

Dead End?

by Rick Paolini, Associate Lay Servant of Divine Mercy



When I was a child I enjoyed puzzle books. I especially liked connect-the-dots which would develop into an image if the dots were joined correctly. I found the most satisfaction from the connect-the-dot pictures when I could not visualize the image until I was almost finished. I was also challenged by the puzzles that had several starting points and only one final destination. This destination could only be reached from one of the starting points. The other starting points led to a dead end.

I grew bored with connect-the-dots when I was always able to visualize the final picture before I even started to draw. This was a disappointment because I had loved to watch the picture develop. I guess you could say I liked to watch things unfold. When I knew the final result before I started, I lost interest. On the other hand, with the destination puzzles I discovered that I solved them much faster when I started at the end. I guess that's not the way you are suppose to work them, but it worked for me. I could always start at the finish and work right back to the correct mystery starting point. I avoided all the dead ends.

I had not thought about my fondness for those puzzles for a long time. Recently, I was thinking about the New Year and all my prior resolutions, hopes, dreams and ambitions.

While in this reflective state of mind, I realized that I was still loving and working my puzzles from childhood. I saw myself connecting the dots of my life and moving through the destination puzzle to eternity.

A large portion of the connect-the-dots puzzle of my life seems clear. There are two images. One of the images is close to completion. It is most clearly a cross. The second image in the puzzle is shaping up, but is still somewhat unclear. I am not sure if it is a crown or a circle of flames. I can see the circle clearly. It's the top of the circle that if it continues straight will form a crown, but if it hooks will form flames. I am not going to worry about that now because I think my destination puzzle will help me finish the first one.

The procedure I developed to work the destination puzzles when I was a boy is proving to be a great help in my life walk. I realized that at the end of my life destination puzzle is Jesus. I found that when I looked at the puzzle closely, the path is very clear. If the correct path starts with Jesus, it will end with Jesus. Any others could lead me straight into a "dead end"

It is a new year with the season of Lent, Easter Sunday and Divine Mercy Sunday just ahead. Now is the time to take a close reflective look at where you are headed. What is your picture developing into? Where is your eternity going? Are you satisfied that the picture of your life will lead to eternal life in heaven? Will the path you have chosen lead to Jesus or to a "dead end"?

Attention Associates!

As Divine Mercy Sunday approaches we ask you to once again prayerfully consider becoming an Associate Lay Servant of Divine Mercy. A re-commitment form will be mailed to you soon. Please return the form before Divine Mercy Sunday. If you are not presently an Associate and would like to learn more about this wonderful group, please call 894-4476.

Next Meeting: Feb. 22nd, 6:30PM

Potluck followed by a reflection by Fr. Jack Mattimore, SJ
Infant of Prague, Cheektowaga

Missionary Mom

by Michelle Marciniak, Lay Missionary



Something new and exciting is developing in this missionary mom's world. In the last few months I have had the pleasure of attending a mom's group at one of my sister missionary's home. Michelle Spikes, or Mickey, as we affectionately call her, has been hosting some awesome "mom" activities in her home.

I would be remiss though if I didn't give credit where credit is due. The whole idea of a mom's group at the mission started with three beautiful Associate moms. Donna Franco, Mary Erckert and Heather Schieder saw a need for the moms of the mission to have time to be together and chat. We would often find ourselves talking after Mass, or at different Mission functions and we left wanting more time together. These three ladies had also experienced young mothers who really wanted to be better moms; wanted to know how to keep house, discipline their children, and sometimes just needed someone more experienced to talk to.

So off they went to talk to the "Mom of the Mission", Amy Betros. They told her what they would like to do and she gave the project her blessing. They held a few moms' group meetings, advertised and went to functions and fundraisers for the Mission. They never wavered or became discouraged no matter how many or how few showed up. They were very committed to the moms and continued on with what they felt God had called them to do.

Mickey went to a few meetings and loved them!! So much so that she asked if she could host one in her home. Mickey never does anything half way herself, and she really made things nice for the moms. I think she gets up at the crack of dawn on the day of the meeting to cook a lavish spread! Mickey has inspired all of us, even those who have been homemaking for decades, with her bargains. Mickey can make a table look like a million bucks on a tight budget. Millionaires don't have as fine a table set as she does. Being the prayerful woman that she is, Mickey starts us off with prayer and a scripture reading. In all ways she has made her home welcoming for all of us who attend. Our "original" three associate moms come when they can, but now can devote the time needed to their families and still be a part of what they started. They planted and watered the seed; Mickey continues to nurture it.

I have gone to a few meetings and they really feel like something planned by God. The women who attend are women who come to the Mission; some to serve, some to be served, but all of us seeking to be better women, better moms, better daughters of the King. We support each other and we are sisters who love each other very much. We have come to realize that we are all broken, with hearts that can only be healed by God.

Most important of all, we have learned that despite our backgrounds, despite our childhoods, despite where we live, despite the color of our skin, despite anything and everything, we are all the same...we have a need to love and be loved, and we need to feel God's love in our hearts. Together, as sisters in Christ, we can bridge any gap, as long as we love each other.

