



The Lubbock SERRAN

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The Life and Death of Lubbock's First Priest

by Carl Sundell

On January 11, 1905, Father David H. Dunn celebrated the first Mass in the town of Lubbock at the home of Captain C.W. Holt, a Confederate Civil War veteran who had converted to Catholicism. Father Dunn as a young man had migrated from Ireland to Wisconsin to join his brother. He eventually studied for the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Chicago. A year before he was to be ordained, he contracted a severe case of tuberculosis. It was decided to ordain him in 1899, a year before he finished his studies, so that he could "enjoy the grace of the priesthood before his death." The Archbishop of Chicago sent him to Dallas, where the climate was supposed to be better for his lungs. The Bishop of Dallas, realizing the climate was still too harsh for the young priest, sent him to the Panhandle, where there was only one Catholic Church, St. Mary's in Clarendon. For the next six years he was the only full-time priest visiting Catholics by train and buggy everywhere in the 40,000 square miles of the Panhandle as far south as Lubbock. He would send a postcard ahead to inform the Catholic host family of his arrival on a certain day so that other Catholics would be invited to attend Mass.

On one occasion, according to Marynell Holle, "he found that he had left behind the altar breads which are necessary for the communion service. He asked the woman who owned the boarding house for flour, water, and an iron. He then proceeded to make the unleavened bread. The landlady had been watching and said, "Well, I'll be

Christmas Meeting at Bishop's House



Judy Simmons presents a check to Bishop Placido Rodriguez in the amount of \$1,700 for the Bishop's Seminarian Burse. The presentation took place at the Serra Club Christmas Mass and dinner held on Friday, December 14.

switched if I ever see a man make flapjacks like that again!" Father Dunn had a good sense of humor, and incidents like this appealed strongly to him, helping to lighten the fatigue of his traveling."

Father Dunn transferred the center of the new deanery from Clarendon to Amarillo when the railroad decided to favor Amarillo over Clarendon. The young priest and Dr. David R. Fly started a small hospital staffed by Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

Father Dunn lived in the hospital which was located in a place that made possible the grazing of cows just outside the hospital windows. That year, 1902, Amarillo had only eight Catholic residents. As more Catholics arrived, Father Dunn decided to build a church, donating \$400 of his own money to start a fundraising effort. The first Catholic Church of Amarillo, Sacred Heart,

was dedicated by the Bishop of Dallas on October 12, 1903. Father Dunn would build thirteen more churches before he died.

In the next few years as Catholics moved into more parts of the territory and new missions were established, it would be increasingly difficult for Father Dunn to cover the vast territory as far south as Lubbock. Priests came to assist and joined Father Dunn in reaching out to the Protestants by inviting them to bring their bibles to church. A question box would be available into which they could put their questions, which were answered by the priests who would use a copy of the King James Bible to demonstrate Catholic doctrines.

In 1911 Father Dunn realized his long-lived dream of establishing the first Catholic
(See First Priest, Page Two)

Ask Father Bill

This question comes from Carl Sundell, who asks:

What are some of the basic causes of Atheism?

Atheists are not born, they're made.

Belief in a Supreme Being is something natural to the human condition; in fact, it's part of what sets humans apart from lower forms of life. We have the ability to reflect on ourselves and the world around us. We marvel at the order and complexity of the natural world. We ask questions like, "How did we come into being?" "Why is there order in the universe and not simply chaos?" "Who or what imposed this order?" "Did the world always exist, or did it have a beginning?" "Who made the world?" and the biggest question of all, "Why do we exist?" Since the beginning of the human race, our ability to ask these kinds of questions, along with our inability to find satisfactory answers, has led us to the logical conclusion that there must be a God (or gods) more powerful than ourselves, to whom we owe worship and adoration.

Atheism has been around, in one form or another, since the 5th Century BC, and probably before that. There is not nearly enough space here to give an exhaustive treatment of all the various philosophies that we collectively call "Atheism." (A very good treatment of the topic may be found at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism>.) Our concern here is with the causes of Atheism. What causes people to deny their natural instinct to believe in a Supreme Being? While there are many particular reasons why an individual might come to hold atheistic beliefs, I would like to focus on three major causes of Atheism: Hypocrisy of believers, a distorted image of God, and the Problem of Evil.

I believe most Atheism comes out of a negative reaction against organized religion, and against the hypocrites who profess one way of life but live another. Jesus taught, "By their fruits you will know them" (Matthew 7:16a). When apparently religious people turn out to be vicious hypocrites, religion loses all credibility. If a child suffers



sexual abuse at the hands of a priest or other Christian minister, could you blame that child for growing up believing there is no God? When religion is exploited for political purposes, and when people's belief in God is used to oppress them, Atheistic Humanism begins to look like a path toward liberation. Such was the thinking of Vladimir Lenin, who wrote, "Religion is opium for the people ... a sort of spiritual booze."

When Atheists deny the existence of God, oftentimes it is because their concept of God has been distorted, either by erroneous religious teachings or religious ignorance that creates a knowledge vacuum, which is quickly filled by error and superstition. In other words, they are not denying the existence of the True God, but rather their own erroneous concept of who God is. For example, if I had grown up listening to a preacher who preaches nothing but fire and brimstone, painting a mental picture of a vengeful, angry God who flings souls into hell just for spite—I imagine I would either change churches, change denominations, or just stop believing altogether. After all, who would want to spend eternity with a God who hates them?

Finally, there are many people who stop believing in God because of the evil they observe in the world. The Problem of Evil is, as the Greek philosopher Epicurus (341-270 BC) stated it, "Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or he can, but does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, but does not want to, he is wicked. If God can abolish evil, and God really wants to do it, why is there evil in the world?"

The Christian teaching, of course, is that evil comes from human sinfulness, and that God allows us to live with the consequences of our own decisions, good or bad; but not everyone can accept this. I met a young Jewish man a few years ago who told me he does not practice his Jewish religion. When I asked why, he told me it was because of the Nazi Holocaust. He simply could not believe in a God who would allow six million of his own "chosen people" to be slaughtered. I was reduced to silence. How could I, a Christian, even begin to explain to this Jewish man where God was while his own relatives were being killed like animals? The Problem of Evil should not be underestimated as a cause of Atheism in our modern world.

So what are we to say and do about

all the Atheists in our world? We could proselytize them. We could knock on their doors, hand out Bibles and pamphlets, and tell them they're going to hell if they don't start believing. That's been tried, of course, and the only thing it did was to make Atheists more obstinate in their disbelief. In recent years, Atheists have even become politically organized, seeking to expand "freedom of religion" to include "freedom from religion." They have made up their minds that God (or their own concept of God) doesn't exist, and that believers are either hypocrites or victims of a vast deception. In most cases, Atheists are not bad people; they just want to be left alone to live out their life on earth, and then (so they believe) simply cease to exist when their life is over.

The only way to convert an Atheist is to address the reasons why they are an Atheist in the first place. The best way to achieve that is by looking in the mirror. We need to look at the way we live and the way we treat other people, using the Gospel as our measuring stick. We also need to ask ourselves, "If I were a non-believer, what would attract me to want to know more about Christianity?" It's not the words we speak or our knowledge of the Bible that attracts converts to Christianity, it's the way we live the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (cf., Galatians 5:22-23). If we truly live these fruits of the Holy Spirit, we won't have to knock on doors; the unbelievers will seek us out.



Fr. Bill Anton receives a gift certificate on behalf of the Serra Club from Elroy Simmacher. The presentation was made at our Christmas dinner on Dec. 14. The gift was made in appreciation for all Fr. Bill does as our Serra Club chaplain.

Sisters Corner

The Christmas Crib

By Sister Charlotte Lujan, OSF
Our Lady of the Angels Convent

Did you know that the Christmas Crib was introduced into our Christmas tradition by St. Francis of Assisi? The following is an account from St. Bonaventure and Thomas of Celano, major biographers of St. Francis, of the great joy experienced that glorious and memorable Christmas of 1223.

"The Brothers came from their various places and the people of the neighborhood came with candles and torches that lit up the night. The forest re-echoed with their voices and their songs of praise. The manger was prepared, the hay had been brought, and the ox and ass were led in. The simplicity, poverty and humility in Greccio was made, as it were, a new Bethlehem. The saint of God stood before the manger, overcome with love and filled with a wonderful happiness. The solemnities of the Mass were celebrated over the manger. The saint of God was clothed with the vestments of the deacon, and he sang the holy gospel in a sonorous voice. Then he preached to the people concerning the nativity of the poor King and the little town of Bethlehem.

The gifts of the Almighty were multiplied there, and a wonderful vision was seen by a knight called John of Greccio. He claimed that he saw a beautiful child lying in the crib lifeless, and that the holy man of God took it in his arms and seemed to wake it up. This vision was not unfitting, for the Child Jesus had been forgotten in the hearts of many; but, by the working of his grace, he was brought to life again through his servant St. Francis."

At Our Lady of the Angels Convent, the Sisters gathered in the chapel on the holy evening before Christmas Mass and prayed the final Advent novena prayer followed by the blessing of the crib. One of the Sisters placed the Child Jesus in the crib while the others sang songs of love and adoration. The Sisters sang Christmas songs as they processed to the living room for the blessing of the Christmas tree. Christmas greetings and gifts were shared and a light meal followed. Before long, the Sisters were on their way to celebrate the Eucharist with the Community of Faith. It was a wondrous night, a holy night! God came to us as a little Child!

A Heart Ablaze

Why I Am a Catholic

Editor's Note

Christ the King High School Students, grades 9 through 12, recently had the opportunity to submit entries for an essay contest sponsored by the Lubbock Serra Club. The students were given a choice of subject, "Why I Am a Catholic" or "My Favorite Saint." The following essay was one of four selected by the committee to receive a \$50.00 prize.

By Keely Tishler

Raised in a Catholic home from birth definitely impacts how your faith develops. I was baptized when I was born and brought into a normal run-of-the-mill family environment. Growing up through my eyes, being a Catholic, going to church, and numerous religious activities were

not just a part of my life, that WAS life. I thought this is how everyone must live. I lived a very sheltered life and that was all I knew. I realize now in all honesty that the things I did then, such as attending church, was something I did out of habit.

When I was about six years old, my parents got divorced and I began to realize the religious segregation in the world. My father was Jewish and this was, for me, one of the highest brick walls that I faced in the center of my spiritual path. I became lazy and kind of tired of the "habits" like going to church, so I just decided I would see what Judaism was like. Of course then I was little, (maybe 10 or so), and I had never really learned any in-depth basic facts

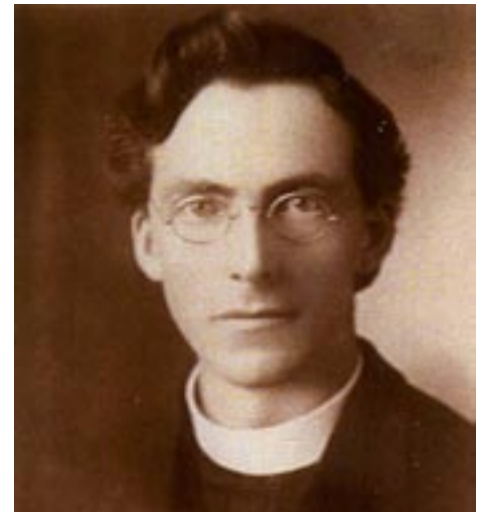
(See **A Heart Ablaze**, Page Four)

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school in Amarillo. St. Mary's Academy in Clarendon had closed due to an epidemic of typhoid fever. Father Dunn persuaded the Sisters who ran the school to open it again in Amarillo, where there were now six times as many Catholics than there were in Clarendon. The parishioners subscribed \$8,000 toward the school, whereupon ten acres were purchased for the three-story brick building that would open in 1913. Also during that year the Bishop of Dallas appointed Father Dunn as the head of the new Amarillo deanery

Father Charles Bier came as Father Dunn's assistant in 1909. About Father Dunn he made these comments: "... to point out some of his well known character traits, I would mention first of all his sincere loyalty as a friend In company he was always social, witty, and entertaining As a traveling companion he was the very soul of cheerfulness, even in the most trying circumstances or emergencies. In fact, I have never heard him complain at any time or show signs of impatience either during his occasional sick spells or in the midst of other troubles or difficulties."

In 1916, at a cost of \$18,000, Father Dunn built a new Sacred Heart Church in Amarillo and throughout the year could be seen laying brick and handing boards to the workmen above. One day early in September, returning from bringing Communion to a patient at the hospital, he



Fr. David H. Dunn

fell at the foot of the altar. On October 1, at the age of 46, he died. His funeral was the first service in the last church he built. There being no pews yet installed, Protestant churches sent many chairs for those attending the funeral. In tribute to a priest loved and admired by all, businesses closed their doors during the funeral Mass.

Ten years later, Father Dunn's Sacred Heart church became the cathedral parish when the Diocese of Amarillo was created in 1926. Had he led a less rigorous and sacrificial life, Lubbock's first priest might well have lived to become the first Bishop of Amarillo.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Feb. 1** First Friday Rosary & Mass
Christ the King Cathedral
6:35 a.m.
Donuts and coffee follow
- Feb. 13** Board Meeting
Christ the King Cathedral
7:00 p.m.
- Feb. 14** Lunch Meeting
Lakeridge Country Club
12 Noon
- Feb. 14** Holy Hour for Vocations
Christ the King Cathedral
7:00 p.m.
- Feb. 29** Dinner Meeting
Hanley Hall, St. Elizabeth's
6:30 p.m.
- Mar. 7** First Friday Rosary & Mass
Christ the King Cathedral
6:35 a.m.
Donuts and coffee follow
- Mar. 12** Board Meeting
Christ the King Cathedral
7:00 p.m.
- Mar. 13** Lunch Meeting
Lakeridge Country Club
12 Noon
- Mar. 13** Holy Hour for Vocations
Christ the King Cathedral
7:00 p.m.
- Mar. 28** Dinner Meeting
Hanley Hall, St. Elizabeth's
6:30 p.m.
- Apr. 4** First Friday Rosary & Mass
Christ the King Cathedral
6:35 a.m.
Donuts and coffee follow
- Apr. 8** Board Meeting
Christ the King Cathedral
7:00 p.m.

The Lubbock Serran is published quarterly by the Serra Club of Lubbock Communications Committee. Judy Simmons, Vice President Communications, 9302 Quinton Ave., Lubbock, TX 79424, 794-4384; Elmus Beale, Larry Craig, Mike Custy, Bob Goyette and Gary McDonald.

Visit Often
www.serralubbock.org

Date / Facility	Speaker / Topic
February 14 Luncheon Lakeridge Country Club	Julie Ramonez <i>In the Spirit of God</i>
February 29 Dinner St. Elizabeth's Parish	Greg Ramzinski <i>St. Elizabeth's College Program</i>
March 13 Luncheon Lakeridge Country Club	Deacon Randy Canale <i>Topic TBA</i>
March 28 Dinner St. Elizabeth's Parish	Gary Simmons <i>Stem Cell Research</i>
April 10 Luncheon Lakeridge Country Club	Fr. Rene Perez <i>Topic TBA</i>
April 25 Dinner St. Elizabeth's Parish	Serra Club Membership Drive

A Heart Ablaze from page three

about my faith, so I saw no wrong in what I was doing.

When I went into the 7th grade I started attending Christ the King. This opened up a whole new world to me about my real faith. It wasn't until this past year that my faith really blossomed although. I met a wide range of new people and began to attend Rosary on Tuesday nights and Life Teen at Saint Elizabeth's on Sunday nights. I began to understand what being a Catholic means, what it has done for my life, and the blessings it has always showered upon me, grace after grace, like a thunderstorm of redemption. My mind has been opened in the seemingly infinite knowledge that there are things to be known and that I had been so ignorant for so long.

It was the beginning of this past year that this flood of information had nearly swept me away. I have been to some retreats and other events that have helped me to make my faith stronger. Now I see the error of my ways when I was a child, but I do not regret them; they have led me to where I am now and have shown me through experience what not to do. On occasions when I have the time to just sit and think, my mind is racing with life.

I think that the world and its blemishes could be quickly cleansed if only people would love God because that is really all he wishes of us; to love him and in his love, to follow his laws that keep us from hurting ourselves. I like to think about these things because when I see the affect some sins have on people, it helps me to understand God's reasoning more and in that, the plant of my faith digs its roots deeper into the soil of my soul looking for the nourishment of more knowledge. I think this may be a weakness of mine as well as a blessing. For me, as easily as I can be intrigued I can be confused. Sometime the insight I find leads to a forked road and the confusion leads to

frustration, which is impulsive. Usually when my mind has calmed, I will stumble upon that question which has confused me so and the answer seems so apparent it makes me laugh at the chaos that had conceived the problem.

Now I do not go to church just out of habit. My faith is a very important part of my daily life, and it makes me sad to know that I had not been introduced to Christ sooner in the light that I see him now. Through all the confusions and temptations in life, my faith will keep me strong. It also makes me feel good to know that no matter what, even when I run into rough patches in my life, there are always people in my life who care about me and they help me to stay strong even though I feel on the verge of collapse. Every day and every prayer brings me close to my God and my King in its entirety, the FATHER, SON & HOLY SPIRIT.

Diocesan Seminarians as of Fall 2007

St. Michael's Church-Levelland, TX
Anthony Phelps – Finished seminary.
Possible ordination in May or June 2008

Assumption Seminary-San Antonio, TX
Nahum Lopez – 3rd Theology – Candidate for Class of 2010
Joseph Palacios – 1st Theology – Candidate for Class of 2012

Holy Apostles College & Seminary
Cromwell, CT
Jerome McCallum – 1st Theology
– Candidate for Class of 2012

Sacred Heart Major Seminary-Detroit, MI
Lt. Brian Wood, USAF – Pre-Theology II
– Candidate for Class of 2013
(Note, we are "sharing" Brian with the Archdiocese for Military Services.)