

## **Reflections from Fr. Bert Buby**

Stonemill-Kiefaber Community Retreat

Dec. 20-22, 2007

Governor's Island, Huntsville, Ohio

Nine of us Marianists from the Stonemill-Kiefer community went on retreat Dec. 20-22 at Governor's Island which is about 70 miles north of Dayton on an artificial lake called Indian Lake. It was frozen over upon our arrival. We should have been 10 persons, but Marianus Bilung, our student brother from India, was home mourning his mother and consoling the members of his family. He will return before Jan. 1. We missed having his pleasant, peaceful, and thoughtful presence.

The two days here passed quickly. Our theme was *hope* during the season of Advent. Fr. Jerry Chinchar gave us an excellent article by a Benedictine professor of liturgy at St. Meinrad's which gave us a lot of prayerful material for the virtue of hope and its meaning for our world today. I have been reading Pope Benedict's encyclical or pastoral on hope called *SPE SALVI FACTIC SUMUS ... by hope are we saved*.

While I was in Rome last week for a special meeting with the president of the Marianum, Fr. Maggiani, and later in the week with the Congregation of Catholic Education (three representatives from that Congregation and then Fr. Luigi Gambero, SM, Fr. Johann Roten, Fr. Paul Marshall and I were the representatives of IMRI and UD – Fr. Maggiani was also present at this meeting) – I took the time to read Pat McDaid's excellent little booklet which contained the pastoral of Benedict XVI the eve before I left for Dayton, Dec. 16.

The trip back was horrendous ... lost luggage ... extra hours in Atlanta and an hour delay on the flight from Rome which meant over twelve hours in the air in the close space of a Delta plane. I read the letter of the pope at the Generalate. Then on this retreat I reread it to strengthen my own hope in things beyond this space and time and my involvements in it.

It helped me focus on "things eternal, the substance of which are things unseen." Our discussion on the article about hope helped us to have a fruitful faith sharing on Friday morning. Everyone had several sharings which brought out the content of the article as well as some practical and spiritual things to do and think about in the days to come. It was a real grace-filled retreat for all of us where prayer, community life, socializing and realizing the needs our world has.

It seems hope is often ignored in the secular culture in which we live. It is shunned as something unreal and not important.

As a postscript: On our way to the retreat, three of us were rear-ended by a driver on busy W. Fairfield Road near of all things the TARGET store! Another car was even more damaged after hitting a huge male deer. Fortunately, no one was injured. This became a source of lively exchange during the retreat in spare moments. Surprisingly, the article we read for the retreat was entitled, "Windshield and Rear-View Mirror: Advent's Encircling Vision."