

Gumisindo (Gumie) Gonzales

Thank you. My name is Gumie Gonzales. I was born in McDade, Texas, the seventh member of a family of 16 brothers and sisters. My parents, Bernabe and Delores Gonzales, brought me to Taylor at the age of six years old.

I was going to say that they had brought me here when I was little, but every time I say that -- some of my brothers are here -- they always say, "Well, Gumie, you're still little."

I want to thank the Moody Museum and the Moody Museum president, Susan Komandosky, and all the other Moody Museum members. I want to thank also Jessie for all the work that she has done in getting us together, but I want to thank the Moody Museum for the work that the museum is doing to preserve the oral history of our community here in Taylor. And I want to thank Miss Cissie Pierce in a special way for inviting me to be here today.

Father Paul A. Lewis arrived in Taylor in 1946 to serve the community of Our Lady of Guadalupe. One of the things that Father Lewis saw was that our sister parish, Saint Mary's, had a Catholic school and so Father Lewis noticed that, well, how wonderful that they're able to teach the children their Catholic faith. But Father Lewis said, "Well, what about the other children? Who's going to teach them their faith?" So with

that, Father Lewis decided that he was going to do something about that situation.

Father Lewis came from Roma, Texas, and while he was there he met a young lady, her name is Guadalupe de la Paz, who taught the children religious education classes. Father Lewis invited Sister Lupe -- after that we always called her "Sister Lupe."

So Father Lewis invited Sister Lupe to come to Taylor in 1946 and immediately Sister Lupe formed a community of sisters to teach the faith to the children. Sister Lupe and other young women from all over the country came to Taylor to help her teach the children our Christian faith.

The young women who joined the community of sisters took their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and lived a life of prayer. A convent was built in 1948 by the men of the parish. The convent was built in Washington Heights, a block away from the Taylor Country Club, which is now known as Mustang Creek Golf Club.

At one point the sisters numbered as many as 11 dedicated sisters to serve our parish, but also the surrounding parishes in Central Texas. The sisters served Our Lady of Guadalupe, Taylor; Sacred Heart, Elgin; St. Williams, Round Rock; St. Joseph's in Rockdale; St. Helen's in Georgetown; Santa Rosa in Andice; and Good Shepherd in Lampasas.

During the summer months when many Hispanic families, including our family, migrated to Minnesota to work in the -- in the beef fields, the sisters worked in parishes in New York City in the barrios.

As I mentioned, Sister Lupe was the Mother Superior of the community of sisters and had a profound love of Christ and of the church. I remember as I attended religious education classes that Sister Lupe made sure that she enforced a dress code, and this was when dress codes weren't even in style yet.

Another thing that she was very diligent about is she made sure that every one of us attended religious education classes on Wednesday afternoons, and if we missed she would go to our house and inform our parents that we were not in class. So I guarantee you that after she made a visit to the home, we were always in class.

There were many other sisters that all of our community grew to love, and one -- there were many other sisters that my wife and I remember and we remember with fondness Sister Michael. Sister Michael was kind, gentle, and loving. She dedicated her whole life and it showed in the love that she had for Christ above all things. When Sister Michael retired and moved to San Antonio to live, my wife Minnie and I visited with her one day. We took her to lunch and took her on a shopping spree.

Sister Lucinda was another one of the sisters that my wife Minnie and I came to love very much for their dedication. She was -- she served approximately 25 years in the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe and she left the convent and moved to Fort Worth where she worked for a parish as a director of religious education.

As some of you may know, the sisters renew their vows after so many years and they have an option to renew the vows or not renew the vows. If they don't renew the vows they can move away from the convent and start a secular life. So Sister Lucinda left the convent and went to work for a church in Fort Worth.

Anyway, later on she met a young man, they married and they adopted two young boys from South America and I had the sacred honor and the privilege to baptize their oldest child. And so I always remember the work that they did for us to build our faith and to bring us up in the faith to receive our sacraments.

The other sister that we remember, the last remaining sister, was Sister Joseph. Sister Joseph loved Christ and loved the children of the parish, but she also had a wonderful sense of humor and she was real witty. I remember one day Sister was picking flowers on the side of the road because she wanted to bring them -- on the month of May she wanted to decorate the altar with these beautiful wild flowers and I said, "Sister

Joseph, don't you know that it's against the law to be picking flowers off the side of the road?" Sister Joseph said, "Well, I'll tell you what, if they stop me and ask me why am I doing that, I'm going to tell them that the master, the owner, needs them."

As I said, Sister Joseph was the last one of the sisters that was remaining and while she was there one of the ladies of the parish asked her, "Sister Joseph, aren't you afraid to be there in the convent all by yourself?" She said, "I'm not. I'm not there by myself. God is with me."

As I said, Sister Joseph was the last surviving member of the dedicated women of St. John Bosco Convent. She died on January the 21st, 2016, at the age of 92. She served the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe for 69 years.

She and the other sisters dedicated their whole lives to serve Christ in the service to the community of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Taylor from 1946 until 2016. The sisters of St. John Bosco served three generations of parishioners and instructed the children in our Catholic faith, and it was through their effort that many of us were instructed in the practice of faith and received all of our sacraments.

As the community of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the city of Taylor we should be forever grateful -- forever grateful for the tremendous amount of work that the sisters have done for our community. We will always remember the sisters of St. John

Bosco when we read the scripture passage from the gospel of Matthew 25:21 that says, "Well done my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come and share your master's joy."

Thank you.