

## A CRY FOR HELP

In mid-July, a couple expecting a child approached Father Thomas Vander Woude, pastor of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Gainesville, Virginia. Though the woman was nearly six months into her pregnancy, they had just learned from prenatal tests that their unborn child had trisomy 21, Down syndrome, and had already scheduled an abortion. Unwilling to raise a child with developmental disabilities but troubled by the prospect of late-term abortion, they asked the priest if he could help them find a better alternative.

The couple did not pick Father Vander Woude at random. In 2008, the priest's family had been the subject of international publicity when his father, also named Thomas, died in a struggle to rescue a 20-year-old son who had fallen into an old cistern behind the family home. The priest's brother saved in that heroic rescue also had Down syndrome.

## A TICKING CLOCK?

Father Vander Woude well understood the pressures facing the couple who sought his help. Thanks to private efforts like Special Olympics as well as more enlightened public policies toward people with disabilities, many individuals with Down syndrome have moved into the mainstream of American life. But an estimated 92 percent of women who receive a prenatal diagnosis of trisomy 21 decide to end their pregnancies, often on the advice of medical professionals.

Today many influential commentators support such advice. Criticizing recent efforts to restrict abortions performed more than halfway through pregnancy, a recent *USA Today* editorial noted that genetic conditions like Down syndrome cannot be accurately detected until late in pregnancy, so a ban on late abortions "forces women and couples to make heartrending decisions against a ticking clock."

## AN EYE-OPENER FOR OUR SOCIETY

In Virginia, Father Vander Woude recognized that he faced a ticking clock himself. The couple he was counseling gave him just one day to find an alternative to abortion for their unborn child. So he posted a message on the parish Facebook page. "If you are interested in adopting this baby please contact Fr. VW IMMEDIATELY," the post read. "We are asking all to pray for this baby and the wisdom that this couple realize the importance of human life and do not abort this beautiful gift from God."

The response was overwhelming. Within hours, hundreds of couples had contacted the parish staff with offers of adoption. Extra personnel were needed to handle requests from as far away as England and the Netherlands. Soon a local adoption agency presented the couple with three promising homes where their baby could find lifelong love. Not only did the experience confirm Father Vander Woude's faith in human decency, but it also highlighted the work of the National Down Syndrome Society, an advocacy group whose president noted with pleasure, "It's a good eye-opener for our society to see that so many families value a child with Down syndrome like any other child and want to raise them as their own."

*For information about efforts to value and support people with Down syndrome, visit the National Down Syndrome Society website at <http://www.ndss.org/>*

*Our Lady of Lourdes Monthly Calendar*  
**Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Eucharist will be celebrated Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM**

<b>AUGUST 2013</b>						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Zumba Class 7:00P AGLD Rehearsal 7:30P	2 <i>Father Jeffery's Birthday</i>	3 Lector Prep 10:30A SVDP Meeting 9A Dance by Kenya 10:00A Rosary 4:30PM 5:00PM Eucharist Ice Cream Social
4 <b>Simon's Call</b> Ice Cream Social RCIA 9:30A Social Action 9:30A Women's Council 11:30A St. Vincent de Paul 12N	5 Life After the Pink Slip 7P	6 Zumba Class 6:00P Baptismal Class 7P Lector Prep 7P Adult Faith Formation 7P	7 <i>Bible Study 7:00P</i>	8 <i>St. Dominic's Day</i> <i>Atlanta Beltline Meeting</i> 6:30P Zumba Class 7:00P AGLD Rehearsal 7:30P	9	10 <b>Prayer Breakfast 9A</b> Dance by Kenya 10:00A Rosary 4:30PM 5:00PM Eucharist Stephen Ministry 6:30P
11 Stephen Ministry Day Sunday Breakfast 9A RCIA 9:30A KPC/KPCLA Meeting 1:30P Jr. Daughters Meeting 1:30P	12 Pastoral Council Meeting 6:30PM	13 Expansion Steering Committee 7P Zumba Class 6:00P Adult Faith Formation 7P	14 <i>Bible Study 7:00P</i>	15 <i>Feast Day</i> <i>Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Eucharist 7:00PM</i> Zumba Class 7:00P AGLD Rehearsal 7:30P	16 <i>Men's Ministry</i> <i>Movie Night for Edgewater</i> 7:30P	17 SVDP Meeting 9A Dance by Kenya 10:00A Centennial Meeting 3:30P Rosary 4:30PM 5:00PM Eucharist
18 <b>KPC Meet &amp; Greet</b> RCIA 9:30A St. Vincent de Paul 12N Haiti Committee Meeting 12N	19	20 Zumba Class 6:00P Adult Faith Formation 7P	21 <i>Bible Study 7:00P</i>	22 Zumba Class 7:00P AGLD Rehearsal 7:30P	23	24 <b>Boydell Wedding 10A</b> Dance by Kenya 10:00A Life Issues 4P Rosary 4:30PM 5:00PM Eucharist
25 <b>Sunday Breakfast</b> RCIA 9:30A Health Ministry 11:30A Lourdes Alumni Meeting 2P Lay Dominicans Meeting 2P	26 <i>Taize Prayer Group</i> 8:00PM	27 Zumba Class 6:00P	28 <i>Bible Study 7:00P</i>	29 Zumba Class 7:00P AGLD Rehearsal 7:30P	30	31

Join us for Sunday Breakfast on Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup> & August 25<sup>th</sup>  
 Sponsored by the Knights of Peter Claver  
**Save the Date ~ Parish Picnic ~ Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup> @ 2:00PM**