



# The Alaskan Shepherd



Volume 46 Number 3

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*Some give by going to the Missions*

*Some go by giving to the Missions*

*Without both there are no Missions*

## THE NATIVE MINISTRY TRAINING PROGRAM RECEIVES THE 2008 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

**Editor's Note:** Annually, the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) presents an award to a member who has worked in the catechetical ministry a good number of years, has labored in the field with dedication and enthusiasm, has made a substantial contribution to the ministry and to the people they served, and has labored tirelessly, willingly, and effectively for the sake of the Gospel without any thought of recognition. In November of 2007, Sister Dorothy Giloley, S.S.J., NCCL Representative for Region 12 (Alaska, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana) nominated the Native Ministry Training Program of the Diocese of Fairbanks for consideration of this award. Sister Ellen Callaghan, O.S.F., Director of the NMTP for the past 11 years, traveled to Houston, in April of 2008, to accept the award on behalf of all the priests, sisters, and lay ministers that make the catechetical and ministerial program possible. Father Theodore Kestler, S.J., NMTP Theologian expressed, "My prayer is that the life of the Church will truly continue through the various Native ministers and deacons that we have trained."

The Native Ministry Training Program would not be possible without the prayers and



*Sister Ellen Callaghan, O.S.F., (middle) accepts the 2008 Distinguished Service Award on behalf of the Native Ministry Training Program, in Houston, Texas, on April 8. Representing the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership are President Mary Ann Ronan and Executive Director Leland D. Nagel.*

*--Photo by Sister Dorothy Giloley, S.S.J.*

generosity of our Alaskan Shepherd contributors. I am very pleased to offer to you the following summary of the award winning program and the missionaries that make the program so successful. The accompanying slide photos are provided courtesy of Sister Rose Monica Katusz, O.S.F. --Patty Walter

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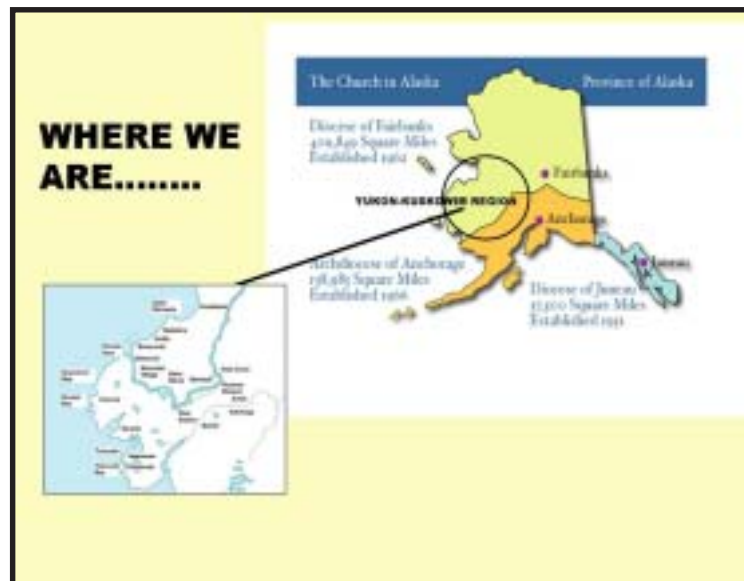
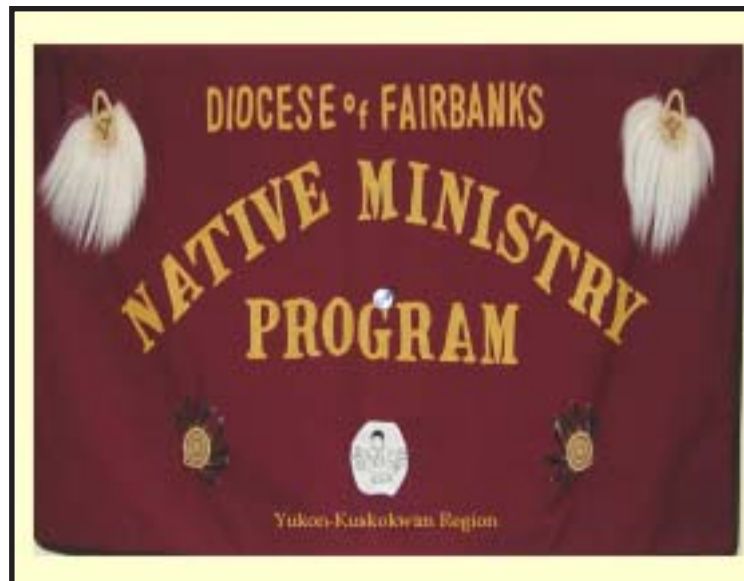
*Special Masses are offered throughout the year for you and your intentions by our Missionary Priests. Please pray that God may bless us and our work.*

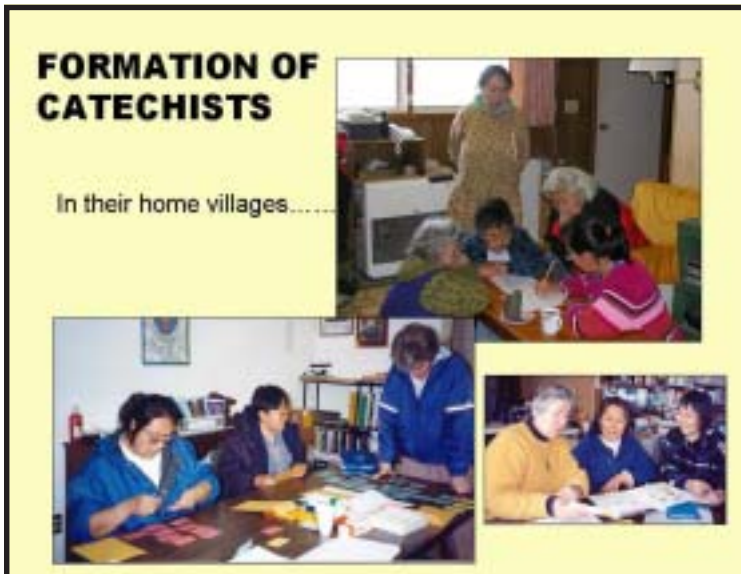
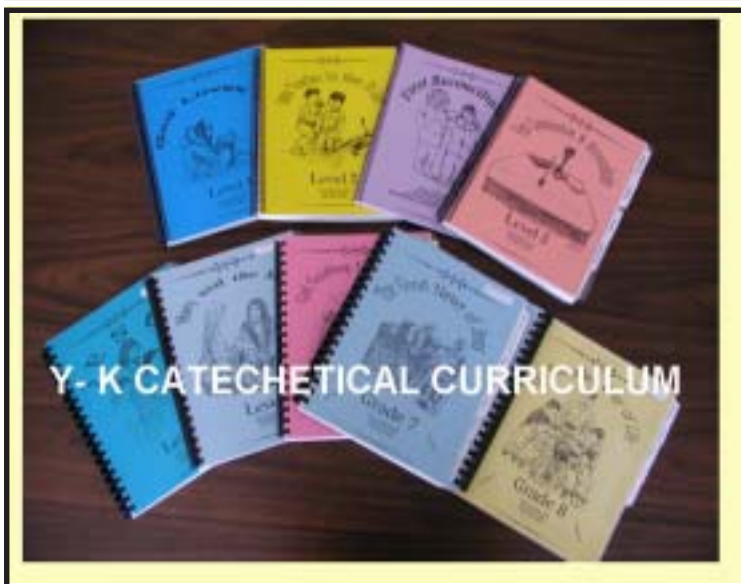
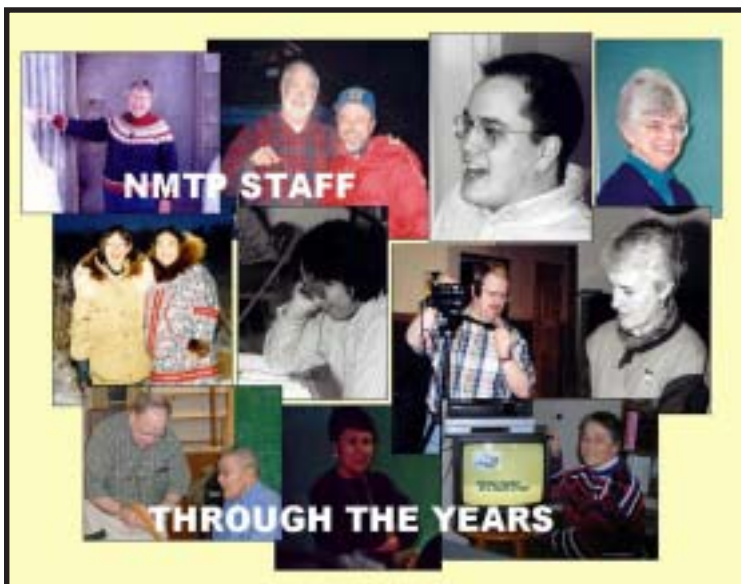
Sister Dorothy Giloley, S.S.J., Director of Religious Education for the Diocese of Fairbanks, while attending a National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) meeting for Region 12, nominated the Native Ministry Training Program (NMTP) of the Diocese of Fairbanks, to be considered for the *Distinguished Service Award*. Sister Dorothy saw the nomination as a means of recognizing the program's 18 years of service to the Catholic parishes in the 24 Yup'ik Eskimo villages of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Region. She was soon informed that the conference had in fact chosen the program for the award. On April 8, 2008, at the NCCL annual awards banquet, Sister Ellen Callaghan, O.S.F., Director of NMTP, accepted the award on behalf of the men and woman who give so much of themselves in service to the Eskimo people of western Alaska.

Fr. David Loftus, Vice President of NCCL, while making the presentation, spoke of the NMTP's thirteen *"dedicated and selfless men and women who...minister together in a common cause to produce the miraculous."* He added that they have *"labored tirelessly for the sake of the Gospel without any thought of recognition."*

In 1990, partly due to the great success of the Native Deacon Training Program, Bishop Michael J. Kaniecki, S.J., felt it was time for a broader Native ministry training program. Bishop Kaniecki called into being the NMTP, after a series of village evaluation reports, regional diocesan meetings, and visitations, which indicated that an expanded training program was indeed warranted. Bishop Kaniecki appointed Fr. Ted Fortier, S.J., as the first Director of NMTP in 1991. From Seattle, he writes, *"Our work during those first years was really to support the work of the Yup'ik and Athabascan leaders of each village. We tried to build upon the legacy left by the Sisters of Providence, by the Sisters of St. Anne, by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, by the Ursulines, and by the many other religious women who volunteered, as well as the pioneering work of all those who developed the Native Deacon program. I was really thrilled to work up there in those villages, and to be a small part of the incredible spiritual life of the Native people. It really set my course for what I am doing now—teaching the Anthropology of Indigenous people at Seattle University."*

*The following group of slides compose a presentation produced by the NMTP.*





The NMTP is truly a unique and pioneering ministry, providing training and creative, culturally appropriate continuing education for parish ministers in the region. The program develops parish leaders, Sunday Service presiders, and catechists among the Yup'ik people. These leaders, once trained, take responsibility for faith formation in their villages. Hundreds of Native people have benefited from their training and many have been certified by the NMTP in catechetical and other church ministries. Eighteen Native deacons presently serving in villages also benefit from NMTP for their ongoing training. Training workshops are held at the St. Marys Conference Center. The former boarding school and its property was sold, in 2003, to Ciunerkiurvuk Corporation. Thereafter, the diocese leased the building housing the Jesuits, a house for the Sisters, and space for the Rural and Native Ministry Training programs, as well as some storage and office space. The Center overlooks the Andreafsky River and has meeting rooms for workshops, space for the Yukon-Kuskokwim Regional Diocesan offices, a large chapel, dining room and dormitory to accommodate large groups of trainees, and ample room for prayer and reflection.

The frontier conditions under which the NMTP works are difficult. The Missionary Diocese of Fairbanks covers three quarters of the state of Alaska. Because of its massive size, the diocese is divided into four areas: the Interior—containing the 9 road parishes; the Northern Region containing 5 parishes; the Galena Region—containing 8 villages and its training center in Galena, which serves the Athabaskan Indian people; and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Region—containing 24 villages. The Y-K Region is further divided into four subregions with its training center in St. Marys, serving the Yup'ik Eskimo people.

The NMTP was established to assist Catholic parishes with the training of lay parish leaders in the remote Eskimo villages between the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers in the western coastal region of the diocese. Ministry to the 24 parishes located in the Y-K Region is currently served by six full-time priests, one part-time priest, one pastoral facilitator sister and a diocesan regional staff of five. Most parishes will have

***We want to thank in a special way those of you who have included the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska (our legal title) in your bequests and wills, and those of you who, at the time of the deaths of dear ones, have suggested that in their memory contributions be made to the Missions of Northern Alaska or to the Alaskan Shepherd Endowment Fund. A suggested wording: "I give, devise and bequeath to the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska, 1312 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska..."***



*Gathered head catechists to develop a culturally appropriate catechetical curriculum manual with detailed lesson plans and activity sheets for Levels 1-8 and with a Confirmation and Reconciliation Curriculum ready this year.*

*Gathered Native musicians and singers to record all 70 songs in a 1950 Eskimo Hymn Book in order to preserve them for future generations. The 600 sets of disc and cassette copies of these Yup'ik hymns produced in June, 2006 were a quick sellout!*

Patrick Tam, Adult Faith Formation Director for the Y-K Region has had sufficient opportunities to benefit from the success of the NMTP. Upon receiving word of the award Pat wrote, *“For these many years, NMTP has been the sower faithfully planting the seeds of the Gospel in the hearts and minds of the Yup'ik*

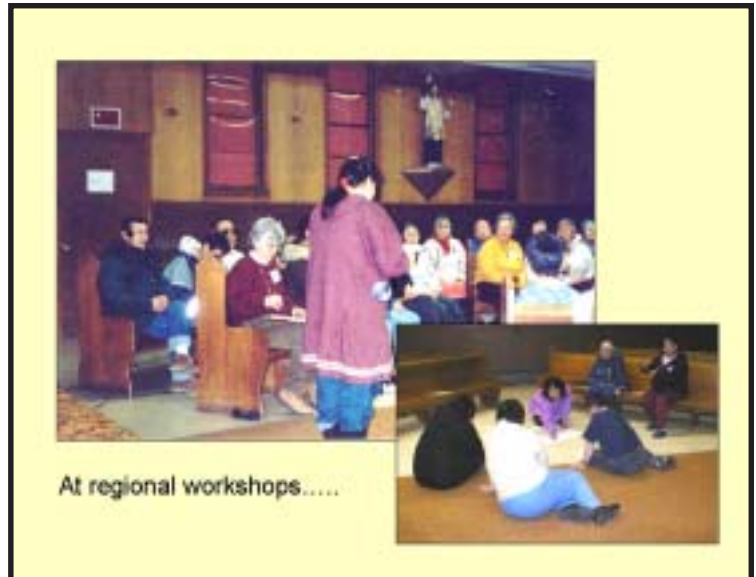
a priest for a few days about every five weeks, since villages are accessible only by small planes or seasonally by boat and snowmachine. Due to the distance between villages, with no possible road system on the tundra, parish life is very dependent on dedicated lay ministers. Extreme weather conditions, power outages, equipment failures and other challenges are common to their ministry. Trainees from remote villages usually are flown into St. Marys for weekend training sessions on small bush planes. Materials and presentations are often translated into the Yup'ik language to reach the greatest number of people.

Sister Ellen Callaghan, is assisted in her direction of the program by Theologian Father Theodore Kestler, S.J., and Media Specialist Sister Rose Monica Katusz, O.S.F. The program's goal is to provide various forms of training and resources to help prepare and sustain laity in essential parish ministries. With essentially only six priests available to fulfill the sacramental requirements of 24 villages—that goal is becoming even more imperative.

The successes and achievements of the program have been significant and notable. Just a portion of the programs accomplishments include:

*Provided a process for lay ministers to achieve certification in their ministries.*

*Provided user friendly binders for five Liturgical Seasons plus major feast days, Funeral Rites for adult and child, and all Triduum Services based on USCCB's document, and “Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest” for Deacons and Eucharistic Ministers. (Presider books also available in Yup'ik translations.)*



All donors are truly co-missionaries, since they alone make possible our work for the Lord and His Kingdom.

**TO: CATHOLIC BISHOP OF NORTHERN ALASKA** (our legal title):

1312 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-5199

Date \_\_\_\_\_ *F1- 2008*

**YES, Bishop Kettler**, I want to help you and the missionaries ministering in Northern Alaska to bring the Mass, the Sacraments, religious education, and training to the widely-scattered Indian and Eskimo people of Christ. Please accept this donation and use it where most needed.

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NOVENA IN HONOR OF

***THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS***



To the friends and benefactors of the Missionary Diocese of Fairbanks: On each of the eight days preceding the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and on the feast day itself, May 30 (2008), a novena will be offered in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and for our benefactors and their intentions. You are invited to submit petitions to be remembered during the novena. No offering is necessary. Any received will be used to support our ministries here in Northern Alaska.

You are also invited to join us on the novena days

(May 22-30, 2008) inclusive by praying the following prayer:

O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, you said: "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." With confidence in your loving, compassionate Heart I come to you as the fountain of every blessing. I ask you to make my heart humble and holy like yours. Grant me to live a holy life and to die a happy death. During this novena I humbly ask also for certain spiritual and temporal favors: \_\_\_\_\_.

**Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me!**

*Please remember the following petitions during the Novena in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus:*

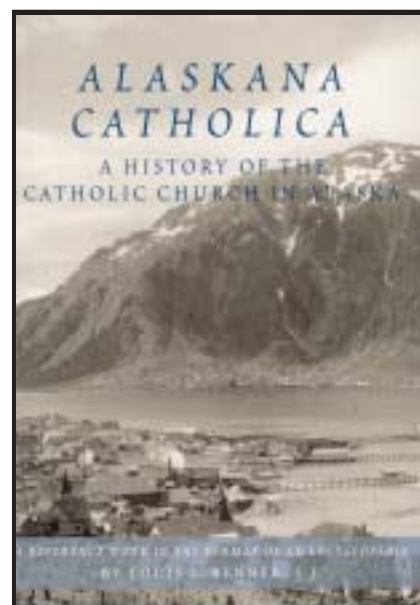
# ALASKANA CATHOLICA

*“Through years of dedicated research, writing, and documentation, Father Renner has created a succinct yet comprehensive guide detailing in total clarity and conciseness the history of the Catholic Church in Alaska. Within this historic documentation the reader can reference over 225 years of Catholicism in Alaska. Father Louis L. Renner, S.J., has accomplished in Alaskana Catholica a momentous feat—a magnum opus.”*

**Donald J. Kettler**  
**Bishop of Fairbanks**

*“Father Renner is the foremost authority on Catholic history in Alaska, writing history at its purest, almost exclusively from archival sources.”*

**Dr. Dorothy Jean Ray**  
**Historian and Anthropologist**



*“This fascinating volume offers an intimate picture of the activities of the Catholic Church’s Alaska Mission, from its beginning in the nineteenth century to the present. It is a fact-filled account of people and places with a wonderful array of characters...Father Renner, with a historian’s concern for the facts and a writer’s eye for a good story, has produced a valuable work.”*

**Francis Paul Prucha, S.J.,**  
**Professor of History Emeritus , Marquette University**

*“One of the main intents of this volume,” we read in the author’s Preface, “is to keep alive for posterity the memory of many major Catholic Alaskan figures—clerical and lay, Native and non-Native, living and deceased—by the recording of their lives and deeds.”*



*Alaskana Catholica* (“a unique gift, whether to give or to receive”) is a reference work in the format of an encyclopedia. It offers its readers something more than mere bare-bones reference data and Who’s Who-s. Moreover, some entries have a story about the given entry’s subject attached to them. Some have a “tapestry” woven out of a series of quotations from the mission diary of the given place attached to them. These stories and tapestries give readers a kind of “you are there” experience, of being present at an event of the past or at a place remote to them.

Close to 400 images illustrate *Alaskana Catholica*.

Yes, please send \_\_\_\_\_ copy(ies) of *Alaskana Catholica*,  
written by **Father Louis L. Renner, S.J.**

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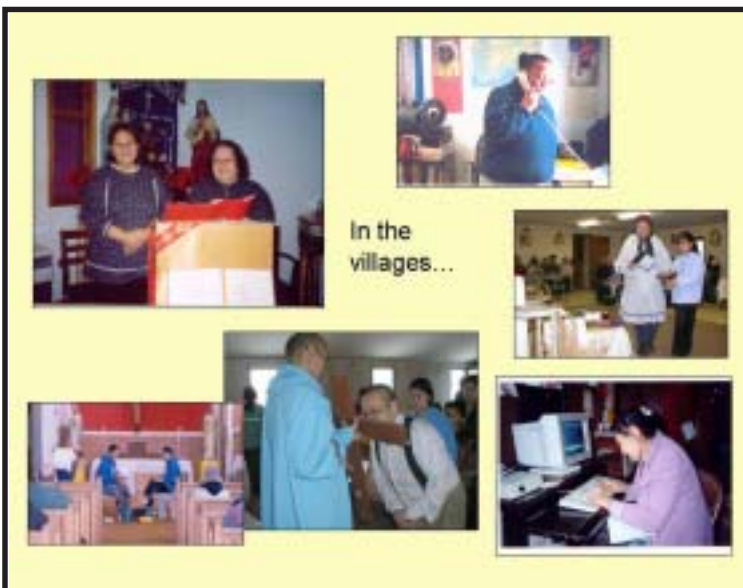
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## *A letter of thanks from Bishop Donald Kettler*

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,



I send to you my prayers and best wishes this Easter Season and my deepest gratitude for your prayers, letters, and phone calls during our Chapter 11 reorganization in federal Bankruptcy Court. I cannot express to you

how much your support means to me. I am humbled by your kindness.

I wanted to take this opportunity to once again express my deepest regret over anyone who has suffered abuse at the hands of a church worker or volunteer; indeed, my heart goes out to anyone who has suffered abuse of any kind.

While our diocese moves through reorganization as a means of satisfying claims made against it, we recognize it is not a pastoral resolution to those harmed in the past. Nor are those who have stepped forward the only ones to suffer. Family, friends, whole communities feel the emotional weight of these past abuses. It is to this circle of the damaged, to the whole Church, in truth, that I pledge my commitment to healing.

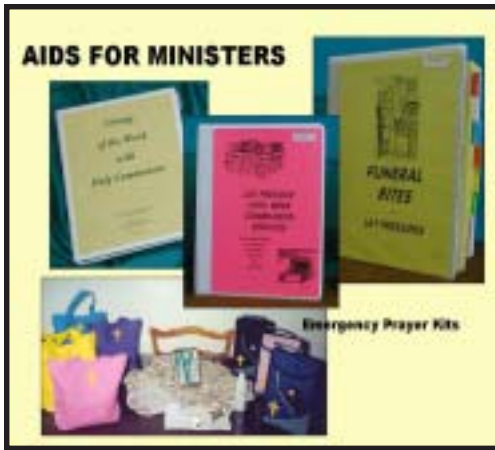
I believe true healing will only come about when we can reach out to the suffering, to one another, with Christ's love and we as Church can demonstrate an unswerving desire to prevent future harm. I ask you to include special prayers of intercession at your Masses. Pray not just for those who have been harmed but also for children today, that they may never suffer abuse of any kind, verbally, physically, sexually.

Easter celebrates new life. Our children, as they have always been, are our future. Join me in nurturing them in love as God's people. In so doing, we help bring about Christ's kingdom on earth.

Thank you and God bless us all.

*+ Donald J. Kettler*

Bishop Donald J. Kettler



people. I am pleased that Sister Ellen and her staff are receiving recognition for their hard work, their dedication, and their persistent hope in the people of God.”

NCCL Vice President, Fr. David Loftus, presented the award on April 8, 2008. Fr. Loftus had this to say, “Immense waters circumscribe the geography within which our awardee exercises its ministry. Bounded by two great rivers and the expansive ocean, this ministry sees the life and leadership of 24 distinct communities of faith grow, and blossom, even in winter’s darkest depths. The light of faith is demonstrated by our awardee with enthusiasm and dedication, comparable to the intense summer sun, which at times even seems eternal. In fact, it is no stretch to say that the efforts of our awardee are as vital to the communities served as the day is long...and I mean a good summer’s day.

Ladies and gentlemen, the poet David Whyte writes in “Working Together” We shape our self to fit this world, and by the world are shaped again. The visible and the invisible working together in common cause, to produce the miraculous.

This year’s Distinguished Service Award is made to a group of dedicated and selfless men and women who indeed minister together in common cause to produce the miraculous. They seek to raise up, form, and advance leadership within the Yukon-Kuskokwim Region of Alaska, within the great expanse that is the Diocese of Fairbanks. Divided into four regions, this diocese covers three quarters of the state of Alaska, and despite the incredible challenges this brings, the 13 men and women who are collectively the recipient of our award serve the 24 parish communities in the development and formation of lay leadership through the efforts of a highly dedicated group of lay, religious, and ordained ministers. Their efforts include the provision of support and formation for parish administrators, catechists, and liturgical ministers, in culturally appropriate and adaptive ways. Our 2008 Distinguished Service Award goes to the Native Ministry Training Program.”



Sister Ellen Callaghan accepted the award on behalf of all the selfless men and women who make the program possible. At that time she encouraged the conference participants to thank their parishioners for contributing to the Home Missions and Black & Indian Mission collections since these are also major donors to NMTP. Sister Rose Monica Katusz, O.S.F., summarized, in the presentation she prepared for the conference with the words, “The NMTP exists for the building up of God’s people by God’s people.”

—Patty Walter

**Thank you so much for your generous first class stamp donations.  
 First class stamps will increase to 42¢ in May 2008.  
 A gift of the “Forever” stamp is especially appreciated.**