



# fraternitas

*Ars Gratia Christi*

*Official Newsletter of The Fraternity of St Genesius, St Mary's Presbytery, Dublin Road, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Ireland.*

Volume 1

Christmas 2007

Issue 3



Christmas Greetings to all our members!

# Fraternity News

## First Prayer Group Formed

The first meeting of a St Genesius prayer group took place in St Mary's Church, Drogheda, on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November. A large number of the local members attended the meeting and were joined by non-members to pray for the intentions of the Fraternity.

Beginning at 8pm, the meeting consisted of a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. The Rosary was recited – the Joyful Mysteries including the sixth, the Hidden Years and this was followed by a brief reflection by Fr John, Father Director. Prayers for those in the theatrical and cinematic arts were offered with prayers for the sick. The meeting concluded with Benediction and a blessing with the Relic of St Genesius.

The Constitution of the Fraternity envisages prayer groups being formed as a means of bringing the members to pray together for the Fraternity, to build up community among them and also to introduce the Fraternity to non-members.

The group will meet on the third Monday of every month in St Mary's Church, James Street, Drogheda, at 8pm. The next meeting will take place in St Mary's on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December. All are welcome to attend. If members in other areas are interested in forming their own groups, please contact the Fraternity office.

## National Rosary Rally

Members of the Fraternity found themselves on the streets of Dublin on a cold November day, helping various Catholic groups evangelize at the National Rosary Rally. An annual event in Dublin, the Rally took place this year on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November. Among the aims of the event is to bring prayer onto the streets of the Irish capital.

Beginning with Mass at 9am in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Bachelor's Walk, which this year was celebrated by Fr John, the various groups set up tables on O'Connell Street – the city's main avenue, and North Earl Street and Henry Street, two of the main shopping streets. From 11am until 4.30pm the various groups, which were staffed mostly by young people, spoke with passers-by, gave out rosaries and prayer cards, as well information on their own groups. Among the groups were the Legion of Mary which has experienced a surge in membership in recent years, again mostly among young people; Youth 2000 and Pure in Heart, a new movement promoting chastity among the young.

At 4.30pm a large crowd processed through the streets of Dublin to the Carmelite Church in Clarendon Street,

praying the Rosary. There a full church heard the testimony of John Pridmore, a former London gangland criminal who experienced a major conversion and has since been working with young people. The day was brought to an end with the celebration of Mass at 6pm with the friars of the Carmelite Community.

Throughout the day various members of the Fraternity staffed a table in North Earl Street introducing the association to the public and members of the other groups. A number of contacts were made, and many of those spoken to were interested and positive about the Fraternity's aims. Numerous prayer cards and flyers were distributed. This was the first public evangelization undertaken by the Fraternity, but will be, it is hoped, the first of many.

## First Anniversary Mass

To celebrate the first anniversary of the Fraternity's foundation, a Mass of the Holy Spirit will be offered in St Mary's Church, Drogheda on the 18<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm to be followed by light refreshments. Fr John Hogan, father Director will be the principal celebrant. The Fraternity was founded on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007, and the first year has seen tremendous growth and many graces. All members are invited to attend the Mass and it will be the first opportunity for all the members to get together and meet with the members of the Council and with each other. We look forward to seeing you.

**Your Nativity, O Christ our God  
has dawned to the world  
the light of understanding,  
for by it those who worship the stars were  
taught by a star to adore You,  
the Sun of Righteousness,  
and to know You  
the dawn from above,  
O Lord, glory to You.**

*(Tropar for the Nativity, Orthodox Liturgy)*

### **A Blessed Christmas to all our members**

Father Director and the members of the Council would like to wish all our members a blessed and joyful Christmas, and a very happy New Year. Midnight Mass will be offered for you and your intentions, to implore the Lord's grace-filled blessings for the Holy Season and the New Year.

# From the Father Director

## *The Christmas Cave*

In the depths of his darkness, the prophet Elijah lay down and asked God to let him die. He had served the Lord faithfully, overcoming the priests of the pagan god Baal and winning the hearts of the people of Israel back for the true God and his covenant with them. But there was to be no glory for the prophet: when he should have been celebrating his triumph the wicked queen, Jezebel, a fervent devotee of Baal, sent her soldiers to kill him and he was forced to flee. It seemed that in the long struggle with Jezebel and her husband King Ahab, Elijah would in the end fall prey to their vengeance, and so he asked to die by the hand of the Lord rather than by the hands of his enemies. God had other plans – the moment of glory was yet to come.

Sending an angel, he fed Elijah and then the prophet left for Mount Horeb to wait on God. It was a long track – Elijah walked for forty days to reach the holy mountain; there he found a cave, he went in and slept. Elijah was no stranger to caves. If you go to Stella Maris Monastery on Mount Carmel, beneath the church you will find a cave believed to have been Elijah's dwelling where he and his community of hermit-prophets lived before he was called to action. Hidden in this refuge, Elijah the contemplative communed with God in prayer as would many hermits in the centuries to come. The cave was not only a place to live in, but a place of silence and prayer.

Geographically the Holy Land is a land of caves. The native peoples used them as dwelling places or stables, for storage, or, in times of strife, for refuge, as we see in many passages and stories in Scripture. A visit to Nazareth will reveal that the home of the Holy Family was in part a cave. Caves were also used as tombs and again the Bible relates how the Patriarchs were laid to rest in family cave-tombs, as were many others. Around Jerusalem there are numerous ancient tombs, man-made caves craved out of the rock: in one of them the dead Christ would lie for three days.

In Elijah we see one brought through darkness – the Dark Night of the Soul, to a state in which he was prepared to recognise and enter the presence of God and into union with him. From that cave God called Elijah out to the heights of mystical experience, revealing himself to his faithful servant at the entrance to the cave: making it a place of encounter with the divine. Reflecting on that moment of revelation, we see that Elijah ignores the tumultuous natural phenomena – the Lord was not in these; it was when he heard the *"still small voice"* whispered on the breeze that he recognized the coming of the Lord, and he covered his face and went out into the presence of God, emerging from the darkness of the cavern into the light. The cave here, then, we can see as a symbol for that state in which man is prepared to enter into

the presence of God, and indeed, into union with him, and it is a union in littleness – in poverty, a poverty which, as Elijah discovered, is the fruit of suffering.

We might see a prefiguring here of what would happen in Jerusalem, the ultimate theophany when the Risen Lord emerged out of his cave-tomb and met Mary Magdalen in the garden, conquering sin and death, and restoring life. But in this holy season we turn to the cave of Bethlehem, the rough-hewn grotto buried in the hillside of the village. In this cave, man, for the first time, comes into an encounter with the Word-made-flesh. The shepherds of Bethlehem – the outcasts and the poor, following the announcement of the angels, came to the door of the cave as if to a sanctuary – a new Holy of Holies, and encountered God – not in a terrifying vision, but first in the *"still small voice"* of the infant's cry, and then in the vision of the babe in swaddling clothes – the vision of the Incarnation: a mystery they did not understand but yet saw. As Elijah came out to God at Horeb, in Bethlehem God came in to us.



The cave of Bethlehem is a place of encounter with the living God made man. It is a place where sinful and weak human beings can come before the Lord and recognise him come in flesh to live with us, to teach us and then bring us with him when he returns to the Father: as Scripture says, *"and a child shall lead them"*; of course before this happens the manger must

give way to the cross and the cave serve another purpose. The spirituality of Christmas is one of the crib – of the grotto in Bethlehem in which we are led to understand the full impact of the Incarnation of the Son of God who became one of us and was counted among the poor. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit"*, the Beatitude tells us: in spiritual terms the cave is our hearts, our souls, the place where we must become poor to encounter the presence of God who seeks shelter within us and calls us into union with him.

Today the cave of Bethlehem is richly covered in precious fabrics. Oil lamps burn day and night to remind pilgrims that they are in a sacred place. A silver star marks the spot where the Christ Child is believed to have been born, and in another alcove a marble reconstruction of the manger replaces the original wood now preserved in Rome. Icons line the walls and ceiling, incense floats on the air and yet the place has not lost the sense of its humility; the bare rock peeks through the devotionals to testify that here is a place not for the grandeur of an earthly king, but a refuge for a hidden Saviour, God in man as man, until he is raised up and revealed to all. For now, only the poor will see and know him: those who are small enough to become as poor as him, a poor as the shepherds, as poor as Elijah in his distress, and as faithful.

## A Season of Delights: Christmas Movies to look out for

Christmas has always been a time for the blockbuster movie and the Hollywood Christmas stories. Christopher McCamley takes a look at some of the Christmas movies which might be winging their way to our television screens over the festive season.

Christmas films. What springs to mind when you hear those two words? Well, judging by my focus group (people I questioned on the 8.20am Drogheda to Dublin Express train) while some films appear on everyone's lists, there are lots of, what you might call "niche" Christmas films around. Being of a rational bent I began to categorise the range of films before beginning endless hours of watching DVDs, the result of which my television is broken – it's like watching through a rainbow coloured fish eye lens. So my categories – films about the birth or life of Jesus (a very small category); films set around Christmas; musicals; action films. So, on to the films, not an objective list of the best Christmas films, but some of the ones I like.

A film which I always associate with Christmas Eve (though it's actually set on New Year's Eve) is *The Little Match Girl*, a BBC version of the Hans Christian Anderson story. A poor, little match girl is afraid to go home after selling no matches. To warm herself she lights some. In the light of the first match she sees a hot stove, but the fire is blown out by the wind. A second match shows her a fully laden dinner table and a roasted goose, but it too disappears as the match goes out. The third match reveals a beautiful Christmas tree. The candles on it go higher and higher until they became stars. One becomes a shooting star and she remembers her late grandmother telling her that means a person has gone to Heaven.

By the fourth match she sees her smiling grandmother, the only person who ever loved her. She quickly lights the next match and the next so that her grandmother will never fade. Finally, the grandmother takes the happy girl in her arms and they fly higher and higher to a place where there's no cold, no hunger, no fear. The next morning, the little girl is found dead in the snow. I think the BBC put that on on Christmas Eve so parents could say – "look at that poor girl, and be happy with what Father Christmas brought you".

On a much more cheery note are the range of musicals we associate with Christmas. My wife's favourite, *The Wizard of Oz*, has always left me a little cold. I think it's the studio stageiness of the whole thing but there's

no doubting it's popularity. Much higher on my list would be *The Sound of Music*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's final musical together. For while *The Wizard of Oz* has one good song, *The Sound of Music* is rolling in them: 'Edelweiss', 'My Favorite Things', 'Climb Ev'ry Mountain', 'Do-Re-Mi', 'Something Good' and 'The Sound of Music' itself. Of course two of the classic Christmas films are musicals set at Christmas and I can't quite make up my mind whether to prefer *Holiday Inn* or *White Christmas*. They're both pretty much the same story with Bing Crosby in each singing *White Christmas* accompanied by Fred Astaire in *Holiday Inn* and by Danny Kaye in *White Christmas* which probably just shades it because of that great

"Sisters" number from Danny Kaye and Bing Crosby. Combining Christmas with old soldiers is usually a good way to make a good Christmas film.

And speaking of soldiers and moving into action pictures, *The Great Escape* on Christmas Day and *The Battle of the Bulge* on St Stephen's Day always works for me. *The Great Escape* is one of those movies I

can watch any time it's on, forever hoping that Steve McQueen will manage to make his motor bike leap that final barbed wire fence into Switzerland and freedom. Or that Gordon Jackson will remember to speak German when getting onto the bus and that blind Donald Pleasence will not walk down the hill and get shot.

Action films are a big feature of Christmas because they are perceived to have broad appeal (debatable). Probably they were to allow men digest their dinner while the women, who had already cooked for hours, went and did the dishes. In the 1970's and 80's the big movie always seemed to be James Bond whose story lines I could never follow. The first time I saw a complete James Bond movie was *Casino Royale* in the cinema last year. Sneaking onto my list for Christmas is a combined Christmas/action movie, *Die Hard* which bizarrely is a sequel to a 1968 film, *The Detective*, starring Frank Sinatra. Starring Bruce Willis, fresh from the cult classic *Moonlighting*, *Die Hard*, practically reinvented the action film for the 1990s. After two hours of relentless running, jumping, falling, bleeding and shooting, Bruce ends up with his wife while snow falls and the Christmas music begins: *Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!*



And from snow we move to *The Snowman*, my big brother's favourite. The animation of Raymond Briggs's book is beautifully drawn, with a warmth that no computer can generate and the film's one song, 'Walking in the Air', was written specially for it and performed by a St Paul's Cathedral choirboy, Peter Auty (not Aled Jones who recorded it later). I think it was produced specifically for Channel 4 in the early days of the new station and has certainly been associated with them ever since, being faithfully broadcast by them every year since.

That sort of fidelity leads me on to two "classics", one of which you'll all know and the other, possibly not. *It's a Wonderful Life* makes it on to most people's lists and certainly is on mine. Long before I was Secretary of the Fraternity of St Genesius (in fact about 25 years ago) I was President of the James Stewart Appreciation Society of Ireland. *It's a Wonderful Life* could only have been made by James Stewart and we never want to hear someone's great idea to remake it—no thanks, Hanks! The other cast are spot on as well: the lovely Donna Reed, the evil Lionel Barrymore and the rather hapless Henry Travers as Clarence the angel, 'Second Class'. They call them "feel good" movies for a reason.

One "classic" you might not know about is *The Christmas Story*, made in the early 1980's and a classic in America ever since, but rarely shown here in Ireland or the UK. Set in the 1950's it's about a boy's desire for a BB gun for Christmas and has real charm, but with a sharp edge. There are some tremendous set pieces in it and reminds me of Woody Allen's 1987 film, *Radio Days*. A similar mini classic that deserves a mention is *Home Alone* with Macaulay Culkin. If you haven't seen it before, or haven't for a while, try and watch it with some young children, for their response will be infectious. Just be careful afterwards as I discovered my seven year old had set up a series of very dangerous traps on the stairs inspired by the film.

To mention a religious film, I recently watched *The Nativity Story* which I found rather dull. It had the feel of a school nativity play but without the hope that someone will say "come in, there's plenty of room" or "it's a girl!" Interestingly, the video shop told me I was the first person to rent it – it's been out for well over a year.

So many films left and so little space as more and more classics try and squeeze in. *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street*: everyone rushes to add – "the original", but I'm rather fond of the 1994 version as Richard Attenborough makes a good Kris Kringle and Mara Wilson was perfect as the little girl. *Meet me in St Louis* has to be on the list, if only because Margaret O'Brien was so good in it; Judy Garland's hair was so awful and it featured one of the best Christmas songs of all time,

'Have yourself a Merry Little Christmas'. Almost finally, the numerous versions of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. The Muppets version is surprisingly good but almost everyone agrees that the award goes to the 1951 version, *Scrooge*. This is the best version by far and stars the marvelous Alastair Sim as a Scrooge who really does seem redeemed (as opposed to those Scrooges who just appear to reform because they're afraid of what the future holds – an easy trap to fall into with this story).

And this provides the link between all great Christmas films. Whether it's George Bailey discovering how meaningful his life really is, or Charlie Brown finding the best tree, or Bruce Willis defeating the bad guys and getting his wife back, they are all about redemption and that is what Christmas is really all about.

### In the Stable of Bethlehem

*"God is born and the powers tremble –  
the Lord of the heavens lies naked.  
The star fades and the brilliance turns to shadow –  
the Infinite accepts limitation.  
Despised – re clothed in glory, the mortal –  
the King of eternity"*

That extract from a Polish Christmas carol is, in my opinion, outstandingly expressive of the mystery of God incarnate. It is a mystery embracing contrasts: light and the darkness of night, God's infiniteness and man's limitations, glory and humiliation, immortality and mortality, divinity and human poverty. People who are brought face-to-face with the *mysterium fascinans* (the fascinating mystery) of this holy Christmas night which makes all races one become conscious that what then happened was something immensely important, something without parallel in the history of mankind. The Nativity brings us within touching distance, so to speak, of our spiritual birth in God through grace. Born through faith and grace, we have been called *children of God*; and so we are says St John (1 John 3:1).

*The Servant of God, Pope John Paul II*

The Fraternity has no source of income and depends on donations to cover the printing of the Newsletter, literature and postage. If you would like to send a donation to support us in our work we would be very grateful. Thank you.

## Saved by Hope

On the 30<sup>th</sup> November Pope Benedict promulgated his second encyclical, *Spe Salvi*, in which he reflects on hope. In this article Donal O'Sullivan-Latchford, Council Media Secretary, reflects on the encyclical and the Holy Father's message of hope for the Church and the world.

*"Man's great, true hope which holds firm in spite of all disappointments can only be God – God who has loved us and who continues to love us 'to the end.'"*

(*Spe Salvi* – Paragraph 27).

Pope Benedict's encyclical on hope, which was released on November 30<sup>th</sup> is certainly timely. First of all, it appears just prior to the Season of Advent, a time of hope, as we await the birth of our reason for hope, Jesus Christ; secondly, its release took place on the Feast of St Andrew, thus pointing to the hope of unity between Orthodox and Catholic; and, thirdly, its publication coincides with a time of new uncertainties, particularly for Ireland – on the one hand, the Celtic Tiger seems to be fading fast and, on the other, a new, potentially demoralizing, awareness is emerging here of the extent of 'moral collapse' and its social and economic consequences.

Recently, there have been a number of attempts made to put a 'brave face' on Ireland's new economic situation and engender a type of 'hope' in the country; and, these attempts are not without their own legitimacy. A new book by Newstalk's Economics Editor, Marc Coleman suggests that the future 'may not be so bleak after all' and that 'the best is still to come'. Meanwhile, psychologist Marie Murray, writing in *The Irish Times*, has pointed out some likely coping mechanisms to watch out for in ourselves, as we face into the new economic and social climate.

The present encyclical, however, puts efforts such as these into perspective and, in it, Pope Benedict blows the dust off some of the enduring errors in our world's understanding of hope, while presenting some intriguing new thinking as well. "It is true," The Holy Father says, "that anyone who does not know God, even though he may entertain all kinds of hopes, is ultimately without hope, without the great hope that sustains the whole" (Paragraph 27). The false god's, such as those alluded to by St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (cf Ephesians 2:12), make only for a "dark world" and a "dark future" (Paragraph 2); whoever

places his hope in these easily falls back '*ab nihilo in nihil*' (from nothing into nothingness).

If, instead, we are to achieve our goal of what St Augustine refers to as the "blessed life" or, simply, "happiness" (Paragraph 11), only *Christian hope* – an anchor cast towards the throne of God (Paragraph 37) – can sustain us through the sufferings of this life (cf Victor Frankl's discovery, in *Man's Search for Meaning*, namely, that man can endure almost any 'what' provided he has a sufficient 'why'). This is

important because "*the capacity to suffer for the sake of the truth is the measure of humanity*" (Paragraph 39). Christian hope is, in this way, not merely "informative" but "performative" – it brings about a change in the life of the believer. Prayer is needed to sustain this hope as are certain people who act as 'lights of hope' when they take their light from the true Light who is God. Pre-eminent among these 'lights of hope' is Mary, whom The Pope refers to as "Star of Hope" and "Mother of Hope" and to whom he devotes the final section of the encyclical.

Like peace, the hope offered by Jesus Christ 'is one the world cannot give'. However, attempts have been made, in the modern

age, at a "*transformation of Christian faith-hope*" – the use of the term 'faith-hope', here, seems to be inspired by Pope Benedict's observation that, in the Bible, the word 'hope' is sometimes used interchangeably with the word 'faith'. These attempts at "progress", which amount to the building of a 'kingdom of God', without God, are marked by their exclusive dependence on reason and one sense of the word, 'freedom'.

But reason and freedom cannot "*guarantee by themselves ... a new and perfect human community*" (Paragraph 18). On the contrary, without God, reason and freedom and whatever structures they inspire lead only to a "perverted" version of what Kant called the 'end of all things'. The failure of Marxism illustrates this point – one is reminded here of Fulton Sheen's observation that "*sharing the same apple does not make men brothers but if men are brothers*



*they will share the same apple*". While recognizing that our hope is 'only in God', that it comes from a "relationship" with God, we should not take this to mean that our hope should be individualistic. Why? Because this relationship itself comes through communion with the whole Church. In fact, the Pope says, "our hope is always essentially also hope for others; only thus is it truly hope for me too" (Paragraph 48).

Such hope is demonstrated in the lives of religious who, on the one hand, bear witness to the fact that faith, "the *substance* of things hoped for" is a preferable and more solid basis on which to place our lives than that of material possessions. On the other hand, in the view of St Bernard of Clairvaux whom the Pope quotes in Paragraph 15, contemplative religious also perform a task for the whole Church and hence also for the world. "The

*human race,*" says St Bernard, "lives thanks to a few; were it not for them, the world would perish." All the more reason then that in spite of "the successes of science in progressively structuring the world," modern Christianity should not "restrict its attention to the individual and his salvation (for) in so doing it has limited the horizon of its hope and has failed to recognize sufficiently the greatness of its task – even if it has continued to achieve great things in the formation of man and in care for the weak and the suffering." (Paragraph 25).

Pope Benedict leaves the last words of his encyclical to Our Lady, closing with the prayer:

*"Holy Mary, Mother of God, our Mother, teach us to believe, to hope, to love with you. Show us the way to his Kingdom! Star of the Sea, shine upon us and guide us on our way!"*

## **Bella: In Praise of Life**

*A new film, on general release in the US, and will hopefully come to Ireland and the UK, presents the case for the life of the unborn. In this season in which we celebrate the birth of the Divine Child, Christopher McCamley previews a work which seeks to honour the birth of every child.*

It can be difficult to preview a film you haven't seen, and I haven't seen *Bella*. But I have read lots of reviews, countless articles and many blogs and what emerges is a film that's not exactly for the neutral. Reviewers have tended to follow strict lines - profilers love the film, pro-choicers hate it while the non-aligned have generally given it a thumbs up. The film took top prize at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival by winning the "People's Choice Award". It's not yet clear what sort of distribution *Bella* will get in Ireland and the UK and we may have to wait for a DVD release but I look forward to an early viewing.

*Bella* is film directed by Alejandro Gomez Monteverde. The film is about one day in New York City and its impact on three people's lives. Former professional footballer, Jose (played by Mexican pop and television star Eduardo Verastegui) is head chef at a Mexican restaurant in Manhattan owned by his brother Manny (Manny Perez). Not the most forgiving of employers, Manny sacks waitress Nina (Tammy Blanchard) when she is late for work. He doesn't realise she's just discovered she's pregnant.

For no clear reason, Jose impulsively walks out just as the restaurant is about to open for lunch and wanders with Nina around the city for the rest of the day, even though he hardly knows her and the restaurant is totally dependent on his cooking. Because there is no obvious reason for the narrative direction, the storyline relies on the chemistry between the two leads to cover holes in the plot.

Nina and Jose visit his parents (Angelica Aragon and Jaime Terelli) who deeply affect Nina who has no family herself, and we reach the central moment of the film in which Jose reveals past tragedy and convinces Nina to keep the child and allow him raise it.

*Variety Magazine* is not happy with the film: "So slight that a gentle breeze might tip it over, *Bella* is a film about selfless love that wants to be loved too much...Mexican-born helmer Alejandro Monteverde's debut will be remembered as a curious case of a mediocre film that wows crowds." The *New York Post* is more favourable, giving it three stars out of four: "Debut filmmaker Alejandro Monteverde's *Bella*, which understandably won the audience award at the 2006 Toronto Film Festival, is a disarming indie romance set in a fairy-tale version of the Big Apple. Cynics need not apply, but I found *Bella* a real heart-tugger." The *National Catholic Register* writes: "One of the winsome things about *Bella*, Alejandro Gomez Monteverde's intimate, appealing feature debut, is that it listens to Nina instead of preaching - to her or to us....Jose's views aren't hard to guess, but Nina doesn't ask him for advice, and he offers none. Instead, he offers her what she really needs: understanding, compassion, support, and ultimately something much more....Bolstered by engaging performances and an appealing Latin milieu, *Bella* tells a simple, idealistic story with considerable style and charm."

*Bella* is the third film this year about a young woman dealing with a so called crisis pregnancy, after



## Rome 2008

From 24<sup>th</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008 the Fraternity will host its first pilgrimage to Rome to visit the tombs of the Apostles SS Peter and Paul, and the tomb of St Genesius led by the Father Director, Fr John. Details are still being worked out with the travel agent and we will have more information and the price in the next issue of *Fraternitas*. The Council would like to extend an invitation to the members, their families and friends to join us for this pilgrimage in what promises to be a wonderful spiritual experience. In the meantime a taste of what we hope to include in the programme:

The General Audience with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican.



St Peter's Basilica, to visit the tombs of St Peter and the Servant of God Pope John Paul II, the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican Museums.

St Paul-outside-the-Walls and the tomb of St Paul to celebrate the Pauline Year (2008-2009).



Tomb of St Genesius in the Church of Santa Susanna.

Basilicas of St John Lateran, St Mary Major and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.

Tour of the Catacombs and Basilica of St Sebastian.

Trip to Nettuno to visit the shrine of St Maria Goretti, to the house where she was martyred and the Chapel of the Pardon where she died.

Adrienne Shelly's excellent *Waitress* and the very well reviewed comedy *Knocked Up*. While it is good, from the Catholic point of view, to see films which are life affirming – indeed in *Waitress* Keri Russell affirms her unborn baby's "right to thrive" – we should be cautious at presuming that the pro-life cause will benefit.

I purposely used the term "pro-choice" rather than "pro-abortion" at the start of the article because that is what the battle is about: films in which women struggle with decisions before ultimately choosing to keep their child can be as much pro-choice as pro-life because they ultimately place the power within the choice of women. Of course it's good to see films in which the child is chosen; it would be better to see films which accept that the humanity of the child requires that there be no choice.

### New Members

Membership of the Fraternity is growing month by month. Since the Fraternity is a family in which members make a daily commitment to pray and support others, future members have to think seriously about joining us, so the personal touch is important. All members of the Fraternity, Dedicated Members and Cooperators are encouraged to invite people they know to join in us in prayer. From time to time we will include the information brochure with *Fraternitas* and we would suggest that you might pass it on to someone you know who may be interested in joining us in our mission. If you require additional brochures, please contact us.

### Website

For those of you who like to surf the net, if you have not logged on to our website yet, why not so do now. Not only does the site give some background information on the Fraternity, but also includes a life of St Genesius, some historical articles to help situate him in his time, as well as prayers and other items which may be of interest. It is hoped that the website will be a first point of contact with many, particularly those who work in theatre and cinema. At the moment the site is unfinished, parts are still construction, but in time we hope that it will also provide a forum for members, and serve as a catechetical resource. Please keep the project in your prayers. If you have any ideas, please let us know.

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