

# Catholic singer helps raise the roof for Habitat

Inter Lake Advertising Staff

**D**onna Cori Gibson has been called the Celine Dion or Twila Paris of contemporary Catholic music. St. Charles Church in Whitefish is proud to host Gibson in a free concert to benefit Habitat for Humanity of the Flathead Valley.

Gibson was born in New York and raised in Florida where she started studying music and performance at a young age. A professional singer by 17, she received a full scholarship to the University of Miami School of Music where she became the first freshman to be accepted into its top vocal group.

With the promise of a budding professional career, Gibson left school early and returned to New York at age 21, where she found work singing in clubs, studios, and in commercial jingles.

The closer Gibson came to realizing success, however, the more she was disturbed by what she saw in the recording industry.

"I didn't like the way I was spoken to," she said. "I didn't like the innuendoes, the sexual references. Sex is used to sell everything and I learned that in the music industry, if you don't play the game by their rules, you don't play. I thought I could be a Christian singer in a secular market, but it just doesn't work that way."

Gibson left the secular music industry and moved to Kalispell in 1999 with her husband, Matthew, a computer technician from Seattle, whom she'd met while on a pilgrimage in Israel. Today, she maintains a busy travel and performance schedule in her music ministry.

Gibson's music is focused on her faith and religion and includes word-for-word verses from the Bible and well-known prayers.

She has recorded five CDs, which have sold about 42,000 copies including her recent release "That We May Be One."

Although the concert is free, offerings will be accepted to benefit Gibson's ministry or the Flathead Valley's Habitat for Humanity project in Whitefish.

Since 1976, Habitat for Humanity International and its local affiliates have built more than 100,000 houses in more than 60 countries, including 30,000 in the United States.

Habitat's goal is to eliminate substandard housing while providing simple, decent, affordable homes in partnership with those in need of adequate shelter. Homeowner families are chosen according to their need, their ability to repay and their willingness to work in partnership with Habitat.

"Many people think Habitat houses are another handout," said Jill Evans, executive director of Habitat's Flathead affiliate. "But what makes our program so successful is that it's all about people helping people in their own community, in their own neighborhood. It's about more than just a place to live. It's about coming together to help someone realize the basic dignity that comes from working hard to build and own their home."

Homeowners and volunteers build the houses under trained supervision and professional guidance. Houses, which are sold at no profit, with no interest charged on the mortgage, are purchased by the homeowner families. Habitat houses are made affordable through the efforts



Photo courtesy of Donna Cori Gibson

**CATHOLIC RECORDING ARTIST Donna Cori Gibson will sing at St. Charles Church in Whitefish on March 10 to benefit Habitat for Humanity.**

and donations of individuals, corporations, faith groups and others community service groups and churches. Habitat for Humanity's work is organized at the local level by more than 1,900 affiliates worldwide, which coordinate house building and select partner families.

*Donna Cori Gibson will appear at St. Charles Catholic Church in Whitefish*

*on March 10 at 3 p.m. For more information regarding this concert please contact Sandi Smith at 862-2051.*

*For more information on Donna Cori Gibson please call 754-3204 or visit her on the Internet at [www.donnacorigibson.com](http://www.donnacorigibson.com)*

*For more information on how you can help Habitat for Humanity of the Flathead Valley call 257-8800 or visit [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)*