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Around the Diocese: June 2, 2025



## Eucharist Draws Faithful From Around the Diocese

BY JEAN YAEGER

TULSA — The 2025 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage passed through the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma last weekend, where Catholics gave joyful witness to their love for Jesus in the Eucharist.

The pilgrimage route through the Sooner State began with Mass on Friday morning at Sacred Heart Church in Miami. From there, a monstrance holding the Body of Christ

traveled by van to the University of Tulsa, the starting point of a 4.2-mile Eucharistic procession ending with festivities and all-night Eucharistic Adoration at Holy Family Cathedral.

Across the diocese — in a span of a little more than 24 hours — the pilgrimage attracted a reverent and jubilant gathering. Despite heckling from a few out-of-state protestors with loudspeakers, the faithful worshiped the Lord in song, dance and prayer in diverse languages. The beauty and universality of the Catholic Church included:

- The Micronesian community in Miami, who wore tropical attire and sung hymns of praise in their South Pacific language of Chuukese.
- Adults and youth from Tulsa's St. Catherine of Alexandria Church, who sang in their native Zomi (Burma) at an altar of repose set up in front of Christ the King parish.
- Pilgrims young and old accompanied the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of midtown Tulsa. They processed behind Bishop David Konderla and the priests who took turns carrying the monstrance.
- The combined choirs of north Tulsa's St. Augustine and St. Monica parishes sang during the closing Mass at Holy Family Cathedral on Saturday morning.

The faithful turned out from parishes across eastern Oklahoma to join the procession, which drew an estimated 1,800 total participants. Some parents carried their babies or pushed toddlers in strollers. Costumed dance troupes performed footwork to the beat of drums along the procession route. Some pilgrims used a cane, scooter, or wheelchair to assist their mobility during the three-hour procession to the cathedral.

"We know what we believe. We are strong in our faith," said Father Leo Ahanotu, marching behind a banner for Holy Cross Church in Wagoner. "Jesus Christ is real, and we are proud to profess him. We are happy to be his disciples."

In another part of the lineup, 16-year-old Valerie Luna processed in sync with fellow members of Danza Guadalupana, a troupe from Church of the Resurrection in Tulsa. Her dad, Jesus Luna, carried a 30-pound drum and pounded a cadence for the dancers.

Valerie said she considers their rhythmic moves an expression of prayer. "Our Lord is here with us."

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage began on May 18 in Indianapolis. The pilgrimage's Drexel Route passed through the Diocese of Wichita before arriving in northeast Oklahoma.

"As Catholics we don't think that Jesus is a symbol, but we believe that Jesus is with us in a form we can receive and eat and be nourished by," Bishop Konderla said in his homily at the opening Mass in Miami.

A group of young-adult "perpetual pilgrims" who will accompany the Eucharist across country, rode in a van to Tulsa on Friday afternoon. Worshipers assembled on the TU campus inside the Reynolds Center, where an altar was set up on the courtside for Adoration prior to the street procession.

The procession on foot left from TU, paused at Christ the King Church, and concluded on the steps of the cathedral downtown. Father Brian 'O'Brien, rector of HFC, and

Father Gary Kastl, vicar general for the diocese, sprinkled the sweaty pilgrims with generous splashes of holy water. Eucharistic Adoration went on all night inside the cathedral. Out back in the parking lot, pilgrims enjoyed pizza and enjoyed live music. The eastern Oklahoma stretch of the national pilgrimage concluded Saturday morning at the cathedral.

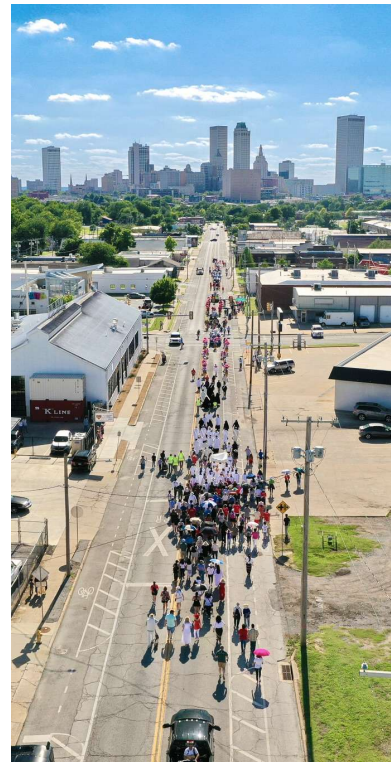
“As we continue to accompany the pilgrims prayerfully as they make their way across the country, let us also ourselves remember how blessed we are and do what we can to enliven and to deepen and to further awaken our Eucharistic faith, our own awareness of the blessing of God’s visitation,” Bishop Konderla said in his closing homily.

From Tulsa, the NEP continued to St. Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee and the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City before it will make its way to Los Angeles on Corpus Christi weekend.



*Photo by Chris Rush*









Photos above by Daniel McCay  
Photos below by Renata Copsey



## Tulsa's Deacon Robert Williams Serves Sunday Mass with Pope

*(Editor's Note: The following personal account by Deacon Robert Williams, a seminarian from the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma studying at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, was posted on his social media account. Deacon Williams is to be ordained a priest this month in Tulsa on June 27. The original Facebook post and additional photos and videos can be found by clicking [here](#).)*

ROME — "It was one of the greatest honors of my life to represent the Diocese of Tulsa as a deacon today for Pope Leo XIV at the Sunday Mass for Jubilee of Families, Children, Grandparents, and The Elderly.

"Beautiful words on family life from Pope Leo XIV's Homily:

***"...Today's world needs the marriage covenant in order to know and accept God's love and to defeat, thanks to its unifying and reconciling power, the forces that break down relationships and societies.***

***"For this reason, with a heart filled with gratitude and hope, I would remind all married couples that marriage is not an ideal but the measure of true love between a man and a woman: a love that is total, faithful and fruitful. This love makes you one flesh and enables you, in the image of God, to bestow the gift of life..."***

"I greeted the Holy Father before Mass on behalf of the whole [Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma](#) and shared with him that we are all praying for him and his ministry.

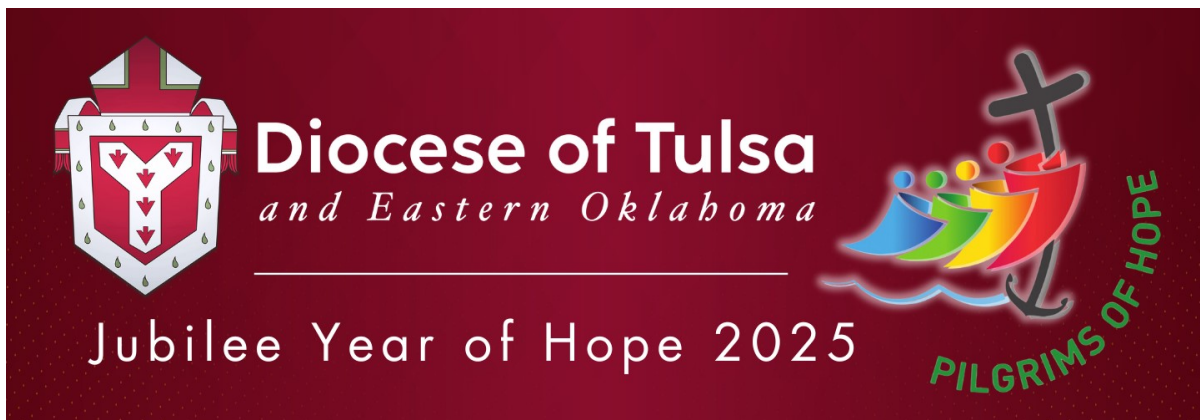
"He asked if I went to [Cascia Hall](#)... 'No Your Holiness, I went to the other Catholic high school in the diocese...' 'What was that one called again?' he asked me... I said, '[Bishop Kelley High School](#).' 'Right, Bishop Kelley.'"







A live video feed displayed on a monitor at St. Peter's Square shows Deacon Robert Williams of Tulsa serving at Sunday Mass with Pope Leo XIV.



## Cathedral to Host Pilgrimage Mass on Saturday



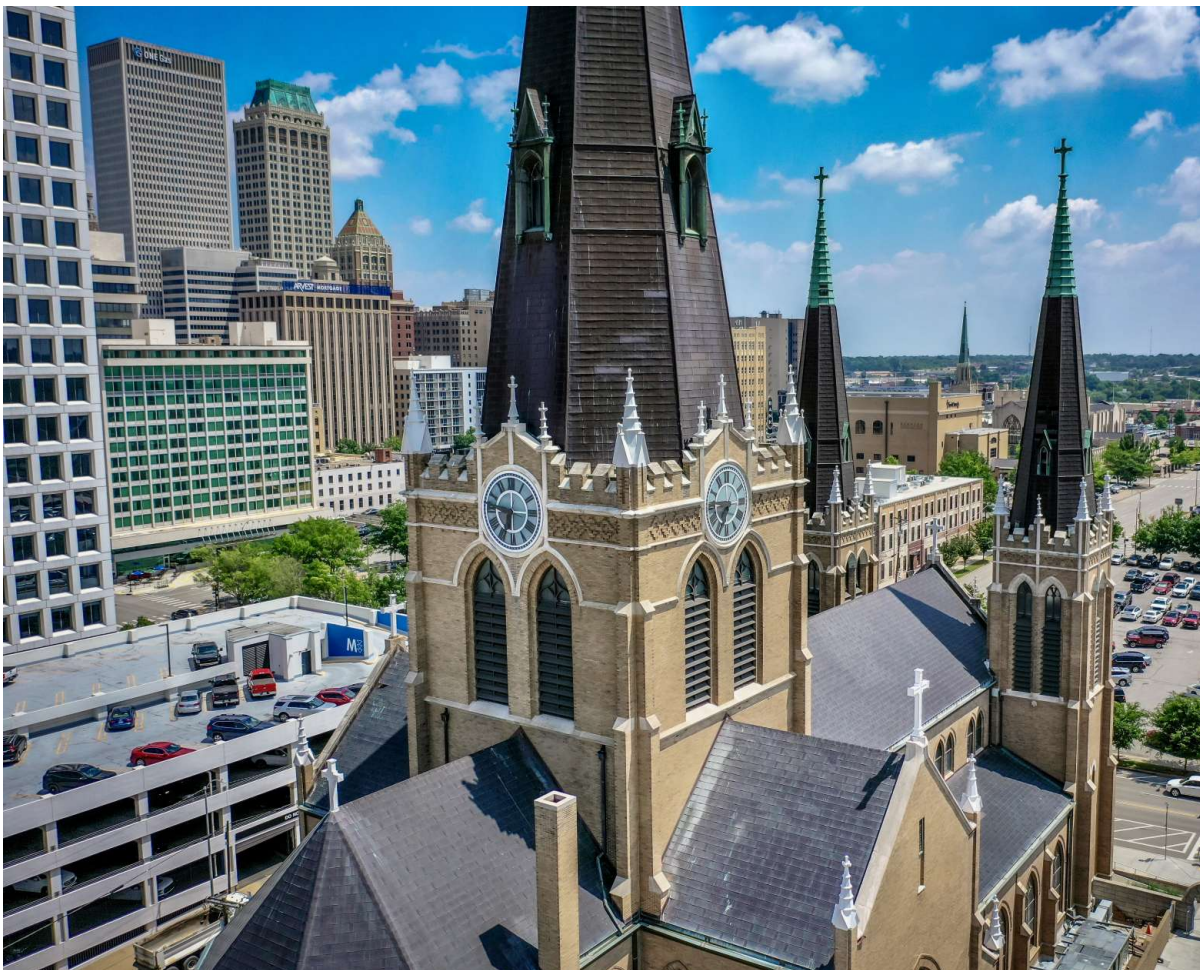
TULSA — The 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope returns to Tulsa this month as Holy Family Cathedral, the mother church of the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma, hosts the 6th monthly pilgrimage Mass at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 7.

The faithful from across the diocese are invited to attend the special worship during the Year of Jubilee. Very Rev. Father Brian O'Brien, rector of Holy Family Cathedral and Vicar Forane of the Western Vicariate, will celebrate the Mass along with other priests of the diocese. The theme for this month is Holy Orders and Consecrated Life.

The morning will begin at 8:30 a.m. with confessions until 9:45 a.m.

Twelve monthly pilgrim sites were selected for the faithful to travel throughout the diocese this year to pray and strive for a greater integration of the theological virtue of Hope in their lives. This month's Mass represents the halfway point for the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope.

Next month's pilgrimage Mass will be hosted by St. Anne Catholic Church in Broken Arrow on July 5. For a complete schedule for the remainder of the year, click [here](#).



## Seminarian Summer Assignments Announced



**BROKEN ARROW — Summer 2025 Seminarian assignments have been announced by the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma Vocations Office:**

Dcn. Robert Williams - Holy Family Cathedral, Tulsa  
Dcn. Adrian Meneses - St. Pius X, Tulsa  
Giang Vicent Vu - Church of St. Mary, Tulsa  
Matthew McClain - St. Francis Xavier, Tulsa  
Luke Bland - Hospital Ministry, St. Francis, \*St. Bernard Residence, Tulsa  
Jim Southard - CPE at Hillcrest, \*The Church of the Madalene Residence, Tulsa  
Joey Griggs - Church of St. Benedict, Tulsa  
Daniel Albrecht - Holy Rosary, Hartshorne  
Noah Drew - St. Bernard, Tulsa  
Joseph Jones - Totus Tuus Missionary  
Luke Tompkins - Church of St. Mary, Tulsa  
Dillon Kay - TBD  
Sebastian Schlegel - Church of St. Benedict, Broken Arrow  
Dcn. Joe Yosten - Immaculate Conception, Poteau  
Newly Accepted Seminarists - NO ASSIGNMENT

To support seminarists within the diocese to further their studies and vocation, the faithful are invited to attend the [Bishop's Annual Dinner for Seminarist Education](#) to be held August 6 at Southern Hills Country Club. Tickets and sponsorships purchased for the dinner raise funds to pay for tuition and other education-related expenses for seminarists.

For more information or to RSVP, click [here](#) or contact Katie Neal at 918-307-4912.



## CULTURE: 'The Last Rodeo,' Filmed in Tulsa Area, Suitable for Families

BY FATHER BRYAN BROOKS

[The Last Rodeo](#) is the latest film from Angel Studios. I was able to see it in a theater yesterday. Starring Neal McDonough, it was filmed mostly in the Tulsa area in 2024.

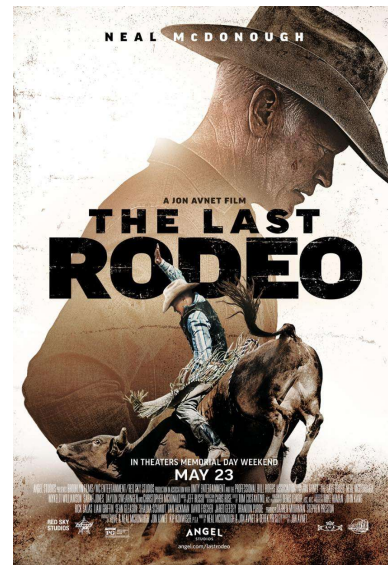
McDonough plays Joe Wainwright, a retired champion rodeo bull rider. Although more than a bit over the hill, he enters a high-stakes rodeo competition. He does so not for fame and fortune but for the prize money to pay for life-saving surgery for his grandson.

A main theme is the importance of family, even if its members have deep flaws. For example, Wainwright's self-isolation and self-medication, after the death of his wife years before, have greatly strained his relationship with his daughter.

Another theme is that of solidarity. It is difficult, especially for men, to allow others into our suffering. It can be taken as a weakness. But knowing that others stand with us in that suffering becomes a source of strength. This is a lesson that Wainwright must learn in order for redemption and reconciliation to take place.

Because this is a film from [Angel Studios](#), faith is part of the storyline. Wainwright expresses anger at God while his best friend and confidant is a professed Christian. Instead of confronting Wainwright, he gently encourages him to place his trust in God. To use a phrase common today, he accompanies Wainwright, showing great loyalty and patience.

*The Last Rodeo* is a good movie entertainment suitable for families with middle school-age children and older. Its total runtime is just under two hours. The film is rated PG for some mild and brief profanity. There is also a brief bar fight, but it is a story involving





cowboys and bull riders, so of course, there is a bar fight.

*The Last Rodeo* is in theaters for a limited time (through June 5). However, it will be available for viewing on streaming services.

## Broken Arrow Adoration Chapel Celebrates Fifth Anniversary This Month

BY DEACON DICK BERBERET

**BROKEN ARROW** — In June of 2025, a very special celebration will occur at the Parish of St. Benedict in Broken Arrow: the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the dedication of St. Scholastica Adoration Chapel.

The chapel is a very special and holy place dedicated to prayer focused on Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, prayer in which those who visit the chapel meet Jesus face-to-face in a most profound manner! Eucharistic Adoration began in this chapel five years ago, during a most difficult time for our society, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. There could have been no “better” time to open this place of hope in troubled times, this source of strength for the weary members of our community.

The story of St. Scholastica Chapel began in 2016 when Fr. Joe Townsend, then Pastor of St. Benedict, proposed a plan to build a new chapel to promote devotion to the Blessed Eucharist in the Parish. When Fr. Joe shared his vision for the design and purpose of this chapel, a place dedicated solely to Eucharistic Adoration, he was encouraged by the enthusiastic response of parishioners, many of whom were already devoting hours to Adoration each week. A building committee comprised of clergy and lay members of the Parish was soon formed to work with an architectural firm in developing plans for the new chapel. After Fr. Townsend was transferred from St. Benedict in 2018, our new Pastor, Fr. Bryan Brooks, continued working with members of the building committee to complete the chapel.

The design of St. Scholastica Chapel features both spiritual and historical aspects of the Catholic faith, as lived by pioneer families who settled in the Southern Plains of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. In both exterior and interior features, the chapel is modeled after the traditional design of small town and country churches built during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries throughout the plains. Once the project was completed, it was evident that those who designed and built the chapel had exceeded all expectations in bringing to life the history of the Catholic Church in the plains region.

It was also quite apparent that, throughout the design and completion of this chapel, the “Hand of God” was active in guiding this project. In the exterior view, the entrance

of the chapel is enhanced by the presence of beautiful, life-sized statues of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica, carved of white Carrara marble by artists from the region of Pietrasanta, Italy. Above the door to the chapel is a beautiful mosaic crafted in Rome, which depicts Jesus Christ the Teacher.

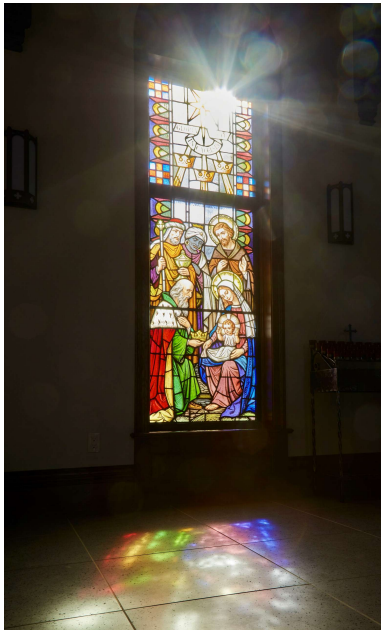
As is appropriate for a chapel dedicated to Eucharistic Adoration, the focus for the interior is upon a beautiful altar that was originally delivered to Immaculate Conception Parish in the small town of Burns, KS, on September 25, 1918. For 75 years, Masses were celebrated at this altar until the Parish was closed in 1993. The altar then remained, perhaps even forgotten, in storage at a warehouse in Burns until it was discovered by members of the building committee and brought to the Parish of St. Benedict. The altar was modified to install a specially designed tabernacle, built to accommodate an ornate monstrance that was designed and built in Munster, Germany, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and now serves to display the Blessed Eucharist in St. Scholastica Chapel.

In 1980, when the Parish of St. Benedict consisted of an idea shared by a group of people who had yet to build a church, Masses were celebrated in the chapel at the convent of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother in Broken Arrow. Among the most memorable features of this chapel were the beautiful stained-glass windows, originally brought from Germany to Oklahoma by the Sisters in 1925. The fact that several of these windows are now installed in St. Scholastica Chapel, after being removed from the convent when it closed in 2007, is such a special blessing to our parish. After a period of prayer, discernment, design, and careful construction lasting nearly 4 years, on June 11, 2020, Bishop David Konderla presided at Mass and the dedication of the chapel.

Since the first hours of Adoration were scheduled on June 15, 2020, thousands of people have come from throughout Oklahoma and several other states to pray before the Eucharist in St. Scholastica Chapel. The chapel is always open to visitors who are seeking a place to offer praise and thanksgiving to the Lord Jesus. At present, over 225 dedicated volunteers are committed to praying at least 1 hour during the 90 hours per week that the Blessed Sacrament is exposed.

The long-term goal of our Parish is to host perpetual Adoration with dedicated volunteers praying face-to-face with Jesus every hour of every week. All who are interested in becoming an Adoration volunteer may contact the Parish of St. Benedict at 918-455-4451 for more information.





*Photos courtesy Parish of St. Benedict*  
Architectural details of the five-year-old St. Scholastica Adoration Chapel in Broken Arrow are shown.

## From the Editor...

What a time to be a Catholic here in the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma!

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage has come and gone but not before hundreds of faithful from around the diocese had the opportunity to adore, worship, process and celebrate the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Perhaps an even larger crowd of onlookers also witnessed the Eucharist as it passed by their cars on city streets, by homes and apartment buildings, and by many places of business in Tulsa.

The long-anticipated events wrapped up locally with a closing Mass at Holy Family Cathedral on Saturday morning before the Eucharist and its attending pilgrims made their way west to the Diocese of Oklahoma City. We pray for their continued safe travel

over the next few weeks before the pilgrimage reaches its conclusion in downtown Los Angeles in time for Corpus Christi weekend.

Also, a shout out to Fr. Joshua Votruba and members of his planning committee who took on the logistics and all the behind-the-scenes preparation (venue setup, procession route and security, sound systems, water, cookies and pizza, festival, etc.) to make this unique event inspiring, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

But summer activity is really just getting started here in the diocese.

This coming Friday night is the Second Annual "Kickin' for Christ Kickball Showdown" pitting priests against seminarians in a fun and friendly competition for the whole family from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Church of Saint Mary. The priests were victorious last year so our seminarians will be seeking revenge. Bring the family, your lawn chairs, and come root for your pastor or favorite seminarian. Food will be provided by the Knights of Columbus. The event is free but please RSVP online [here](#).

We have reached the midway point of the [2025 Jubilee Year of Hope](#) and the sixth of 12 Pilgrimage Masses will take place Saturday morning at the mother church of the diocese, Holy Family Cathedral.

Also, this coming weekend, wedged between Confirmation Masses in Hartshorne, Okmulgee and Tulsa, Bishop Konderla will celebrate Mass at 10 a.m., Sunday, June 8, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Uganda Martyrs Parish in Okmulgee.

The Ugandan Martyrs were a group of Christian converts who were executed by King Mwanga II of Buganda in the 1880s for refusing to renounce their faith. The parish in Okmulgee is dedicated to these saints. There is also a shrine and church dedicated to the Uganda Martyrs in Namugongo, Uganda, where many of them were executed. The community will celebrate the milestone with events on both Saturday and Sunday.

Our small but dedicated staff here in the Communications office make every effort to provide coverage of events around the diocese. But quite frankly, we could not do it without reader support. We value news and photo submissions where they can be published here or on our social media to reach a wider audience. So, if you have an upcoming event at your parish that others should know about, send us a note. Our team can be reached via email at [communications@diocese](mailto:communications@diocese)

Until next week, thanks for reading!

**Chris Rush**  
**Chief Editor**

*"Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" — Philipians 4:8*



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