

NORTH COAST CATHOLIC



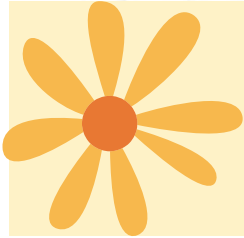
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MAY/JUNE 2023 VOLUME IX ISSUE

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Mary is the example of the power of Motherhood.

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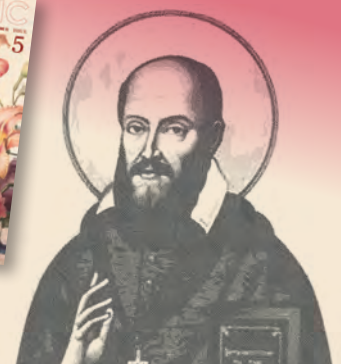
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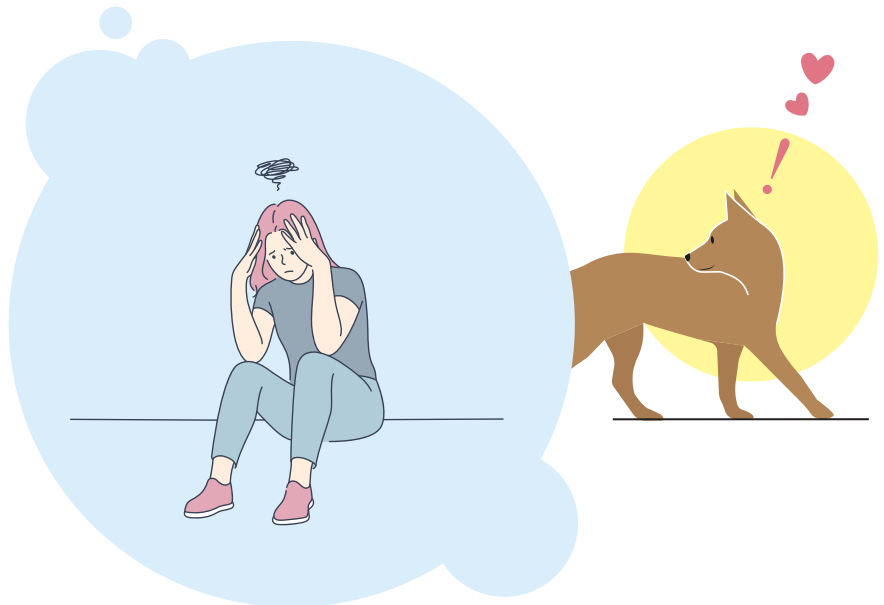
St. Francis de Sales,
pray for us.





FROM *the* BISHOP

NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL IX



The famous poem by Francis Thompson (1890) titled *The Hound of Heaven* is one which occasionally crosses my path and each time it does I am reminded of the appropriateness of both the title and the theme. Further, the very encounter with this poem, again seemingly providentially and more than coincidentally, is always a graced invitation to stop, look and listen. This year, more than others, I was reminded of this poem's appropriateness. Prior to the *Triduum*, I was reading a sermon of Saint John Henry Newman in which he wrote about Easter joy as basking in the shade of the cross. He wrote: "Rather, like sick people convalescing ... they will go forth to the light of day and the freshness of the air, and silently sit down with great delight under the shadow of that Tree, whose fruit is sweet to the taste." This reminded me of a line from Francis Thompson's poem which I then read.

I had remembered a line near the end of this great poem, "Is my gloom, after all, Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?" I used this theme of being in the shade of the cross at the Easter Vigil and told someone after Mass that the idea of the 'shadow' being actually shade came from the poem, *The Hound of Heaven*. Easter Sunday morning, I checked my email and discovered that at 4:00 PM on Saturday, before the Vigil, I had received one of those blanket Easter emails and at the end of the Easter greeting I found the internet link: www.houndofheaven.com/poem.

The email came from a Religious whom I have not heard from since 2014. I must confess that I had not had occasion to look at this poem for several years and so the 'coincidence' of reading Saint John Henry Newman's reference to the "shadow of that Tree", my own re-reading of the poem, the comment to a parishioner about *The Hound of Heaven* and the email made me realize that the Lord truly is a relentless 'hound' who vies ardently for our attention. He continues to remind us, even when we are very distracted by many things, that He has not abandoned us and that He continues to pursue us.

Another line of the poem follows immediately after the line cited above:

**'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!'**

In this Eucharistic Year, I have commented on the Eucharist as Presence, the Eucharist as Mass and now the Eucharist as Communion. In this third section I am trying to make clear that clinging to thoughts, words or deeds which are contrary to the Gospel, closes off the possibility of 'communion'. I am trying to point out that clinging to thoughts, words or deeds which are contrary to the moral demands of the Commandments, closes off the possibility of 'communion' with Christ. I am trying to point out that clinging to thoughts, words or deeds which are contrary to clear teachings of the Church, closes off the possibility of 'communion' with Christ. While there is clearly

an argument for denying Holy Communion to those who manifestly hold to these contrary positions, I would simply point out that those who hold these views are simply not in 'communion' with Christ. Receiving Him in Holy Communion does not create that 'communion'. Holding to those contrary views while claiming to seek Christ is, as noted in previous articles, incoherent.

It is Christ who doggedly seeks for us, for our love, for our obedience, for our adherence to Him. The Lord certainly pursues, passionately. For our part, we must stop, look, listen and allow the Lord who seeks us to catch us. I suspect that many, like Francis Thompson, need to admit: "For, though I knew His love Who followed, Yet was I sore adread / Lest having Him, I must have naught beside." The Lord answers: 'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, I am He Whom thou seekest!'

I pray that this loving 'Hound of Heaven' catches all of you during the graced Season of Easter and that we all deepen our realization that whatever fears of gloom we might have are "after all, Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?"

Pray for me as I promise to pray for you.

Bishop Robert F. Vasa
Bishop of Santa Rosa



The Grace of Faith



By Chris Lyford

Editor, North Coast Catholic

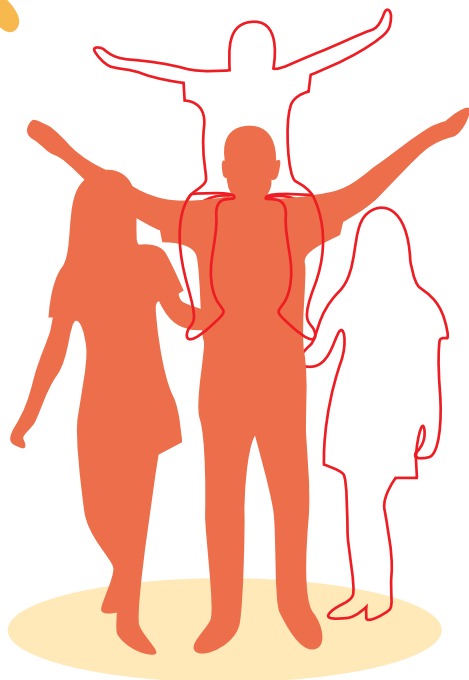
If you have faith, you don't deserve it. Nothing any of us could ever do could merit the 'free gift of grace' that comes from God in forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The only thing we truly own is our sin. All our talents, gifts, produce, family, and prosperity come from God. We are but stewards of everything that has been given to us. We will give a full account of how we spent every single moment of our lives, and how we invested each and every talent. And unless we have placed ourselves under the care of Jesus the Divine Mercy, we won't get to heaven. Jesus himself said **"I am the way, the Truth and The Life! No one comes to the Father except through me."** Notice he didn't say "I am 'A' way...."

This framework of our "Faith" is the good news of salvation unto the remission of sins. Sinners need saving. We are all sinners. We can't get to heaven unless our sins are forgiven, and only God can forgive sins. That's why we call it the Good News. Because he went to a lot of trouble to spell it out. But we first need to recognize we need forgiveness. In order to recognize this state of our soul we need the indispensable gift of humility. Proud people are blind to all this, which limits the ability to see this state of reality as a huge grace.

Only God can forgive sins and He set up His Church by creating the Sacramental life to make His very presence a reality. One we can see and touch. We can KNOW that our sins are forgiven in the Sacrament, because He himself instituted the Sacraments.

We are in a season of new life and light. Spring brings us the yearly drama of hope played out before us on the stage of terra. The reflection of hope in the blossoms and blooms points to a reality which is not subjective nor ethereal. The hope we speak of is the solid reality of the sacraments. We touch, experience, and sense the matter which makes present what it signifies.

So, during these months of May and June as you see life reborn around you, pay special attention to the sacraments you participate in, and thank God for the grace of faith. You may witness someone receiving their first communion, receiving the seal of the Holy Spirit at their confirmation, reciting their vows at their wedding, or receiving orders. These are things eternal and whose leaves never fade; it is the Spring that never ends. May we stay close to Our Lady especially during these months as she shows us how to welcome the grace of faith! 📖



The Importance of Mothers and Fathers

Dear Family;

May and June is a time to celebrate two important people in our lives: our mothers and our fathers. Without them, we wouldn't be here! Mother's Day, this year on May 14th, is traditionally celebrated with family gathered round and a big meal, frequently a brunch, while telling Mom how wonderful she is. Father's Day, this year on June 18th, is usually celebrated by a big bar-b-que, grilling Dad's favorite meats and telling him how wonderful he is. Both are times to celebrate family, and if possible, with multi-generations participating. And family gatherings are the perfect place to hand down stories and pass on traditions while also taking the opportunity to teach your children right from wrong, good from evil, and

how to conduct themselves in an honorable and virtuous manner so they will grow up to be the responsible, faith-filled adults all parents hope their children will be.

Unfortunately parenthood does not come with a training manual, a degree in "mommyhood" or "daddyhood," or built-in continuing education credits. Most parents learn by immersion training, starting with the very minute we hold that precious newborn and realize that we are totally responsible for this beautiful little life entrusted to us. Some new parents will be blessed that they had good examples of how to parent from their own parents, where they can rely on memories or be able to ask for constructive advice. On the other hand, some new parents have learned, unfortunately, what not to do through the examples of their parents. And some new parents, through whatever circumstances, did not have a mother or father in their lives as they grew up. And all of us who are parents know the reality is that a lot of parenting knowledge comes from just "winging it" or sharing stories with our friends who have children the same age who are the same as us, just trying to do the best we can with the knowledge we have at the moment!

Doing your best to be faithful Catholic parents and raising your children to be faithful Catholic children is not easy today. Conflicting societal views and some disparate laws passed here in California seem to undermine parental rights as we have known them and are not friendly to the virtues so important to living a faith-filled Christian Catholic life. So, what is a parent to do these days? How can parents today raise virtuous sons, happy and comfortable in their masculinity and manhood and virtuous daughters happy and comfortable in their femininity and womanhood?

We would like to recommend two books that we have found that can help parents do just that. The first is called: **Raising a**

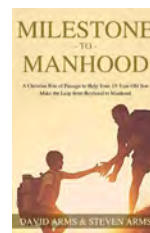


Strong Daughter in a Toxic Culture - 11 Steps to Keep Her Happy, Healthy, and Safe by Meg Meeker, M.D.

Dr. Meeker is a pediatrician who has practiced pediatric and adolescent medicine and counseled teens and parents for over 30 years. This is a wonderful, though at times disturbing, book looking

at how parents and our current culture can influence young girls. The chapters range from *Know Her Heart, Help Her Take Control of Screens to Body Image and Help Her Find Good Friends*. This is a must read for both fathers and mothers (grandparents and aunts and uncles too!) who care for all the young girls in their lives. It gives you a lot of practical advice to avoid and respond to cultural influences.

The second book is called: **Milestone to Manhood - A Christian Rite of Passage to Help Your 13-Year-Old Son Make the Leap From Boyhood to Manhood by Deacon David Arms and Steven Arms**. It tells the story of how Deacon Dave



Arms grew up without a father and how he wanted to do something meaningful for his sons, to show his love, learn responsibility, and learn the virtues that would help them succeed in life. So, he came up with a plan; a *Rite of Passage*. The plan is then revealed through the eyes of his son Steve as he experienced the *Rite of Passage*. We encourage all fathers (and mothers because you will have a role in this as well) to read this book and plan a Rite of Passage event for your son(s). Age 13 is the sweet spot but you can still follow the plan if they are older. 📖

Both of these books are available at
ST EUGENE CATHEDRAL BOOKS & GIFTS
2323 Montgomery St. Santa Rosa
Open Wednesday thru Saturday
8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Sunday from 8:30 - 1:30.
Phone 707 542-0250

Both books are also available on-line on Amazon.

We wish you all a blessed and Happy Mother's Day and Father's Day!



Pax Christi,
Carlin & Deacon Dave Gould
Co-Directors of the Marriage & Family Life Office



450+
ORDINANDS

SURVEY of NEW PRIESTS:

Most Pray Rosary, Go to Eucharistic
Adoration, Parents Stayed Married

Kevin J. Jones (CNA)

April 26

More than 450 men are set to be ordained priests this year, and the survey of their ordination class shows that the overwhelming majority of priests-to-be were raised Catholic in intact families and individually showed habits of frequent church service and regular prayer life.

“On this day, let us thank God for continuing to call men and women to serve him and his Church as priests, religious, and consecrated persons,” Bishop Earl Boyea of Lansing, Michigan, said April 25. *“We pray that all families, teachers, and priests will continue their essential work of instilling the faith and love of Jesus in our children.”*

Boyea chairs the U.S. Bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations. On Tuesday the committee released the *“Ordination Class of 2023 Study”* from the Georgetown University-based Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). CARA sought survey responses from the **458** seminarians to be ordained this year. It received **334** responses, a response rate of **73%**. Responses came from ordinands at **116** U.S. dioceses and **24** different religious institutions.



Catholic upbringing in
stable families



The seminarians to be
ordained, also known
as ordinands, are
overwhelmingly “cradle
Catholics.”

93%



About **93%** of ordinands
were baptized Catholic as
infants.

96%



Another **96%** were raised
by their biological parents.

92%



About **92%** were raised
by a married couple living
together.

84%



For **84%** of ordinands,
both parents were
Catholic.

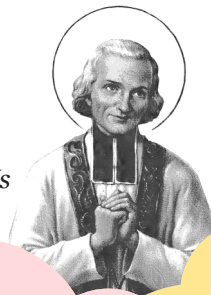
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One in three respondents
had a relative who is a
priest or religious.

Boyea especially noted the importance of the family life of the prospective priests. “Surveys of recently professed men and women religious and men ordained to the priesthood show that families and encouragement from the parish priests alongside Catholic schools provide optimal environments for a vocational call to grow,” he said.

St. John
Vianney
Pray for Us



Involved in parish life

63%



More than **63%** of survey respondents said their parish priest had been an encouraging influence on their vocation, followed by a fellow parishioner, a friend, their mother, father, or teacher or catechist.



Church ministry is another common habit for prospective priests:

72%



About **72%** of prospective priests have been altar servers, while about half served as lectors and **40%** served as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

33%



Another **33%** served as catechists, while slightly smaller percentages served in youth or campus ministry.

23%



About **23%** had been cantors or members of the music ministry.



Devotional life marked by regular prayer

The survey also shows commonalities in devotional life.

73%



Among respondents, **73%** regularly took part in eucharistic adoration.

66%



Another **66%** regularly prayed the rosary.

45%



And **45%** were in prayer or Bible groups.

33%



Lectio divina was a regular practice for **33%** of respondents, who also reported participation in college or high school retreats.

27%



More than half of ordinands had participated in their parish youth group and another **27%** had been participants in Catholic campus ministry.



Educational background of ordination class

The survey found that less than half of new priests attended Catholic schools:

43%



About **43%** of respondents had attended a Catholic elementary school (K-8).

34%



As many as **34%** attended a Catholic high school. About **11%** were home-schooled at some point in their childhood.

35%



Another **35%** of respondents attended a Catholic college.

1/4
35%



About **1 in 4** ordinands — **26%** — reported educational debt upon entering seminary. Of those with debt, the median amount owed was \$21,000.

42%



Around **42%** of ordinands had a college degree before entering seminary, while about **16%** had a graduate degree.

18%



Another **18%** had some college or went to trade school, and **24%** had a high school degree or less.

4%
12%



About **4%** served in the U.S. armed forces, while **12%** were from career military families.

How old are they and where are they from?

AGE
30 | 34

Diocesan ordinands' median age is **30**, while ordinands for religious institutes are slightly older, with a median age of **34**.

AGE
25 | 67

The youngest respondent was **25** years old and the oldest was **67**.

31%



The Midwest and the South now lead in seminarian formation, as seminaries in these two regions each formed **31%** of the priests-to-be.

17%

Another **17%** of ordinands were formed in the Northeast, **13%** in the West, and **7%** abroad.



Hispanics or Latinos make up **16%** of the 2023 ordination class. Their share has averaged about **15%** since 2006. Ordinands of Asian/Pacific descent make up **10%**, while Blacks or African Americans make up **6%**. Whites make up **64%** of priests-to-be.



About **75%** of ordinands are American-born, but the 2023 class represents **28** countries of origin in total. A few countries predominate. About **5%** of ordinands were born in Mexico, while smaller percentages were born in Vietnam, Nigeria, and Colombia.



The survey was released ahead of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, marked by the Catholic Church this year on April 30, the Fourth Sunday of Easter.



Pope Francis: ‘There is no vocation without mission’

Hannah Brockhaus (CNA)

April 26



In his message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2023, *Pope Francis* said God’s call to a particular vocation also includes the mission to offer one’s life for others.

“God’s call,” the pope said, “includes a ‘sending.’ There is no vocation without mission. There is no happiness and full self-realization unless we offer others the new life that we have found.”

The 60th World Day of Prayer for Vocations will take place on April 30, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, also known as Good Shepherd Sunday. St. Paul VI started the annual event in 1964.

“This day,” Pope Francis said, “is a precious opportunity for recalling with wonder that the Lord’s call is grace, complete gift, and at the same time a commitment to bring the Gospel to others.”

In his message, he emphasized that the Church’s vocations — lay, priesthood,

religious, or consecrated life — work together in a harmonious symphony.

The vocations are “joined together in ‘going forth’ to radiate throughout the world the new life of the kingdom of God,” he said.

Speaking about the inspiration of a vocational call, Pope Francis said sometimes the Holy Spirit acts in a completely unexpected way.

He recalled an indispensable moment in his own vocational journey when, on Sept. 21, 1953, on his way to a school celebration he “was led to stop by a church and go to confession.”

“That day changed my life and left a mark that has endured to the present day,” he said.

However, he added, God’s call to a specific vocation is often revealed in a more gradual way: “in our encounter with situations of poverty, in moments of prayer, when we see a clear witness to the Gospel, or read something that opens our minds.”

“When we hear God’s word and sense that it is spoken directly to us, in the advice given by a fellow brother or sister, in moments of sickness or sorrow... In all the ways he calls us, God shows infinite creativity.”

Pope Francis compared the gift of a vocation to a “divine seed that springs up in the soil of our existence, opens our hearts to God and to others, so that we can share with them the treasure we ourselves have found.”

Love is also a very important part of vocation, the pope said. “This is the fundamental structure of what we mean by vocation: God calls us in love and we, in gratitude, respond to him in love.”

“We realize that we are beloved sons and daughters of the one Father, and we come to see ourselves as brothers and sisters of one another,” he elaborated, pointing to the example of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who said: “At last I have found my calling: My call is love. Indeed, I have found my proper

place in the Church ... In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be love.”

In his message, the pope said everyone in the Church is a servant in accordance with his or her charisms, while the common vocation is “to give ourselves in love.”

One way this finds a concrete expression, he said, is in the lives of the men and women who are raising families as a domestic church, or who are working “as a leaven of the Gospel to renew the different sectors of society.”

Another expression is that of the consecrated men and women “who are completely committed to God for the sake of their brothers and sisters as a prophetic sign of the kingdom of God,” he said.

Those in the ordained ministry — priests, bishops, and deacons — are, he added, “placed at the service of preaching, prayer, and fostering the communion of the holy people of God.”

Pope Francis quoted St. Paul’s words in the Letter to the Ephesians: “The apostle Paul opens before us a remarkable horizon: In Christ, God the Father ‘chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will.”

“These words,” he explained, “allow us to glimpse life at its fullest: God has ‘conceived’ us in his image and likeness and desires us to be his sons and daughters. We were created by love, for love, and with love, and we are made for love.”

“In the course of our lives, this call, which is part of the fiber of our being and the secret of our happiness, comes to us by the work of the Holy Spirit in ever new ways. It enlightens our minds, strengthens our wills, fills us with amazement, and sets our hearts afire,” he said.

Pope Francis concluded his message with a prayer written by St. Paul VI for the first World Day of Vocations on April 11, 1964.

“O Jesus, divine Shepherd of souls, you called the apostles and made them fishers of men. Continue to draw to yourself ardent and generous souls from among the young, in order to make them your followers and your ministers. Give them a share in your thirst for the redemption of all... Open before them the horizons of the entire world... By responding to your call, may they prolong your mission here on earth, build up your Mystical Body, which is the Church, and be ‘the salt of the earth’ and ‘the light of the world’” (Mt 5:13). ❧



Vatican Is Preparing Text for Divorced-and-Remarried Couples, Cardinal Farrell Says

Jonah McKeown (CNA)

April 25, Vatican

The Vatican’s Dicastery for the Laity, Family, and Life is preparing a document that will address divorced-and-remarried couples, at the request of Pope Francis, according to the dicastery’s prefect, Cardinal Kevin Farrell.

Cardinal Farrell mentioned the in-progress document in a speech delivered in Italian on April 22 that opened a meeting of the dicastery, which promotes the pastoral care of the family and the mission of the lay faithful. Cardinal Farrell spoke about the importance of providing help and guidance to “those experiencing marital crises of all kinds.”

“On this front, the dicastery is also working on the preparation of a text that will specifically concern — as you wished, Your Holiness — men and women who, having a failed marriage behind them, live in new unions,” Cardinal Farrell said in his opening address.

Cardinal Farrell did not say when the document will be released.

The Church teaches that Catholics who are divorced and remarried without

an annulment are not to take Holy Communion, a teaching reaffirmed by St. John Paul II in the 2005 apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*. Pope Francis has said during his pontificate that there may be case-by-case situations where divorced-and-remarried Catholics can access the Eucharist, including situations where the spouses practice continence within their marriage.

In a recent interview, Pope Francis responded to a question about whether divorced-and-remarried Catholics could receive the Eucharist by saying: “We cannot reduce a human situation to a prescriptive one.” In the interview, Pope Francis advised looking to what his predecessor Benedict XVI said on the subject of annulments, affirming that “a large part of Church marriages are invalid for lack of faith.”

“And think about it: Sometimes [one] goes to a wedding and it seems more like it’s a social reception and not a sacrament,” Pope Francis said. “When young people say ‘forever,’ who knows what they mean [by] ‘forever.’” ❧



FULL TEXT OF BISHOP PAUL COAKLEY'S PASTORAL LETTER ON GENDER DYSPHORIA, TRANSGENDER MOVEMENT



**By Archbishop
Paul S. Coakley**

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
May 1, 2023 (CNA)

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Below is the full text of Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul S. Coakley's pastoral letter

"On the Unity of the Body and Soul: Accompanying Those Experiencing Gender Dysphoria," released on Good Shepherd

Sunday, April 30, 2023. A section of resources on gender dysphoria, mental health professionals, and transgender ideology was also included at the end of the original letter.



"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth"

(JOHN 1:1–5, 14)

Go Make Disciples: Accompaniment and Community

In my earlier pastoral letters, *"Go Make Disciples: A Vision for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City"* (2013) and *"Go Make Disciples!: Building a Culture of Conversion and Discipleship"* (2019), I cast my vision for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in broad terms as I called each of us to *"joyfully witness to our Catholic faith."* Witnessing involves "accompanying" those we encounter so that they see in our lives, our actions,

and our words that God is Love, and that He sent his only begotten Son to bring us into a communion of Love. Accompaniment requires us "to love and accept all people in a way that invites each person to a deeper relationship with Christ and a greater alignment of their lives with his teachings."

Vatican II emphasized that "the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can

respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other." This pastoral letter takes the broad themes of my previous letters to address two related but distinguishable phenomena prevalent in our times, namely those who in increasing numbers identify as transgendered, and the political, cultural and ideological transgender movement.

While this letter will address the anthropology underlying the transgender

movement, the purpose of the letter is to provide pastoral guidance on how the Church, its ministers and the lay faithful can accompany – walk with – those who struggle with their gender identity, especially those who identify as transgendered. Following Pope Francis, I distinguish “between what pastoral care is for people who [identify as transgendered] and what is [trans] gender ideology.” Persons who identify as transgendered are created by God, are loved by God, and we as faithful Christians are called to love each of them as our neighbor (cf. Mark 12:31). To love others means at its heart to will and desire their good.

The Beauty and Truth of Creation

As Catholics we recognize through faith and reason that God created everything good. This is particularly true of the human person, who is “*very good*” (Genesis 1:31) and exists as a unity of body and soul (cf. Thessalonians 5:23). The two so integrally comprise the person that any attempt to separate body and soul inevitably diminishes our very humanity. We don’t have bodies; we are bodies enlivened by souls.

God created humanity in love to share in love. Reason tells us that we give and receive love through the powers of the soul, our intellect, and will. And the body participates, tangibly expressing our love and making visible the invisible. In other words, the givens of body and soul are gifted to us so we may give ourselves to others in love.

Furthermore, as Christians, we learn from the Bible that the human person has a far greater dignity than we can know by reason alone: **“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”** (Genesis 1:27).

Here we find the revealed truth that we image God in body and soul. But what does it mean to image God? “This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth that God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.” This is why the next verse, and the first command is to be fruitful and multiply – man and woman most fully image God by their own self-giving love, a truth reflected in bodies that were designed for fruitful union. Scripture confirms what we can know through reason alone – that there are two sexes, and they are made for each other for the sake of

life-giving love.

God’s definitive statement on the goodness of the human person, the body in particular, is found in the Incarnation of Jesus, the Word made flesh (cf. John 1:14). That God became fully man, even assuming a human body, is the ultimate affirmation of the entire human person. Following His Resurrection, Jesus didn’t shed His human body, but is and will be embodied for all eternity.

Jesus reaffirms for us that there are two sexes designed by God for each other. Saint John Paul II called the sexes “two different incarnations.” That is, two distinct but related ways of being human. While only the body is sexed, each soul is adapted to a particular body, so there is a sense in which the body feminizes or masculinizes the soul. And because the sexed body causes this effect in a sexless soul, the two always align.

The two God-given sexes give rise to the two genders, whose lived expression varies across and within cultures, creating the beautiful diversity among men that is masculinity and among women that is femininity. Since gender should reflect the entirety of the person, Pope Francis emphasized that the “biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated.” If gender is to serve the individual, it must neither be confined to rigid stereotypes nor untethered from the sex that grounds its meaning.

It is especially in regard to gender that humanity’s complexity and freedom come to bear. Although biology sets hard limits, it is influenced by culture and choice. Upbringing, societal norms, religious beliefs, and individual choice are a handful of the many factors that affect how we think and feel about ourselves.

Distorted by the Fall

Since the Fall – the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden – our freedom as human beings has been complicated and distorted by sin. We seek goods, including identities, that fall far short of our ultimate Good in God. These lesser goods inevitably leave us feeling unsatisfied and unfulfilled. Saint Augustine eloquently captures this reality: “You have made us for yourself [God], and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” It is not hard to see this reality all around us. We fill ourselves and our lives

with work, the desire for power, sex, alcohol, the internet, and constant noise in a futile attempt to satisfy the aching in our soul, or alternatively, as a way of numbing the pain of not finding satisfaction. Some of those suffering from gender dysphoria seek respite from their pain by identifying as the opposite sex or some “non-binary” variation.

We can all empathize with these individuals because each of us in our own unique circumstances has sought to rest in something other than God.

Sins and injustices against us can create wounds that make it difficult to recognize the body as a gift. Our own fallen natures exacerbate the internal and external disharmony we experience in varying ways. These factors add to the challenge of recognizing the goodness of our bodies and foster discord within the unity of body and soul. Both often are keenly experienced by those who struggle with gender dysphoria, which is defined as “strong, persistent feelings of identification with another gender and discomfort with one’s own [biological] gender and sex.” What tremendous suffering it must be to feel a lack of congruity between one’s sex and gender! We must tread lightly and with great compassion as we seek truth related to situations filled with pain.

Loving Persons in Pain

Let us first acknowledge the immense pain found within this small segment of the population. According to the largest study of persons who identify as transgendered in the United States, 40 percent have attempted suicide at least once – a rate almost nine times higher than the general population. Nearly half (47 percent) have been sexually assaulted and more than half (54 percent) have experienced verbal harassment. They also are more likely than the general population to suffer from issues such as eating disorders, dissociative disorders and substance abuse. This picture is alarming, and as Catholics we must be concerned for the welfare of persons who identify as transgendered and categorically condemn all forms of violence and unjust discrimination against them.

In addition to eschewing all injustices, Jesus commands us to love as we have been loved (John 13:34). Each person who identifies as transgendered is loved by God and is a person Jesus Christ died to redeem.

To love like Christ means to desire the good of the individuals in our lives and to walk with them, regardless of their degree of openness to the good. Given the foundation laid by reason and revelation, what is an authentic Catholic response to gender dysphoria? We must avoid the extremes: to ignore the pain of the person and dogmatically assert that biological sex is the end of the conversation or to jettison the truth of the body in the false hope of relieving pain. A Catholic response must both affirm God-given sex and recognize the struggle of the person in front of us. It requires listening with empathy as well as extending the invitation to receive God's gift of the sexed body. It means recognizing that all desires are rooted in something good, including the desire to identify as the opposite sex, which can be fueled by a wide range of good things, such as a desire for beauty, a desire to be seen as a person and not be objectified, a desire to pursue relationships and activities that aren't culturally acceptable but feel more authentic, a desire to be seen and known, etc., even though those desires can be misdirected.

Ultimately, it means inviting the suffering person to surrender to the truth. Through their trust in Jesus Christ, they can receive assurance that despite the challenges and pain of bringing gender into alignment with one's God-given sex, it will ultimately be for their happiness, holiness, and peace.

To Those Experiencing Gender Dysphoria

God knows us and loves us — all of us. He knows our joy and sorrow, our strengths and weaknesses, our sense of humor and idiosyncrasies. He sees in us the sons and daughters He created. He also sees our pain and struggle around gender and invites us to follow Him more deeply. To those for whom gender has been an ongoing struggle, I offer Pope Benedict XVI's words: *"It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love."*

Admittedly, the path the Church lays out — accepting the gift of your biological sex and working to heal your felt incongruity mentally, emotionally somatically and spiritually — is arduous and currently countercultural. But it also is a glorious, grace-filled, path on which

Jesus offers ever deepening wholeness and holiness.

As a Church, we want to walk alongside you as you struggle with gender dysphoria, for as Saint Paul notes, *"If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together"* (1 Cor 12:26). We want to help you know the unconditional love of Jesus and to bring Him to you in the Sacraments. You are a part of the Church — you belong here and, truly, you are welcome here. I pray that the Lord will send wise and faith-filled individuals into your lives in order to accompany you with and through your struggles.

I ask each person who is experiencing this confusion to trust Jesus with your pain. As Pope Francis notes, "Believing means entrusting oneself to a merciful love that always accepts and pardons, which sustains and directs our lives, and which shows its power by its ability to make straight the crooked lines of our history. Faith consists in the willingness to let ourselves be constantly transformed and renewed by God's call." That transformation and renewal can be painful, but it's the path to wholeness and, ultimately, sanctity. Today, maybe more than ever, holiness is desperately needed! As Saint Catherine of Siena quipped and demonstrated by her own life, "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire."

To Parents Whose Children Are Experiencing Gender Dysphoria

It is always heart wrenching to see a child in pain. There aren't quick fixes to gender dysphoria, but through unconditional love, patience and humility, families can navigate these tough topics

I encourage parents to become curious and to ask gently about what their child is experiencing. The idea isn't to interrogate but to better understand. Questions like:

- **In what way do you feel like [the opposite gender/both genders/neither gender]?**
- **When is the earliest/first time you remember feeling this way?**
- **Are there situations where that desire feels stronger?**
- **Are there situations where the pain of the struggle lessens?**
- **How does your faith influence your thinking on this topic? Are you considering your faith in relation to this topic?**

These questions can start important conversations that help children and young people better understand themselves as well as help them feel heard, known, and loved.

As young people continue to sort through feelings and experiences, the conversation can be on- going. Keeping in mind that gender does not make up the whole of anyone's life or identity, these conversations should only be a fraction of what parents discuss. If a child doesn't want to engage in such conversations, please respect that choice, but continue to check in and offer to listen. If a child believes a parent will listen with empathy and without judgment, he or she will be more likely to share experiences and concerns.

As I write this letter, many leaders in the United States are stridently promoting what has been dubbed "gender affirming therapy," which seeks to bring the body into alignment with one's felt gender rather than working to align one's felt gender with biological reality. It is our responsibility to help children, family and friends understand that our Catholic faith and scientific research confirm this is not a helpful option. About a dozen studies show that for the vast majority of children, gender dysphoria resolves itself in adolescence.

While some like to tout the short-term benefits of gender transition surgery, the most reliable long-term study shows that those who surgically transitioned had vastly higher rates of suicide and suicide attempts than their peers. A report from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services under President Obama showed "there is not enough evidence to determine whether gender reassignment surgery improves health outcomes."

Others tout puberty blocking medications for adolescents as an option to "pause" their development. But in truth it is a transitioning on-ramp because more than 95 percent of children who use puberty blockers eventually transition to opposite sex hormones. It also is worth noting that puberty blockers and opposite-sex hormones are experimental, with long-term effects still unknown. Studies on how they impact a child's brain development, bone mass, and fertility are only just beginning.

So how should a parent support a child through gender dysphoria? I encourage you to consider Catholic counseling (see the resources section), both for children

and parents. If a Catholic counselor isn't available, the resource section includes counselors focused on a psychotherapeutic approach to gender dysphoria. This type of counseling offers an avenue for exploring identity questions in the overall context of mental health issues, ideally within the broader context of a Christian anthropology. Counseling is important since gender dysphoria often stems from rejection, trauma, or abandonment, which must be addressed for genuine healing.

Although pronouns in keeping with a child's God-given biological sex must be maintained, some parents have found using nicknames or terms of endearment (champ, ace, sweetheart, etc.) ease some of the relational tension when their children want opposite-sex names or pronouns. Unconditional love requires boundaries and flexibility, and compassion rooted in the truth of your child's biological sex is a good guide as you navigate difficult terrain.

It is also important for parents to seek support and avoid isolation. Talking to a trusted friend or parish priest can be helpful in sharing your burden as is turning to Jesus through prayer and the Sacraments. Ask the Lord what healing He desires in our hearts during difficult circumstances. As Pope Francis offered for strength and consolation, "Let yourself be transformed. Let yourself be renewed by the Spirit, so that this can happen, lest you fail in your precious mission. The Lord will bring it to fulfillment despite your mistakes and missteps, provided that you do not abandon the path of love but remain ever open to his supernatural grace, which purifies and enlightens."

To All Catholics and People of Good Will

We are called to bear witness to the truth inscribed in every human body and to do so with great love. Most of us will not directly accompany someone struggling with gender dysphoria but may interact with friends or family who support "gender affirming" treatment and the transgender movement. What is our role? As Pope Francis famously said, "I see the church as a field hospital after battle. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds. And you have to start from the ground up." Confusion about the goodness of the human body, the gift of biological sex, and what it means to be male and female are

foundational wounds.

Healing requires us to speak about gender and sex in logical and compassionate ways, doing our best to speak into the other's worldview.

Love requires that we offer the truth at a time and in the manner that is appropriate to the relationship so that the truth can be received. Pope Benedict XVI put it this way: *"In Christ, charity in truth becomes the Face of his Person, a vocation for us to love our brothers and sisters in the truth of his plan. Indeed, he himself is the Truth (cf. John 14:6)."*

Saint John Paul II noted, evangelization should be *"joyful, patient, and progressive."* And as Pope Francis reminds us, "The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze, which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life." So too the work of treating gender and sex confusion in our local "field hospital."

I have encountered varying responses to our culture's efforts to untether sex and gender. For Catholics, Jesus challenges us to *"love your enemies, do good to those who hate you"* (Luke 6:27). Truth without love is cruelty and though it may be instinctive to respond in kind, Jesus calls us to the harder road of blessing those who curse us.

For Catholics inclined to a permissive "gender affirming" response, Pope Benedict XVI warned that "without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality." Jesus exemplified the truth in love model when he spoke to the woman caught in adultery, *"Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again"* (John 8:11). We must follow His lead of truth-centered compassion.

For those inclined to withdrawal, Jesus reminded us, *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house"* (Matthew 5:14-15). By virtue of our baptism, we have been sent on mission to evangelize the culture.

Lastly, for Catholics inclined to dismissiveness, Jesus invites us, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). Scorning transgenderism misses the intense pain driving these ideas forward. Compassionate

engagement fosters an openness to truth, but it requires that we seek first to understand.

Compassionate engagement is especially crucial for those of us who have or will have the opportunity to accompany someone struggling with gender dysphoria. Walking with someone who is facing pain can be healing in itself. We must always hold in view the fullness of our personhood and God-given vocation to love in truth. We all are wounded and, if we have entrusted our lives fully to Christ, we can share authentically how through struggle and pain, we can bring our wounds to Jesus, who ultimately works it all for good (cf. Rom 8:28).

A Brief Word about the Transgender Movement

Throughout human history, every generation has faced its own unique challenges with powerful forces rising to disfigure the human person and distort her relationship with God and neighbor. Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World put it this way: *"Although he was made by God in a state of holiness, from the very onset of his history man abused his liberty, at the urging of the Evil One. Man set himself against God and sought to attain his goal apart from God. Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, but their senseless minds were darkened and they served the creature rather than the Creator."*

In our present cultural moment, we are experiencing the rise of the transgender movement, which tragically attempts to promote and normalize transgenderism. Pope Francis has described gender ideology as "one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations." He asks, "Why is it dangerous? Because it blurs differences and the value of men and women."

As this letter emphasizes, this cultural and political movement is and must be distinguished from the individuals who, suffering from gender dysphoria, identify as transgendered. The promotion and societal acceptance of transgenderism as a movement is witnessed by the topic's increasing media coverage, the growing number of transgender characters in films and political efforts to further the ideology. As a cultural force, it has been particularly effective among young people where the number of youth identifying as transgender has doubled in the past five years.

Jesus commands us to love as we have been loved (John 13:34). Each person who identifies as transgender is loved by God and is a person Jesus Christ died to redeem. To love like Christ means to desire the good of the individuals in our lives and to walk with them, regardless of their degree of openness to the good. But what is good for human persons, and in this context, for human persons experiencing gender dysphoria? This is the foundational question, and it is where the fault lines emerge. The culturally dominant transgender movement has an understanding of nature and purpose radically at odds with the Catholic understanding of the human person.

The transgender movement is rooted in a modern form of dualism where body and soul/mind/spirit are separate realities. In this view, the human person is the immaterial inhabitant of a physical host. The material body therefore can be manipulated in service to the immaterial soul/mind/spirit. Where the transgender movement sees a disconnect between the material and immaterial, Catholics see a beautiful unity as described earlier in this letter.

Pope Francis has noted that “today children — children — are taught in school that everyone can choose his or her sex. Why are they teaching this? Because the books are provided by the people and institutions that give you money. These forms of ideological colonization are also supported by influential countries. And this is terrible!” The movement is, simply put, an evil infecting our world in this time and place, and it must be rejected completely even as we love unconditionally those bound in its snares.

Before turning to Mary, our Mother, I leave you with this from Vatican II:

Though made of body and soul, man is one. Through his bodily composition he gathers to himself the elements of the material world; thus they reach their crown through him, and through him raise their voice in free praise of the Creator. For this reason man is not allowed to despise his bodily life, rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and honorable since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.

For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10

Mary, Mother of the Church

Mary’s motherhood started with Jesus but eventually extended to the whole Church. She who experienced the mystery of the Incarnation firsthand and accompanied her Son to the Cross had her share of pain and confusion. Yet she gave a full-hearted “yes” to God in all things. May we turn to her with trust, assured of her motherly care, as we end with Pope Francis’s prayer to Mary, Mother of the Church:



Mother, help our faith!

Open our ears to hear God’s word and to recognize his voice and call.

Awaken in us a desire to follow in his footsteps, to go forth from our own land and to receive his promise.

Help us to be touched by his love, that we may touch him in faith.

Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him and to believe in his love, especially at times of trial, beneath the shadow of the cross, when our faith is called to mature.

Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One. Remind us that those who believe are never alone.

Teach us to see all things with the eyes of Jesus, that he may be light for our path. And may this light of faith always increase in us, until the dawn of that undying day, which is Christ himself, your Son, our Lord!

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley

Archbishop of Oklahoma City

Good Shepherd Sunday April 30, 2023



Getting Ready for a Smaller Church

By Russell Shaw

April 5, 2023

The Catholic Church in the United States has been experiencing a steep, accelerating numerical/institutional decline for half a century, and all indications are that the decline will continue for the foreseeable future. Catholic lay people need to prepare now for the challenges that inevitably will bring.

Numbers for the country as a whole tell the story:

- In 1970 there were more than 59,000 priests in America, 37,000 of them diocesan clergy. Last year, the number was around 34,000, including 24,000 diocesans. About a third of the priests are retired.
- From 1970 to 2022 the number of U.S. parishes went from a little over 18,000 to around 16,400; those without resident pastors rose from 571 to 3,215. Catholics who attend Mass weekly or more often dropped from 54.9 percent to 17.3 percent.
- Parish closings and consolidations have become common occurrences in dioceses in the Northeast and Midwest. In the Southwest, where overall population is rising, Church numbers also continue to rise, but even there the priest shortage is a problem.



Now consider a few diocesan numbers – by no means the whole of the story but representative of what's been happening generally.

In the mid-1980s the *Archdiocese of Chicago* had nearly 450 parishes. In 2016 it was about 350, and by next summer it will be 221. Over the last year the *Archdiocese of New York* whittled down 112 parishes (out of a total of 368) to 55. And similar shrinkage is happening in smaller sees like Madison, Wisconsin, which expects to have consolidated its 102 parishes into about 30 by next year, and Columbus, Ohio, with 97 active priests for 105 parishes as of late last year (and planning for a projected 80 priests by 2030).

When, shortly after Christmas, the *Archdiocese of Seattle* announced a consultation process before finalizing a plan for consolidating parishes, the chief operating officer explained: “We have churches that were built for many more people than are attending Mass, and most parishes have constrained resources with significant expenses to maintain facilities.” Many other dioceses could say the same.

Given the power of inertia in human affairs, it's tempting to assume that, with a little tweaking, things will go on pretty much as before in the churches, though on a smaller scale. And maybe they will. But I doubt it. Here's why.

The years of consolidation and shrinkage that lie ahead unavoidably will see significant social and psychological changes in roles and functions arising from the decline in the number of priests. Simply put, and leaving aside sacramental actions that require an ordained minister, either many things now done largely by priests won't get done, or will be done irregularly, or else will have to be done by somebody else. That is true especially of teaching and evangelization, the need for which won't be less in the future but even far greater than now.

And here's where the laity come in.

In our soon-to-be-published book, *Revitalizing Catholicism in America*, David Byers and I spell out nine steps that lay people must take to prepare themselves for the unsought and largely unanticipated responsibilities in the smaller Church of the future. Here let me say a word about one such responsibility – a necessary condition for realizing several of the others.

It's this: “Get rid of your (possibly unrecognized) clericalist attitudes.”

Catholic clericalism has at least two bad practical results. The more serious is its tacit encouragement to the laity to ignore Vatican II's “universal call” to holiness and settle for a second-class spirituality. The other, visible in everyday Church affairs, is to foster a “Father knows best” or “Father's in charge” mentality among many lay people, together with sullen hostility toward legitimate ecclesial authorities, among others.

Correcting these unhealthy attitudes will be increasingly necessary in the smaller Church as parishes are consolidated into parochial clusters in which one or two priests cover several geographically dispersed Catholic communities, with a non-priest (permanent deacon, religious, or laywoman or layman) as an administrator of each.

But that's not all. Lay people will have to take the initiative on many other matters. Some, such as conducting Communion services, will require approval from the priest-pastor. But others, from organizing prayer groups to setting up and operating social service programs and running schools, will not. If they aim to do something within their professional competence, without invoking the authority of the Church and themselves accepting responsibility for the results, lay

people can and should simply go ahead and do it, without seeking or receiving clerical approval.

That's hardly a radical idea. For, as Pope *St. John Paul II* remarked, “*Such liberty is a true and proper right that is not derived from any kind of ‘concession’ by authority, but flows from the Sacrament of Baptism, which calls the lay faithful to participate actively in the Church's communion and mission*” (*Christifideles Laici*, 29). John Paul then proceeds to cite Canon 215 of the Code of Canon Law, which says essentially the same thing.

Are laypeople ready for the challenge? Some probably are, but many likely aren't. Serious, faithful training and formation are needed to prepare lay Catholics for an expanded role in the smaller Church of the future. Anticipating this need, the late *Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J.* proposed what he called “novitiates for life” for lay leaders. Except for the clericalist ring of “novitiates.” The idea should be dusted off, fleshed out, and implemented – sooner rather than later, to meet a rapidly growing need.

A 1969 radio address by *Father Joseph Ratzinger*, has often been quoted for its prediction of hard times for the Church – “*terrific upheavals*” inflicting great suffering and calling forth saints. But in anticipation of the time of testing, the future *Pope Benedict XVI* also foresaw, a “*more spiritualized and simplified Church*” which many would welcome as “*humanity's home*.” If he was right, getting there will be painful, but, in the end, it will be well worth the effort. ☩





DEL OBISPO

REAVIVAMIENTO EUCARISTICO NACIONAL IX



El famoso poema de Francis Thompson (1890) titulado “*El Lebre del Cielo*” es uno de los poemas que ocasionalmente se han cruzado en mi camino y cada vez que esto pasa me recuerda la idoneidad del título y el tema. Aparentemente, el mismo encuentro con este poema más que casualidad es providencial, ya que siempre una invitación divina para detenerme, mirar y escuchar. Este año, más que otros, recordé la idoneidad de este poema; antes del Triduo Pascual, estaba leyendo un sermón de San John Henry Newman sobre la alegría de la Pascua y como tomar el sol a la sombra de la cruz. Él escribió: «Más bien, como enfermos que convalecen... saldrán a la luz del día a la frescura del aire, y en silencio se sentarán con gran deleite bajo la sombra de ese Árbol, cuyo fruto es dulce.” Esto me recordó una línea del poema de Francis Thompson que dice: “Es mi oscuridad, después de todo, la sombra de su mano, caricias extendidas?” El tema de estar en la sombra de la cruz lo use en la Vigilia Pascual y le dije a alguien después de misa que la idea de la “sombra” procedía del poema, “*El Lebre del Cielo*”. El Domingo de la Pascua por la mañana, revisé mi correo electrónico y descubrí que a las 4:00 p.m. El sábado, antes de la Vigilia, había recibido uno de esos correos electrónicos generales de Pascua y al final del Saludo de Pascua encontré el enlace de internet: www.houndoftheeven.com/poem.

El correo electrónico fue enviado por un religioso del que no había tenido noticias desde el año 2014. Debo confesar que

no había tenido la oportunidad de mirar este poema durante varios años, entonces la «coincidencia» de leer a San John Henry Newman en referencia acerca de la Sombra del árbol, mi propia lectura, el comentario al feligrés sobre “*El lebre del Cielo*” y el correo electrónico que recibí, me hizo darme cuenta que Dios verdaderamente es un implacable «Lebre» que lucha ardientemente por nuestra atención. El continúa recordándonos, aun cuando estamos muy distraídos por muchas cosas, que Él no nos abandona y que Él nos sigue buscando.

Otra línea del poema que sigue inmediatamente después de la línea citada anteriormente;

**«Ay, El más indulgente, El más ciego,
El más débil, Yo Soy Aquel a quien tu
buscas!»**

En este año Eucarístico he comentado acerca de la Eucaristía como Presencia, La Eucaristía como Misa y ahora la Eucaristía como Comunión. En esta tercera sección estoy tratando de dejar en claro que aferrarse a pensamientos, palabras o hechos contrarios al Evangelio, cierra la posibilidad de comunión. Estoy tratando de señalar que aferrarse a pensamientos, palabras y acciones que son contrarias a las exigencias morales de los mandamientos, cierra la posibilidad de comunión con Cristo. Estoy tratando de señalar que aferrarse a pensamientos, palabras o acciones que son contrarias a la clara enseñanza de la Iglesia, cierra la posibilidad de comunión con Cristo. Mientras se encuentre claramente un argumento para negar la Sagrada Comunión,

para aquellos que manifiesten lo contrario, yo simplemente señalaré que aquellos que sostienen estos puntos de vista, simplemente no están en comunión con Cristo. Por lo tal, recibirlo en la Sagrada Comunión no crea esa «comunión». Aferrarse a esos puntos de vista contrarios a la verdad, mientras afirman buscar a Cristo, es como he señalado en artículos previos, incoherente.

Es Cristo quien tenazmente busca nuestro amor, nuestra obediencia, nuestra adhesión a Él. El Señor ciertamente persigue, apasionadamente como ese Lebre o cazador. Por nuestra parte debemos parar, mirar, escuchar y permitir que el Señor nos atrape. Sospecho que muchos como Francis Thompson, necesitan admitir “Porque, aunque yo conocía el amor de quien me seguía, sin embargo estaba terriblemente asustado/ No sea que teniéndolo a Él, deba tener nada al lado. El Señor responde: “Ah, el más indulgente, el más ciego, el más débil,

Yo soy Aquel a quien tu buscas!

Rezo para que este amoroso “*Lebre del Cielo*” los atrape a todos durante esta bendecida temporada de pascua y que todos profundicemos en nuestra comprensión de que cualquier temor a la tristeza que podamos tener es “después de todo, Sombra de Su mano, caricias extendidas?”

Reverendísimo Robert F. Vasa
Obispo de Santa Rosa



DESCANSO ETERNO: EL ARTE DE MORIR

Una de las realidades en la vida, claro después de pagar los impuestos por su puesto, vamos a morir. Y para la mayoría de nosotros la muerte es un misterio y todos tenemos preguntas reales sobre la muerte. ¿Qué pasa cuando morimos? ¿Qué enseña la Escritura acerca de la muerte? ¿Como nos preparamos para la vida eterna?

Recientemente el Instituto Augustine dio a conocer un programa nuevo titulado "Descanso Eterno - El Arte de Morir Bien". El programa es unos videos de cuatro partes y una serie de estudios está disponible para usar en grupos parroquiales. El Descanso Eterno examina el origen de la muerte, el más allá y la poderosa realidad en turno al sacramento que nos lleva a la vida eterna. El Descanso Eterno presenta las enseñanzas de la Iglesia Católica sobre la muerte y la respuesta de Dios a la vida con sabiduría y verdad, mansedumbre y compasión, para que podamos pensar y prepararnos para la muerte a la luz de Jesucristo, el Autor de la vida.

El arte de morir bien es también el arte de vivir bien. Al comprender quienes somos y de que estamos hechos, podemos ordenar nuestras vidas y valores según el designio de Dios para nuestra verdadera realización. Conociendo que un día vamos a morir, nos permite vivir como administradores prudentes del tiempo que nos ha dado, y nos otorga la capacidad de anticipar gozosamente la vida eterna.

Nosotros aquí en la oficina de Matrimonios y Vida Familiar hemos revisado el Programa de Vida Eterna y sentimos que es algo que vale la pena considerar para llevar a su parroquia. Si están interesados en explorar el misterio de la muerte el morir y la vida eterna a través de los ojos de nuestra fe católica, hágaselo saber a su Pastor, ya que nos complacerá llevar El Descanso Eterno, El Arte de Morir Bien a su parroquia.

La gracia de Dios nos da la fuerza y dirección para navegar el dolor y la confusión de la muerte. Como experimentamos recientemente en su Pasión y Muerte durante la Semana Santa, y luego en su gloriosa Resurrección el domingo de Pascua, Jesús conquisto la muerte de una vez por todas. Cristo nos da una nueva esperanza y la capacidad de declarar con San Pablo: *"Oh muerte donde esta tu victoria? ¿Oh muerte, donde esta tu aguijón?"* (Corintios 1, 15:55)

Experimentar el Descanso Eterno, El Arte de Morir Bien puede brindar consuelo y comprensión a un tema que la mayoría de nosotros evitamos discutir y pensar demasiado. Esperamos tener la oportunidad de compartir este programa revelador y conmovedor con usted y su parroquia. 📺



Escrito por
**Carlín & Diacono
Dave Gould**

Traducción por
**Eustolia & Diacono
Sergio Velázquez**
*Co-Directores de la Oficina
de Matrimonios y Vida Familiar*

Espíritu Santo: Una App (Aplicación) Divina para nuestras vidas.

By Fr. Mario Valencia



Espíritu Santo ven, ven... Espíritu Santo ven, ven... este canto resuena en mi corazón al pensar en la celebración de Pentecostés: que se celebra 50 días después de la Pascua, celebración que nos prepara para reavivar nuestra conciencia de que Dios, en su infinita misericordia penetra en nuestras vidas ahora y por siempre. Ya no tan solo como Dios Padre Creador, o como Hijo Redentor, sino como la tercera Persona de la Santísima Trinidad; Espíritu Santificador: *"misterio central de la fe y la vida cristiana"* (CIC #234).

En el Antiguo testamento ya se percibe esta economía de salvación para nuestras almas. Nuestros hermanos judíos celebran el Shavuot o la fiesta de las semanas, 50 días después de la pascua judía, donde daban gracias a Dios por las cosechas; frutos

de su divina providencia que sostienen la vida material, después fueron integrando la conmemoración, en acción de gracias, por el juramento o alianza que Dios hizo con su pueblo por medio de la ley dada a Moisés en el monte Sinaí: pacto y promesa de su presencia, pertenencia y relación de Dios con su pueblo.

Esta prefiguración del Antiguo Testamento se lleva a plenitud en la promesa de Jesús = Dios cuando dice: *"y Yo estaré con ustedes todos los días hasta el fin del mundo"* (Mt. 28:20), realidad nueva y concreta que se inaugura 50 días después de la Pascua de nuestro Salvador, donde *"... se les aparecieron unas lenguas como de fuego ... y quedaron llenos del Espíritu Santo..."* (cfr. Hch. 2:1-5) concretizando así su nueva alianza, pertenencia y presencia entre los hombres de todos los tiempos, edades,

lenguas y naciones. "Toda la historia de la salvación no es otra cosa que la historia del camino y los medios por los cuales el Dios verdadero y único, Padre Hijo y Espíritu Santo, se revela, reconcilia consigo a los hombres, apartados por el pecado, y se une con ellos" (CIC #732).

Que verdades tan profundas, que por el amor misericordioso del Padre se nos han revelado, pero, en donde Dios, en su eterno presente continua realizando. Por ello este pentecostés nos debe de llevar a entender esta verdad que se actualiza en nosotros, no en el abstracto de una idea o acontecimiento que pasó, sino en la realidad que nos alcanza a todos por medio de su Iglesia. Esta "misión de Cristo y del Espíritu Santo se realiza en la Iglesia, cuerpo de Cristo y Templo del Espíritu Santo." (CIC #737).

Muchas veces estos misterios del



ser y el hacer de Dios, no son fáciles de entender y mucho menos de aceptar, por ello necesitamos de la gracia de Dios para tener fe en Él, pero si contemplamos con ojos de amor la revelación de Dios, todo tiene sentido y lo más fascinante es que, estas verdades sobrepasan cualquier imaginación humana, por lo que no pueden o pudieron ser inventadas por los pescadores galileos y mucho menos por los recaudadores de impuestos.

En algunas ocasiones, cuando comparto las pláticas pre-bautismales trato de usar imágenes que nos ayuden a explicar el misterio de la presencia del Espíritu Santo = Dios en nosotros y que mejor ejemplo que los llamados Smart-phones o teléfonos inteligentes. Imaginemos nuestra realidad en comparación con estos aparatos modernos. Para empezar podemos entender que los teléfonos tienen una parte que se ve (hardware) y otra que no se ve (software), igual que nuestro ser; lo que se ve (cuerpo) y lo que no se ve (alma). Cuando compramos un teléfono celular necesitamos actualizar a la versión más nueva el software (conjunto de programas que hacen posible el funcionamiento del teléfono celular) capacitando al teléfono móvil para mantenerse activo a través de las aplicaciones que todos los días son mejores, rápidas y capaces, dando respuesta a las necesidades de nuestro tiempo.

Más o menos así, aunque no igual, nuestra alma (lo que no se ve pero nos hace ser y existir) se actualiza por medio del Bautismo, en donde se nos confiere la presencia, pertenencia y relación de Dios en nosotros, haciéndonos capaces de ser la mejor versión posible de nosotros mismos; descargando en nuestras almas esta "App

(aplicación) Divina" llamada Espíritu Santo. La cual nos capacita para tener una íntima relación con nuestro Padre y Creador, que nos fortalece, santifica, enseña, guía y nos da toda clase de dones espirituales que hacen posible que alcancemos nuestra felicidad y meta en plenitud. *"Cuando venga Aquel, el Espíritu de Verdad, os guiará hasta la verdad completa..."* (Jn. 16:7-14) Esta presencia real de Dios en nosotros, la tercera Persona de la Santísima Trinidad, ya está en ti y en mí y en cada bautizado.

Sin embargo, al igual que las aplicaciones o apps de los teléfonos inteligentes, es necesaria activarla para recibir sus beneficios por medio de la Fe y la confianza, creciendo en nuestra relación con la presencia divina en nuestras vidas. Por eso al hablar del ser de Dios, como un solo Dios en Tres Personas distintas, no tan solo es hablar de que Dios ha revelado la esencia de su ser, sino que también nos revela su actuar por el amor hacia nosotros y nuestra salvación, misma que se nos ha compartido por medio de la Iglesia, los sacramentos y la sucesión apostólica, inaugurada en Pentecostés y asegurada hasta el final de los tiempos.

Dios en su infinita sabiduría y antes que Amazon prime, Ups, DHL o cualquier otro sistema de paquetería, ha conferido a sus apóstoles y sus sucesores el regalo de su presencia, su Espíritu mismo entre nosotros por medio de su Iglesia y los sacramentos, *"vayan y bauticen a todas las gentes en el nombre del Padre del hijo y del Espíritu Santo, enseñándoles a guardar todo lo que yo les he enseñado"* *Y he aquí que yo estoy con vosotros todos los días hasta el fin del mundo"* (Crf. Mt. 28: 19-20); confiriendo así, por medio de los sacramentos *"el espíritu de su Hijo que clama: ¡Abba, Padre! De modo que ya no eres esclavo, sino hijo, y si hijo, también heredero por voluntad de Dios"*. (Gal. 4:6)

Hagamos, cada día de nuestra vidas un nuevo Pentecostés, usando esta aplicación Divina; El Espíritu Santo que nos guía y capacita para dar frutos de hijos e hijas de Dios, frutos de *"caridad, alegría, paz, paciencia, afabilidad, bondad, fidelidad, mansedumbre y templanza"* (Gal. 5:22-23) pues *"El Espíritu es nuestra vida!"* (CIC #736) 📖

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Estimada Familia:

Mayo y junio es tiempo de celebrar a dos personas importante en nuestras vidas: nuestras madres y nuestros padres. ¡Sin ellos no estaríamos aquí! El día de las madres, este año va a ser el 14 de mayo, esto tradicionalmente se celebra en familia alrededor de una gran comida, mientras se le dice a mama que maravillosa es. El día de Padre, este año va a ser el 18 de junio, usualmente se celebra con una carne asada, cocinando las carnes favoritas de papa y diciéndole que maravilloso es. Estas dos ocasiones para celebrar en familia, y posiblemente con múltiples generaciones participando. En estas reuniones son un tiempo perfecto para compartir historia y tradiciones. Y las reuniones familiares son el lugar perfecto para contar historias y compartir tradiciones al mismo tiempo que aprovechas la oportunidad para enseñar a sus hijos el bien del mal. Y cómo comportarse de una manera honorable y virtuosa para que crezcan y sean los adultos responsables y llenos de fe que todo padre espera que sean sus hijos.

Desafortunadamente el ser padre no viene con un manual de instrucción, un título en "maternidad o paternidad", o créditos de educación continuos incorporados. La mayoría de los padres aprendemos a través del entrenamiento de inmersión, comenzando el mismo momento en que cargamos a ese precioso recién nacido y nos damos cuenta de que somos totalmente responsables de esa pequeña y hermosa criatura que se nos ha confiado. Algunos padres nuevos serán bendecidos porque tuvieron un buen ejemplo de cómo ser padres de sus propios padres, donde pueden confiar en los recuerdos o pueden pedir consejos constructivos. Por otro lado, algunos padres primerizos han aprendido lamentablemente, lo que no deben hacer a través de los ejemplos de sus padres. Algunos padres nuevos por alguna u otra razón no tuvieron una madre o un padre en sus vidas cuando crecían. Y todos los que somos padres sabemos que la realidad

La Importancia de las Madres y Padres

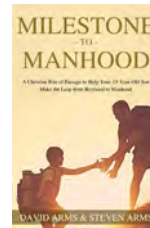
es gran parte del conocimiento sobre la crianza de los hijos proviene simplemente "improvisando" o de compartir historias con nuestros amigos que tienen hijos de la misma edad y que son iguales que nosotros tratando de hacer lo mejor posible. ¡Podemos con el conocimiento que tenemos en este momento!

Haciendo todo lo posible para ser padres católicos fieles y criar a nuestros hijos para que sean católicos fieles no es fácil hoy en día. Los puntos de vista sociales son conflictivos y diferentes leyes aprobadas aquí en California parecen que nos quitan la habilidad de nuestros derechos como padres tal como lo conocemos y no van con las virtudes tan importantes para vivir una vida Católica Cristiana llena de fe. Así es que, ¿qué puede hacer un padre hoy en día? ¿Como pueden los padres hoy en día criar hijos virtuosos, felices cómodos en su astucia y hombría e hijas virtuosas felices y cómodas en su feminidad?

Nos gustaría recomendarles dos libros que hemos encontrado que pueden ayudar a los padres hacer precisamente eso: ***Raising a Strong Daughter in a Toxic Culture – 11 Steps to Keep Her Happy, Healthy, and Safe.*** (Como criar a una Hija Fuerte in una Cultura Tóxica – 11 pasos para Mantenerla Feliz, Saludable, y Segura)



por la Dr. Meg Meeker, M.D. La Dra. Meeker es una pediatra que a practicado medicina pediatra y para para adolescentes y ha sido consejera para adolescentes y padres por más de 30 años. Este es un libro maravilloso, aunque a veces inquietante, que analiza como los padres y nuestra cultura actual pueden influir en las niñas. Los capítulos van desde Conocer Su Corazón, Ayudarla a Tomar Control de las pantallas y la Imagen del Cuerpo y Ayúdala a Encontrar Buenas Amigas. Este libro es algo que deben leer los dos padres y madres (¡abuelos, tías y tíos también!) que cuidan a las niñas en sus vidas. Te da muchos consejos prácticos para evitar y responder a las influencias culturales.



El segundo libro se llama: ***Milestone to Manhood – A Christian Rite of Passage to help to Help Your 13-Year Old son Make the Leap From Boyhood to Manhood*** (Un rito de Iniciación

cristiano para ayudar a su hijo de 13 años en dar un salto de la niñez a adulto. Por el Diacono David Arms y Steven Arms. Cuenta la historia de cómo el Diacono Dave creció sin su padre y como él quería hacer algo significativo para sus hijos, mostrar su amor, aprender responsabilidad y aprender las virtudes que los ayudarían a triunfar en la vida. Así es que se le ocurrió un plan: Un Rito de Iniciación. Luego el plan revela a través de los ojos de su hijo Steve mientras experimenta el Rito de Iniciación. Animamos a todos los padres (y madres porque ustedes también tendrán un papel en esto) a leer este libro y planificar un evento de Rito de Iniciación para su(s) hijo(s). La edad de 13 años es el punto ideal pero aun puedes seguir el plan si son mayores. 📖

Ambos libros están disponibles en la tienda de

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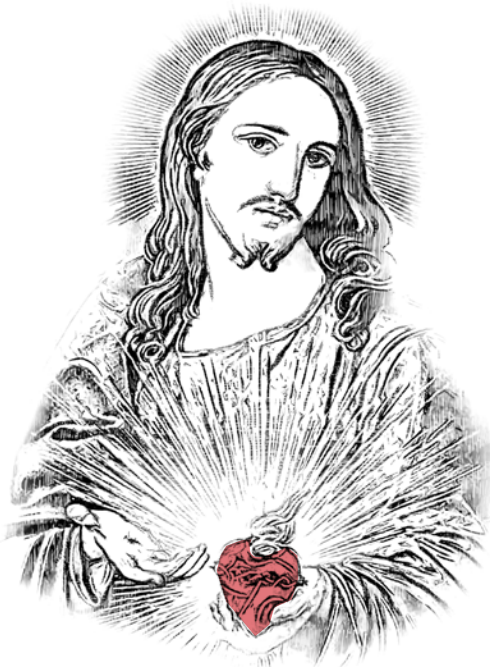
Ambos libros también están disponibles en línea en Amazon.

Les deseamos a todos un bendecido Día de las Madres y de Los Padres.



Escrito por
Carlin & Diacono Dave Gould

Traducción por
Eustolia & Diacono Sergio Velázquez
Co-Directores de la Oficina de Matrimonios y Vida Familiar



Why is June the month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus?

By Francesca Pollio Fenton

Denver Newsroom, Jun 19

June is known as the month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus most simply because the solemnity of the Sacred Heart is celebrated during it. This year, the solemnity falls on **June 16**. The date changes each year because it is celebrated on the Friday after the Corpus Christi octave, or the Friday after the second Sunday after Pentecost.

However, other reasons exist as to why June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart.

The feast dates back to 1673, when a French nun, belonging to the *Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary (Visitandines)* in eastern France, began to receive visions about the Sacred Heart.

Jesus appeared to *Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque* and revealed ways to venerate his Sacred Heart and explained the immense

love he has for humanity, appearing with his heart visible outside his chest, on fire, and surrounded by a crown of thorns.

These different ways include partaking in a holy hour on Thursdays and the reception of the Eucharist on the first Friday of every month.

Jesus told Sister Margaret Mary, ***“My Sacred Heart is so intense in its love for men, and for you in particular, that not being able to contain within it the flames of its ardent charity, they must be transmitted through all means.”***

These visions continued for 18 months.

On June 16, 1675, Jesus told Sister Margaret Mary to promote a feast that honored his Sacred Heart. He also gave Sister Margaret Mary 12 promises made to all who venerated and promoted the devotion of the Sacred Heart.

He said, “I ask of you that the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi be set apart for a special feast to honor my heart, by communicating on that day, and making reparation to it by a solemn act, in order to make amends for the indignities which it has

received during the time it has been exposed on the altars. I promise you that my heart shall expand itself to shed in abundance the influence of its divine love upon those who shall thus honor it, and cause it to be honored.”

Sister Margaret Mary died in 1690 and was canonized by *Pope Benedict XV* on May 13, 1920.

The Vatican was hesitant to declare a feast to the Sacred Heart, but as the devotion spread throughout France the Vatican granted the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to France in 1765.

In 1856, *Pope Pius IX* designated the Friday following the Feast of Corpus Christi as the Feast of the Sacred Heart for the universal Church. Ever since, the month of June has been devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and his immense love for us all.

On the current calendar, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a solemnity, the highest-ranking feast in the liturgical calendar, although it is not a holy day of obligation.

These are the promises the Sacred Heart of Jesus made to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque:

- I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.
- I will give peace in their families.
- I will console them in all their troubles.
- I will be their refuge in life and especially in death.
- I will abundantly bless all their undertakings.
- Sinners shall find in my Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
- Tepid souls shall become fervent.
- Fervent souls shall rise speedily to great perfection.
- I will bless those places wherein the image of My Sacred Heart shall be exposed and venerated.
- I will give to priests the power to touch the most hardened hearts.
- Persons who propagate this devotion shall have their names eternally written in my Heart.
- In the excess of the mercy of my Heart, I promise you that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who will receive Communion on the First Fridays, for nine consecutive months, the grace of final repentance: they will not die in my displeasure, nor without receiving the sacraments; and my Heart will be their secure refuge in that last hour.



Principals and Presidents Meeting April 26th at Christian Brothers Conference Center, Napa, CA



Dr. Adrian Peterson Superintendent
Dr. Linda Norman President of Cardinal Newman
Nicholas Reynolds Principal of Cardinal Newman
Patrick Daly Principal of Saint Vincent High School
John Bertolini and **Phil Duncan** Kolbe Trinity
Olivia Brazil Saint Apollinaris
Shannon Jordan Saint Vincent Elementary
Debbie Picard Saint Francis Solano
Kathleen Amyer St. Rose
Paul Shanahan St. Bernards
Joe Filice Saint John the Baptist
Andrew Soria Saint Mary of the Angels

TRUTH: A Healing Path



By Stephen Morris
 Director of Youth and
 Young Adult Ministry

Last month I presented the “healing path” of Resurrection, and the necessity of the prayer: “may we be free from sin and safe from all distress.” Division and confusion cloud our ability to see **TRUTH** these days, and suffering runs rampant.

Yoda said it best, “*fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering.*” Is there more fear these days? More division? More difficulties?


There is a tendency to point at youth with the proverbial, “kids these days” but our children are a mere reflection of our society! What are children seeing these days? What societal “truths” are forced upon them? Rhetorical questions but the results are clear: anxiety and stress are on the rise among teens.

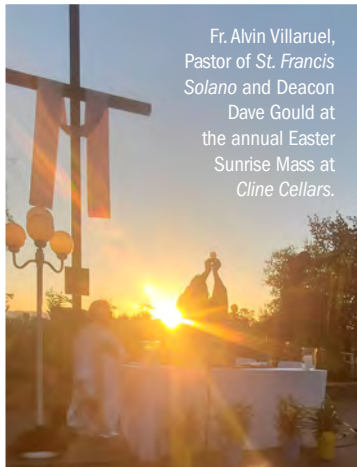
What has changed? Device dependency and social media access.

When’s the last time you read Ray Bradbury’s classic “*Fahrenheit 451*”? A haunting prediction of what is taking place today; our faces buried in screens, scrolling senselessly, hearts and minds filled with confusion, deception, and falsities. Therefore, the need for **TRUTH**.

Consider the early Apostles in the book of Acts, “**the place where they gathered shook, as they were filled with the Holy Spirit**” (Acts 4:31). Perhaps we can start an earthquake with our witness and evangelization of **TRUTH**!

Lastly, I’ll conclude with the lesson of counterfeit money. Experts can identify counterfeit currency easily, because of their prolific training of examining **REAL** money. They spend all their time focused on what the real thing looks like, contrary to an assumption that experts study fake money, counterfeit techniques, or strategies - they focus on the real thing!

Let us also focus on **TRUTH**. I pray we become experts by modeling a dedication to God’s word in scripture, merciful works of the church, and Sacramental practices in order for our children to recognize **TRUTH**. 



Fr. Alvin Villaruel,
Pastor of *St. Francis
Solano* and Deacon
Dave Gould at
the annual Easter
Sunrise Mass at
Cline Cellars.

See you out on the path to healing,
email me for more info:
stephenmichaelmorris@gmail.com

• **MAY 25TH ST. BONA PISA**
(patron of pilgrims):

St. Eugene's to Sebastopol

• **JUNE 8TH DIOCESE EUCHARISTIC
REVIVAL PROCESSION:**

St. Rose of Lima to St. Eugene's

Pictures from the annual Petaluma
Cross procession on Good Friday





EXCITEMENT IN THE AIR

Perpetual Profession



Summer is always an exciting time for the Community – summer apostolates hither and yon, teachers prepping for the coming academic year, the annual BBQ (which is coming back this year!), and all the many summer projects tackled around the Convent. But these, joyous as they are, do not hold a candle to the excitement caused by a perpetual profession in the Community.

Perpetual profession, the culmination of nearly 7 years of prayer, study, formation, and service, is a sign of the unbreakable union of Christ and His Bride, the Church. In a profoundly ecclesial act, the Sister making perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience is consecrated to Christ forever. This consecration, deeply rooted in Baptism, is one of thanks, praise, and adherence to Jesus Christ, the Spouse, who taught by His whole life the perfection of chastity, the richness of poverty and the depth of obedience to the point of dying for us. These vows constitute the essence of the Sister's religious life and lovingly compel her to live as Christ lived in areas which covers her whole life: possessions, affections, and autonomy.

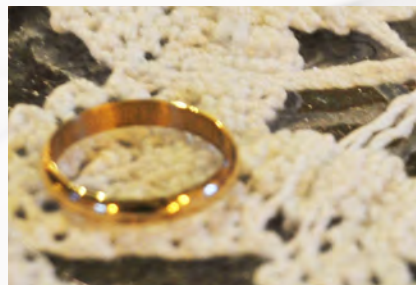
It is this configuration to Christ, symbolized by the gold ring bearing the inscription, To Jesus, my heart, my all, forever, that sets the perpetually professed Sister apart as one forever consecrated to Jesus, her Spouse. Thus in perpetual profession each Sister brings to perfection the full gift of herself as a sacrifice offered to God, and her whole existence becomes a continuous worship of God in love. As His Bride, the Sister spends herself seeking and loving God, Who first loved us, and strives to live a life "hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3).

This summer's perpetual profession holds a special excitement for the Community (and for the Diocese) as a native of Santa Rosa, Sr. Mary Emmanuel Lorbeer, will be making her vows on **Saturday, July 1, at 10:30am at the Cathedral of St. Eugene.** All are invited!

Sr. Mary Emmanuel likes to say, "My Community came to me!" as she met the Sisters shortly after our Foundresses arrived in the Diocese in 2011. She relates, "I distinctly remember the summer morning when I was sixteen years old that I saw two blue veiled Sisters in the pews of my parish church. 'Sisters!

Here?! I had never met a Sister in a habit before, and I didn't think I liked nuns because I could only imagine them being stern and dour. However, as I got to know these Sisters, I found that they were loving, warm, and holy women – loving because they were in love with Love Himself."

After her First Profession of Vows in 2019, Sister began serving at the Cathedral Elementary School while completing her Bachelors in Organizational Management. She now teaches 6th and 8th grade religion, serves as the Cathedral's Religion Coordinator, and oversees the parish's PSR catechetical program. She will soon begin her educational credential studies. Reflecting on her life as a Sister, she says, "As I continue to learn what it means to be a Bride of Christ and a Mother of Souls, I love my religious life more and more as I am espoused to Him who the angels serve." Please pray for her, and our Community as we prepare for this momentous moment in her life and the life of the Community.





Working in God's Vineyard

By Arthur Waligora

*Creative Director/Graphic Designer
North Coast Catholic*

Being a part of the North Coast Catholic team allows me to really meditate on the knowledge and insight that is shared through this publication. I have to pay attention to what is being communicated and figure out the visual accompaniment, cadence and overall layout.

I was texting with Chris Lyford about the NCC and mentioned an article that brought me to tears. ***"Be Not Afraid: A Young Man's Journey to Faith"*** was the appropriate title written by Sam Gearing. It spoke candidly and boldly of finding God in a generation that lacks or feels the need for Him even as their mental anguish grows desperately trying to figure out this world without Him. I read the title and then was shaken to my core by this young gentleman's testimony and how he pointed out the words "be not afraid" being repeated 365 times in the Bible. I know what it feels like to "know God is with me" and the joy and triumph that comes with that knowledge in the midst of adversity, but sometimes I forget.

We can't rely on ourselves at times, but we can always rely on God putting representatives of Him in our lives that prove His existence. I am reminded of when I have words that come out of my mouth and I don't know where they come from. I know if I open myself up and open my heart, that God uses me and those around me to bring joy, understanding, consolation, and love to one another. Christ said *"Love your neighbor as yourself"*, because when we do-God can use us to hug, hold, speak, cry with and love one another.

A teacher asked his students "who would want a million dollars?" Their hands rose up. He then asked "who wants 10 million dollars?" The hands shot up! He proceeded on to say "what if you could have 10 million dollars, but you don't get tomorrow?" The hands fell down. He asked them, "so, you mean to tell me that tomorrow is worth more than 10 million dollars?" "Yeah!" a few retorted. He calmly responded "then why don't you act like it?"

This is another time God was talking to me through one of His representatives. I know God gives me wealth beyond measure in the day ahead of me, not to mention the present. That wisdom comes from Him through people like Sam giving his God given perspective on why he turned to Him. We all need to be reminded of these things sometimes, regardless of how long we've known the Lord. Even the Israelites who witnessed miracles in the desert needed to be reminded.

I was on the phone with my Mom and she was having a difficult day. She is the one who taught me about God and how to kneel and pray when I was a child. She sacrificed and worked multiple jobs to send me to Catholic school and make sure I had an education that was founded on God. It's amazing how we help one another with wisdom we hear at times, whether it be church, friends, family or a complete stranger. I asked her "how many times does it say *"be not afraid"* in the Bible?" "I don't know" she answered. "365 times" I said. I then asked her, "how many days in a year?" "365" she answered. "That's no coincidence", I said. I told her about Sam's article and how it uplifted me and how God talked to me through it and I'm passing it along to her so she would not be afraid. "I love you!" she exclaimed. "I love you too, Mom." +





PRIESTLY ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES



MAY

Rev. Bernard D'Sa
Rev. Gerard Gormley
Rev. Michael Cloney
Rev. Daniel Roa
Rev. Robert Torczynski
Rev. Juan Ramon Diaz de Leon
Rev. Eliseo Avendaño
Rev. Carlos Ortega
Rev. Edilberto Ramon
Rev. Mario Valencia
Rev. Michaelraj Philominsamy
Rev. Gordon Kalil

Rev. Andrew Pacheco
Rev. Aaron DePeyster
Rev. Loren Allen
Rev. Thomas Diaz
Rev. Luis Penalzoza
Rev. Ray Rioux

JUNE

Rev. Robert Castro
Rev. Mario Laguros
Rev. Mark Kissner, OCD
Rev. William Donahue
Rev. Msgr. Daniel Whelton

Rev. John Griffin
Rev. Denis O'Sullivan
Rev. Msgr. James Gaffey
Rev. John Martin
Rev. Msgr. John Brenkle
Rev. Michael Culligan
Rev. Samuel Moses Brown
Rev. Stephen Canney
Rev. Isaac Alejandro de la Cruz
Rev. Fergal McGuinness
Rev. Gregory Villaescusa
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JUST A FEW HOURS A MONTH CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE AND THE LIFE OF OTHERS

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Our brothers come from all walks of life to unite in our goals of Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. In doing so we develop new friendships, embrace the joy of fundraisers, delight in the giving to those in need, and the bonus of becoming a Knight shows our families what it is to give back and pass it forward.

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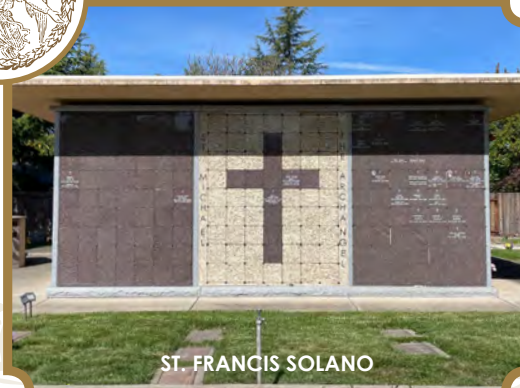
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2023 2024 ADULT FAITH FORMATION & CERTIFICATION

SCHEDULE

St. Rose of Lima Church
398 Tenth Street
Rooms TBA
Santa Rosa

1 - 2 Mondays per month
6:30 - 9:00 pm

Orientation & Introduction	Monday, June 26, 2023
Intro to the Creed & Christology	July 10 & Aug. 28
SR Congress	Sept. 22 and Sept 23
Ecclesiology and Mary & Saints	Oct. 23 & Nov. 13
Liturgical Principles & Sacraments of Initiation	Dec. 11 & Jan. 8, 2024
Sacraments of Healing & Services	Jan. 22 & Feb. 26
Principles & Methods/Intro to Ecclesial Method	Mar 11
Moral Life in Christ: Foundations & Conscience Formation	Apr. 8 & 22
Moral Life in Christ: Ten Commandments	May 13 & Jun 10
Catholic Social Doctrine	Jun 24
Christian Prayer	Jul 8
Teaching Observations (for Certifications)	TBA

- Adult Formation \$150.00/person for the entire program, including some books. Those who wish to attend and are not interested in receiving a California Certificate are welcome, but must register.
- California Basic Catechist Certification (BC) \$150.00/person for the entire program, including some books.
- California Master Catechist Certification (MC) \$175.00/person for entire program, includes some books. (In-depth study, advance seminar & teaching practicum. (Prerequisite: Basic Catechist Certification)
- For those interested in dropping in, \$20 person/class, not including books.
- There will be various books available to purchase. The Class fee does not include all books.
- Class can be used as credit towards Catechist Recertification.
- Complete an Application to register in the Adult formation or California Catechist Process.



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For Registration & an Application contact Carmen Aanenson:
dre@srdiocese.org (707) 566-3366 www.srdiocese.org

4/3/2023



Painting By Jean II Restout 1732

RITE *of* CONFIRMATION FOR ADULTS

PENTECOST SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2023
CATHEDRAL OF ST. EUGENE, SANTA ROSA

For additional information contact
the Department of Religious Education
(707) 566-3366 dre@srdiocese.org



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RELIGIOSA DE SANTA ROSA**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023
SÁBADO, 22 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 2023

CARDINAL NEWMAN HIGH SCHOOL
SANTA ROSA

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| ■ Registrations begins
August 2023 | ■ El registro comienza
agosto de 2023 |
| ■ Mailings go out in August. | ■ Folletos salen en agosto |
| ■ If you wish to receive the
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us your name, email &
mailing address. | ■ Si desea recibir el folleto,
por favor envíe-nos su
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**SANTA ROSA RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION CONFERENCE
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RELIGIOSA DE SANTA ROSA**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2023
SABADO, 2 DE DICIEMBRE 2023

ST. BERNARD CATHOLIC SCHOOL
222 DOLLISON STREET, EUREKA

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Registrations begins
August 2023 | ■ El registro comienza
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mailing address. | ■ Si desea recibir el folleto,
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CONTACT: CARMEN PEREZ AANENSON
Diocese of Santa Rosa
Department of Religious Education

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American Catholics Support Church Efforts To Provide Safe Water for Bolivia's Poor

Sometimes, pursuing a simple solution to a problem is the best approach to take — and that's definitely the case when you're trying to provide safe water to poor families in remote areas of Bolivia. There, Cross Catholic Outreach has been helping Suma Jayma install simple wells "the old-fashioned way," and its approach has proven to be perfectly suited to that region's people and their environment.

Hilarion Huanca Benito, who recently benefitted from one of these water projects, explained how his life has changed since the well was installed.

"We used to drink water from rivers or open wells. Sometimes the water was dirty," he remembered. "Now, with this manual pump, you can see that it is very nice and very safe."

The simple well and hand pump Hilarion uses were installed by the volunteers working for a ministry of Suma Jayma and funded by donors supporting Cross Catholic Outreach. Once it was operational, clean water began flowing in abundance, and Hilarion and his neighbors experienced the love of God in a powerful and tangible way.

"There is a spiritual aspect to every project Cross Catholic Outreach undertakes, and the well installed in Hilarion's community is no exception," explained Jim Cavnar, CEO for the ministry. "That is because we collaborate with local priests, religious sisters and Catholic lay ministries to accomplish our goals. When a project is done that way, the people being helped see the work as an act of mercy and a reflection of God's love."

The practical benefits of these water projects are worth celebrating too, and when one is completed, the community often gathers to mark

the occasion with a ceremony of thanksgiving. In most cases, the families being helped have had to rely on unsafe water sources for generations, so the installation of a well produces a range of immediate and profound benefits.

"Hilarion said the close proximity of the well and the abundance it produces had an incredible impact on his life and the lives of his neighbors. Lugging water from a distant pond or other natural source had been very challenging, so families tried to get by with less water than they actually needed. There were also fears about the contamination of that groundwater. Given those challenges, it is easy to understand why newly installed wells are seen as an answer to prayer," Cavnar said.

Through the process, the people were also provided with "WASH" training that shows families how to care for the well and improve hygiene practices. This training will benefit them for many years to come, according to Cavnar.

"Not only are providing access to safe water and improving sanitation a matter of convenience, but also they produce important health benefits" he said. "It dramatically changes the future of a community."

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach's water projects and other ministries to the poor can contribute through the brochure inserted in this issue or by sending tax-deductible gifts to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC02526, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner or write "Monthly Mission Partner" on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.



Above: When a new well is completed, it serves as a safe, abundant source of clean water for an entire community, and local families celebrate the blessing this provides.

Below: Local labor is used to install the new water systems, and community residents take part in the process. Here, water pipes are examined before installation.



Legacy Giving Provides Catholics With Unique Opportunity To Bless Others

If you are like many Catholics born in the 1950s or before, you have probably begun to think about the spiritual legacy your life and actions represent. What did we care about? What did we value? These are some of the things we hope will be remembered.

"For a growing number of Catholics, this introspection has led to the exploration of 'legacy giving' — the use of one's will, trust, life insurance or retirement policies to leave behind an echo of one's beliefs, deeds and values — a blessing of others that will

reverberate beyond our own lifetime, hopefully influencing our family and others we cherish," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, an official Catholic relief and development charity with a staff dedicated to such estate planning.

According to Cavnar, Cross Catholic Outreach has helped many Catholics establish these "legacy gifts" and expects them to play a significant role in future ministry missions.

"A will or trust can also reflect a person's special heart for a country

or for an area of need. It can be used to build houses for poor families or to build classrooms to educate children, for example," Cavnar said. "Others simply want to help the poorest of the poor and make their legacy gifts for that purpose. It's their way of saying, 'As a Catholic, I value life and support works of mercy. I want my family to understand that calling and believe in it too.' And because legacy gifts can be quite large, they often achieve incredible things. A single one might build an entire school or fund the construction of hundreds of

homes. It's producing an amazing impact and serves as an incredible testament to the faith of the giver."

In addition to this service, Cross Catholic Outreach's staff can also support donors seeking to establish a charitable gift annuity, charitable remainder trust or special endowment. And financial planners can obtain information to help those who seek professional counsel or establish donor-advised funds.

To learn more about these services, the charity recommends readers visit its special online portal at crosscatholiclegacy.org

Ministry Leader Encourages U.S. Catholics To Help Church Supply Safe Water to Bolivia's Poor

When Jim Cavnar travels into the rough terrain of rural Bolivia, he says a passage from the Bible often comes to mind. It is a declaration from God, communicated by the prophet Isaiah: "For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring."

These words, he believes, perfectly align with the mission of his ministry, Cross Catholic Outreach. He also feels they should inspire action from any compassionate Catholic who wants to bless the world's poor.

"When you see the hardships faced by the poor in Bolivia, and when you understand the trials they endure to get safe water, the importance of the promise God makes in Isaiah comes to life. It speaks to the hardships poor families face, and it expresses how eager God is to end that suffering.

"What greater satisfaction can we know than to play a role in blessing the poor in the name of our Lord?"

Jim Cavnar,
Cross Catholic Outreach

That is why I believe we Catholics need to take a more active role in providing relief in a 'thirsty land' like rural Bolivia. We are the instrument God uses to pour out blessings on those poor families," Cavnar said.

At Cross Catholic Outreach, where Cavnar serves as the CEO, supplying safe water to needy communities has always been a high priority. The ministry also encourages U.S. Catholic donors to support those Church-based efforts because water projects have a profound material and spiritual impact.

To help convey just how transformative a water project in Bolivia can be, Cavnar compared the plight of that country's poor with the situations most of us experience in the United States.

"In the U.S., we are blessed to be able to access fresh, safe water by simply turning a household tap," he said. "In the poor and remote areas of Bolivia, that's simply not an option. There is no tap in their simple houses, no modern infrastructure providing clean water in their communities, and no protection from the deadly contaminants and parasites typically found in their closest water sources.



ABOVE: The areas of Bolivia served by Cross Catholic Outreach are dry and desolate, and the people living in those places have very few safe or convenient options for collecting their daily water supply. The simple hand-pump water systems Cross Catholic Outreach is helping Suma Jayma install with funding from its U.S. Catholic donors make an incredible difference in the lives of the poor.

LEFT: This is one of the wells and water pumps Cross Catholic Outreach helped install. Many more of these systems are needed by other Bolivian communities.



The illnesses caused by this unsafe water are heartbreaking, and they can become life-threatening in some cases because many of the families there are too poor to pay for medical treatments when they or their children become sick."

Cavnar added that the passage from Isaiah is also significant because it speaks of a transformational change in people's lives — one that both has an immediate impact and will also bless their descendants, their offspring, as the verse puts it.

"That is exactly what installing

a modern well and water system can accomplish," he pointed out. "Once it is completed, the local Catholic leaders who helped us manage the project put systems in place to ensure that safe water will flow for decades to come, blessing individuals now and their children later. Our Church partners also offer training to promote better hygiene and sanitary practices in the communities being served."

All of this brings Cavnar back to his original point and his goal of serving as God's instrument of

mercy to "pour water on the dry ground," relieving the thirsty both materially and spiritually.

"This is a work every American Catholic can engage in and support," he said. "When we work together to fund and install safe water systems in developing countries, we literally pour out blessings for the glory of God. We demonstrate that the spirit of Jesus Christ is active in our world today, just as Isaiah said it would be. What greater satisfaction can we know than to play a role in blessing the poor in the name of our Lord?"

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. AC02526, 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.



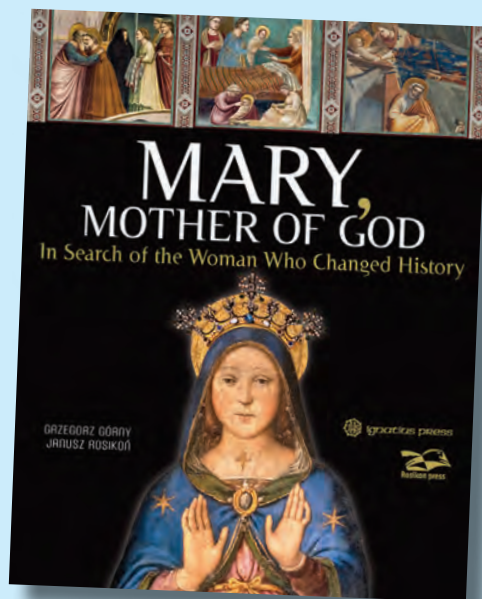
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In Search of the Woman Who Changed History

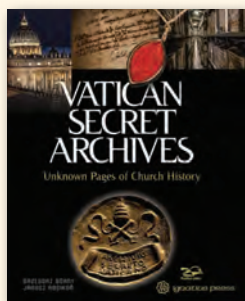
This latest book by the acclaimed investigative journalism team **Grzegorz Gorny** and **Janusz Rosikon** is the first extensive, thoroughly documented, richly illustrated account of the earthly life of the Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. They conducted exhaustive research and journalistic investigations to reconstruct the life and story of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

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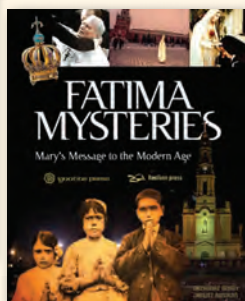
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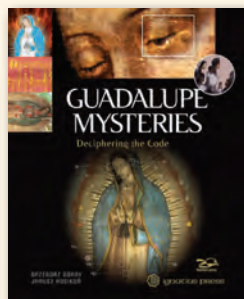
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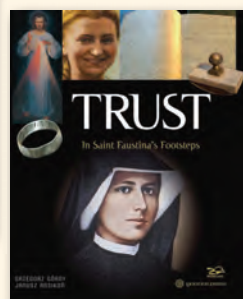
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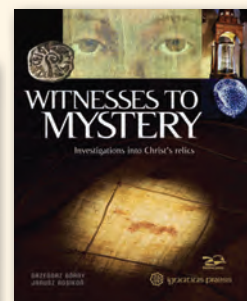
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