



# CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF GALLUP

Happy those concerned for the lowly and poor—  
Ps. 41

Volume 3 Issue 3  
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## The Voice of People - Cry of Earth

By Sr. Rose Marie Cecchini, MM

July 16, 2011 marked the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Church Rock Uranium Tailings Spill, largest radioactive waste accident in U.S. history. On that morning in 1979 the United Nuclear Corporation dam broke releasing 1,100 tons of radioactive tailings and 94 million gallons of toxic wastewater into the Rio Puerco. The yellowish radioactive sludge flowed by the communities of Pinedale, Church Rock, Gallup, into Arizona and far beyond.

The anniversary, known as "Uranium Legacy Re-

membrance and Action Day" in the Navajo Nation, began with early morning prayer in the Red Water Pond Road community, led by Teddy Nez. We formed a circle with over a hundred concerned community members, local leaders and environmentalists. United in spirit and prayer, we remembered all who had suffered and died from exposure to high levels of radiation and resultant diseases. We prayed for healing of the contaminated water and wounded Mother Earth.



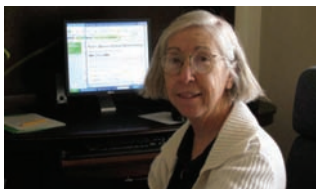
Church Rock Uranium Spill remembered at July anniversary.

From Red Water Pond Road we marched two miles along Highway 566 to the location of the uranium tailings spill, now a Superfund site requiring constant monitoring. Larry King, a mineworker at United Nuclear at the *(continued on page2)*

**The Wallow Wildfire** began on May 29, 2011 in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest which is located in eastern Arizona and western New Mexico. The fire charred 538,049 acres or 841 square miles destroying 32 homes and damaging five others. Catholic Charities was there to help in any way needed. Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from Catholic Charities USA and the generosity of our donors and supporters, the Catholic Charities office in White Mountain were able to respond to immediate and longer term needs of the fire victims. According to White Mountain Catholic Charities director, Nelson French, we were able to respond by providing minor home repair, food, moving, utility and rental assistance. We are praying that the monsoon season will not bring additional flood damage to the area. Please keep the victims of the Wallow Fire in your prayers as all victims of natural disasters.

## Alejandro's Story

By Sister Janet Cashman, SCL



Alejandro en-

tered the United States almost 20 years ago from Mexico hoping to work and help support his parents, brothers and sisters still in Mexico. The work was scarce

in his home country and the pay was far below what he hoped to earn in the U.S. What he could earn per hour at minimum wage in the U.S. was *(continued on page2)*



In Farmington our guests gather for an evening meal offered through our San Juan office.

### The Voice of People continued ...

time of the spill, described how deep cracks visible in the dam had been reported by workers to mine supervisors, but all these warnings had been ignored. So the disaster, King stated, was clearly caused by company negligence. Other speakers told of their experiences following the waste spill, not having been

warned of the danger of contaminants in the water and along the river banks, as they continued to water their sheep and cross with their livestock.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly assured the people that he was resolute in upholding and implementing the 2005 Diné Natural Re-

sources Protection Act which bans all future uranium mining and milling in the Navajo Nation. Loud applause resounded from the audience, signaling support of the President's resolve to protect the Navajo people and their sacred land.

*Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me. — Matt 25:40*

### Alejandro's story continued ...

what he would earn in one day at home.

After a few years of working and living in the U.S., he met, fell in love with and married a U.S. citizen. They started their family and now have eight children. In 2001 his wife applied for him to become a legal permanent resident but they did not have the resources needed to complete the process. Two years ago I began coordinating a new application process with Brother John Hotsream in Klagatoh, AZ. This time, thanks to Brother John's help,

we were able to find the resources needed to complete the process. Alejandro was granted legal permanent residency status in February, 2011.

One of the first things he did with his green card and Social Security card was to file his income taxes, a patriotic act difficult to do without a valid Social Security card. Also, now after 20 years of separation, he is able to return to Mexico and visit his family. His parents have grown elderly during his absence and he has been concerned that he would

never again see them alive. He knew that should he return to Mexico before becoming a legal permanent resident he may not find a way to reenter and return to his wife and children.

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*Sister Janet Cashman is an immigration specialist with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Gallup and can be reached at (505)-722-4407, ext. 120.*

*Brother John Hotstream is a brother of the Sacred Heart stationed at St. Anne Mission in Klagetoh, AZ.*



St. Anne Mission in Klagetoh, AZ



## From the Executive Director



By Steven Pearson

When I started my position as the Executive Director of Catholic Charities, Gallup, NM, Sr. Kathleen Driscoll was away on business for her community, the Daughters of Charity. On the desk in my office, Sister left a book of daily meditations for each day of the year. The meditations consisted of a Bible verse followed by a short commentary. I thought it wonderfully appropriate that one of the first meditations was as follows:

*"Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where your stand is holy ground" — EXODUS 3:5*

*"We stand before the burning bush whenever other human beings share with us something of their relationship with God or something of the movement of their hearts. In such moments may we always realize that we stand on*

*holy ground."*

I found this meditation so appropriate because that is what we do at Catholic Charities. In the main office in Gallup and the five branch offices Talbot House, Chinle; Casa San Jose, Grants; Good Shepherd Center, Holbrook; San Juan, Farmington; and White Mountain, McNary the staff and volunteers welcome hundreds of people each week. From our meal programs to AA programs to walk-in services to supporting a frightened pregnant teen or teenage mother Catholic Charities is indeed holy ground.

So often people seeking services from Catholic Charities have been the victims of abuse, maltreatment, fear, scorn and ridicule. When they are treated with dignity and respect, they respond in kind. In fact the simple act of listening can give desperate people hope and the possibility of turning their lives around.

Sr. Kathleen Driscoll certainly did that during the six

years as Executive Director of Catholic Charities along with Sr. Mary Thurlough who has been the Assistant Director of Catholic Charities since 2002. They wanted every child, woman and man who entered the offices of Catholic Charities to be treated as one would treat the Lord Jesus. That care showed in the increased number of people served by Catholic Charities during their years of service.

All of us who are part of Catholic Charities are indebted to Sr. Kathleen and to Sr. Mary for their example and untiring service to those most in need. Their joyful manner demonstrated that following the Gospel is a delightful burden to bear for when we reach out to those in need, we reach out to the Lord.

On behalf of all those who have been touched by your hard work and generous spirit we say "thank you, Sr. Kathleen and Sr. Mary." May God be with you on every step of your next journey.



Catholic Charities Offices on Route 66 in Gallup, NM.

***"Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where your stand is holy ground" EXODUS 3:5***





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the lowly and poor—Ps. 41**

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## **Catholic Charities of Gallup awarded \$49,000 from Walmart Foundation and White Mountain goes On Golden Pond for fundraiser**

Catholic Charities of Gallup was awarded \$49,000 from the Walmart Foundation. The award is part of a \$760,000 grant that Walmart awarded to Catholic Charities USA. Catholic Charities USA then awarded grants to diocesan Catholic Charities in order to expand food services to those most in need.

Catholic Charities Gallup has requested funding for a

delivery truck so that they might continue to pick up and distribute donated food items in Gallup and expand food distribution and delivery of clothing and furniture to agencies in Holbrook and Chinle, AZ as well as remote places on the reservation.

A pallet truck and new commercial refrigerators will supplement and assist in the ability to distribute food. These improvements will allow Catholic Charities

Gallup to serve an additional 8,000 individuals a year.

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On July 2-3 community volunteers from White Mountain performed On Golden Pond. Spearheaded by the Camelot Repertory Company, St. Mary's parish provided the venue. \$7,625.00 was donated to Catholic Charities to provide food, rental, utility and transportation assistance to those in need.



The day begins with a hearty breakfast served by volunteers at the Catholic Charities main office in Gallup.