

THE EASTER SEASON

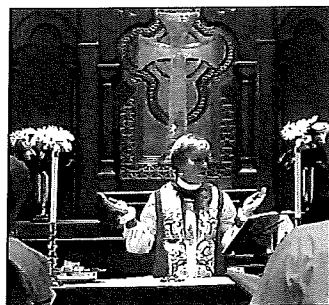
AN ALTAR GUILD PRIMER

Dee Whiteside, altar guild directress, Diocese of West Texas

After an unusually cold week in South Texas, with snow and icy highways, Saturday, January 20, warmed up to 70° in San Antonio, just in time for our altar guild gathering. The Diocese of West Texas invited its members to the Bishop Jones Center's Cathedral House to join in an offering of "The Easter Season — An Altar Guild Primer."

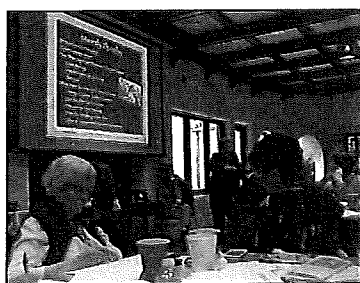
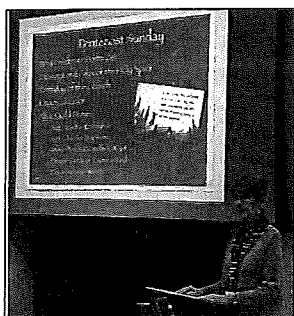
The six-member planning committee, members of the DWTX Altar Guild for St. John's Chapel, had judged that approximately 30 would attend — the usual number for our workshops — and duly prepared 30 folders, notebooks, pens and handout materials, and one week before the gathering we were confident that we were ready. But the registration forms kept coming in. Our committee members scrambled. More of everything had to be bought, copied and collated. We were frantic but ecstatic. In all, we had 69 altar guild members attend from across the diocese.

The presentations of our gathering covered the 94 days of the Easter season, from Ash Wednesday to Pentecost, delving into the liturgy of each service, explaining the meanings and background of our Episcopal beliefs, and focusing on altar guild duties during all Easter-related services. The presentations for each segment of the Easter season were made by altar guild members from San Antonio area churches, as well as the Diocese of West Texas Altar Guild members, who serve



Sixty-nine altar guild members squeezed into 40-seat St. John's Chapel for Eucharist, celebrated by Bishop Jennifer Brooke-Davidson

Among the many presentations on the Easter season, Dee Whiteside explained why Pentecost Sunday is included in Eastertide, and Ellen Martin spoke on Maundy Thursday



at a weekly Eucharist on Wednesday mornings celebrated by Bishop David Reed and Bishop Jennifer Brooke-Davidson.

Our day at Saturday's gathering began with a Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Jennifer and somehow, 69 people were seated in the 40-seat St. John's Chapel. Our new Bishop Suf-fragan, Jennifer Brooke-Davidson, the first female bishop in our diocesan history, allowed time after the service for our members to get to know her in an informal chat. Her dedication to the altar guild ministry was apparent in her remarks to the group.

The Reverend Carol Morehead, associate rector of St. Mark's Church in San Antonio, gave an enlightening talk on altar guild principles for service during Lent, giving us greater knowledge and understanding of altar guild service and commitment during this time.

Marjorie George, author of the diocese's publication, *Reflections, and Hallowed Ground, The History of Cathedral Park*, led groups through the beautiful grounds of Cathedral Park at the Bishop Jones Center, home of the Diocese of West Texas. San Antonio is an old city and we treasure our historical buildings, not the least of which is the Cathedral Chapel of St. John's, known as Chapel House, built in 1926 as a private residence, and later gifted to the diocese by the step-daughter of Rev. Hollis Jones for whom the Bishop Jones Center is named. The grounds of Cathedral Park's meditation walk, adjacent to the headwaters of the San

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Antonio River, are expansive with nature's beauty — 100-year old oak trees, and seasonal flowers and greenery of all kinds.

Other presentations by our altar guild members included information about the camouflage stoles, sponsored by the National Altar Guild Association, which are sent to our military chaplains in combat; disaster kits for churches in need; and the General Convention of the Episcopal Church (when NAGA is holding its Triennial) to be held July 5-13 in Austin. Many of the members of our diocese signed up to help in the many Eucharists that will be celebrated during the Convention.

Certainly, we were showered with God's abundance at this wonderful and productive gathering of our altar guild brothers and sisters. We felt God's presence there and are quite sure He had a hand in the sudden change of weather for our day. ☩



*Top: Members visit the Pergola of Hope and Trinity Fountain on a walk of the Cathedral Grounds
Bottom: The live oak and sunrise overlook on the Meditation Walk*

A PRAYER IN MEMORY OF OSCAR ROMERO (1917–1980)

A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

From Xavarian Missionaries: Oscar A. Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, in El Salvador, was assassinated on March 24, 1980 while celebrating Mass in a small chapel in a cancer hospital where he lived. He had always been close to his people and preached a prophetic gospel, denouncing injustice in his country and supporting the development of popular and mass organizations. He became the voice of the Salvadoran people when all other channels of expression had been crushed by the repression. This prayer was composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, drafted for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden in Nov. 1979 for a celebration of departed priests. As a reflection on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Bishop Romero, Bishop Untener included it in a reflection titled "The mystery of the Romero Prayer." The mystery is that the words of the prayer are attributed to Oscar Romero, but they were never spoken by him.