

## Section 12 Convention 2006

By John & Regina Ruport

Dear Family,

We wanted to share with you the beautifully spiritual, challenging, and powerful Section 12 Convention held July 28-30, at Santa Clara University on the theme "In God We Trust" and format following the 2005 Towson WWME Convention.

We began the Convention Friday night with a gentle reminder that this was in fact a gathering of Family, of the apostles and disciples, a time of dialogue, of prayer, of intimate sharing, of enrichment, of celebration at our all being together to praise and thank God for the wonderful blessings He has bestowed upon us!

Then, at the suggestion of John & Sandra Williams, one of our rookie teams, the Convention kicked off Friday night with a humorous Dialogue & Sharing Group Workshop, presented by one of the community share circles. The mistakes in "Guidelines for Dialogue" & "The Rules for Sharing, while at Circle" were quickly brought to the attention of the attendees by Pat & Diane Sweeney, wearing referee shirts, using whistles and throwing yellow or red flags, while carrying big signs identifying the grievous error. We all laughed till our sides hurt and the message for how to share in a WWME small group got through loud and clear. We concluded Friday night with a beautiful evening liturgy of the Hours coordinated and conducted by George & Michelle Otte, our Section Priest Scheduling couple / Convention Liturgy Coordinator.

Saturday began with Mass celebrated by the Archbishop Niederauer of San Francisco, who expressed great appreciation for the work being done by WWME to enrich Married Couples and Parish Life. We all agreed that the music at that liturgy and through-out the convention and liturgies, provided by community couples and Team from many different Areas, was as engaging and spirit filled as any we have heard at other conventions. The whole experience of Family was also enriched by the presence of Ray & Fina Fernandez, Charles & Esther Keone, & Fr. Jeff San Nicholas from Guam and Julian & Marcia Calvo & Fr. Ike Ayuyu from Saipan. This was made possible by the decision of the Section Board to assist them with their transportation costs. The four Saturday presentations were given by circles from Sacramento, Fairfield, Hawaii, and San Jose. The community couples shared their hearts, with each succeeding presentation becoming more intimate and tender. Each Presentation was followed by dialogue and then a small group sharing. We were all blessed with the presence of Maddi Viernes, widow of Frank Viernes, who passed May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006. She shared briefly, as part of the Sacramento circle, her decision to Trust in God through out Frank's illness. In addition, quite by surprise, after the first presentation Saturday, we began to discover that there were three pre-weekend couples attending the convention, who had registered over the internet, which gave us a wonderful opportunity to invite them to make a W/E. By the end of the convention two were signed up to attend upcoming weekends and the third committed, but not yet signed.

Saturday evening, the Convention committee provided us all with a delightful surprise: a DJ who had several trunks full of props for games, and fun music to which we danced. We were all amazed at the excitement and competitiveness that ensued.

Sunday began with a sharing from the Section Ecclesial Team, without Fr. Dick, who had a wedding at Lake Tahoe for the son of some very close long time friends. They shared both the joy that surpasses all understanding that result from our Trusting in God and the joyful confidence, that we have from trusting in God, for sharing the Dream with as many pre-encountered as we can. We also invited everyone to attend the National Convention in 2008. The convention ended with the excitement of a Family gathering. Couples are still talking about the Joy of Trusting in God and the convention, giving witness to the outpouring of many graces by the Holy Spirit on this enrichment experience. About 160 people attended.

We were all thrilled with what this Community did with the Towson Convention outlines. By the way, this was the first convention put on by Section 12 since 1998.

This Convention was an incredible success because of the work of many, many couples. Our praise begins with Dennis & Carrie Crawford, Convention coordinators, without whom there would not have been a convention in the first place. Dennis & Carrie (Execs for SRSSR) stepped up after Paul & Peg Raburn moved to Kansas City. Our praise also extends to their convention committee: Dean & Claire Simonich (facilities), Bob & Karen Smith (registration), Manuel & Rory Dominguez (housing), George & Michele Otte (liturgy), Richard & Theresa Rieve (promotion), Mike & Jeanne Emry (packets/name tags), Thor & Tess Devenish (music), Ken & Claranne Schirle (program), and our presenters/circle leaders Don & Jeannette Boltz, Pat & Diane Sweeney, Jose & Mary Elizabeth Alvior, and Ken & Claranne Schirle, were all outstanding. They never once hesitated to go way beyond their respective responsibilities and many often jumped in with more ideas that they wanted to pursue. We also want to thank Archbishop Niederauer and Bishop Garcia for their celebration of Mass on Saturday morning and at the end of the Convention on Sunday. Finally, we want to thank the Towson Convention Outline Committee for graciously sharing their outlines that served as the foundation for what was represented to our Section 12 Community.