

Nearly 300 attend Loaves and Fishes gala

By Colette Cowman
ICR editor

BOISE — The gala Loaves and Fishes Political Banquet, which took place Sept. 9 at the Grove Hotel, Boise, to benefit the statewide services of Catholic Charities of Idaho, started and ended with the word "caring."

And in between there was a great deal of light-hearted humor, tons of laughter, a few jabs, much talk about saints, sharing of memories about parish life and Catholic schools, scripture quoting, spoofs on Catholic terminology, talk about service and friendship and praise for the work of Catholic Charities of Idaho. Master of Ceremonies Marc Johnson even called on an old-fashioned Catholic tradition to determine the order of speakers — a Bingo cage.

The "first of its kind" \$100 a plate dinner drew nearly 300 people from across the state to share fellowship, support Catholic Charities of Idaho and listen to speeches by the major parties' candidates for Idaho governor — Jerry Brady and C.L. "Butch" Otter — and lieutenant governor — Larry LaRocco and Gov. Jim Risch. All four are Catholic. (Gov. Risch attended the reception but was not able to stay for the dinner and program. A staff member read a letter from him.)

As Johnson said, "Never in the State of Idaho have so many Catholics run for office at the same time."

The dinner was the brainchild of Andy Brunelle, Boise, a Bishop Kelly High graduate. It was organized by a group of local Catholics who saw it as an opportunity to bring the candidates together for an evening of fun and humor and raise money for an important charity.

The evening was modeled after the traditional fundraiser Al Smith Dinner, sponsored annually by the Archdiocese of New York City. That dinner is known for its non-partisan,



OLD FRIENDS — Regina Otter, 91, left, Holy Apostles Parish, Meridian, sits with her old friend Msgr. James Hallissey, Mountain Home, laughing, cheering and talking at the Sept. 9 Loaves and Fishes Idaho Political Dinner at the Grove Hotel, Boise. The event benefited Catholic Charities of Idaho. Mrs. Otter is the mother of one of the candidates on the program.



FIXTURE IN IDAHO POLITICS — Bethine Church, daughter of the late Idaho Democratic Governor Chase Clark and wife of the late Idaho Sen. Frank Church, enjoys the light-hearted banter of Idaho's candidates for governor and lieutenant governor during the Loaves and Fishes Dinner Sept. 9. (ICR Photos by Colette Cowman)

humorous nature. Smith was the first Roman Catholic nominated for president of the United States on a major party ticket. He made his way from the tenements of New York City to the Governor's Mansion in Albany. The proud Catholic, who espoused Catholic social teaching, was the unsuccessful Democratic candidate for president in 1928.

Boise Mayor Dave Bieter, a Catholic himself, welcomed the Loaves and Fishes crowd. "Whether Democrat, Republican or Independent, the hope is that people will know us by the depth of our caring for the people of this fine state of Idaho," he said.

After his own tongue-in-cheek political comments which included a vow to change his name to "Cecil D. Andrus" to enhance his own political future, Mike Kennedy, Coeur d'Alene, chairman of the Catholic Charities of Idaho (CCI) Development Committee, shared the CCI mission to practice works of

charity service and justice and collaborate with other organizations to solve social problems and build resilient communities.

Father Thomas Faucher, pastor, Saint Mary's Parish, Boise, offered his personal observations about the four Catholic candidates, one of whom was a roommate and employer, two who have been his parishioners and one whose family he knows and whose first cousin was his associate pastor at one time.

His observations were a collection of true or "should be true" stories.

Besides the candidates, whose talks often drew applause and laughter and all included some subtle campaigning, other speakers included Dr. Steve Shaw, a professor of political science from Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa, who gave a history of religion and politics in Idaho, and Rosio Gonzales, Catholic Charities of Idaho executive director.

Bishop Michael Driscoll

gave the closing remarks. He talked about how one of the core's of the Catholic faith is caring for one another, which is what Jesus asked us to do.

"We have the best of all worlds in Idaho," he said. "We have an opportunity in the four men who are running for governor and lieutenant governor who are all Catholic. If they truly profess their faith, the entire population of Idaho will benefit because they are going to care about all people."

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