

*Kenrick-Glennon  
Seminary: "Training men  
for the priesthood for over  
100 years."*

# The Herald

## Special Commemorative Issue

### A Fond Farewell to Our Beloved Carmelite Sisters

By Jordan Gongora (Glennon Junior / Diocese of Belize) and Steven Hansen (Theology III / Diocese of Jefferson City)

At the close of the 2003-2004 academic year, the Carmelite Missionaries of St. Teresa will be leaving Kenrick-Glennon Seminary after 41 years of service to the seminary community, and returning home to their Motherhouse in Houston, Texas. From the beginning, the Sisters' service to Kenrick-Glennon Seminary has been twofold: operating the seminary kitchen and praying for the priestly discernment of Kenrick-Glennon's seminarians. The fruits of their mission are tasted in nourishing, delicious meals served seven days a week and seen in the ministry of priests and deacons in dioceses near and far. As Sr. Cira Maria explains: "As Mary served her Son and lived the will of the Father, so we served the priests and seminarians of this seminary."

For the priests and seminari-

ans at Kenrick-Glennon, the Sisters hold a special place in their hearts. "The Sisters are a wonderful example of prayerfulness, humility, and cheerfulness," says Brian Hecktor, a first year Theologian studying for the Archdiocese of St. Louis. "But they're more than just a good example. They're a real part of our family and our community."

Fr. Edward Richard, Academic Dean at the seminary, explains the Sisters' presence at Kenrick-Glennon this way: "The Sisters have been 'love in the heart of the seminary'."

In 1963 a Vincentian priest at the seminary in Houston, Texas, was contacted by a Vincentian Priest in St. Louis (where there were 160-170 Theology seminarians and 10 priests) at the direction of Car-

dinal Joseph Ritter, seeking 10-12 Sisters (In Spanish, *hermanas* means "sisters"). After prayer and discernment, Sr. M. Teresa Rosa Ruiz (the Superior General at the time) sent four Sisters to St. Louis. This was on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1963. Believe it or not, Sr. Julita Bravo was among the first CMST missionaries sent to St. Louis, as were Sr. Martina Munoz, Sr. Viviana Valdez, and Sr.



Michaela Venicia.

In 1964 the late Sr. Guillermmina Escobedo came with another Sister. In 1967 Sr. Boni-

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## Farewell to Our Beloved Hermanas: You Are in Our Thoughts, Our Prayers, Our Hearts

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facia Castillo came with three others. Over the forty years of their service to the seminary, a number of sisters have come and some have gone back to Houston, where the Provincial Motherhouse in the U.S. is located. Some of the other Carmelite Sisters who have served Kenrick-Glennon Seminary include: Sr. Florintina Mendoza, Sr. Rosario Rosales, Sr. Guadalupe Jaime, Sr. Celia Jaime, Sr. Ester, Sr. Rosa Maria, Sr. Florina, Sr. Rosandina, Srs. Socorro (two), and Sr. Yolanda Flores. Deceased Sisters who have served at Kenrick-Glennon include Sr. Maria Emilia, Sr.

Remedios Lagina, Sr. Refugio Marie Paris, Sr. Lidia Chavez, Sr. Luz Delgado, and most recently, Sr. Guillermo Escobedo (*pictured right*).

Currently the six Carmelite Sisters in St. Louis are Sr. Cira Maria Ramirez, Sr. Licinia Perez, Sr. Maria Teresa Gomez, Sr. Fernandina Lira Ruiz, Sr. Bonifacia Castillo, and Sr. Julita Bravo, who has been with us from the very beginning.

Leaving the seminary after so many years of dedicated service has been an emotional experience for the remaining Sisters. "We feel sad that we are leaving," says Sr. Cira Maria, "but we are willing to do God's will."

We ask everyone in our Kenrick-Glennon Seminary community and friends of the seminary to pray for the



Sr. Guillermo: In our memories, in our prayers.

Carmelite Missionaries of St. Teresa in a special way at this time as they continue to pray for us.

## Counterpoint: They're Not As Sweet As You Might Think!

By Kevin Muniz, Theology I / Diocese of Springfield, Illinois

One day I came into the kitchen to see the Sisters before dinner. As they were preparing our meal, I heard them speaking Spanish to each other. Now, I have always been intrigued by the language, probably because I have some Spanish blood in me. As a result, I asked a Sister to teach me some words, since I do not know any Spanish. With a kind and loving face, she agreed to teach me some words. She told me to repeat after her. She said "MIS," so I repeated "MIS." Next, she said the words "MANOS," then "SON,"

then "PARA," and then finally "AYODAR," with me repeating each word as I heard it.



Hermanas at a Seminary Christmas dinner.

With a feeling of accomplishment, I said "Sister, MIS MANOS SON PARA AYODAR. Now tell me, what does

that mean?" As she handed me a tray of food, she explained: "It means 'My hands are for helping,' so put that tray in the warmer." Now, every time I want to speak Spanish with them I have to help them out, since those are the only words that I know. This is why they are not as sweet as you might think, because they take advantage of an innocent and eager young man who just wanted to learn some Spanish.

God bless you, Hermanas! I'll miss you all.