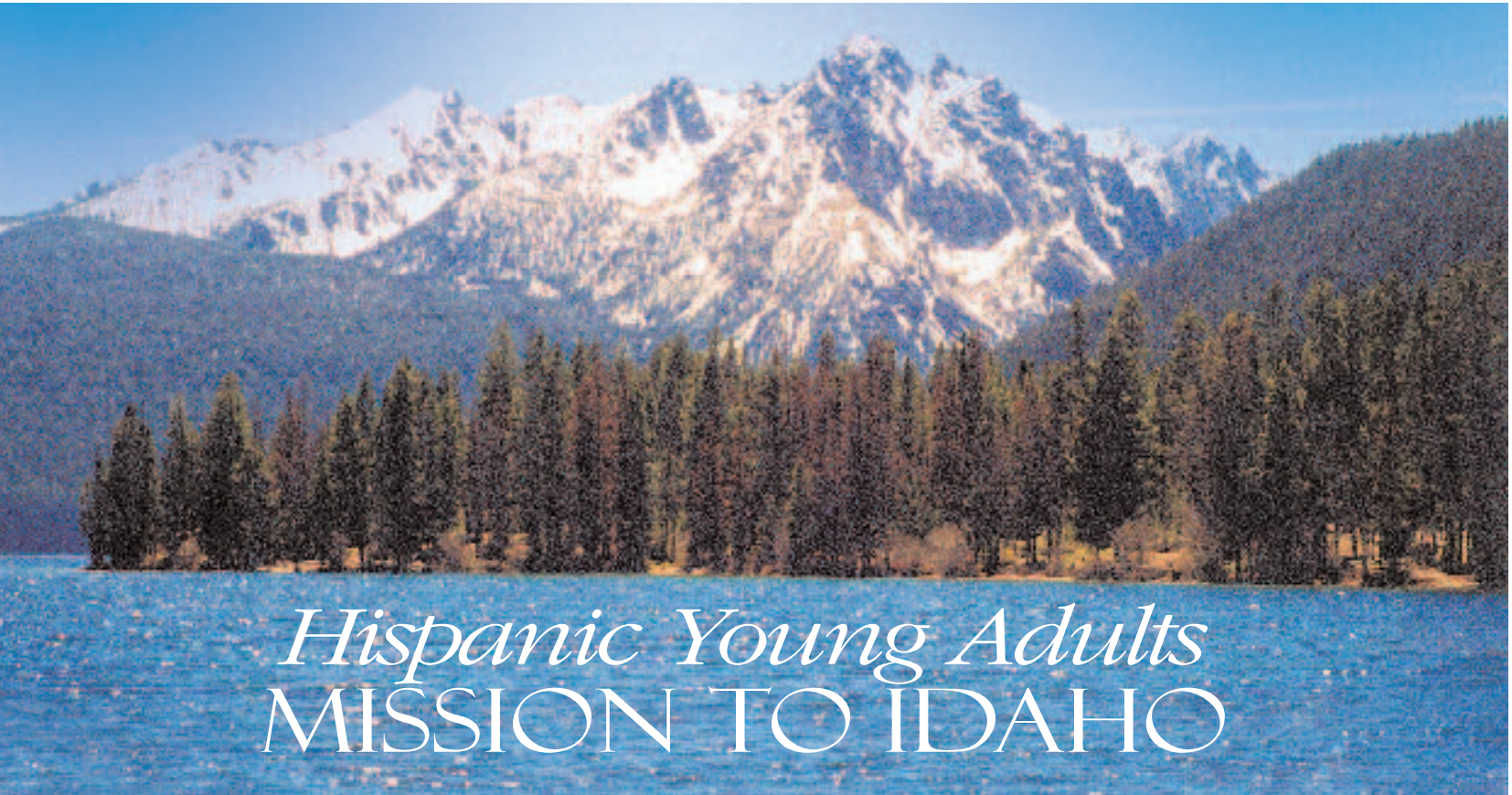




# neighbors

SUMMER 2005

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM MISSION AMERICA



## *Hispanic Young Adults* MISSION TO IDAHO

**“W**e need to find ways for effectively training more of our Catholic laity to play pivotal leadership roles within the diocese,” said Bishop Michael Driscoll thoughtfully. Outside his office at diocesan headquarters, the rapidly growing city of Boise, Idaho shone in the May sun at the foot of sheltering mountains. “We especially

need to continue ministry programs that empower our Hispanic families. I place a lot of confidence in our dedicated Hispanic young adults.”

Laura Henning, the energetic young woman who serves as diocesan youth ministry director, enthusiastically agreed. “We need to open the doors to these young people so they can fully express their rich faith and culture,” she said. “Young Hispanics constitute more than 45% of

the Catholic population under age 30 in the United States today. We simply can’t afford to lose their youthful idealism, joyful faith, and passionate energy.”

For the past several years, the Diocese of Boise has offered a *Prophets of Hope* retreat for Hispanic young adults. This spring, over 50 people ranging in age from 18 to 26 gathered in Burley, Idaho, to explore their identity and dignity as Catholics. Over three busy but fun-filled days, these

# From The Chairman

Summer 2005



Dear Friends,

*“To live means to be desired and loved by God, moment after moment.”* Of all the ways we might define human life, this brief and startling statement says everything. I wonder what kind of definition each of us would write were we asked to define “to live.” I have a suspicion many of us would begin, “To live means that I . . .” Our definitions would continue with a list of things that “I” would accomplish, achieve, feel, think, know, or do.

But the true definition does not begin with anything “I” set as a goal for myself. Instead, it begins with recognizing that the only reason I am alive is that I am “desired and loved by God.” By desiring and loving me, God brought me into being and sustains me. I am neither the source nor the goal of my own life.

Taking that truth seriously means letting a revolution happen in our hearts. If the reason I am alive is that I am desired and loved by God, then nourishing a relationship with God brings me even more to life. Making myself the center, the point of it all, only lessens me. One obstacle to serious consideration of a vocation is asking, “Should ‘I’ do this?” In other words, this approach to vocations is akin to making a career change, when, in fact, a vocation has much more to do with my willingness to leap into God’s arms. It has to do with surrendering myself to the truth—even though I do not fully understand it—that no matter what I have already accomplished, the reason I am living is because I am desired and loved by God.

Am I afraid of falling? God will catch me. Am I too weak? Yes, but God is strong. Will I miss my former life? Perhaps, but I will gain something more. Will I lose what I have built up? No, I will give it to God. Will I limit my future choices? Yes, but in giving myself to God I will gain everything.

As part of a Home Missions diocese, the priests of the Diocese of Boise know what it means to be stretched across an enormous landscape—the Lord’s vast vineyard that is Idaho. Thirty-eight clergy staff 51 parishes over 83,557 square miles. Yet Bishop Michael P. Driscoll and the staff serve God’s people with enthusiasm and generosity.

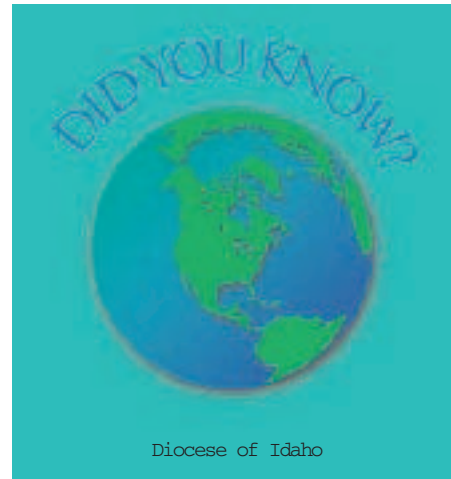
Contributions to the Catholic Home Missions Appeal help educate dozens of mission territory seminarians each year, including those of Boise. These funds are vitally important. But even more important is prayer.

Please join us in prayer for those considering a vocation to the priesthood. Pray that they will come alive in God’s desire and love for them, that they will give their “I” to God for his sake and ours. Pray that they will have the courage to stake their lives on what it means “to live.” Pray that they will hear his call and answer, “Send me.”

Clear signs are emerging all over our country that God is indeed answering our prayers!

† Most Rev. J. Peter Sartain  
Bishop of Little Rock  
Chairman, Committee on the Home Missions

1 (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Jubilee of the Consecrated Life* Rome: February 2, 2000), Appendix IA.



Diocese of Idaho

Nicknamed the Gem State, Idaho’s greatest jewel is the land itself. More than two-thirds of the state is mountainous public land—an outdoor paradise for hikers, bikers, skiers, kayakers, fishermen, campers, and tourists.

Amazingly, the entire state of Idaho has only a single telephone area code. With about 1.3 million residents spread out over 84,000 square miles, Idaho has one of the lowest population densities in the United States. But it is still the number-one potato-producing state in America.

Sometime around 1815, a band of Iroquois migrated from eastern Canada to Idaho. The Iroquois brought with them the rudiments of the Catholic faith—they spoke of the necessity of having “black robes” show them the way to heaven. In 1840, a Belgian priest, Fr. Pierre Jean de Smet, arrived to celebrate the first Mass in Idaho.

The 84,290 square-mile Diocese of Boise includes the entire state of Idaho. Only one Catholic high school exists in the whole state; there are no Catholic colleges or seminaries at all. The 145,900 Catholics of the Diocese of Boise—who populate 51 parishes, 31 missions, and 31 chapels—have only 38 diocesan priests to serve them.

The Committee on the Home Missions is funding education for ten seminarians to serve the fast-growing Hispanic population in the diocese. The Diocese of Boise leads the largest state of Idaho. Its Home Missions Center promotes a Pastoral Plan for the Diocese. Original missions artwork illustrated by Br. Michael McGrath, OSFS. Photos: p. 1, 3, David Suley, CHM.

continued from page 1

young people learned leadership skills to help them guide youth groups back home. The wide-open 84,000-square-mile Diocese of Boise, which covers all of Idaho, certainly leaves space for everyone’s talents, young and old. Catholics account for about 10% of the state’s 1.3 million people, but the need for culturally diverse pastoral gifts in Idaho is growing. More and more families, mostly Mexican, are arriving to work the vast fields of the Snake River Plain in the south. Already, about 5,000 Hispanics attend Sunday Mass at 15 locations across this rich valley.

The challenges this diocese faces are not limited to wide open spaces and an exploding young Hispanic population. There is also a serious and growing shortage of priests. With only 38 active diocesan priests to staff 51 parishes, 31 missions, and 31 chapels, the Diocese of Idaho depends heavily upon the skills of deacons, religious

women, and lay leaders. Eight married Hispanic men from Boise have recently come forward to be ordained to the diaconate. Over the past ten years, nearly 100 lay women and men have been educated and certified for ministry leadership.

The Gem State’s greatest natural treasure is the sky-piercing land itself, especially the spectacular 11,000-foot Sawtooth Mountains, which dominate the horizons of central Idaho. The greatest mission treasures, however, are the men and women—ordained, religious, and lay—who are holding this Catholic community together and making it prosper.

All these are gems in God’s sight.

CHM is grateful to Jim Hughes, diocesan director of stewardship and development, and Laura Henning, diocesan youth ministry director, for their assistance with this article. ■



Hispanic Young Adult Leaders

## Catholic Home Missions Committee Awards Record 10.6 Million!

The Bishops’ Committee on the Home Missions (CHM) awarded a record-breaking \$10,641,500 in grants to 90 mission dioceses and 20 mission organizations in the United States for 2005-2006. Donations to the Catholic Home Missions have nearly doubled since the CHM Appeal was established. The \$10.6 million is also an increase of \$231,500 over last year’s allocations.

The Committee on the Home Missions has always paid special attention to members of diverse cultural groups. In 2005, money raised in the Catholic Home Missions Appeal (CHMA) funded ministry among the following cultures:

- Hispanics 41%**
- Caucasians 38%**
- Asians 7%**
- African Americans 6%**
- Native Americans 6%**
- Pacific & Caribbean Islanders 2%**

CHM also awarded a major grant to the Archdiocese of the Military Services for its chaplaincy programs worldwide.

## Youth from Mission America Travel to World Youth Day

The Committee on the Home Missions recently awarded **\$200,000** in special grants to 63 home mission dioceses for World Youth Day this summer. These gifts will enable young people in poorer and more rural dioceses to experience the universal Church by participating in World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany. Catholic youth from Home Mission America will have a wonderful encounter with other young people from all over the world and the newly elected Pope Benedict XVI.

Generous Catholics across the nation made this assistance possible through their contributions to the annual Catholic Home Missions Appeal. We thank you!



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Summer 2005

• COMMITTEE ON THE HOME MISSIONS •  
**Who Are We?**

**T**he bishops' Committee on the Home Missions was founded as the American Board of Catholic Missions in 1924. In cooperation with the Black and Indian Missions Board (1885) and the Catholic Church Extension Society (1905), the Committee provides financial support for missionary activities that strengthen and extend the presence of the Church in the United States and its island territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The principal beneficiaries of the annual Catholic Home Missions Appeal are approximately 90 home mission dioceses, which include the Eastern Catholic Church eparchies.

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**WANT  
TO SEE  
MORE?**

We invite you to take an Internet journey to a few of our home missions and learn what's happening in their parts of the country. Just log on to [www.usccb.org/hm](http://www.usccb.org/hm) and click on **Stories and Pictures from the Field**.