

Workshop July 14, 2010
“How Do You Fit in the Puzzle?”

(Instrumental music will be playing in the background as the ladies enter the room.)

LIZ: Good morning. I'm Elizabeth Williams, State Regent of Oklahoma.

It's my pleasure to introduce the co-presenters of the Spiritual Enhancement Workshop: Born in Yoakum, Texas, our first presenter graduated from St. Joseph High School. Afterward, he studied business and accounting, working for the Tex Tan Western Leather Company. Always active in his parish activities, Father was the first Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist appointed in his church after Vatican II. He began studying for the priesthood in 1973 and was ordained on January 20, 1978. His involvement with Catholic Daughters began in 1980 in Victoria, Texas, and has continued with his appointments as Texas State Clergy Consultant and Texas State Chaplain. He is a Fourth Degree Knight and Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Presently serving as the National Clergy Consultant for the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, I'd like to introduce Father Donald Ruppert.

Our other workshop presenter was born in Enid, Oklahoma, and attended Catholic Schools all through high school and college. For 35 years her profession was Registered Nurse in Obstetrics. She is married with 3 children, 6 grandchildren and one due any day now. She is chairman of the Ceremonials Committee, National Spiritual Enhancement Chair and is presently serving her second term as National Director from Oklahoma. I'd like to present Evelyn Saxton. Evelyn....

EVELYN: Good Morning! It's such a pleasure to be here with you this VERY EARLY morning and to be able to share with you some of the ideas behind our workshop title topic, "How Do You Fit in the Puzzle?"

As we start our session, let's take a few moments to join spirit and body in praising God and offering thanks for our lives and the opportunity to be here in Buffalo sharing time with our CDA sisters in Christ.

Those of you who wish to, may do this exercise sitting down, but otherwise, please stand. This exercise is taken from "Out of the Ordinary" by Joyce Rupp.

She invites all of us to participate in six gestures of morning praise. I'll say one line and ask you to remain in a designated posture a brief moment. Then I'll repeat another line.

1. Offering the Creator praise and gratitude: *Please stretch your arms high and wide above your head.* "We thank you, Holy One, for the gift of another day of life."
2. Intentionally being aware of our spiritual bond with all of creation:
Hold your arms out from your sides, a little below shoulder height; pivot left and then to the right "We reach out in compassion to our sisters and brothers throughout the universe."
3. Offering our lives to the Holy One: *Stretch your arms straight out in front of you with palms up.* "We give to you all we are and all we have."
4. Opening to accept what the Holy One offers us this day: *Pull your hands close together and cup them as a container.* "We open our entire being to receive the gift that you have waiting for us in this new day."

5. Remembering to be kind to our planet earth: *Reach down toward the floor.* “We touch this planet earth with awe, reverence and gratitude, promising to care well for her today.”

6. Awareness of the indwelling presence of the Holy One: *Cross hands over your heart and bow slightly.* “May we be united with you throughout this day, aware of your love strengthening us and shining through us.” AMEN. Please be seated

As you know, the title of the workshop is “How Do You Fit in the Puzzle?”

To eventually answer that question, we first need to decide what a puzzle is and if we’d even like to fit in it. A puzzle is a collection of pieces intended to be placed together in a logical way in order to create a desired shape, picture or solution.

The many sizes, shapes and colors of the pieces fit together, linking each other as parts of the whole. We can observe many of those same characteristics as we look around this room today at the Catholic Daughters –and Father—gathered here. Our organization is composed of young and those who are “seasoned”; some who are heavy and those who are slim; some married or single, and there are skins of many colors. Some members prefer to remain in a less active role in CDA like the border pieces of a puzzle. Others prefer to be active as in the middle parts of the puzzle, while those smaller numbers in the middle might be considered the leaders, the focus of the picture. Just as we join all of our parts to make a whole, we function as many parts of one body, that being, in our Catholic belief, is the Body of Christ.

With the **first piece** of our CDA puzzle –“those who came before us” (**place first piece on board**), we might consider all of those men and women through the past 100-plus years who began the legacy we

experience today. Father Ruppert, who is very well-versed in the history of the Catholic Daughters, will now present some of the unique happenings in our history from the book “Catholic Daughters of the Americas—A Century in Review”. Father Ruppert.....

Evelyn: Thank you, Father. We owe so much to those who came before us.

(I will have printed 10 copies of the following prayer service and have 8 people participate. Liz and I will be the 9th and 10th)

Evelyn: Throughout the workshop we’re going to be doing several prayer services to give you an idea of the types of prayer services you might select or create to offer for use in your Courts. The Internet, books, hymn books, sermons—there are so many resources for preparing services your court members would benefit from.

Evelyn: If those of you who have the blue sheets would please come forward, we’ll share remembrances of our Catholic Daughter ancestors.

Evelyn: “God of our ancestors, today we gather to our hearts all those who have influenced our lives with their love and goodness. Although they have passed on to the other side of this life, their lives continue to affect who we are and what we do. Thank you for those who have come before us and the bond we have with them.

Reader 1: Let us listen now as we are invited to remember various groups of our spiritual ancestors. After each group is mentioned, a bell will be rung to remind us of how their goodness

has resonated in our lives.

Reader 2: Let us remember the ones who lived and loved deeply, who found the source of their inner strength from you, the Divine Savior.

(Liz ring bell)

Reader 3: Let us remember **the light-filled ones**, who enkindled our spirits with their teachings and the spark of their beliefs.

(Liz ring bell)

Reader 4: Let us remember the **risk-takers** who faced their fears and took action, who sought justice even though they had to pay a price for it.

(Liz ring bell)

Reader 5: Let us remember the **vulnerable ones** who allowed us to care for them, to be with them in their time of need.

(Liz ring bell)

Reader 6: Let us remember **the faith-filled ones** who brought us to the Holy One, who led us, by their words and example, into deeper relationship with God.

(Liz ring bell)

Reader 7: Let us remember the **brave ones** who walked through their struggles with hope, who taught us how to trust and have confidence during our times of difficulty.

(Liz ring bell)

Reader 8: Let us remember the great **lovers of life**, whose humor and enthusiasm lifted our spirits and brought us joy.

(Liz ring bell)

Evelyn: We thank you, Lord, for the holy ones who have come before us.

As they embrace you in eternity, we give you thanks for them and ask that our lives model their virtues and resonate with their goodness. Amen.

(Liz ring bell)

(Taken from *Out of the Ordinary* by Joyce Rupp)

Piece #2 of the puzzle is “We Are Many Parts”. In Corinthians 12:4, we are told by St. Paul that “as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.” We’d like to take just a few moments to concentrate on the words of the hymn we’re probably all familiar with—“We Are Many Parts”. You have the words on the sheet you were given as you walked in, so if you would please join in as soon as the lyrics begin. (Liz will start the tape of the “We Are Many Parts” ---the CD with voice and accompaniment)

As the text of the hymn says, each of us has many gifts to share and, being a servant of the Lord allows us to go out and share the gift of love with the world. As Catholic Daughters, this is exactly what we do, each in our own way, but according to God’s plan for us, not always according to OUR plan. To illustrate, I’d like to relate the story about three little trees that stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.

The **first** little tree wanted to be a treasure chest. He wanted to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. He wanted to be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!

The **second** little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean and decided he wanted to travel mighty waters and carry powerful kings. He wanted to be the strongest ship in the world!

The **third** little tree wanted to grow to be the tallest and straightest tree in the forest. He wanted people to look up at him and think of the heavens and God and how close he would be to them.

Years passed and the little trees grew tall. As fate would have it, one day three woodcutters climbed the mountain and each of them cut down one of the trees that had had such big dreams. The trees just knew their dreams were finally coming true.

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought him to a carpenter's shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feed box for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, or with treasure. He was filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took him to a shipyard, but no mighty ship was made that day. Instead, the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. He was too small to sail on an ocean, or even a river. Instead he was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut him into strong beams and left him in a lumberyard. All it ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God...

Many, many days and nights passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feed box. "I wish I could make a cradle for him," her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and the sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful," she said. And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

Many years later, a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree knew he did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the wind and the rain. The tired man awakened. He stood up,

stretched out his hand and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the King of heaven and earth.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. But on Sunday morning, the third tree knew that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.

The moral to this story is a simple one: Things may not always go our way, but God always loves us and has a plan for us. Just as each tree got what it wanted ---though not in the way it expected, we don't know God's plan for us, but He is always in control and will always give us what is best for us.

Piece #3 of the puzzle: How are we disciples of Jesus?

There are approximately 180 people in this room and I feel certain if I'd ask, there would be at least 180 different ways in which we show we are followers of Jesus and carry on His work. Would some of you please share with us some of the Court activities you do to show you are following in the footsteps of Christ? (audience participation)

It's obvious there are so many ways to be the hands and feet of Jesus. So many ways to carry out our Christian obligations. I came across a poem written by Gina Ponessa from Court McLaughlin #422 in New York, many of you may know her, and I'd like to share a few lines from it as she addresses the invitation to join the Catholic Daughters.

"I discovered a family of sisters, who focused themselves on God.

Doing good works, promoting justice, and following the road He trod.

Making the world a better place through acts of charity,

Putting forth a united team effort to improve their community.

Just like a jigsaw puzzle, everyone's talent plays a part

Giving of ourselves to others means the most

When it comes right from the heart.

Ministering to the sick, feeding and clothing the poor,

Helping out those less fortunate—let me elaborate some more.

Support for increased vocations of new servants of the Lord,

Donations to the Smile Train, contributing scholarship awards.

Working toward Morality in Media,

Teaching that life is the only choice,

Standing up for what's right and what's just

Needs us all to lend our voice.

Habitat for Humanity, helping with disaster relief,

Sending aid in support of our troops, reinforcing our spiritual beliefs,

Whenever there's a worthwhile cause, we're always there to help out,

It's what most definitely pleases the Lord—of that I have no doubt.”

I appreciate her poetic effort to illustrate the ways in which we can be disciples of Christ.

Piece #4 of the puzzle:

We've looked at the leaders and sisters in Christ who have come before us as Father has so beautifully related; we've considered the activities we presently do as Catholic Daughters; and we know we are all parts of the Body of Christ.

So where do you fit in the puzzle that is Catholic Daughters of the Americas?

Do you postpone "doing" until you're certain your talents are good enough?

Do you hold off in commitment until you're sure you won't make a mistake?

Do you claim no time---no knowledge---no energy?

Do you feel like a border piece of the puzzle, content to stay in the mix but keeping a distance from the major activity?

Or do you feel like those pieces surrounding the middle of the puzzle, active and participating but not willing to take on leadership roles?

Or maybe you're the epicentre of the puzzle---willing to lead your CDA sisters from the present into the future. All of the pieces must fall into place in order to make a complete picture, just as all Catholic Daughters must work together -----regardless of what role you choose--- to make our organization unified and successful.

We are all so blessed to be Catholic Daughters, as are those recipients whom we help through our CDA activities. [Liz Williams](#) is going to lead us in a litany of Catholic Daughters so please respond from your prayer sheets.

Litany of Catholic Daughters

- *(Leader reads these parts)*

- Blessed be the Catholic Daughters who commit their time and talents in carrying out great works of mercy.

Response: For them we give thanks.

- Blessed be those Catholic Daughters who take on leadership roles guiding members to a deeper knowledge of the CDA mission.

Response: For them we give thanks, Lord.

- Blessed be those who lend their hands and strength to build homes and improve lives through Habitat for Humanity

Response: For their hands we thank you, Lord.

- Blessed be those Catholic Daughters who so generously support the clergy, religious men, women and seminarians.

Response: For them we are grateful.

- Blessed be those Catholic Daughters who March for Life and believe in the sanctity of life at every stage.

Response: We appreciate their dedication, Lord.

- Blessed be those Catholic Daughters who prayerfully remember their CDA sisters who cannot physically participate in activities.

Response: We are thankful for them, Lord.

- Blessed be those Catholic Daughters who help alleviate the pain of loneliness, abuse, illness or hunger.

Response: Please bless them, Lord.

- Blessed are those Catholic Daughters who bring comfort to the grieving, mercy to the troubled and light to the darkness.

Response: For them we are truly grateful.

LEFT SIDE: We thank you, Father, for the Catholic Daughters and those gifts you have so graciously and generously bestowed on all of us:

RIGHT SIDE: We thank you for the faith that fills our hearts with understanding.

LEFT SIDE: We are grateful for those who will be taking

leadership roles in our organization and ask for your Divine guidance as they serve.

RIGHT SIDE: We are especially grateful for those in the clergy who selflessly offer their time as Court Chaplains and guide us with their wisdom.

LEFT SIDE: We thank you for the men and women of the past whose actions made a difference in our lives and helped make us who we are today.

RIGHT SIDE: We thank you, Father, for light---light that allows us to see the beauty of nature in our world and in each other.

LEFT SIDE: We thank you for the many hands that reach out and touch those in need.

RIGHT SIDE: We appreciate all those members who give so generously of themselves toward the betterment of community and country.

LEFT SIDE: We honor your Blessed Mother and give thanks for her motherly protection.

RIGHT SIDE: We thank you for the many brave men and women who fight for our freedom and for the nation we call

home.

LEFT SIDE: Finally, Father, we thank you for the presence of your Spirit in our lives and the gift of your body and blood to sustain us.

ALL: For all these things we are eternally grateful.

AMEN.

Puzzle Piece #5 : We know that the gifts of bread and wine that nourish us here on earth become the food for our eternal life in heaven. Father Ruppert will share his thoughts with us as we place the 5th puzzle piece---“United with Jesus in the Eucharist”. Father.....

Our puzzle is now complete. We know that it takes many parts, many personalities and lessons from the past to make up the total body of the Catholic Daughters. We have seen the many ways in which we are disciples of Christ. And hopefully, we’ve determined just where we fit in the puzzle.

As Father has said, each of us, as we share in the bread that has been changed into the body of Christ, and the wine that has been changed into the blood of Christ, become one body----the body of Christ--- as we partake of one bread. **(Turn tri-fold around to reveal poster of Jesus)**

We want to thank you for participating in the morning and hope you enjoy the rest of the convention. We are asking that you exit quietly after a very brief prayer and the sacred hymn “How Beautiful”.

Lord Jesus, you give us yourself as the Bread of Life and the Cup of salvation. Strengthen us to be your Body in our world today.

You are the Bread of Life. You promise that all who eat the bread will live forever.

Lord Jesus, we hunger for the Bread of Life. Fill us with yourself that

we may become what we eat. Nourish us with your body and blood as food for the journey of life. Amen.

(CD of “How Beautiful” is the Body of Christ)