

NORTH COAST CATHOLIC

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St. Francis de Sales,
pray for us.





FROM *the* BISHOP

NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL XIII

I concluded last month's reflection with the comment that it is most appropriate for each of us to work to make sure that this National effort to enhance Eucharistic understanding, devotion and participation takes root in our own hearts and in our own lives. I promised that this would be the direction of my articles for the next several months.

The Diocese of Santa Rosa was privileged to be the site for a *Liturgical Conference* sponsored in Ferndale at the end of May. In my research and study for that Conference I followed up on talks which proposed that the Most Holy Eucharist (Mass) could be contemplated from the perspective of four altars. Professor David Fagerberg, in a 2022 article in *Adoremus Bulletin* references these Four Altars. Other authors have made similar representations (See Jean Corbon, *The Wellspring of Worship*, Ignatius Press, 2005).

While there certainly can be variations and additions, the four altars which are proposed and which will serve as the foundation for articles for the coming months are:

- WOOD** - the Cross;
- STONE** - The Sacrificial Altar of Mass;
- FLESH** (or *Spirit*) - The Altar of the human Heart;
- GOLD** (*The Golden Altar*) - The Altar of God in Heaven (*Celestial*) (*Exodus 30 and Revelation 8*).

We begin with the cross, that Altar of wood about which we sing on Good Friday, "Behold the Wood of the Cross on which hung the Savior of the world. Come let us worship!" Good Friday is the culmination of our Lenten reflections on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the

Rosary as well as the Stations of the Cross. Making these devotional journeys with our Lady and our Lord point to Good Friday and prepare us for it. Then, as if present on the Mount of Calvary, we stand with Mary and the Beloved Disciple, John, and look upon The Crucified. This is the hill to which Saint John Vianney invites us saying, "Let us go often to the foot of the Cross ... We shall learn there what God has done for us, and what we ought to do for Him."

It was on the Cross that our Lord accomplished and completed what He did on Holy Thursday. At that 'Last Supper' He took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to His disciples saying: "**This is My Body which will be given up for you.**" It was on the Cross that His body was given up for us. The same with the wine. Jesus' words indicate a future action: "**This is the chalice of My Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you, and for many for the forgiveness of sins.**" It was on that cross of wood that the Blood of Jesus was poured out. Most pointedly, this was done when His side and heart were pierced by the lance so that His Blood (and water) poured out.

In reflecting on this and going to the foot of the Cross, especially as we attend and actively participate in Holy Mass, we remember and often learn anew "what God has done for us" as we are invited to do by the *Curé of Ars*. It is inevitable, after recognizing with humility what God has done for us, that we, in turn, strive to make a return to Almighty God. *Psalm 116* reminds us: "How can I make a return to the LORD for all the great good done for me? I will raise the cup of salvation - and call on the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people (Verses 12-14).

At every Holy Mass, it is important to remember the altar of the Cross so that we might hold in our hearts the reality that the Lord has really done great good for me, a good accomplished on the cross. It is only by having a firm grasp of this reality that it will be possible and fitting for us to feel a great desire and urge to make a return to the Lord. That return can never repay the Lord, the gift is too great. Yet, making a return to Him, however small, will always be proportionate to the love generated in our hearts by our

recollection of that Cross of wood and of the loving Savior, who for our sake, willingly embraced it and poured out Himself upon it.

Pray for me as I promise to pray for you.

Bishop Robert F. Vasa
Bishop of Santa Rosa







A SERIOUS TIME



By Chris Lyford
Editor, North Coast Catholic

In the midst of a world focused on the winds of war, what are we to do?

Pray from the heart with complete trust and the understanding that the creator of the universe can untangle any man-made mess however complex. How bad does it have to get until we all cry out to Jesus to save us?

If we believe all we hear from our mainstream media, we are sure to have only a partial and incomplete picture of the truth of the matters we face. The heartfelt prayers we offer up are always effective in bringing peace into this world, starting with our own lives and families, but now it is even more urgent and necessary. And those prayers do make a difference.

As we approach the Holiday Season and the Advent of Christmas and a new year, perhaps we can embrace a spirit of prayerful penitence for ourselves and our world. The phrase "Peace on Earth" is centered on the Prince of Peace, who was born in the poverty of a manger and yet is the very channel through which true peace flows from infinity.

It's the little things.

We can truly make a difference for peace by being present to the opportunities in our daily lives. Sometimes with a smile, sometimes with a listening ear, sometimes with a taco.


A dear friend of mine shared this story:

"I once shared my birthday with a homeless man. He was begging and with his dog at a freeway exit next to a Jack in the Box. I asked him if he was hungry and if so, what he would like to eat. He said, "a couple of tacos." No sooner than he responded, another homeless man jumped out from the bushes. Then I asked him if he'd like a drink with his meal as well. He said he'd like a coke too. I brought him back his food and enough for him to share with the other guy along with a cake dessert since it was my birthday. I told him 'Today is my birthday!' so I brought you some cake to celebrate with me!

He reached out his dry severely cracked and weathered hands to shake mine, looked into my eyes with his tearful sparkling blue eyes and with a big smile wished me Happy Birthday! I'll never forget that feeling of sincere pure blessing and gratitude. God's love and light shining down. Our guardian angels dancing and happy seeing the will of God manifest.

Best birthday gift to be inspired to invite a pure stranger, homeless and severely weathered soul to be a part of my day. It helped me live out my favorite prayer: ***"Holy Spirit, Beloved of my soul, I adore thee! Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should say and do. Give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me and accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will!"***

Let us spend each day living out our Baptismal promises in being attentive to the little things in our families, our parish, and our community. To let Christmas come early in our hearts and be channels of Peace on Earth!

Please continue to pray for our Diocese, Bishop, Priest, Deacons, and Religious. They have given their whole lives to serve us and intercede for us through the sacramental life of our Church! 

Editor's note: since the Synod on Synodality is still in process at the time of printing, we will have more in the December issue of the North Coast Catholic

FAMILY *Life!*



**By Carlin &
Deacon Dave Gould**

*Co-Directors of the
Marriage & Family
Life Office*

Greetings Diocese of Santa Rosa Family;

November is here and our thoughts of course turn to Thanksgiving feasts, sugar plum fairies, Christmas shopping, decorating, travel plans, and on and on and on. It seems that the to do list seems to never end as we navigate the "Holiday Season." Hecticness (and added stress!) can take over as we try to fit all these holiday tasks and activities into our lives.

We used to get pretty frazzled (and stressed out) at this time of year trying to get everything done by Christmas Day until we learned to slow things down a bit and relax and just enjoy each day. What really

helped us was eventually learning that the "Christmas Season" actually does not begin until Christmas Eve! So yes, some things need to get accomplished by Christmas Day, but the time for celebrating and feasting can come after Christmas! Back in the day, the household Christmas decorations didn't even appear until the day of Christmas Eve and were up for the Christmas season. Now, in many cases, the tree goes up on the day after Thanksgiving and comes down the day after Christmas!

Advent is the season before Christmas – the four weeks to prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus, our savior. Four weeks of penance, prayer, almsgiving and fasting (yes fasting!) before the celebration of Jesus's birth, God's coming to earth to redeem us.

That is why the liturgical color for Advent is purple, just as in Lent.

This year Advent starts on December 3rd, (the fourth Sunday before Christmas). One of the ways to prepare yourself spiritually for Christmas is to pray the St. Andrew Christmas Novena. The Novena begins on November 30th, the feast of St. Andrew, the Apostle, and ends on December 24th. It is an Advent tradition going back over 100 years, though the origins are unknown. While it's called the St. Andrew Novena, the prayer is addressed to God and focuses our attention on the coming Nativity of Christ. For this reason, it's also called the "Christmas Anticipation Novena." Even though it is called a novena, it is longer than the typical nine days of a novena prayer.

Mea Culpa

For those of you who participated in last month's "Name That Saint" quiz we apologize for an error we made in the answer key. A dutiful parishioner (Yay, someone was actually taking the quiz!) pointed out a mistake we made in listing the correct answers. The correct answer for **#3 St. Apollinaris** should have been "B" and not "N" as we listed in answers. St. Apollinaris was the first bishop of Ravenna, Italy and was a martyr. St. A's feast day is July 20th. And for **#6 St. Eugene**, the correct answer should have been "N" and not "B" as we listed. St. Eugene was the 75th pope and known for his gentleness and generosity. St. Eugene's feast day is June 2nd. We apologize for these mistakes, especially to the parishioners of St. Apollinaris



HERE IS THE PRAYER:

St. Andrew Christmas Novena

"Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires (mention your intentions here) through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother."

It is piously believed that whoever recites the St. Andrew Christmas Novena prayer **FIFTEEN** times each day from the feast of St. Andrew (November 30th) until Christmas Eve will obtain the favor requested.

Fifteen times a day!? Really? Well, yes, but they don't have to be done all at once. Try five when waking, five sometime around mid-day, and five after dinner and you will have completed the novena for that day! Easy-peasy.

Or perhaps how about this: five at the stop light, or five standing in line at the grocery store, or five when taking a quiet walk, or five when washing the dishes, or five when brushing your teeth, or five when walking the dog, or It doesn't take too long to memorize this prayer and then it is even easier to pray. If you participate in this novena there's a good chance that you'll be saying more than 15 a day by the time Christmas arrives. Praying this novena is a way to focus on what your greatest need is at this time in your life ("hear my prayer and grant my desires") and is a nice way to slow down and to realize that putting God first is the most important thing on your "to do" list for Christmas.

Speaking of your "to do" list, here is something that you may want to try out. (Deacon Dave is always encouraging including cookie recipes in our articles!)

15x



BABCIA'S GINGER CRINKLES



INGREDIENTS:

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup butter at room temperature
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ¼ cup dark molasses
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 large egg
- ½ tsp ground cloves
- ¾ cup granulated sugar

DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger and cloves in a bowl and set aside.
2. In a large bowl beat butter and brown sugar until pale. Add the molasses, and egg. Mixture will look curdled.

3. Gradually beat in the flour mixture until blended. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour or until firm enough to handle. (or overnight if you don't have the time to do this all at once)

4. Heat oven to 350°F. Put granulated sugar in a small bowl. Shape tablespoonfuls of dough into 1¼ -inch balls and roll in the sugar. Place 1 ½ inches apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes until tops crack but cookies are still soft to the touch. Remove to wire rack to cool completely.

Store in airtight container at room temperature up to 3 weeks.
(If they last that long!)

To make them extra yummy you could put in some finely chopped crystallized ginger to have those delicious chewy bits in each bite.

Now, make a cup of tea or coffee, take a couple of cookies (one if you are fasting), rest in His presence, pray the Novena, and count the many blessings He has given you while enjoying a moment of peace and deliciousness. BTW, "Babcia" is Polish for Grandmother.

Happy Thanksgiving and a Blessed Advent to all of you and your families.





SYNODALITY, SOTERIOLOGY, AND “SHARING THE JOURNEY”

By Carl E. Olson

October 10, Catholic World Report



In “The Dogma is the Drama”

(1939), which is one of my favorite essays, the brilliant Anglo-Catholic writer Dorothy Sayers (1893–1957) wrote:

Christ, in His Divine innocence, said to the Woman of Samaria, “Ye worship ye know not what”—being apparently under the impression that it might be desirable, on the whole, to know what one was worshipping. He thus showed Himself sadly out of touch with the twentieth-century mind, for the cry to-day is: “Away with the tedious complexities of dogma—let us have the simple spirit of worship; just worship, no matter of what!” The only drawback to this demand for a generalised and undirected worship is the practical difficulty of arousing any sort of enthusiasm for the worship of nothing in particular.

It came to my mind while reading a recent column by an American Cardinal titled “Sharing the journey” (Aug 2, 2023).

Remarking on “the ancient understanding of the church as a pilgrim people,” the Cardinal writes that Pope Francis is inviting us to appreciate better “what it means to be a pilgrim people in calling us to be a synodal church.” And:

A synodal church is one in which everyone lives in communion and is responsible for building bonds of compassion within our church and society. Being a synodal church means there is a sense of belonging and solidarity, to the point that we live as brothers and sisters and as friends, sharing our blessings, our time, talent and treasure. It also means forming a partnership among all the members to participate in the mission of the church.

These sort of verbal bouquets, which spring up often in the synodal soil, raise questions. The plentiful buzzwords tend to obscure some fundamental issues. Recall that the Apostle Thomas asked Christ: “Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” (Jn 14:5)—being apparently under the impression that it might be desirable, on the whole, to know why and whereone is journeying, and for what ultimate purpose. After all, “belonging” and “solidarity” and “partnerships” and “participation” can easily be part of the mission statement of a national coffee chain. What is distinctly Catholic here?

In other words, in the synodal church, there is a lot of talk about journeying but little mention of the eschatological goal, the telos of it all. Perhaps that is a feature and not a bug? “Pilgrimages are about more than traveling from one place to another,” the American Cardinal says. “They are about leaving what is familiar, helping one another along the way, dedicating time for reflection, making the pilgrimage a journey inward.” Neither Oprah nor Tony Robbins could have said it with less focus or more self-referential meaninglessness.

In late August, Pope Francis referred to the Synod as “a journey that St. Paul VI began at the end of the [Vatican II] Council when he created the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops because he had realized that in the Western Church synodality had disappeared, whereas in the Eastern Church they have this dimension.” He further remarked that “this years-long journey — 60 years — is bearing great fruit...” Fair enough, except the “Instrumentum laboris” (hereafter IL), the working document for the October 2023 Synod in Rome, begins (“The journey so far”) by stating: “The People of God have been on the move since Pope Francis convened the whole Church in Synod in October 2021” (#1).

Regardless, the appeal to the experiences of the Eastern Catholic Churches is more problematic, as noted by Bishop Manuel Nin, a Greek Byzantine Catholic prelate, who stressed that if the West understands synodality as where “everyone, lay and clerical, act together in order to arrive at some ecclesiastical, doctrinal, canonical, disciplinary decision, whatever it may be, it becomes clear that such synodality does

not exist in the East.” He then contrasts the two approaches, and in doing so draws out questions about the ecclesiology, eschatology, and soteriology involved:

Decisions within these Churches are made by the assembly of bishops (almost always called a “synod” or sometimes a “council of hierarchs”) belonging to an Eastern Church,” he said. And he explained that such meetings are convened by the presiding bishops in view of important decisions relating to the “Christian journey undertaken by pastors for the good of their faithful, spiritually and materially.”

And:

By contrast, he noted that the Synod on Synodality is a “collective ascent” of laity and clergy but he wondered: “To get where? To what end?” He also posed the question: with whom are the participants walking?

And, significantly:

The word synod, he pointed out, comes “directly from the Greek and means ‘walking with,’” but he added that what must be “clarified immediately so that our reflection on synodality does not go astray” is the meaning and real object of the Greek preposition syn (“with”). “It does not refer to the ‘journey’ but to ‘someone’ with whom it is carried out and completed,” he wrote. “It is the object or person ‘with whom’ the preposition ‘syn’ connects us and brings us together.”

Bishop Manuel stressed it refers neither to the road, nor to laity or clergy, but the preposition syn “connects us Christians and brings us to a Person who is Christ.”

Why does the Synod on Synodality, which is ostensibly focused on the nature of the Church and her relationship with the world, appear to have such little concern for soteriology and eschatology? If evangelization and mission (the latter term appears often in synodal documents) are so vital, why is the salvific nature and work of the Church rarely mentioned, especially as a foundational reality? In what way is the “synodal Church” about the call to conversion, the exposition of redemption, and the drama of salvation?

Christ, at the start of his ministry, proclaimed: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt 4:17; cf Mk 1:15). Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, preached: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38; cf Acts 3:19). G. K. Chesterton, a century ago, wrote:

When people ask me, or indeed anybody else, “Why did you join the Church of Rome?” the first essential answer, if it is partly an elliptical answer, is, “To get rid of my sins.” For there is no other religious system that does really profess to get rid of people’s sins.

Oddly enough, the word “sin” never appears in the IL, and references to redemption, repentance, salvation, atonement, the Cross, and so forth are scarce or missing altogether. To be very clear, the issue here is not quantity but rather the theological foundation and doctrinal core of the rather elusive and chameleon synodal Church. As Fr. Robert P. Imbelli has observed, the robust “Christological and sacramental perspective” found in Vatican II documents is mostly AWOL in the recent synodal documents, which are instead replete with references to “processes,” “structures,” and “experiences.” And, as Fr. Imbelli further noted, the IL has no references to the Cross and just one passing reference to Christ crucified.

Even when the IL makes a rare attempt to touch on the relationship between the Church and salvation, it manages to make it wonky and listless:

“The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature” (AG 2). Mission constitutes the dynamic horizon from which we are to think about the synodal Church, to which it imparts a drive towards the “ecstasy” that consists in “coming out of ourselves and seeking the good of others, even to the sacrifice of our lives” (CV 163; cf. also FT 88). Mission allows one to receive the experience of Pentecost: having received the Holy Spirit, Peter and the Eleven stand and take the word to announce the crucified and risen Jesus to all those living in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 2:14-36). Synodal life is rooted in the same dynamism. There are many testimonies that describe the lived experience of the first stage in these terms, and even more numerous are those that link synodality and mission in an inseparable manner. (#51)

In cutting short the quote from Ad Gentes, the Council’s Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, the IL severs the missionary nature of the Church from its Source: “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the

Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father" (AG 2). And, like nearly all of the sixteen documents issued by the Council, *Ad Gentes* has a paragraph expounding the relationship between God and the Church, the Church and the Gospel, and the Gospel and the Kingdom:

Divinely sent to the nations of the world to be unto them "a universal sacrament of salvation," the Church, driven by the inner necessity of her own catholicity, and obeying the mandate of her Founder (cf. Mark 16:16), strives ever to proclaim the Gospel to all men. The Apostles themselves, on whom the Church was founded, following in the footsteps of Christ, *"preached the word of truth and begot churches."* It is the duty of their successors to make this task endure *"so that the word of God may run and be glorified"* (2 Thess. 3:1) and the kingdom of God be proclaimed and established throughout the world. (#1)

Gaudium et spes, sometimes (and unfairly) maligned for being "ambiguous" or worse, opens by stating:

United in Christ, [followers of Christ] are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds. (#1)

And, later, it articulates beautifully what the current synodal documents seem uncomfortable in stating clearly and without sociological-ese:

Coming forth from the eternal Father's love, founded in time by Christ the Redeemer and made one in the Holy Spirit, the Church has a saving and an eschatological purpose which can be fully attained only in the future world. But she is already present in this world, and is composed of men, that is, of members of the earthly city who have a call to form the family of God's children during the present history of the human race, and to keep increasing it until the Lord returns....

While helping the world and receiving many benefits from it, the Church has a single intention: that God's kingdom may come, and that the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass. For every

benefit which the People of God during its earthly pilgrimage can offer to the human family stems from the fact that the Church is "the universal sacrament of salvation", simultaneously manifesting and exercising the mystery of God's love. (#40, 45)

It is difficult, frankly, to see the current synodal documents as anything other than third-rate, flawed texts that water down or ignore completely central aspects of ecclesiology, soteriology, and eschatology, as found in Sacred Scripture and Tradition in general or in the Vatican II documents specifically. If the Synod is to lead to a deeper understanding of the Church, her role in salvation, and her desire to expand the Kingdom of God, it will have to free itself from the bureaucratic brambles and laborious drivel that dominate its documents.

Speaking of such, the IL contains several exhortations to *"build an increasingly synodal Church"* and *"building a more synodal Church."* And, this statement: *"The radical call is, therefore, to build together, synodally, an attractive and concrete Church..."* (#26). Which brings to mind another great quote, this from the late Pope Benedict XVI, who in his essay on the Church and the scandal of sexual abuse, flatly stated: **"... a Church that we build can offer no hope."** (What is Christianity? [Ignatius Press, 2023]). What we need now is a return to the doctrinal clarity of the Vatican II texts. **✚**



Carl E. Olson is editor of *Catholic World Report* and *Ignatius Insight*.



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Georgia Supreme Court Upholds 'Heartbeat' Law Banning Abortion

By Peter Pinedo

October 24, Catholic News Agency



Photo Credit: National Catholic Register

The Supreme Court of Georgia on Tuesday upheld the state's "heartbeat" law that bans abortion at six weeks and recognizes the personhood of unborn babies.

The 6-1 decision allows the "Living Infants Fairness and Equality" (LIFE) Act law to remain in effect while other challenges to the measure are further considered by the court.

This means that abortion in Georgia is banned after an unborn baby's heartbeat is detectable, except in some cases of rape, incest, and situations of serious pregnancy complications.

Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America (SBA), which advocated for the law, called the decision a "major victory for life" in a Tuesday statement.

"Today's Georgia Supreme Court decision ensures that tens of thousands of children with beating hearts will continue to be protected from brutal abortions," said SBA President Marjorie Dannenfelser.

Originally passed by the state Assembly in 2019, the LIFE Act was immediately sued by pro-abortion groups and blocked because it violated *Roe v. Wade*. The law remained null until the summer of 2022 when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe* in its *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision.

Despite *Roe*'s downfall, the legal challenges against the LIFE Act continued, leading to the Georgia Supreme Court ruling on Tuesday.

The court cited *Dobbs* as the basis for its decision upholding the LIFE Act.

The ruling, written by Justice Verda Colvin, said that "because the United States

Supreme Court clearly ruled in *Dobbs* that *Roe* and its progeny no longer control" the legality of abortion, courts must now "faithfully apply *Dobbs*" regarding the meaning of the U.S. Constitution.

While two members of the Georgia Supreme Court abstained, Justice John Ellington was the sole dissenting opinion in the decision.

In his dissent, Ellington said that because of a legal principle called the "void ab initio" (void from the beginning) doctrine, the LIFE Act was invalid when passed and remains so despite the more recent *Dobbs* decision.

Ellington called this principle a "bulwark against legislative overreach" that "prevents subsequent judicial constructions from peeling away a legislative act's voidness from inception."

Katie Daniel, SBA's state policy director, told CNA that the Georgia court "got it right" by ruling that its "role is to interpret the law, not make the law."

While Daniel said that *Roe* allowed courts to essentially create laws and policy, she said that "an entire mess of jurisprudence flowing from that was finally undone in the *Dobbs* decision."

"For 50 years under *Roe*, we the people did not get a say in what policy was going to govern us," she said.

Now, Daniel said, "the people of Georgia have spoken."

"They supported the lawmakers who passed this law," she explained. "This is the policy that Georgians prefer. So that should be the policy that governs."

Besides banning abortion at six weeks,

the LIFE Act also establishes that unborn babies are human persons in the eyes of the law, allows mothers to receive child support from the beginning of pregnancy, and allows parents to claim unborn babies as dependents on state income taxes.

The law says that "modern medical science, not available decades ago, demonstrates that unborn children are a class of living, distinct persons" and that it "shall be the policy of the state of Georgia to recognize unborn children as natural persons."

By "natural person," the LIFE Act explains that it means "any human being including an unborn child."

The ruling is yet another pro-life victory in what Daniel said has been a "tremendous first year under *Dobbs*."

While only one state had a heartbeat law before *Dobbs*, 25 states have now enacted policies to protect unborn babies from the point when they can feel pain or earlier, according to Daniel.

In August, the South Carolina Supreme Court upheld a similar heartbeat law protecting unborn babies at six weeks. In Florida, another heartbeat law is being considered by the state Supreme Court in a case that could end up reversing the Florida Constitution's right to abortion established under *Roe*.

"There's been an enormous amount of momentum in the last year, and we're very optimistic," Daniel said. "We know there will be hard fights, but there are also great opportunities." 🇺🇸



'EACH OF US IS LOVED': California Bishops' Letter Shows Church Response to Gender Ideology

By Daniel Payne

October 16 CNA Staff

*"Compassion that does not include both truth
and charity is a misplaced compassion,"*



Bishop Michael Barber of Oakland & **Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone** of
San Francisco. | Credit: Diocese of Oakland; Archdiocese of San Francisco

In a recent joint letter to Catholics, two California bishops acknowledged that the “influence of gender ideology” has “become pervasive in contemporary society” and urged Catholics to respond to the zeitgeist with both “truth and charity.”

San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone and Oakland Bishop Michael Barber issued the September letter, they said, “to provide clarity and resources with regard to the teaching of the Catholic Church” on the matter of gender ideology.

Catholics, they said, have responded with “questions around the complex and sensitive topics of gender, sexual identity, and the nature of the human person.”

Like the bishops, many Church leaders have been working in recent months and years to determine just what the Catholic response to gender ideology should be since it touches on many practical matters as well as deeper elements of faith, including what the Catholic Church teaches about broad topics such as sexuality and bodily integrity.

In their September letter, the California bishops noted that the Catholic Church “is called to do as Jesus did, to accompany in a spirit of solidarity those marginalized and suffering,” while still “affirming the beauty and truth of God’s creation.”

“Compassion that does not include both truth and charity is a misplaced compassion,” they wrote. “Support for those experiencing gender dysphoria must be characterized by an active concern for genuine Christian charity and the truth about the human person.”

Efforts by the Church to address these questions have taken several forms. In some cases, as with the California bishops last month, prelates have issued pastoral letters offering clarity and guidance.

Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul Coakley composed a similar letter earlier this year, while the Diocese of Cleveland said in a guidance document in August that Catholic institutions there must respond to those suffering from gender dysphoria by offering “a loving environment” while also “upholding the truth of God’s created reality.”

Archbishop George Lucas of Omaha, Nebraska, and Bishop Donald DeGrood of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, similarly issued policies last year directing schools to affirm the biological sex of their students rather than their “gender identity.” And bishops in Minnesota in 2020 issued directives to Catholic schools mandating that they follow Catholic teaching on biological sex, including keeping bathroom facilities and sporting events segregated by sex and not by “gender identity.”

Over the summer, meanwhile, the U.S. bishops voted to move forward with updates to their Ethical and Religious Directives to Catholic institutions, directing that health facilities “must not perform interventions, whether surgical or chemical, that aim to transform the sexual characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex.”

Those directives and instructions have not been limited to the United States. Bishops from several Nordic countries in March, for instance, also released a letter affirming what they called the “embodied integrity of personhood” in rejection of gender ideology.

Clarifications have come from even higher up.

In June 2019, a document from the Vatican’s Congregation for Catholic Education castigated the “cultural and ideological revolution” of gender ideology, arguing for the “need to reaffirm the metaphysical roots

of sexual difference as an anthropological refutation of attempts to negate the male-female duality of human nature.”

Pope Francis earlier this year described transgenderism as “one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations.”

It has even reached the highest levels of government, with the Biden administration this month directing employees of the massive Department of Health and Human Services to “affirm any co-worker’s self-proclaimed gender identity and preferred pronouns.”

In their letter, the bishops pointed out that the Catechism of the Catholic Church counsels against transgenderism’s rejection of bodily integrity. Man “may not despise his bodily life,” the Catechism states; rather, “he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honor since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.”

“The body and soul come into existence together, in an individual human being at the time of conception,” the bishops wrote. “From the beginning of his or her existence, the human person has a body that is sexually differentiated as male or female. ... Consequently, one can never be said to be in the ‘wrong’ body.”

The bishops urged those suffering from gender dysphoria to remember: “Your most fundamental identity is that of a beloved child of God.”

Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, the bishops reminded the faithful that “each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed. Each of us is loved. Each of us is necessary.”

“May our Christian witness and our care for those experiencing real suffering be a sign of our discipleship,” they wrote, “as we joyfully witness to the healing power of Christ.” ✚



Biden Health and Human Services Imposes Trans Pronoun Mandate on Employees

By Tyler Arnold



Admiral Rachel Levine, Department of Health and Human Services assistant secretary for health, announces new transgender guidelines. Credit: HHSgov Internal YouTube channel

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services imposed a transgender pronoun mandate on its employees this week with new guidance that instructs employees to affirm any co-worker's self-proclaimed gender identity and preferred pronouns.

"All employees should be addressed [by] the names and pronouns they use to describe themselves," an HHS email sent to employees and shared with CNA read. The mandate is part of the department's new Gender Identity and Non-Discrimination Guidance, which was established to outline "employee rights and protections related to gender identity," according to the email.

In an unlisted YouTube video linked in the email, HHS Deputy Secretary Andrea Palm said the policy ensures "that our colleagues are able to show up every day as their whole selves."

"I want to say clearly to every one of you: Who you are and who you know yourself to be is valid," Palm continued. "We want you to be your authentic self every day, regardless of your gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability status."

Even though Palm briefly mentioned religion, neither the email nor the speakers in the video made any mention of accommodating or exempting employees who have religious objections to transgender ideology from the policy.

HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Admiral Rachel Levine, who is "an out and proud transgender woman" according to the video announcement, said this policy ensures that "all HHS employees, including transgender and nonbinary employees, have equal protections in the workplace."

"All supervisors and managers are responsible for helping to ensure it is fully implemented across all [operating divisions] and [staff divisions]," Levine said.

Neither the email nor the video explained how the policy would be enforced or whether employees would be subject to disciplinary action if they violate the new policy.

CNA reached out to HHS to ask whether employees would face disciplinary action for violating the policy and whether employees with religious objections would receive accommodations or exemptions but did not receive a response by the time of publication.

HHS employs about 80,000 people in the United States and abroad. Its central office is in Washington, D.C., and it also has 10 regional offices.

Roger Severino, who served as the director of the HHS Office for Civil Rights during former President Donald Trump's administration, accused the HHS of a "compelled speech" mandate with the new policy.

Severino, who now serves as vice president of domestic policy at the Heritage Foundation, told CNA HHS has "replaced science and evidence with ideology" with this policy. He argued that the agency is showing that it does not respect people who acknowledge "the biological and scientific reality of male and female" and warned it would be used to target Christian employees.

"It absolutely will [lead to targeting Christians] because the [Biden] administration has made it abundantly clear that it prioritizes gender ideology over free speech and religious freedom rights," Severino said.

The new policy also has constitutional implications, according to Severino, who said: "Under the First Amendment, [the department] cannot compel people to speak falsehoods; it also cannot compel people to adopt as their own a state-approved ideology [and it] cannot require people of faith to deny their faith with their own lips."

Severino argued that the HHS pronoun mandate is "in some ways the most egregious" effort from the Biden administration to force gender ideology on Americans because it seeks to force them to "violate their own conscience" or risk "being fired and losing their job." He drew a comparison to the Roman persecutions of Christians, referencing the martyrs who "refused to give even a pinch of incense to Caesar [and] paid the ultimate price."

"People should be prepared to file lawsuits to indicate their free speech and religious liberty rights and people of faith should flood HHS with religious accommodations requests and be prepared to defend themselves and their faith from this attack," Severino said.

In addition to the transgender pronoun mandate, the new HHS policy clarifies that workers can wear clothing and use restrooms that match their self-proclaimed gender identity, even if it does not match with their biological sex.

The policy also calls for streamlining HHS' IT systems to ensure that official records reflect any employee's self-professed transgender identity. It also provides department-level coordination for anti-discrimination protections from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. **✚**



Portland Archdiocese: New Office Will Integrate Schools into Evangelization Mission

By Tyler Arnold

Washington, D.C. Newsroom, Oct 20



Elias Moo is the new director of Catholic Education | Credit Archdiocese of Denver

After shutting down its Department of Catholic Schools in June amid ongoing tension about policies related to gender ideology, the Archdiocese of Portland has launched a new office focused on bringing diocesan schools more fully into the Church's mission of evangelization.

"Our goal is to integrate our Catholic schools more deeply into the evangelizing mission of each parish and the wider archdiocesan Church," the archdiocese said in a statement earlier this month, adding that the announcement is "an exciting and transformational new direction for Catholic education and Catholic schools in western Oregon."

The new Office for the Mission of Catholic Education will be launched in January 2024 and will be led by its new director of Catholic education, Elias Moo. He will be relocating from the Archdiocese of Denver, where he currently serves as the superintendent of Catholic schools.

"Elias is nationally recognized as a visionary leader in the realignment of Catholic education with the mind and heart of the Church and our rich educational heritage," the statement read.

In a letter to the archdiocese accompanying the announcement, Moo said he knows "there is desire to know the plans and agenda for the future" but that the plan on the outset is to "get to know [the] community" and "spend time in prayer with the Lord, alongside Archbishop [Alexander] Sample, his leadership team, and all of you,

asking the Lord to reveal to us his plans and his desires for the mission of Catholic education in western Oregon."

Moo also emphasized that Catholic education needs to provide "the opportunity to come to encounter and know Jesus Christ."

"The Church's vision and mission for education is not a model to be implemented or the latest trendy educational fad to be adopted," Moo said.

"It is our timeless charter and heritage, one that has withstood the test of time over many centuries and is handed on to us today, one that calls our schools to be '[sanctuaries] of education' on a spiritual, intellectual, and moral rescue mission for souls."

The closure of the archdiocese's former Department of Catholic Schools in June came less than seven months after Sample issued guidelines on how Catholics should handle gender ideology.

Part of the guidance included recommendations that "Catholic institutions should not endorse gender identity theory nor enable any form of gender transition whether social or medical."


Sample's guidelines went further, recommending that "names, pronouns, facilities use, attire, and sports participation should depend upon biological sex identity rather than self-perceived gender identity."

It also recommended that dress codes, locker rooms, and restrooms should be organized in accordance with the person's biological sex, regardless of self-professed gender identity.

The archbishop faced backlash for the guidelines, which included a handful of principals and other faculty members resigning from their positions within Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

The archdiocese says on its website that an "interim Catholic schools coordination team" is managing school affairs there following the closure.

In his letter to the archdiocese, Moo said he "desire[d] deeply to give you the best of who I am and what I have to offer, all which flows from a deep love for Jesus Christ, for his Church, and for the mission of Catholic education."

Moo added that it would be a "great blessing" for the people of the archdiocese to pray for him. 





DEL OBISPO

REAVIVAMIENTO EUCARISTICO NACIONAL XIII



En mi reflexión del mes pasado, concluí comentando que lo más apropiado para asegurar que este esfuerzo nacional para mejorar la comprensión, la devoción y la participación eucarística es que cada uno de nosotros trabajemos en nuestros propios corazones y en nuestras propias vidas. Y prometí que esta sería la dirección de mis artículos durante los próximos meses.

A finales de mayo, la diócesis de Santa Rosa tuvo el privilegio de ser sede de la Conferencia Litúrgica patrocinada en Ferndale. En mi investigación y estudio para esa Conferencia seguí aquellos que proponían que la Santísima Eucaristía (Misa) pudiera ser contemplada desde la perspectiva de cuatro altares. El profesor David Fagerber, en un artículo del 2022 en *Adoremus Bulletin*, hace referencia a estos Cuatro Altares. Otros autores han hecho representaciones similares (Ver Jean Corbon, *The Wellspring of Worship*, Ignatius Press, 2005).

Si bien ciertamente puede haber variaciones y adiciones, los cuatro altares que se proponen y que servirán como base para los artículos de los próximos meses son:

Madera - la Cruz;

Piedra - El Altar de Sacrificio de la Misa;

Carne (o Espíritu) - El Altar del hogar humano;

Oro (El Altar de Oro) - El Altar de Dios en el Cielo (Celestial) (Ex. 30. Apoc. 8) Comenzamos con la Cruz: el Altar de madera sobre el cual cantamos el Viernes Santo:

"Mirad el Árbol de la Cruz donde estuvo clavada la Salvación del mundo. ¡Venid a adoraremos! El Viernes Santo es la culminación de nuestras reflexiones

cuaresmales sobre los Misterios Dolorosos del Rosario y el camino hacia la Cruz (Viacrucis). Practicar estas devociones de la mano de Nuestra Señora y Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, nos conducen al Viernes Santo y nos preparan para él. Luego, como si estuviéramos presentes en el Monte del Calvario, estamos con María y Juan, el discípulo amado, mirando al Crucificado. Esta es la montaña que San Juan Vianney nos invita a que: "Vayamos muchas veces al pie de la Cruz... Ahí es donde nosotros deberíamos aprender lo que lo que Dios ha hecho por nosotros" y lo que deberíamos hacer por Él."

Fue en la Cruz que nuestro Señor realizó y completó lo que hizo en el Santo Jueves. "En La Última Cena; Tomó pan, lo bendijo, lo partió y se lo dio a sus discípulos diciendo: Éste es mi Cuerpo que será entregado por vosotros". Fue en la Cruz donde Su cuerpo fue entregado por nosotros. Lo mismo hizo con el vino. Las palabras de Jesús indican una acción futura: "Esto es

el cáliz de Mi Sangre, la Sangre de la nueva y eterna alianza, que será derramada por

vosotros y por muchos para el perdón de sus pecados". Fue en esa cruz de madera que la Sangre de Jesús fue derramada. Lo más significativo es que este evento se realiza cuando Su corazón y costado fueron traspasados por la lanza para que Su Sangre (y agua) fuese derramada.

Al reflexionar sobre esto y al ir al pie de la Cruz, especialmente cuando asistimos y participamos en la Santa Misa, recordamos y a menudo volvemos a entender, como dice el Santo Cura de Ars: "lo que Dios ha hecho por nosotros y como también somos

invitados a hacerlo por Él." Es inevitable, después de reconocer con humildad lo que Dios ha hecho por nosotros, cómo es que nosotros, no nos esforzamos por hacer algo para Dios Todopoderoso. El Salmo 116 nos recuerda: "¿Cómo puedo devolver al Señor todo el gran bien que me ha hecho? levantaré la copa de salvación - e invocaré el nombre del Señor. Cumpliré mis votos a Dios en presencia de todo su pueblo (v. 12-14).

En cada Santa Misa es importante recordar el altar de la Cruz para poder mantener en nuestros corazones el gran bien que el Señor ha hecho en nosotros, lo que realizó en la cruz. Sólo comprendiendo firmemente esta realidad será posible para nosotros sentir un gran deseo de volver al Señor. El regalo es demasiado grande y nunca podremos recompensar al Señor lo que Él dio por nosotros. Sin embargo, hacer algo para Él, por pequeño que sea, siempre será provechoso al amor que genera en nuestros corazones, el recuerdo de aquella Cruz de madera y de nuestro amoroso Salvador, quien por nosotros, y por nuestra salvación voluntariamente la abrazó y Se derramó sobre ella.

Reverendísimo Robert F. Vasa
Obispo de Santa Rosa



Arrieros Somos y en El Camino Andamos

by Fr. Mario Valencia.

“Arrieros somos y en el camino andamos,” dice el conocido refrán popular, dicho que perfectamente podemos aplicar a nuestra identidad como discípulos de Cristo. Al inaugurar este mes de noviembre, experimentamos esta realidad. El primero de noviembre celebramos el día de todos los santos, que nos recuerda a la Iglesia triunfante; destino que nos espera y objetivo de nuestra vida de fe. Realidad que nos impulsa a reavivar nuestra esperanza transformándola y encarnándola, en una fe que se vive, se alimenta y se renueva día a día para alcanzar esa patria eterna prometida. “Y en cuanto a saber si los muertos resucitan, ¿no han leído en el libro de Moisés, en el capítulo de la zarza, cómo Dios le dijo: Yo soy el Dios de Abraham, el Dios de Isaac y el Dios de Jacob? Dios no es un Dios de muertos, sino de vivos.” (Mc. 12:26-27)

Nuestros ancestros y hermanos en la fe, ya gozan la corona de gloria en la presencia de nuestro Padre eterno. Los santos, después de sus esfuerzos, sacrificios y luchas espirituales, perseveraron en su paso por este mundo, en la fe de la verdad revelada por Dios en Cristo Jesús llamada Resurrección, pues al fin, “si Cristo no hubiera resucitado vana sería nuestra fe” nos recuerda San Pablo. (cf. 1 Cor. 15:14) Que bello es saberse amado por Dios, que nos ha compartido verdades que ni siquiera nuestra imaginación puede alcanzar a comprender; verdades reveladas que van más allá de nuestro entendimiento que dan luz y sentido a todos nuestros esfuerzos.

Por que quien de nosotros no se ha cuestionado al aceptar la muerte de algún familiar querido, especialmente si este destino común de todo el ser humano: la muerte, se experimenta en medio de

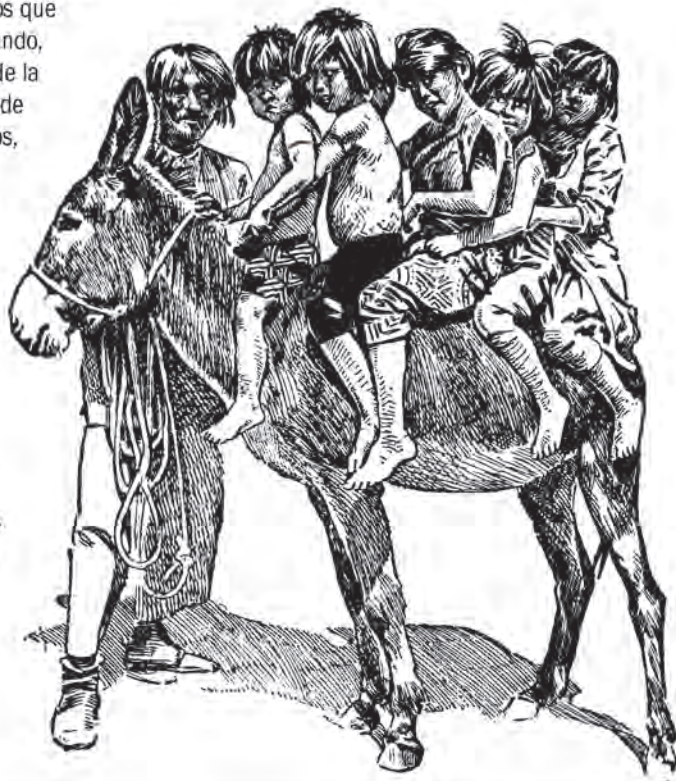
injusticia, sorpresa, dolor y agonía. Cuando experimentamos la muerte en la ausencia de un ser querido, nos preguntamos y cuestionamos incluso para que de la vida, Y Cristo Jesús, nos ha revelado el verdadero sentido y destino de nuestro peregrinar en este mundo que no tiene como objetivo permanecer en la temporalidad de nuestras limitaciones humanas, sino en la trascendencia eterna de nuestra realidad divina.

Para esto hemos sido creados, para ello hemos sido guiados, y por ello también somos purificados, pues de esta condición, libremente optamos por la perfección que Dios nos impulsa, en la libertad, a optar por lo bueno, lo bello y lo verdadero, que permanece en lo eterno. Por ello, también el dos de noviembre celebramos el día de los fieles difuntos, aquellos que en su peregrinar por este mundo, han padecido ya el tránsito de la muerte, y que en el proceso de una comunión plena con Dios, nos recuerdan a la Iglesia purgante, que adquiere por la misericordia Divina la calidad necesaria, por su gracia, para permanecer eternamente en la gloria de la resurrección.

Así, recordamos, agradecemos, celebramos, pero sobre todo oramos, para que nuestros hermanos difuntos, también alcancen la eterna patria prometida, con la firme esperanza de saber que nos volveremos a ver en la morada eterna. Por eso, este

mes de noviembre nos impulsa a abrazar más conscientemente nuestra fe, a dejar iluminar correctamente los acontecimientos de nuestra historia, permitiendo que Cristo: el camino, la verdad y la vida, nos impulse y llene con su gracia para poder aclamar de verdad, que descansen en paz! con la firme y alegre convicción en nuestros corazones de poder decir a nuestros amados difuntos: see you later, allegator! pues no es un adiós sino, un hasta luego!

Este es el camino de nuestra fe, el camino que nos impulsa a entender que el alma de nuestros familiares difuntos por la misericordia de Dios descansen en paz. Así sea. Amen.





NOVEMBER

PRIESTLY ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Rev. Angelito Peries
Rev. Rowell Gumalay
Rev. Chinh Nguyen



OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS (October 2023)

Reverend Frank Epperson

Retiring from active Priestly Ministry

Reverend Samuel Moses Brown, VG

Pastor of Saint Eugene Cathedral and Director of
Diocesan Seminarians in addition to present duties

Reverend John Plass

Vicar General of the Diocese and Promoter of
Vocations in addition to present duties

Reverend Lawrence Mutiso

Parochial Vicar at Saint Rose Parish in Santa Rosa

Reverend Fabian Nwokorie

Parochial Vicar at Saint James Parish in Petaluma

Reverend Gnana Prakash Thumma

Parochial Vicar at Saint Mary in Arcata
and its Missions.

All assignments effective October 30, 2023



PRIEST APPRECIATION SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 12TH

To honor those
“In Persona Christi”
for us

WAYS TO SHOW OUR APPRECIATION:

- CARDS
- CARDS
- FLOWERS
- FAVORITE TREATS
- NOVENA PRAYERS
- DINNERS AT
YOUR HOME
- GIFT CARDS
- VOLUNTEER FOR NEEDS
AROUND THE PARISH

Vocation Awareness Week Nov 5-11



SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY 12/2/2023



DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
EUREKA CATECHETICAL CONFERENCE

**LITURGY, DEVOTION &
THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST**

SAT., DEC. 2, 2023
ST. BERNARD'S SCHOOL
EUREKA, CA



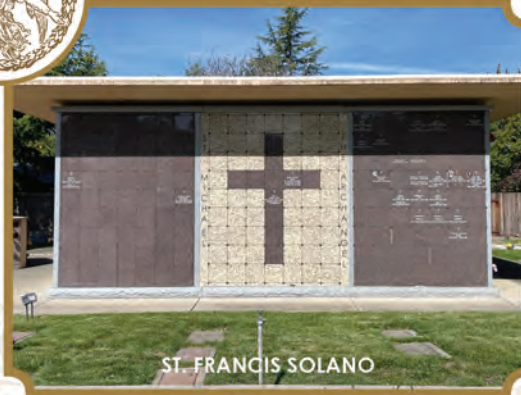
CALVARY CEMETERY – SANTA ROSA



CALVARY CEMETERY – PETALUMA



HOLY CROSS – SAINT HELENA



ST. FRANCIS SOLANO

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CALVARY CEMETERY – PETALUMA.....DIVINE MERCY NICHES
HOLY CROSS – SAINT HELENAHOLY TRINITY NICHES
ST. FRANCIS SOLANO – SONOMAST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL NICHES

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**Descuentos promocionales aplican solo a compras de arreglos anticipados!
Descuento ofrecido hasta Julio 28, 2023.**

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Natalia o Lizette, por favor llame a la oficina principal (707) 546-6290.**

U.S. Catholics Play Critical Role in Special Outreach to Provide Safe Shelter to Suffering Poor

Cross Catholic Outreach has launched a major effort to provide safe housing for destitute families in Guatemala's Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu, and they are asking U.S. Catholics to become part of that life-transforming mission of mercy.

The charity, which has been recognized by the Vatican for its relief and development work in more than 90 countries, is working to build 64 storm-resistant homes to benefit 317 family members in nine communities — as well as help needy families with nutritional, educational and health care needs. [See the related story on the opposite page.]

While Cross Catholic Outreach's "Rise Up With Joy" appeal has many technical objectives, the ministry president, Michele Sagarino, is more focused on the deeply personal stories of the poor families who will benefit.

"This is really about Nilson and Deini Alvarez and families like theirs. Nilson and Deini and their 3-year-old son live in extreme poverty, and the challenges they face every day are heartbreaking. They live in a flimsy home and fear for their son's health because rain often floods their house, turning the dirt floor to mud. It's also easy for vermin like scorpions and rats to crawl through the gaps in its walls," she said. "No one should have to live like that. It's a situation that must grieve God — so it should be unacceptable to us too!"

According to Sagarino, Cross Catholic Outreach has been working with Catholic leaders in the Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu to find solutions for families like Nilson and Deini's, and the plans they have developed can produce life-transforming results — if U.S. Catholics will step forward to help fund the work.

"Our primary goal is to construct durable, concrete block houses

for the poorest families," she explained. "The homes will have two bedrooms and a common area that can serve as a dining room and living room. Each will have a concrete foundation and walls, a galvanized metal roof, a sanitary latrine, a secure metal door and shuttered windows, providing a level of comfort and safety these families have never experienced before."

Because the design is simple, the construction of one of these homes costs less than \$11,000.

"That is a large sacrificial gift for one person or family to make, but many have done that and were thrilled they got involved. Most had been looking for something specific and significant they could do to help," Sagarino said. "This outreach was exactly what they were looking for because a home does more than offer safe shelter. It gives families a foundation for building a better life."

Serving the poor through the local Church also has important spiritual benefits, according to Sagarino.

"When people learn local Church leaders love them and want a better life for them, it strengthens their faith and restores their hope," she said. "Many have felt isolated and unseen. They need to know we care about them."

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach's housing programs and other outreaches can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02587, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. Those interested in making gifts on a monthly basis can indicate that on the brochure to become a Mission Partner, or write "Monthly Mission Partner" on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.



Above: The Alvarez family lives in a home that provides little protection from the weather or security from intruders. They and families like them will benefit from Cross Catholic Outreach's "Rise Up With Joy" appeal.

Below: This is one of the houses the diocese built earlier with help from Cross Catholic Outreach. With your support, the diocese hopes to expand its housing program to provide 64 additional homes to families with urgent needs.



Unique Christmas Catalog Created to Bless Donors — and the World's Poor

If you are like most people, your mailbox has been choked with Christmas catalogs this year. In fact, their arrival has almost become a sign of the season, like the appearance of house lights and department store decorations.

During the Advent and Christmas seasons, Cross Catholic Outreach intends to offer a catalog too — but theirs is a very different offering with a very different purpose. It has been designed to bless both givers and receivers by using the holiday gift-giving tradition to help the world's poorest families.

Rather than offer gizmos, gadgets, neckties and jewelry, the Cross Catholic Outreach Christmas Catalog gives Catholics with a concern for the poor an opportunity to share blessings in their lives with needy families by sponsoring practical and urgently needed items like medicines, milk powder, seeds for farming, access to safe water, or materials for roof repairs. Of course, it also offers special presents for children, including toys and sports equipment, so individuals can choose to sponsor both practical items suitable for families and gifts

to bring children joy.

"Like most Christmas catalogs, ours offers lots of items so donors can choose to give something very specific. That said, they can also make a general gift to address the poor's greatest needs," explained Jim Cavnar, CEO of Cross Catholic Outreach, the Catholic relief and development ministry offering this program. "When donors choose to give to Greatest Need, they provide global Catholic missions with the ability to address the most urgent needs wherever they arise. The priests and religious sisters

we support really appreciate that flexibility. It's the best way to empower their work among the poor."

This unique Christmas catalog is easy to access. Readers will find a link for it at the ministry's website (CrossCatholic.org) or they can reach it directly by entering the web address CrossCatholic.org/Christmas.

"Our hope is that everyone will be blessed by the experience," Cavnar said. "It's the wonderful way for us to celebrate the birth of our merciful Lord!"

Good Samaritan Serves as Model to Catholics Encountering Brutal Poverty in Rural Guatemala



Many poor families in the Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu live in patchwork shacks offering little security or protection from the elements — but there is hope, thanks to the “Rise Up With Joy” appeal being launched by Cross Catholic Outreach.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus describes an encounter between three travelers and a man who has been wounded and left to suffer on the side of the road. In the story, two outwardly spiritual men demonstrate no compassion for this victim and do everything they can to avoid any interaction with him. Only one of the three travelers — a man who has no reason to be helpful — demonstrates Christlike love, doing what he can to comfort and care for the wounded fellow.

“Imagine what a powerful testimony of God’s love that would be!”

Michele Sagarino, President
Cross Catholic Outreach

While it is a parable with several important meanings, it also contains an obvious point about the way Christ’s followers are expected to respond when they encounter an urgent or serious need. Rather than look the other way, we are to step forward and help the suffering, serving as God’s instruments of mercy.

Consider that calling now as we visit the Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu and the countryside of southern Guatemala. On the road we are taking, you will see miles of thriving rubber tree plantations, teakwood farms and sugarcane fields — but you will also find hundreds of wounded and suffering families

trapped in generational poverty.

“In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the injured man was a victim of robbers. In this rural part of the diocese, the harm has been done by a bloody civil war that displaced many families and left them mired in brutal poverty. In the end, the suffering is the same, and so is our call to be instruments of God’s mercy,” explained Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a Catholic relief and development ministry recognized by the Vatican for its effective humanitarian and spiritual programs. “When our ministry discovered the extreme needs of families in this diocese, we felt compelled to provide help — and our hope is that compassionate Catholics in the U.S. will want to get involved too.”

Sagarino said that many of the communities Cross Catholic Outreach wants to serve can only be reached over rutted dirt roads. These villages have little or no infrastructure, so parents there are raising their children in dirt-floored homes without running water, suitable sanitation facilities or reliable electricity.

Most of the men and women in these rural areas are subsistence farmers who work long hours planting, tending and harvesting corn and beans, defenseless against unpredictable weather. Their hard work may provide simple meals for their children, but it is rarely enough to fully cover their housing, health and educational expenses.

Families without access to land for farming face even greater challenges. They typically take work as day laborers, earning about \$10 a day if they are lucky and jobs are available. The diocese reports that those families typically earn between \$125 and \$190 a month — far too little to afford adequate housing. Ultimately, these families must make do with what they have, cobbling together plastic sheets, scrap metal and wood planks to build flimsy, unsafe shacks.

“Our ultimate goal is to improve living conditions in those communities. We want to help families break free from the cycle of poverty that has plagued them for generations,” Sagarino said. “We’ve learned that providing safe housing plays a major part in improving lives, so we are making that our priority. As families are placed in safer, sturdier homes, their hope is restored and they have a foundation for building a better life.”

Through its “Rise Up With Joy” appeal, Cross Catholic Outreach is giving compassionate

U.S. Catholics an opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the Good Samaritan, serving as God’s instrument of mercy by funding the construction of homes for the poor and by helping struggling families in the Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu through other important humanitarian and spiritual programs. [See the related story on the opposite page.]

“The homes we will build are simple but sturdy, secure and sanitary,” Sagarino said. “They will change the lives of these families in profound ways, and their benefits will carry over to the next generation too. Generational poverty has been a major factor in the hardships these families have been facing. Opening this door to generational prosperity will be a major step in the other direction. My prayer is that American Catholics will want to play a role in that restoration of broken lives — just as the Good Samaritan did in the parable Jesus told. Imagine what a powerful testimony of God’s love that would be!”

How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach’s effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper, or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02587, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than is needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.



SONOMA COUNTY PRO-LIFE ANNOUNCES OUR **ESSAY CONTEST**

ENTRIES CLOSE NOVEMBER 27, 2023



School's back in session, and we're announcing our **FIFTH ANNUAL** essay contest, open to all students in Sonoma, Lake and Mendocino Counties.

Grades 3-5: First Prize \$50 | Second Prize \$25
Grades 6-8: First Prize \$75 | Second Prize \$50
Grades 9-12: First Prize \$100 | Second Prize \$75

Prizes are important, but our "hidden" goal is to encourage our local young people to think, seriously, about the issue of the sanctity of life from conception to natural death. To this end, age-appropriate topics are assigned to each group.

All students from 3rd grade through High School in Sonoma, Lake or Mendocino County are eligible.

**TEACHERS, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AUNTS,
UNCLES, FRIENDS, please encourage entries.**

Find more information go to: www.sonomaprolife.org.



HOW TO ENTER

Submissions should be submitted by e-mail to sonomaprolife@zoho.com.

FORMAT: Please submit essay AND name, school and school grade, address, phone number and e-mail address in the body of the e-mail (not attachment). Contact information, except for school grade, will be separated from the essay itself before the essays are judged.

Entries should be submitted double spaced and in print size 12 point or larger.

Entries must be received by Monday, November 27, 2023.

JUDGING: Entries will be judged on the basis of factual accuracy, originality, clarity of expression, and conformity with guidelines as to format and length.

WINNERS: First and Second Place winners in each grade group will be notified on or before

January 3, 2023, and announced on the Sonoma County Pro-Life Website on or about January 6, and publicly at the Sonoma County Pro-Life Annual Pro-Life Rally in late January.

PRIVACY: Entry in this contest implies permission to publish the name and school of the winners in the Sonoma County ProLife Newsletter and on the Sonoma County ProLife Web Page. No other use of any information will be made without the express permission of the parent or guardian of the entrant.

ESSAY TOPICS AND LENGTH FOR EACH AGE GROUP:

GRADES 3-5:

Write an essay of 200-250 words on one of the following topics.

- 1: What can you and your parents do to show that you love babies, and to help their mothers take care of them.
- 2: Do you have grandparents, or older family friends who can no longer do some of the things you can? Do you know someone who is challenged in some other way -- who can't walk, or can't see, or hear, or speak well? What can you and your family do to include in your life someone "different", so they feel loved and needed?

GRADES 6-8:

Write an essay of 300 to 400 words on one of the following topics.

- 1: Everyone on earth begins life in his or her mother's womb. Being pro-life means supporting the right of each life to grow, thrive, and experience many good things. Why is it important for people to be pro-life?
- 2: Some people are born with problems that make their lives difficult. Others become ill, or are injured. Also, as people get old they may not be able to take care of themselves. These people may feel that their lives don't matter. How can you help them to feel wanted, and loved?

GRADES 9-12:

Write an essay of 400-500 words on one of the following topics.

1. Why are you pro-life? Share a personal story if you would like to, relating either to the life of the unborn or to the life of someone who is old, or physically or mentally challenged in some way.
2. Many people today are confused about what it means to be pro-life. How can you respectfully share your belief that the life of the unborn should be protected by law?



THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT

Saint Mary's College High School seeks a gifted, forward-looking leader with a strong commitment to Lasallian Catholic education and values, the credibility to lead and represent a diverse school with integrity and love, a passion for building relationships, the ability to develop and unite the community around a future-oriented vision, a track record of successful institutional advancement, and demonstrated success in strategic and financial leadership.

APPLICATION DETAILS

START DATE: July 1, 2024

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

Competitive and commensurate with experience

APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 30, 2023

APPLICATION PACKAGE: Qualified candidates are invited to apply for this opportunity by submitting the following documents:

- Resume;
- Cover letter describing your unique qualifications for this role;
- A brief description of your vision for Catholic educational leadership.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Please contact us if you have additional questions:

Mr. David Topete

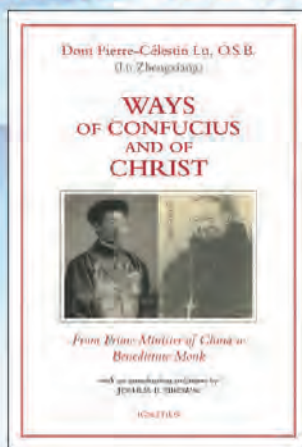
Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, Saint Mary's College High School
trustees@stmchs.org

SUBMISSION EMAIL:

trustees@stmchs.org

www.saintmaryschs.org

COMPELLING JOURNEYS TO CATHOLICISM



◆ WAYS OF CONFUCIUS AND OF CHRIST

Through the tumultuous 19th and 20th centuries, Lu Zhengxiang—a devoted disciple of both Confucius and Christ—served China as a leading diplomat for thirty years. He entered the Catholic Church in 1911 and became a Benedictine monk in 1927.

In 1942, the elderly monk, known as **Dom Pierre-Célestin Lu, O.S.B.**, answered a divine call to bear witness to how God had guided him through challenging times—from political upheavals in Asia and Europe to the untimely death of his beloved wife. This is the extraordinary story of Lu's life, revealing how he sought to transmit the fruits of the religious life to his fellow countrymen, believing that Catholicism was the fulfilment of Confucius' teachings. Lu's story is a true treasure, embodying the challenges and the triumphs of the Christian communities in the Far East.

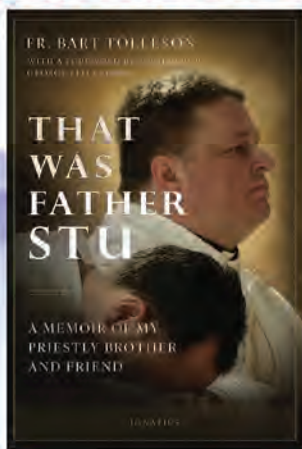
WCWCP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$17.95

"Lu's extraordinary story make manifest the terrible cost of Western imperialism, the richness of the Confucianist spirit, and the treasures that attract converts to Catholicism." —**Matthew Levering**
Chair of Theology, Mundelein Seminary

"Lu's message is providentially calibrated for our moment—a light from the past for our future work in the apostolate."

—**Mike Aquilina**

Author, *The Fathers of the Church*



◆ THAT WAS FATHER STU

This inspiring and insightful story of the unusual life of Fr. Stuart Long is told by his close friend **Fr. Bart Tolleson**. The two men were ordained together and forged a strong, lasting friendship. As the exuberant, edgy Father Stu confronted a rare degenerative disease, the former professional boxer used every ounce of his declining strength to fight the good fight for souls.

This book reveals the enduring legacy of Father Stu, whose moving story continues to draw people closer to God, especially in times of suffering. His life inspired actor Mark Wahlberg to produce the major film drama *Father Stu*. Father Bart, a consultant for the film, provides interesting background on the movie, and presents many more details about Father Stu's amazing life, before and after his conversion to Catholicism.

Illustrated with photos.

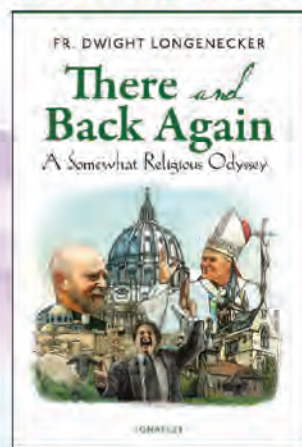
TWSP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$18.95

"Father Stu had only one goal as a priest: to help bring people closer to Jesus and his Church. This fine biography will surely do the same."

—**Cardinal Timothy Dolan**
Archbishop of New York

"Picks up where the movie leaves off. We come to realize in God's mercy that Father Stu is still watching out for us."

—**Mark Wahlberg**
Actor and Producer, *Father Stu*



◆ THERE AND BACK AGAIN A Somewhat Religious Odyssey

A unique tale of one man's spiritual adventure, tracing God's unusual plan of providence from 1950s America to England and back again. Brought up in an Evangelical home, **Dwight Longenecker** attended the fundamentalist Bob Jones University, continued his education at Oxford, and was ordained an Anglican minister.

After some years, realizing that he and the Anglican Church were on divergent paths, Longenecker and his family were received into the Catholic Church in England, where he worked as a freelance writer and charity worker. Then in 2006 the door opened for his return to the United States and his ordination as a Catholic priest. His amazing journey from Protestant fundamentalism through the Church of England to the Catholic priesthood offers an inspiring, and humorous, tale of God's providence.

TBAP . . . Sewn Softcover, \$18.95

"Frank and utterly captivating. I couldn't put it down. It touched every emotion."

—**Johnnette Benkovic Williams**
Founder, *Women of Grace*

"Written by a master storyteller, told with robust wit and poignancy."

—**Dan Burke**, President, Avila Institute for Spiritual Formation

"One of the most comedic conversion stories I've ever read." —**Marcus Grodi**, Host, EWTN's *The Journey Home*



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