

Local nun wins national award

By Michael Brown
Editor

TWIN FALLS — If you ask Mercy Sister RoseMary Boessen how she has managed, in her ministry, to run a group home for girls, move a church to Nevada and currently operate a legal assistance office for immigrants hoping to become U.S. citizens, the response is pretty much the same.

"God knows how to find answers through me."

Sister Boessen is the recipient of the 2009 Lumen Christi Award from the Catholic Extension Society, recognizing her lifelong efforts in this mission diocese. The honor, announced Aug. 6, brings with it \$50,000 to be split between the recipient and the diocese.

It is the second time in the 32-year history of the award that someone from Idaho has won. In 2002, Anthony and Evelyn Messuri, foster parents from Caldwell, were also recognized.

In nominating her, Bishop Michael P. Driscoll noted that Sister Boessen had "dedicated her life to the people of Southern Idaho, developing religious education programs, establishing a foster home for teenage girls, ministering to prisoners and supporting and empowering the growing Hispanic population in the area."

A Mass and dinner in her honor is set for Oct. 7 in Twin Falls.

Sister Boessen, a native of St. Thomas, Mo., recently marked her golden anniversary in religious life and reflected on her ministry that began, inauspiciously with her degree in home economics and first teaching assignment at Mercy High School in Omaha, Neb.

It is just the second time in the 32-year history of the Lumen Christi award that someone from Idaho has won.

After earning a degree from the Sumore Program at Seattle University in Seattle, Sister Boessen was assigned in 1970 as deanery coordinator of Religious Education for the Southern Deanery, while in residence in Immaculate Conception Parish in Buhl. The parish school was closing, and nearby parishes in Shoshone, Twin Falls, Hailey and Ketchum needed someone to help them with their fledgling religious education programs.

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MISSIONARY OF THE YEAR — Mercy Sister RoseMary Boessen, executive director of La Posada Ministry in Twin Falls, earlier this month was told that she was the 2009 recipient of the Lumen Christi Award. Given by the

Catholic Extension Society, the honor goes to a person or group considered the top missionary in the U.S. Sister Boessen has been involved in outreach in the Southern Deanery since 1970. (ICR photo courtesy of Sister Boessen)

'Sorry, Sister can't come to the phone right now...'

By Michael Brown
Editor

CHICAGO — Father John J. Wall, president of the Catholic Church Extension Society, wanted to be the first to congratulate Mercy Sister RoseMary Boessen on being named the 2009 recipient of the prestigious Lumen Christi Award, given to the top missionary in the U.S.

There was one problem, however. She was too busy to come to the phone.

"I called to tell her she was a winner, but I couldn't get hold of her," Father Wall said Aug. 12 from his office in Chicago.

The priest identified himself to the operator at La Posada Ministry, Sister Boessen's Twin Falls outreach ministry to the Spanish-speaking, but didn't want to leave a message, because he wanted to hear the nun's reaction when he told her the news. So, he kept calling, and calling and calling.

"Every time I was calling, she was working with someone," he said. "That said so much to me about who she is."

Although he eventually spoke to her by phone, it wasn't until after Bishop Michael P. Driscoll had gotten through to Sister Boessen and offered his own congratulations. Father Wall said that the bishop couldn't have known his difficulty getting through to Sister Boessen; Bishop Driscoll had waited several hours as he had promised so that Father Wall could give her the good news.

Father Wall was impressed by the feats recounted in Bishop Driscoll's letter of support for Sister Boessen's application. "She's really

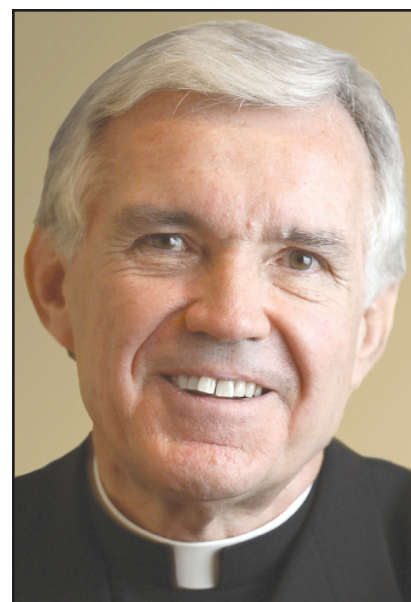
been able to succeed in getting people to work together on something that is special for everyone," Father Wall said.

Father Wall, appointed Extension president in 2007, said he is constantly impressed by the work done by church missionaries in often poor and desolate circumstances.

"Across the U.S., wherever you go, in the poorest communities, you find the presence of the Catholic Church," he said, calling Sister Boessen and others like her, "hidden heroes."

"We feel deeply honored to be able to honor her," he said.

The Lumen Christi Award, which includes \$25,000 prizes to Sister Boessen and to the diocese, will be given during a Mass and dinner in her honor Oct. 7 in Twin Falls.



Father John J. Wall

**BOLD FAITH,
VIBRANT TRADITIONS**

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Hoyt: See faith, traditions through lens of paradox

By Michael Brown
Editor

BOISE — The keynote speakers at Fall Conference 2009 will offer thoughts on the theme "Bold Faith, Vibrant Traditions," setting the tone for the workshops and discussions to follow.

National youth speaker Jerry Goebel's opening presentation "Vibrant Traditions, Modern Opportunities," set for 9:50 a.m., Sept. 18, will address combining traditional wisdom with modern technologies in helping parishes pass on the faith.

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