6 p.m. in Spanish.

**Christmas Masses,** Our Lady of Lourdes, 11291 S.W. 142 Ave., Miami. 305-386-4121:

- Thursday, Dec. 24, Christmas vigil Masses: 4 p.m. children's English Mass; 6:30 p.m. Spanish; 11:30 p.m. choir concert; midnight bilingual Mass.
- Friday, Dec. 25: 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 5 p.m. in English; 1 and 6:30 p.m. in Spanish.

**Annual Migration Mass,** celebrated by Archbishop John C. Favalora, Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010 (feast of the Epiphany), 10 a.m., St. Mary Cathedral, 7525 N.W. Second Ave., Miami. 305-759-4531 or www.cathedralofstmary.com.

**Contemporary Mass,** Saturdays, once a month, 5 p.m., St. Maurice, 2851 Stirling Road, Dania Beach. For youths and young adults. 954-961-7777.

PRAYER GROUPS

**Songs and prayer in the spirit of Taizé,** Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010, 7:30 p.m., Barry University, Cor Jesu Chapel, 11300 N.E. Second Ave., Miami Shores. Chant, Scripture, silent reflection, intercessory prayer. 305-899-3650 or 305-458-9919.

**Taizé prayer group,** Tuesdays after 9 a.m. Mass, Our Lady of Mercy Chapel, 5201 Military Trail, Deerfield Beach. 954-421-3246.

**Cursillo Ultreya in Spanish,**

MIAMI ARCHDIOCESE COMMUNITY PAGE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

The Florida Catholic welcomes calendar items of parish/organization events that are open to the whole archdiocese. There is no charge but items must be in the Miami office at least six weeks before the event. To list an event both on the Web site and in the newspaper, go to www.miamiarch.org, click on the banner "announce your event for free" and follow the instructions. Notices may be sent by e-mail: [arsoto@theadom.org](mailto:arsoto@theadom.org); fax: 305-762-1132; mail: The Florida Catholic, 9401 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, FL 33138.

Tuesdays, 8 p.m., St. Stephen, 2000 S. State Road 7, Miramar. 954-893-7898 or 305-596-5246.

**Cursillo Ultreya,** Tuesdays, 8 p.m., Good Shepherd, 14187 S.W. 72 St., Miami. 305-778-7962 or 305-305-0208.

**Post Camino,** in Spanish, follow-up for Camino participants, second Wednesdays, 8 p.m., Southeast Pastoral Institute, 7700 S.W. 56 St., Miami. www.caminante.com.

RETREATS /DAYS OF REFLECTION

**MorningStar Renewal Center,** 7275 S.W. 124 St., Pinecrest. Registration required for all programs. 305-238-4367, ext. 102, or visit [www.morningstarrenewal.org](http://www.morningstarrenewal.org): New Year's Eve retreat, Thursday, Dec. 31, 6-9:30 p.m., featuring dinner, presentation, Mass. \$30.

**Impacto,** Saturday, Jan. 16, 2010, and Jan. 17, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., each day, in English, Mother of Our Redeemer, 8455 N.W. 186 St., Miami. Enrichment retreat for the whole family. Designed for couples with children ages 3-11. [www.impactos.org](http://www.impactos.org) or 305-571-7111.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

**Virtus workshops:** To help parents, teachers and anyone who works with children recognize signs of sexual abuse and spot abusers. Free. 305-762-1250 or [jrayburn@theadom.org](mailto:jrayburn@theadom.org):

- Saturday, Jan. 16, 2010, 9 a.m., St. Jerome School, Fort Lauderdale.
- Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2010, 6 p.m., Archbishop McCarthy High School, Southwest Ranches.

SCHOOL EVENTS

**St. James School** looking for alumni from class of 1978 for reunion in March 2010. [marzayas@bellsouth.net](mailto:marzayas@bellsouth.net).

SUPPORT MINISTRIES/ PEER GROUPS

**Separated and divorced support groups** meet in various locations in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. Go to [www.miamicatholicfamily.org](http://www.miamicatholicfamily.org).

**Grief Share,** Sundays, 10:15-11:45 a.m., St. Gregory Ministry Building, second floor, 200 N. University Drive, Plantation. Convenient for attending Mass

before or after. 954-473-6261, ext.167; or [javerell@cherubim.org](mailto:javerell@cherubim.org).

**"Living an Authentic Life,"** Tuesdays, 7 p.m., St. Maurice Parish office, 2851 Stirling Road, Dania Beach. To assist people in developing the skills needed to form good relationships and overcome barriers to healthy relationships. 954-987-3064.

**Castos Por Amor (Chaste Out Of Love),** meets Fridays, 8-10 p.m., Immaculate Conception, 4497 W. First Ave., Hialeah. To help people live their sexuality according to God's design. 305-249-0498 or [castosporamor@bellsouth.net](mailto:castosporamor@bellsouth.net).

**St. Luke Addiction Recovery Center of Catholic Charities,** for people suffering from addiction to drugs or alcohol. Free consultation. 305-795-0077.

**Nuevo Caminar (New Journey),** for alcoholics, drug addicts, co-dependent families, in Spanish, 1030 E. Eighth Ave., Hialeah. 305-863-3355.

**"A Time to Share," Schott Communities support group** for parents of children with special needs, meets first Sundays, 11 a.m., 6591 S. Flamingo Road, Cooper City. Free, but please R.S.V.P. to 954-434-3306, ext. 102.

**Courage support groups for people with same-sex sexual attraction** who want to live chaste Christian lives. Miami Courage, 786-394-0069 or [couragemiami@yahoo.com](mailto:couragemiami@yahoo.com); Fort Lauderdale Courage, 954-778-2101 or [ftlaudcourage@yahoo.com](mailto:ftlaudcourage@yahoo.com).

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Respect life,** Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., English-, Spanish-, Creole-speaking, to work in Respect Life office, 3600 S.W. 32nd Blvd., West Park. 954-981-2922 or [ilovelife@bellsouth.net](mailto:ilovelife@bellsouth.net).

**Detention Ministry,** training new volunteers first Mondays, 6-9 p.m., Pastoral Center, 9401 Biscayne Blvd., Miami Shores. 305-762-1093, [efarias@theadom.org](mailto:efarias@theadom.org) or [www.detentionministry.org](http://www.detentionministry.org).

**HIV/AIDS ministry,** Catholic Charities, volunteer training meetings, third Wednesdays, 7 p.m., 1503 N.E. 26 St., Wilton Manors. 954-630-9404, ext. 132.

**Guardian ad litem** seeks volunteers to act as advocates for abused, abandoned, neglected children. Guardians must complete application, interview, background check, 30 hours of training. 954-831-6477, Drew. [Korenvaes@gal.fl.gov](mailto:Korenvaes@gal.fl.gov), or [www.gal.fl.gov](http://www.gal.fl.gov).



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2009-12-18



# BUILDING THE CITY OF



## What he did before becoming a priest:

He worked as a bank teller while pursuing a degree in architecture. He ultimately received a two-year degree in drafting.

## When he knew he wanted to be a priest:

Even though his family was religious and attended Mass faithfully, the thought never entered his mind. "I wanted to be married, have a lot of kids and be an architect." Then a friend from the youth group at San Isidro Parish insisted he attend a vocations retreat in Conyers, Ga. "I didn't know what a vocation was. ... I went to the retreat just to get him off my back." By the last day, "I decided, I've heard so much, I like this. So why not try it out?" He began the discernment process and entered the seminary at age 20. "They told me, at any point, you can leave. You don't commit until you reach ordination. That was a sense of relief for me. I had nothing to lose. I said to myself, 'I'll give it a chance.'"

**'They told me, at any point, you can leave. ... That was a sense of relief for me. I had nothing to lose.'**

## Person most surprised by his vocation:

"My father was adamantly against me being a priest" and did not speak to him for a year after he announced his decision. In part, his father feared the priesthood would take him too far from his family; in part, his objections were rooted in the anti-clericalism that exists in the Mexican culture. "We don't like priests but we go to Mass." Father Garza's vocation "healed a lot of my family's misconceptions about the priests and the nuns" and his father "eventually became my greatest support and my best friend." Ironically, Father Garza has remained geographically closer to his dad, who died in 2000, than any of the other children, who moved to other states. His dad is buried at Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery in Miami. When he visits there, Father Garza likes to remind him, "Here I am again; your only son who's here."

## What the seminary did not prepare him for:

Parish administration: "A parish is almost like a business. You have to run it. You have to make decisions and if you're not prepared, you're going to make bad decisions."

## What he would be doing if he had not become a priest:

"I probably would have pursued architecture. I still read and I have my drafting table. I still draw."

## The most difficult aspect of being a priest:

"Dealing with the fact that you can't please everybody."

## His description of the ideal priest:

"A priest who loves and forgives as Christ does; who does not judge."



Whenever he travels to the mission in Colombia, Father Garza takes a day to go paragliding off a 9,000-foot mountain. He took up the sport three years ago. "I feel freedom." Here he poses with his paragliding instructor/partner, a young man known by his nickname, "La Garza" (the heron). A video of Father Garza paragliding can be seen at [www.miamiarch.org](http://www.miamiarch.org).

## Priestly stereotype that should be discarded:

"That they're perfectly holy."

## What he does on his days off:

"Drive to Key West, have lunch and come back." He also spends much of his vacation time helping out at a mission in the suburbs of Medellin, Colombia. "Most of what I do is the financial part of it," raising funds in the U.S. to build a church there.

## Favorite movie:

"The Mission."

## Last book read:

"Road to Cana" by Anne Rice.

## Favorite type of music:

"I love to dance so I like the cumbia."

## What he collects:

Nativity scenes. Right now he has about 30, including one from Africa. "I never buy any. They've all been given to me and that's how I started collecting them."

## Hobby:

"Trying to do anything I can for the mission in Colombia."

## Person he most admires:

"My mom and dad."

## His greatest joy:

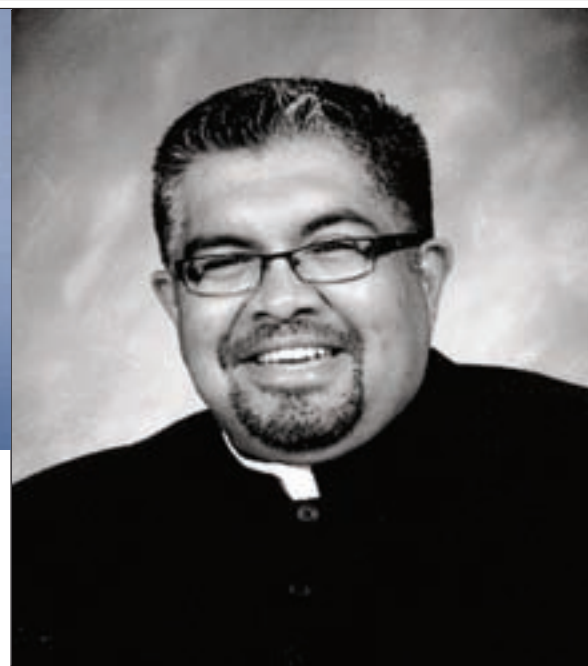
Baptizing and celebrating the sacraments for his nephews and nieces.

## Thing he most fears:

"Judging others."

## Regrets:

None, not even on not marrying or having children. Among his parishioners and friends, "I have tons of children and brothers and sisters. ... It's a mystery that you can't understand unless you're a priest and you allow yourself to live that mystery."



## FATHER ROBERTO GARZA

Vocations director, Archdiocese of Miami

Born Oct. 2, 1967, in Tulia, Texas, Father Garza

is the oldest of four children. His great-great-grandparents were cattle ranchers from southern Spain who settled in that area of the U.S.

when it was part of Mexico. His parents moved to

Clewiston when he was young and he graduated from Clewiston High School before entering

St. John Vianney Seminary. He was ordained for the Archdiocese of Miami on May 11, 1996,

and served at St. Mary Star of the Sea in Key West before being sent to Rome to obtain a

licentiate in missiology from the Gregorian University. He worked with Catholic Charities and as pastor of San Isidro Parish in Pompano

Beach before being named archdiocesan vocations director in January 2009.



Archdiocese of Miami  
9401 Biscayne Boulevard  
Miami, Florida 33138  
305.762.1043 Fax 305.751.6227



NEWS**briefs****Celebrate Christmas at cathedral**

Archbishop John C. Favalora invites the public to celebrate the Christmas season at St. Mary Cathedral, 7525 N.W. Second Ave., Miami. The cathedral's Christmas and New Year schedule is as follows:

- Thursday, Dec. 24: 4:30 p.m. confessions; 5:30 p.m. vigil Mass of Christmas in English; 11 p.m. Christmas concert; Pontifical Midnight Mass, celebrated by Archbishop Favalora.

- Friday, Dec. 25, Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord: 6:30 a.m. Mass in Latin (ordinary rite); 8 a.m. Mass in Creole; 10 a.m. Mass in English with choir; noon Mass in Spanish.

- Thursday, Dec. 31: 5:30 p.m. vigil Mass of New Year in English.

For a complete list of Christmas Masses and related events, go to [www.miamiarch.org](http://www.miamiarch.org).

**Exhibit to feature works of Haitian artists**

The works of women who are members of an artisan cooperative in Jean Rabel, Haiti, will be featured in an exhibit set to open this January at Archbishop Curley Notre Dame High School's gallery of art.

The exhibit is made possible by

the collaborative efforts of St. Thomas University, *Amor en Accion* (Love in Action), Catholic Charities and the Archdiocese of Miami. The art to be exhibited includes oil and acrylic paintings. Samples of the women's work can be viewed at <http://haitiartisanscrafts.com/index.html>.

The exhibit opening will take place Thursday, Jan. 14, 2010, from 7 to 9 p.m., at the gallery located on the high school's campus, 4949 N.E. Second Ave., Miami. Admission is free.

For more information, contact Katherine Doble at [news@acnd.net](mailto:news@acnd.net) or 305-751-3741.

**Marriage preparation 2010 schedule set**

Because "a wedding is a day but a marriage is a lifetime," the archdiocesan Family Enrichment Center offers preparation programs for engaged couples who wish to be married in the Catholic Church. Participation in at least one of these programs is mandatory and should be arranged after speaking with the parish priest and before setting a date for the wedding.

The program for English-speaking couples is Engaged Encounter, designed to help couples come to a deeper understanding of their com-

mitment to a sacramental marriage and the presence of God in their relationship.

Engaged Encounters usually are scheduled on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. A light breakfast and lunch are provided.

Some parishes hold the encounter over two days, beginning Friday evening, from 6:30 to 10 p.m., and continuing Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Refreshments on Friday night and a light breakfast and lunch on Saturday are provided. The cost of these encounters is \$125 per couple.

A third type of encounter also has been added to the schedule, and will be offered only once next year: on Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 21-22, at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Miami. This encounter consists of one day of skill training and one day of sacramentality based on Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. The cost of this encounter is \$175 per couple.

Couples also may attend an encounter skill training day plus a sacramentality day for a cost of \$175.

The schedule of skill training days is as follows:

- Jan. 16, May 8, Nativity Parish, Hollywood.
- Feb. 26-27, Aug. 13-14, Nov. 12-13, St. Louis Parish, Pinecrest.
- March 13, July 17, St. Bartholomew, Miramar.

- April 17, Dec. 18, Little Flower, Coral Gables.

- Sept. 11, St. Coleman, Pompano Beach.

- Sept. 18, Mary Help of Christians, Parkland.

- Sept. 25, St. John Neumann, Miami.

- Oct. 9, St. Jerome, Fort Lauderdale.

- Dec. 11, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Coral Springs.

The schedule of sacramentality days ("God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage") is as follows:

- Jan. 16, Oct. 16, St. Louis, Pinecrest.

- Feb. 27, June 12, Sept. 18, Casa Caná (Christian Family Movement), Hialeah.

- April 24, Good Shepherd, Kendall

- July 10, All Saints, Sunrise

Participants are asked to register early for these programs as space is limited.

A completed registration form (available at [www.miamicatholicfamily.org](http://www.miamicatholicfamily.org)) should be mailed with your check or money order to Family Enrichment Center, 9401 Biscayne Blvd., Miami Shores, FL 33138. Checks should be made payable to Archdiocese of Miami. Couples will receive a confirmation letter prior to their chosen encounter date. For more information, call 305-762-1140 or 305-762-1148.

**Coaches invited to baseball clinic**

The Knights of Columbus council of St. Louis Parish in Pinecrest will sponsor a baseball clinic Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2010, 7 p.m., at St. Louis' family center, 7240 S.W. 120 St., Pinecrest. This free clinic is for coaches and interested parents of parochial school baseball and softball teams. It will be led by Charlie Greene, former Miami-Dade Kendall Community College baseball coach, who has been involved with major league training for years.

Greene will go over the latest methods for safety, skills and enjoyment of the game at all positions and levels. He will be joined by high school coaches who will emphasize the importance of proper teaching and development of the skills they seek in players. Organizers of the clinic point to the fact that about 2 million youngsters play baseball until the age of 12, at which point the number drops to 750,000, often due to injuries. The goal of the clinic is to prevent throwing injuries and other problems and to implement the latest in throwing, fielding and hitting skills — the same skills used by major league players in their training.

Those who wish to attend the clinic should R.S.V.P. to Grand Knight Jim Buzzella at 305-794-8712 or [kofc14730@aol.com](mailto:kofc14730@aol.com).

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