Barn Mass Brings Home Advent for Central Florida Couples

By Dick & Diane Baumbach

What do donkeys, miniature horses, pigs, and 25 Worldwide Marriage Encounter couples have in common? They were all in the same place, a barn, to celebrate Central Florida's second annual Barn Mass on the first Saturday in Advent.

The Barn Mass came together as a result of the efforts of Fran & Eydie Robacker, Jerry & Judy Becker, Hughie & Cathy McCloskey and Jim & Judith Latham. Couples came from as far as two hours away to participate in the Advent celebration.

The Barn Mass, which was held this year (2006) in a working barn located in Lady Lake, Florida, has become an annual tradition for the WWME Central Florida community.

The Mass was celebrated by longtime team priest, Fr. Gene Weis, who lives in the area.

An empty manger was sitting next to the makeshift altar. Couples sat on bales of hay during the Mass.

During Father Weis's homily he had to stop several times because a driving rain slammed into the tin roof making it impossible to hear his voice.

During the distribution of the Holy Eucharist, the sounds of donkeys and miniature horses could be heard.

The entire event really drove home the point that Jesus was born in a stable and the Mass allowed the WWME couples attending to reflect on how Jesus came into the world.

Plans are underway to locate a larger barn for next year's Mass so that additional couples can be accommodated.