



(L to r) Father Michael Kmiotek, Brother Peter Marie Westall, Brother Patrick Crowley, Brother Mariano Joseph Demma, and Yong Oh stand outside the café.

By TOM PAUKEN II

**D**ALLAS. In 2003 Yong Oh, a Korean-American woman, was attending Mass at St. Andrew Kim Church and experienced a life-changing moment while waiting to receive the Eucharist. "An idea came to me," she said. "God placed a desire in my heart to work with young people."

She felt a surge of joy but had some concerns. She believed it was important to lead young people to God, but it would not be easy. Youth are distracted by a society that often shuns spirituality. They attend schools or work at jobs where discussing religion is frowned upon. They turn on a TV or a radio and are hit by a barrage of a pop culture influence that emphasizes "self" above God.

She wanted to find a solution because "there isn't a place that young people (of like minds) can come together." Upon careful consideration, she was struck by the thought that she wanted to open a coffee house to promote the Catholic faith. Yong decided to call it the "Shepherd's Café."

Yong hasn't opened a permanent facility to serve coffee for normal business hours Monday through Saturday because she must set up for 501(C3) non-profit tax-exempt status. But she has been filing the paperwork and is asking for volunteers to assist her.

Yong hosts the "Shepherd's Café" every fourth Saturday of the month at St. Andrew Kim on Swiss Avenue near downtown Dallas, starting at 6 p.m. The event begins with an hour of prayer inside the church and the

festivities move to the auditorium, where she showcases Catholic entertainment.

The Shepherd's Café debuted last spring. About 80 people usually attend.

The Community of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (C.F.R.) recently led Eucharistic adoration during the evening prayer hour. The Franciscans' friary is located in the Diocese of Fort Worth. On this evening in Dallas, they certainly formed an eclectic group, with long beards and wearing gray robes, and carrying folkloric musical instruments. They looked like monks from the medieval ages. Father Michael Kmiotek, superior of the community, proved that appearances can be deceiving because he spoke with a heavy New York accent.

Father Kmiotek explained why he got involved with the Shepherd's Café. "We've been doing something similar like this in New York," he said. "The idea is pretty simple: During Adoration we sing easy-to-learn songs. Then we come to the café after we pray."

"The idea of a café is to create a Catholic culture so each month we invite a different Catholic artist," he said. "There are cafes in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Texas. We call it the Catholic underground because we use the church base-ments."

Father Kmiotek expects the Shepherd's Café will keep growing because more people attend each month. "It gives young adults an environment that will support their faith," he said. "People can make friends with others who are Catholic or hopefully they will meet their future wife or husband."

Inside the café, Father Kmiotek blessed a hand-made cross designed by John Andrew Sustaita, a local

pope understood that we must use our gifts to evangelize and it works," he said. "Hopefully it (the cross) touches everybody spiritually as it did when I painted this. I prayed about it. Hopefully it will touch people spiritually and show them that God sends graces of mercy just by gazing at it."

The two musicians who appeared on stage that evening were Joe Keating, youth minister at St. Mark's Parish in Denton and Michael

Howard, music minister at St. Jude in Allen. Both played a similar style of contemporary guitar Christian music. Howard was promoting a CD in which 100 percent of all proceeds from sales go to Honduran missionary activities.

Howard said he raised more than \$13,000 for Honduras before coming to the Shepherd's Café.

Each month, the Shepherd's Café features local Catholic musicians or speakers. On Sept. 25, Joe Languel sang and promoted his new CD. In October, Daniel DiSilva will give a talk, and in November, Father Jonathan Austin, parochial vicar at St. Rita Parish in Dallas, will give a live musical performance. The Shepherd's Café will host a praise and worship karaoke night in December.

Yong noted that other Catholic organizations could benefit from participating in the Shepherd's Café events. The group promotes vocations

to the religious life through their involvement with religious orders and diocesan priests. They support pro-life groups and provide pro-bono counseling services. They also set aside donation jars for non-profits.

Yong believes she plays an important role. "We're promoting vocations. Last month we had three Dominicans and three Franciscans in attendance," she said. "It's important to be there to help people's faith outside of church. The young people here like to hang out with the religious."

"The Shepherd's Café is a great way to evangelize," Yong said. "All the musicians and everyone who comes is 'hardcore' Catholic. It's wonderful to see people come together excited for Christ. To be in a room to share, it's beautiful."

The Shepherd's Café does intend to build a permanent site for its coffee house, but hasn't chosen a location. Nonetheless, it will be located near a Catholic Church, either in the diocese of Dallas or Fort Worth. Preliminary drawings of the coffee house show the facility will have a stage, lobby, conference rooms, office, kitchen, restrooms, Internet room, gift shop and chapel.

The café will only purchase coffee from "fair trade" in various countries who live in poverty but who are getting paid just wages. Proceeds from the coffee sold at the café will fund Catholic missionary activities in coffee-growing regions of Third World countries.

For more information call (214) 574-5021 or visit the website, [www.theshepherdscafe.com](http://www.theshepherdscafe.com)

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## Catholic Culture and Coffee

*Shepherd's Café offers eclectic mix of prayer, entertainment*

Catholic artist. The crucifix was an Italo-Byzantine style cross with a crucified Christ accompanied by a series of images. It could be compared to a European medieval Byzantine Greek-Orthodox icon. It took Sustaita 62 hours to complete the project.

Sustaita was pleased that many people admired his artwork. "I wanted to do it as a donation and prayer," he said. "I do strongly believe in what Yong is doing here because it does draw in young adults from Fort Worth and Dallas for fellowship and prayer."

He takes pride in his work. "As religious artists we are simply answering the call that Pope John Paul II gave us," Sustaita said. "The