

West Texas ANGELUS

Serving the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas
Volume XXXV, No. 3 MARCH 2015

Bishop, council give go ahead for high school

"This effort will require much dedication and cooperation among Catholics in the area to start and operate this school, but I believe we can do it with God's help."
— Bishop Sis



Much work to be done; advocates hope doors can open in 2018

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — On the recommendation of the diocesan Presbyteral Council on February 25, San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis gave approval for a committee of volunteers in Midland and Odessa to take the next step in establishing a Catholic high school.

Organizers hope the school would be open for students by the fall of 2018.

The school would be legally and financially independent of the diocese, but the diocese would oversee the school's Catholic identity.

The committee overseeing the project's development is made up of eight lay peo-

(Please See **SCHOOL/20**)



Hope in action

Valerie Longoria Bueno, executive director of Catholic Charities of Odessa, volunteers at a recent Hope for the Homeless meal.
Story, photos / Pg. 7

(Photo by Alan P. Torre).

INSIDE

Bishop: Reject extremist violence, but do not reject all Muslims

Every day we see news reports of violent events in the Middle East. We hear of entire Christian villages that are emptied as their inhabitants flee for their lives with nothing but the clothes on their backs. We learn of massacres where people are beheaded simply because they are Christian. We see churches that have been burned and statues that have been destroyed. / Pg. 2

Seminarian of the Month: Tim Hayter

I never saw myself as a priest or seminarian before I was 26 years old. In fact, I was pretty sure it wasn't a possibility. There were occasions though, starting with a brief moment after a SEARCH retreat when I was 18, that I wondered if I should consider the priesthood because I knew there was a need for priests and I wanted to serve God in whatever way He wanted. / Pg. 3



Cloister Walk

As part of "The Year of Consecrated Life," the Mount Carmel Hermitage and Our Lady of Grace Carmelite Monastery, both located near Christoval, opened their doors to educate the public on the life of those who live in cloistered communities. See Pages 12-13 for photographs from diocesan photographer Alan Torre. At right, Fr. Fabian Maria, O.Carm., prior of Mt. Carmelite Hermitage, with some young visitors.

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Exodus brings deacon, his wife together

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus



Deacon Federico
"Freddy" Medina

In his 1782 book, *Letters from an American Farmer*, author J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur wrote of America's new melting pot status. "Here," he said, "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world."

Of course, mortal and sinful man has repeatedly fallen short of de Crevecoeur's words by sadly introducing into the conversation an intolerance for people of color.

The times such racism has damaged our society are too numerous to mention and certainly continue even today.

Many strong individuals overcome the mistreatment directed at them and improve their lives and the lives of their family.

Deacon Federico "Freddy" Medina is a prime example of someone whose family was on the receiving end of racial bullying, but who, as de Crevecoeur wrote, "will one day cause great changes."

New Jersey's loss was West Texas' gain. Literally.

Medina, Director of the Diaconate in the
(Please See **DEACON/21**)

From The Bishop's Desk

Reflections on the situation of Christians in the Middle East

By Most Rev. Michael J. Sis
Bishop of San Angelo

Every day we see news reports of violent events in the Middle East. We hear of entire Christian villages that are emptied as their inhabitants flee for their lives with nothing but the clothes on their backs. We learn of massacres where people are beheaded simply because they are Christian. We see churches that have been burned and statues that have been destroyed.



Bishop Sis

Our Christian brothers and sisters in the Middle East represent ancient faith communities dating back to the earliest centuries of the Church. Through the dramatic injustices they are enduring today, we are becoming more familiar with these venerable apostolic traditions with names like Chaldean, Assyrian, Coptic, Maronite, and Armenian (Related stories, Pg. 24).

Christians have been persecuted in the

Middle East for many years, long before the emergence of the group calling itself the "Islamic State." Today, our brothers and sisters are in need of our prayer and our practical support. In August, Pope Francis wrote to the U.N. General Secretary, Ban Ki-moon, asking the international community "through the norms and mechanisms of international law, to do all that it can to stop and to prevent further systematic violence against ethnic and religious minorities."

The Pope and other Vatican leaders have stated on a number of occasions that it is licit to use force to stop unjust aggressors and to protect innocent civilians. This force must be proportionate and discriminate, and it must follow international and humanitarian law. In the end, this violence in the Middle East will require more than just a military solution. Pope Francis has said, "In reaffirming that it is licit, while always respecting international law, to stop an unjust aggressor, I wish to reiterate, moreover, that the problem cannot be resolved solely through a military response."

It is important to study the circumstances
(Please See **BISHOP/21**)

Reflecciones sobre la situación de los cristianos en el Medio Oriente

By Most Rev. Michael J. Sis
Bishop of San Angelo

Cada día vemos reportes noticieros de los eventos violentos en el Medio Oriente. Oímos de aldeas cristianas enteras que son abandonadas por sus habitantes al huir por salvar sus vidas con nada más que la ropa sobre sus espaldas. Aprendemos de las masacres donde las personas son decapitadas simplemente por ser cristianos. Vemos iglesias que han sido quemadas y estatuas que han sido destruidas.

Nuestros hermanos y hermanas cristianos en el Medio Oriente representan comunidades antiguas de fe que se remontan a los primeros siglos de la Iglesia. Por las injusticias dramáticas que están soportando hoy, nos estamos familiarizando más con estas venerables tradiciones apostólicas con nombres como Caldea, Asiriana, Copta, Maronita, y Armenia.

Los cristianos han sido perseguidos en el Medio Oriente por muchos años antes del surgimiento del grupo que se llama el "Estado Islámico." Hoy en día, nuestros hermanos y hermanas necesitan nuestras oraciones y nuestro apoyo práctico. En agosto, el Papa Francisco escribió al Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas, Ban Ki-moon, pidiendo a la comunidad internacional, "a través de las normas y los mecanismos del derecho internacional, a hacer todo lo posible para detener y prevenir ulteriores violencias sistemáticas contra las minorías étnicas y religiosas."

El Papa Francisco y otros líderes del Vaticano han declarado en un sinnúmero de ocasiones que es lícito usar fuerza para detener a los agresores injustos y proteger a civiles inocentes. Esta fuerza debe de ser proporcionada y diferenciada, y ha de s

(Mira **OBISPO/20**)

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Clergy Changes

- **Rev. Bala Anthony Govindu** assigned as parochial vicar at St. Stephen Church in Midland effective February 13, 2015.
- **Rev. Kumar Jujjuvarapu** assigned as parochial vicar at Sacred Heart Church in Abilene effective February 3, 2015.
- **Rev. Bhaskar Mendem** appointed as pastor at St. Patrick Church in Brady and St. Francis Mission in Melvin effective February 13, 2015.
- **Rev. Albert Ezeanya** appointed as pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Menard and St. Theresa Church in Junction effective February 13, 2015.

Gospel Concert

SAN ANGELO — A gospel concert benefiting the Pregnancy Help Center in San Angelo will be held from 12:30-8:30 p.m., **Saturday, March 14**, at the Wells Fargo Pavilion, 4608 Grape Creek Rd. Tickets are \$7 for adults or \$12 for families. Music by Bride Song; Cindy Gerald and Ken (Southern Gospel); the Cokesbury Quartet; the St. Ambrose Choir, the St. Mary's Church Choir and T. Gozney and Proof of Grace. For more information, call Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd, 325-949-6200 or email secretary.acgs@suddenlink.com.

Texas Mission Conference in San Antonio

The Texas Mission Council will host the 2015 Texas Mission Conference **March 20-21, 2015**, at the Oblate Renewal Center, 5700 Blanco Rd., in San Antonio. The conference is for those interested in learning more about missions at the international, national and local levels.

The theme of the 2015 conference is "Living the Mission Spirit — Across the Street or Across the Sea," and will feature Janet Kragt Bakker, Ph.D., author of "Sister Parishes" American Congregations and Their Partners Abroad" as the keynote speaker. The Most Reverend Joseph Strickland, Bishop of Tyler, will deliver the opening address.

The Texas Mission Council exists to create mission awareness and support through the combined efforts of diocesan mission directors, representatives of Texas-based mission organizations and individuals and groups interested in mission work.

To learn more and to register, visit www.txmissioncouncil.org.

St. Lawrence Mission, March 22-25

ST. LAWRENCE — St. Lawrence Catholic Church would like to invite you to its Lenten Mission, from **Sunday, March 22 thru Wednesday, March 25**, beginning at 7 p.m. each evening. The mission speaker will be Fr. Robert Cary, a Paulist priest. The theme of this year's Mission is, "Give Your Faith Away."

Alive in the Spirit Mission, Brownwood

BROWNWOOD — St. Mary Queen of Peace Parish in Brownwood is sponsoring a parish mission **March 23-26**. The parish mission is entitled "Alive in the Spirit." Rev. Don Willard, C.Ss.R., raised in Pittsfield, IL, and Rev. Benedict Nwachukwu, a Nigerian priest residing in California, will be the preachers. Father Don will preach the Mission in English and Father Benedict will preach the mission in Spanish. Mission services will be Monday through Thursday beginning at 6:30 pm and followed by a social. For those unfamiliar with parish missions, the mission is a preaching event. God's Word is proclaimed through the Bible, Catholic doctrine, and through the life, learning, and personal experience of the preacher. Catholics and non-Catholics are welcome for all or any evening of the mission. The symbols and topics for each night are:

Monday: The Bible and Salvation

Tuesday: The Cross and Jesus as Savior

Wednesday: Ashes, God's loving, healing mercy & forgiveness

Thursday: The Altar and Our Mission

Information / questions call 325-646-7455, email Brownwood@sanangelodiocese.org or visit our web site at www.sm1familybwd.org

Good of the Order Rosary

The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Assembly 1098 are beginning a monthly Good of the Order Rosary to pray for brother Knights and their families who are sick, in need or who have recently died. We will gather on the last Thursday each month at 7 p.m. at the Holy Angels Chapel in San Angelo. All Knights from all Knights of Columbus Councils within the area of the Assembly are invited to join in this rosary asking God's blessings and protection. The first Good of the Order Rosary will be on Thursday, February 26. Members of each Knights of Columbus Council are asked to bring the intentions of their Council. Of course we will also be praying for the needs of our community and nation. Praying for many intentions only strengthens our prayers to God. Please join us.

Chief Finance Officer – Diocese of San Angelo

Applications for the position of Chief Finance Officer for the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Angelo are being accepted. The Chief Finance Officer serves as a general business manager for the diocese and is responsible for the oversight of all financial, accounting, contracted benefits, and risk management activities of the diocese. The CFO also leads implementation of related best practices in diocesan parishes and other diocesan institutions.

Applicant must be licensed as a Certified Public Accountant. Familiarity with diocesan financial operations is preferred, but other accounting experience will be considered.

Experience as a chief finance officer or other high-level accounting or finance position is a plus. The position requires excellent communication and organizational skills. Applicants should have proficiency with information technology, including knowledge of spreadsheet, database, and accounting computer applications. The office is located in San Angelo.

CALENDARS

BISHOP SIS' SCHEDULE MARCH

8 — MIDLAND, San Miguel Parish, Diocesan Adult Confirmation Mass at 3:00 p.m.
11 — SAN ANGELO, Diocesan Staff Day of Reflection, 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
12 — DALLAS, USCCB Workshop at University of Dallas
16-18 — BROWNSVILLE, Tex-Mex Border Bishops Meeting
20-22 — CONCEPTION, Missouri, Visit to Seminary
23 — AUSTIN, Texas Catholic Conference Spring Meeting
24 — AUSTIN, TCC Advocacy Day at State Capitol
26 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Chrism Mass at 11:00 a.m.
26 — SAN ANGELO, Presbyteral Council Mtg., 1 p.m.
29 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Palm Sunday Mass at Noon.
29 — SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Seder Meal at 5:30 p.m.

APRIL

2 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Holy Thursday Mass at 7:00 p.m.
3 — SAN ANGELO, St. Margaret, Way of the Cross at 1:00 p.m.
3 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Good Friday Service at 7:00 p.m.
4 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Easter Vigil Mass at 9:00 p.m.
8 — WINTERS, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Confirmation, 6:30 pm
11 — BROWNWOOD, Mass at Ron Jackson Unit at 11 am.
11 — SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Confirmation at 5:30 p.m.
12 — ROWENA, St. Joseph, Confirmation at 11:00 a.m.
12 — SAN ANGELO, Holy Angels, Diocesan Adult Confirmation Mass at 3:00 p.m.
15 — SAN ANGELO, Presbyteral Council at 11:00 a.m.
15 — BIG LAKE, St. Margaret, Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
16 — SAN ANGELO, St. Francis Hall, Catholic Daughters of America at 6:00 p.m.
17 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral Gym, Religious Education Awards Banquet, 6:30 p.m.
18 — SAN ANGELO, Newman Center Open House at 3:00 p.m.
18 — SAN ANGELO, Angelo State University, Mass and Dinner at 5:00 p.m.

19 — WALL, St. Ambrose, Confirmation at 9:00 a.m.
19 — EDEN, St. Charles, Confirmation at 4:00 p.m.
23 — ODESSA, Catholic Charities Banquet at 6:30 p.m.
24 — MIDLAND, San Miguel, Confirmation at 6:30 p.m.
25 — ODESSA, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Confirmation, 11 a.m.
25 — MIDLAND, St. Ann, Confirmation at 5:00 p.m.
26 — ODESSA, St. Mary, Confirmation at 11:00 a.m.
27-May 1 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Priests' Retreat

CHRIST THE KING RETREAT CENTER MARCH

11 — Bishop Sis' Staff Lenten Day of Reflection
13-15 — Deacon Formation
17 — Adoration
20-22 — Engaged Encounter
22 — Natural Family Planning
23-25 — Episcopal Diocese of Northwest Texas Fresh Start Conference
29 — CKRC Confirmation Retreat

APRIL

3 — Good Friday-Office Closed
5 — Easter Sunday
6 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Grp
10-12 — Beginning Experience
10-12 — Deacon Formation
13 — Heart of Mercy Prayer Grp
16-19 — Women's Walk to Emmaus
20-23 — Episcopal Diocese of Northwest Texas
21 — Deacon Quarterly
23-26 — San Angelo Women's ACTS Retreat
27-May 1 — DOSA Annual Priest Retreat

NECROLOGY APRIL

2-Deacon Lassaro Sevier (2009)
3-Deacon Edward Martinez (1985)
16-Deacon Eliseo Carrillo (1989)
17-Rev. Lee Zimmermann, C.M. (2000)
19-Rev. John Lavin (1983)
19-Deacon Hubert Collins (1999)
21-Rev. Thomas Leahy, SAC (1969)
23-Rev. Louis Droll (2006)
25-Deacon John Munoz (2007)
29-Deacon Robert Daigle (1986)

From the Editor

How best should we spend our moments?

By Jimmy Patterson

A few weeks ago, we were on our way to Mass at St. Elizabeth in



Patterson

Lubbock, a few blocks east of the Texas Tech campus. For whatever reason I cannot remember, we were running late, and as we approached one of the side streets down which we would drive to the church, we noticed that the line to get to that street from the left turn lane was backed up. Later it became obvious that the 12-14 car snag was due to a non-working turn signal. Drivers inched their cars across University Blvd. one, maybe two at a time. It seemed to be taking an eternity.

I grumbled and whined to myself and to Karen. Our son, in the car

ahead of us with his girlfriend, didn't hear my displeasure at his decision to take this route. Thank goodness.

Somehow, we made it to the Mass during the opening procession. We searched the mostly-full church. Finding a place to sit is not easy at a 5 o'clock Sunday Mass in a college town.

We finally eyeballed a pew for four, and we settled in just in time for the opening prayer. A two-year-old girl in front of us began to cough and sneeze, blowing her germs on us like a priest sprinkling holy water. We watched as something differently colored dribbled and bubbled from her nose.

And I grumbled some more while looking for a safer more hygienic place to worship. I wondered how long it would be before we would come down with whatever she was spreading.

We made our way through the prayers, the Gloria, and the read-

ings, and then the deacon at St. Elizabeth rose to deliver his homily. He opened with a couple of gentle, corny jokes about the prior weekend's Super Bowl and then began his homily in earnest. He quoted not so much from Scripture to begin, but instead he pulled from the song "Everybody Hurts" by REM, a band once wildly popular among the college set.

"As many of you know," the deacon continued, "I have been dealing with cancer which has, thankfully, been in remission."

My attention was sufficiently grabbed, and slowly, the sick child and the defective turn light began to step out of my personal limelight. I have always been a sucker for a good rebound story and messages about making one's way back amid the worst of circumstances.

And then came his bombshell.

(Please See PATTERSON/22)

SEMINARIAN OF THE MONTH

Asking God for clarity helps Hayter see future

By Timothy Hayter

I never saw myself as a priest or seminarian before I was 26 years old. In fact, I was pretty sure it wasn't a possibility. There were occasions though, starting with a brief moment after a SEARCH retreat when I was 18, that I wondered if I should consider the priesthood because I knew there was a need for priests and I wanted to serve God in whatever way He wanted.

However, each time I took it to prayer seriously it seemed clear that it was not God's will for me at the time. Looking back I would not have been ready. God was still preparing me through my life experiences and my faith journey. That of course was until August of 2009 when through prayer God began to draw me to the priesthood. Initially I had trouble understanding and embracing it. I did not think I was worthy or capable of being a priest and I had always thought I would eventually get married and have children; not to mention I was enjoying being back in the Fort Stockton area where I grew up. I had a lot of letting go to do and it was not easy. Clinging to my original plans for my life created a



Hayter

barrier for me. Finally, I asked God for clarity and in January of 2010 He consistently began to help me see that He wanted me to enter the seminary. At first I had to do some leg work to figure out the difference between the religious life (belonging to a religious order) and the diocesan priesthood, and Fr. Barry McLean, the vocations director for the diocese at the time, was very helpful in answering such

My openness to God's will, as well as a complete trust in Him, is what has allowed me to answer the call to the priesthood. Even though I am confident that God has wanted me in the seminary, at least up to this point, I am still in the discernment process as I come to a better understanding of what the priesthood entails and how I would function as a priest.

I was at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston for my first four years, and this year I am doing my pastoral internship at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Odessa. I am getting more comfortable seeing myself as a priest in the future, but I remain open to God's will. We all are called to something. God has given each and every one of us different gifts and experiences for a reason. I challenge each reader to prayerfully consider what it is that God is asking of you. Please know and trust that He will provide whatever is needed to fulfill His will through you, but we must respond and put things into action.



‘That Man is You’ touching lives in San Angelo diocese

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor / West Texas Angelus

MIDLAND — Tuesdays at 6:15 a.m., a group of men, sometimes as many as 30 to 40 a week, gather at St. Ann’s Church in Midland to hear a man schooled in energy derivatives trading talk shop.

Week in and week out, the presenter shares his message: How to live. How to experience success in life. And how to become a man after God’s own heart.

That man is Steve Bollman, pictured above, who actually stepped outside of his energy trading house for the final time more than 10 years ago, realizing there was a more valuable commodity he could share with other men without expecting anything in return.

TMIY is an interactive, multimedia men’s program that helps develop authentic male leadership by focusing on the participants’ relationship to God, to their spouse and to their children. Divided into 13-week fall and spring semesters each year, TMIY is, in total, a three-year program.

In 2004, Bollman founded “That Man is You,” in his Houston parish, St. Cecilia. Then, like the price of a barrel of oil in the early 2010s, the program’s popularity skyrocketed a year later and is now offered in 275 parishes across the country. It is also estimated that as many as 20,000 men have participated.

In the Diocese of San Angelo, TMIY is currently in its second year at St. Ann’s, but Bishop Michael J. Sis hopes to see additional parishes offer the program.

“‘That Man is You’ gives men an opportunity to reflect together on their life of faith, particularly in their roles as husbands and fathers,” said Bishop Sis, who participated in TMIY at his Austin parish several years ago. “I enjoyed it, and I think the most beneficial part is the conversation that takes place in the table discussions after the video presentations. The program has a positive impact on men, and it is very easy and low-cost for the parish.”

(Please See TMIY/22)

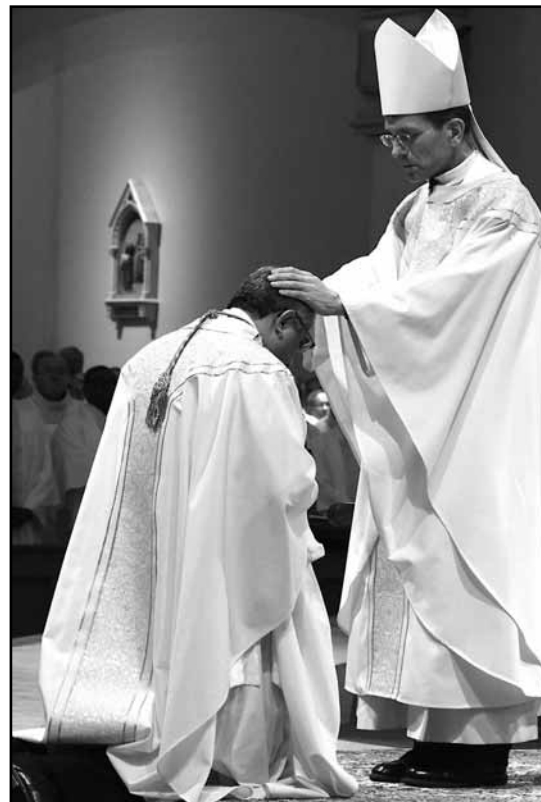


ROCK 4 LIFE EVENT CANCELLED

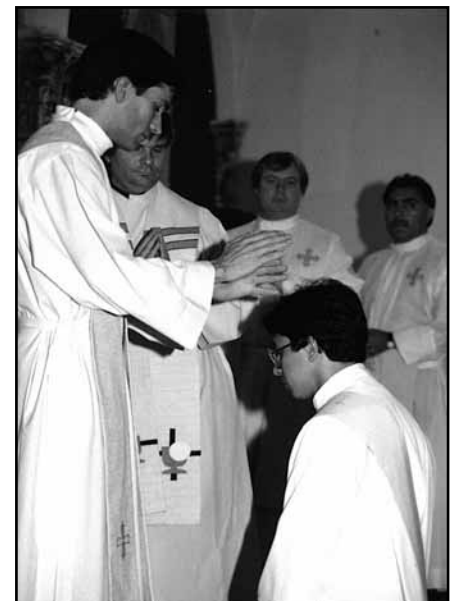
The Diocesan High School Youth Event, Rock 4 Life, scheduled for Saturday, March 7, was cancelled due to inclement weather. The presenter, Sal Solo (above), was unable to travel to San Angelo due to flight cancellations. The event will be rescheduled. (Photo salsolo.com)

Now ...

Bishop Michael J. Sis, at right in near right photo, lays hands on Most Rev. Daniel Garcia at Garcia’s ordination as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Austin. Far right, a young Fr. Michael Sis, left, lays hands on Garcia during Garcia’s priestly ordination, in 1988. (Photos courtesy Diocese of Austin).



... and then



'Fifty Shades of Grey' movie, books degrade women and human sexuality

Editor's Note: The following letter was written by Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of San Angelo.

Dear Editor,

The movie, "Fifty Shades of Grey" launched in movie theaters across America in mid-February 2015. It is based on the enormously popular book trilogy which has sold over 100 million copies across the world.

It is considered a literary phenomenon and the books were at or near the top of the *New York Times* best-seller lists in 2011 and 2012. These books were written by E. L. James, a female British author.

The focus of the books is the relationship between Christian Grey, a wealthy and successful Seattle-based entrepreneur, and Anastasia Steele, a recent college graduate. The story is presented as a romance novel but it is far beyond that in its content. The theme is that bondage, dominance and sado-masochism are normal and pleasurable. In the story the young Miss Steele is urged to sign a contract becoming a sex slave and agreeing to an abusive and degrading relationship.

The contract between the message of "Fifty Shades of Grey" and God's design for self-giving and self-sacrificing love, marriage and sexual intimacy could not be greater. The books and the movie undermine everything that we believe as members of the faith community.

As members of that community, we need to inform our constituencies about the destructive message of this movie and to highlight the beauty of God's design for loving relationships between a husband and wife in the covenant of marriage.

It is critically important not simply to condemn the message of "Fifty Shades of Grey." It is equally important to celebrate our message about love and blessing of sexual intimacy within the bonds of marriage. We have the better story — let's proclaim it.

Sincerely,

Bishop Emeritus Michael Pfeifer, OMI



Bishop celebrates 10th anniversary of adoration chapel at St. Margaret Church

West Texas Angelus

A Mass of Thanksgiving was held on January 26, 2015, celebrating the 10th anniversary of San Angelo's Perpetual Adoration Chapel. The chapel is located at St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church, 2619 Era Ave.

Concelebrating the Mass with Bishop Sis were, Rev. Chinnapureddy Pagidela, Pastor of St. Margaret's Church and Rev. Bhaskar Mendem, Pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Brady.

During the homily, Bishop Sis commented on the more than 8,000 hours that dedicated adorers have spent in prayer during 2014, and the fourteen plus parish communities represented at the celebration, from the San Angelo Deanery, who have given of their time and generosity to support the chapel.

While there are no set prayers or rules for prayer during the time spent in the Adoration Chapel, Bishop Sis suggested various meditations and prayers in which a person could engage, while in the chapel. His suggestions included: reading scripture, reading the writings of the early Church fathers, saints, mystics, praying the rosary and utilizing the five different types of prayer, Adoration, Intercession, Praise, Thanksgiving and Petition.



Bishop Michael J. Sis, top photo, receives the gifts brought by a parishioner at St. Margaret in San Angelo. Above, the bishop visits with the faith community after the Mass celebrating the 10th anniversary of the adoration chapel at St. Margaret.

Bishop Sis shared a story about a man who sat and stared at the Eucharist for hours each day, which expressed this man's meaning of adoration. When questioned about his daily practice, the man replied, "It's just me looking at God and God looking at me." No words needed.

Peace Ambassadors of West Texas



Bishop Sis helps Peace Ambassadors celebrate 10 years

By Becky Benes

February 14, 2015 marked the 10th anniversary of the Peace Ambassadors of West Texas (PAWT's) Valentine's Lunch at the Wesley Daily Bread Soup Kitchen in San Angelo.

Bishop Michael Pfeifer founded PAWT in response to the 9/11 attacks. It was his intention to bring about peace through understanding and engaging in interfaith dialogue. He gathered two Jews, two Muslims, and two Christians to come together in dialogue to see how they could bring about understanding in our area. Since that time, PAWT have established a weekly book study group, the Faith Club; a summer Children's Peace Camp, a yearly citywide educational program, the Season of Peace, and a yearly charitable program, the Valentines Lunch.

Each year, PAWT gathers people of all faith traditions, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and ages, to come

together to serve the poor creating a beautiful space, a delicious meal and lots of conversation. Rashda Khan, Peace Ambassador and coordinator of the event, believes that action speaks louder than words.

"While dialogue and conversation are an important part in creating peace, it is even better to combine action with dialogue," Khan said. "The Valentine's Lunch brings together people from diverse backgrounds, to work together for the greater good and get to know each other."

Bishop Sis, attending for the first time, said his most memorable take away from the event was eating and having conversations with one of the patrons. He said, "the conversation was blessed with joyful simplicity."

According to Rashda, "The Peace Ambassadors feel that this event is important because with all of the sad news in the world, it is easy to be disheartened about humanity. However,

these types of events show us that it is possible for people from different backgrounds to work together for peace and grow in relationship to one another."

Serving the poor and marginalized is a shared principle of all major faith traditions, so by bringing people of diverse backgrounds together working for the common good it opens the heart to love and compassion. Bishop Sis considered the event as a "tangible expression of interfaith collaboration where the goal was simply to help people in need without making a distinction of creed."

He believes that "the future of the human race depends on our ability to give and receive love across boundaries of religion, race, and economic status." The Valentines luncheon does just that, it is an event where you can actually be a part of the solution toward peace.

Bishop Sis encourages Catholics throughout the diocese to find ways to interact constructively with people of dif-

ferent faiths and believes that charitable action is a less threatening way to begin.

"Charitable action is an easy first step to dialogue because as mentioned by FBI agent, James Corney, 'It is hard to hate up close.'"

Working together side by side with "the other" for the greater good allows walls to come down and doors of peace to open.

The Peace Ambassadors of West Texas are passionate about their role in the promoting peace by offering programs throughout the year. They are also willing to share their wisdom and experience to help churches throughout the diocese establish interfaith initiatives. FMI contact Becky Benes: BeckyJBenes@gmail.com or 325-949-1450.

Pictured: Selected scenes from the Peace Ambassadors of West Texas Valentines' Lunch. (Courtesy photos).

Catholic Charities of Odessa



Help for the Homeless Odessa

Schedule for the remainder of 2015:

March 2, 2015

Woodson Comm. Center

First Baptist

Needs: Food, hygiene bags, serving

May 4, 2015

Catholic Charities of Odessa

Barbeque Cookoff

June 1, 2015

First Baptist Church

Needs: Food, hygiene bags, serving

September 14, 2015

First Baptist Church

Needs: Food, hygiene bags, serving

December 7, 2015

First Baptist Church

Needs: Food, hygiene bags, serving

Coalition reaches out to the homeless in Odessa

Catholic Charities of Odessa a big part of community effort

The Angelus

For more than eight years, Pastor Doug Herget with Odessa Tabernacle Life Center, has been ministering to the homeless. On the first Monday of the month, Herget provides a home-cooked meal, haircuts, clothing, hygiene necessities, job leads, and the opportunity to pray and become closer to God.

Other organizations also attend the event to offer resources like health care, counseling, and alcohol and drug abuse classes, etc. It has become a community-supported event where organiza-

tions and parishes often sponsor a particular month by providing and serving the food.

Pastor Doug and other volunteers drive to at least five shelters to pick up clients, and drop them off at the center. They register at the front two tables set up at the doors by Catholic Charities. Around Noon, Pastor Doug begins with announcements and prayer, and then calls on the sponsoring parish's priest or organization's representative to join in the prayer. Volunteers wait in line to get plates and begin serving the guests.

Hope for the Homeless volun-

teers refill on their drinks, distribute desserts and offer seconds.

After the clients are finished with their meal, they are transported back to their shelter or location from where they were picked up.

An average of 70-85 clients attend the Hope for Homeless event each month and the sponsoring organization or parish prepares enough food, desserts, drinks, and hygiene bags for 120. An average of food is usually prepared just in case more guests are received each month,



Photos courtesy of Catholic Charities of Odessa

DIOCESAN BRIEFS (continued from 2)

(From 2)

Job duties and other information regarding the position are available at the Diocesan website: www.sanangelodiocese.org/job-openings.

Resumes should be sent to Mike Wyse, Human Resources Director, Diocesan pastoral Center, P.O. Box 1829, San Angelo, Texas 76902-1829 emailed to mwyse@sanangelodiocese.org.

Safe environment info

The Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is firmly committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for our children and young people. To report allegations of sexual abuse by church personnel, contact the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Lori Hines. To ensure confidentiality in her outreach to victims, she can be contacted privately at (325) 374-7609 (cell). Alleged victims are advised of their right to report alleged abuse to civil authorities.

World Meeting of Families

The World Meeting of Families, held every three years, is coming to Philadelphia September 22-27, 2015. Pope Francis will be making his first visit to the United States during the event. The theme is "Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive." For more information or to register for the WMOF, please visit the World Meeting of Families website.

Engaged Encounter en Espanol

¿Cuándo Son los Fines de Semana?

Sept. 11-13 del 2015

En la Parroquia de Sta. Elizabeth Seton
7601 N Grandview Ave.
Odessa, Texas 79765

El Encuentro comienza el viernes a las 7:30 p.m. y termina el domingo como a las 3:00 p.m.

¿Cuánto Cuesta el Fin de Semana?

Cuesta \$150 por pareja. Esto incluye el programa, el alojamiento y las comidas. Con la forma de inscripción, se requiere un depósito de \$75 que no se devolverá. Con esto se reserva un lugar para la pareja. El matrimonio es toda la vida. Envíen la forma de inscripción con La boda es un día...el depósito a:

Oscar y Blanca Alvidrez

P O Box 132

Gardendale TX 79758

Haga su cheque a nombre de:

Diocese of San Angelo

¿Qué es el Encuentro de Novios?

Es un fin de semana en que las parejas que se quieren casar por la Iglesia Católica tienen tiempo para concentrarse uno en el otro, libres de los problemas e interrupciones de la vida diaria. Es una oportunidad de compartir honestamente sobre su vida futura juntos. Unos de los asuntos en que los novios comparten son: Su identidad

personal, el dinero, el sexo, hijos, familia y religión.

¿Qué Pasa Durante Este Fin de Semana?

Se presenta una serie de pláticas basadas en las experiencias del equipo (dos parejas casadas y un sacerdote). Las parejas de novios son animados a compartir privadamente muchos aspectos de la vida matrimonial. Después de cada plática hay tiempo para reflexionar privadamente y tiempo para dialogar con el novio (la novia). Durante el fin de semana hay tiempo para preguntas, compartimiento con el grupo, oración, reconciliación y la Liturgia del Domingo.

¿Hay un Tiempo Ideal Para el Encuentro?

Cuando una pareja decida casarse, debelaticar con el sacerdote de su parroquia. Entonces la pareja debe inscribirse para el Encuentro de Novios lo más pronto posible. Porque las inscripciones están limitadas, las parejas que se inscriben primero, tendrán la primera oportunidad de asistir. Favor de usar la forma de inscripción a la derecha de esta hoja.

¿Para Quién es el Encuentro de Novios?

Es para parejas comprometidas que quieren casarse por la Iglesia Católica. Antes de inscribirse, la pareja debe haber hablado con su párroco.

Un evento extraordinario le espera a usted

La parroquia de Santa María Reina de la Paz en Brownwood, Texas está patrocinando una misión parroquial del 23 al 26 de marzo. La misión se titula "Vivo en el Espíritu." El Padre Don Willard, C.Ss.R., que creció en Pittsfield, Illinois y el Padre Benedicto Nwachukwu de Nigeria y que reside en California serán nuestros predicadores. El Padre Don predicará en Inglés y el Padre Benedicto en Español. La misión comienza a las 6:30 pm el lunes y termina el jueves, e irá acompañada de un rato dedicado a conocernos y a compartir un ligero refrigerio.

Para aquellos que no están familiarizados con misiones, la misión es un evento predicador. La Palabra de Dios es proclamada a través de la Biblia, la doctrina Católica y a través de la vida, aprendizaje y experiencia personal del predicador. Católicos y no-Católicos son bienvenidos todas las noches o la noche que usted escoja. Los símbolos y temas de la misión cada noche son:

Lunes: La Biblia y la Salvación

Martes: La Cruz y Jesús como Redentor

Miércoles: Cenizas y el amor, la sanación misericordiosa y el perdón de Dios

Jueves: El Altar y Nuestra Misión

Marque su calendario y venga a participar!

Información/preguntas: Llame al 325-

646-7455

Brownwood@sanangelodiocese.org

www.sm1familybwd.org



Patrick Repman, third from left, with family members, from left, Donna Repman Reker, sister; Lisa Repman, wife; Donna Repman, mom; Daniel Kiefer, nephew; Sarah Repman, daughter; Carla Repman, sister-in-law, and Mary Repman Kiefer, sister.

Below, Repman with Msgr. Larry Droll, pastor at St. Ann's.

MFD District Chief Patrick Repman named 2015 Distinguished St. Ann's Graduate

By Heather Bredimus
St. Ann's School-Midland

Midland Fire Department District Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator, Patrick Repman, was awarded the Distinguished Graduate Award of 2015 from St. Ann's Catholic School in Midland, Texas on January 30. The award recognizes graduates for outstanding leadership, contributions of service in the local community, and notable accomplishments in the recipients' professional careers.

Honorees are nominated by members of the church and school community and the award is presented annually at the conclusion of Catholic Schools Week in the Friday morning Mass celebrated by the students currently enrolled at St. Ann's. The award represents the highest honor bestowed upon graduates of St. Ann's Catholic School. Patrick Repman, along with his family, shares a history of generational lineage in attendance at St. Ann's School. From the early 1960s, the Repman family has been a staple in the church and school congregations. Today, the school history includes graduates and currently enrolled students of the Repman genealogy that span over five decades.

In fact, Patrick is the second sibling of the Repman clan to receive the highest honor of Distinguished Graduate after his older sister, Donna Reker, who is employed as the Physical Education teacher at St. Ann's. Patrick says that he is proud to be following in his sister's footsteps and hopes to encour-



age fellow family members as he leads by example.

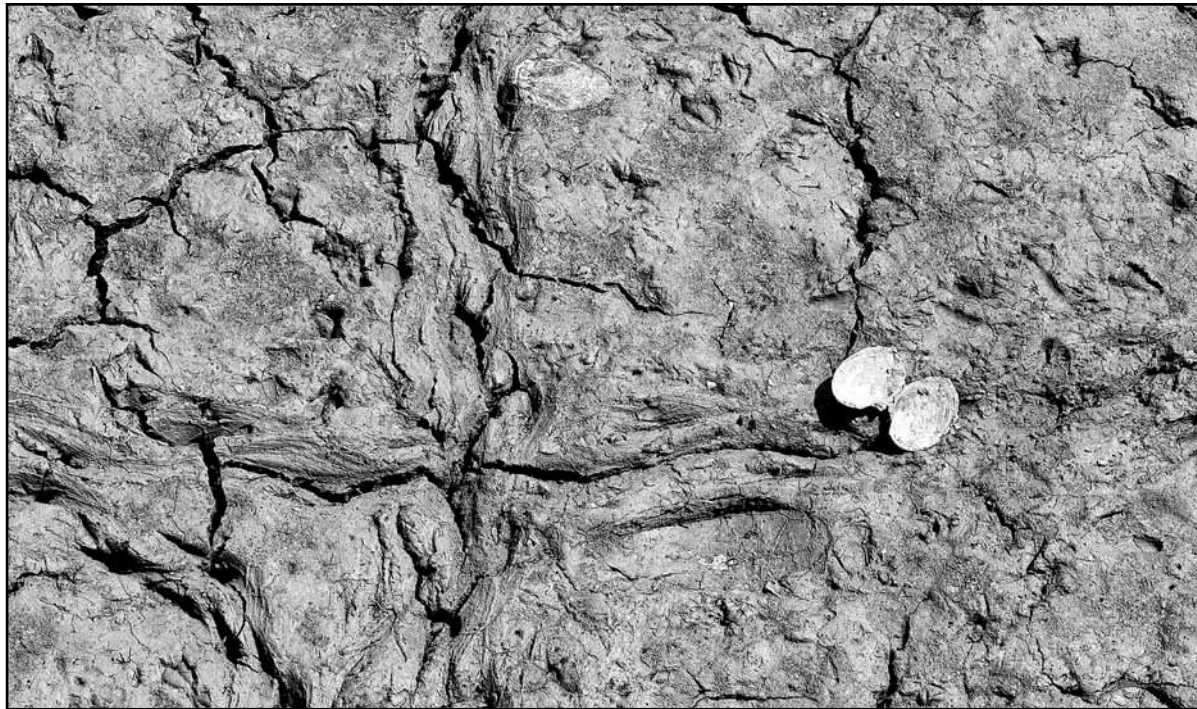
Mr. Repman has been employed with the Midland Fire Department for 23 years and has served as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Midland for 15 years. He is also the District Chief over Hazardous Materials for the Midland Fire Department. Patrick holds five degrees including a Master of Arts and Master of Business Administration.

He has twice been elected to Who's Who in American

Universities and Jr. Colleges and is also a recipient of the prestigious nationally recognized "Environmental Hero Award" from the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Mr. Repman possesses the certification of Master Firefighter, Master Arson Investigator, Master Inspector, Master Fire Service Instructor, Fire Officer II, Hazmat Specialist, and a Master Peace Officer License.

Chief Repman is a graduate of the National Fire Academy and the Emergency Management Institutes, which includes the Professional Development Series. Patrick also sits on several local boards for various volunteer and non-volunteer organizations including the Domestic Preparedness Advisory Committee Board.

St. Ann's Catholic School is proud to have Chief Patrick Repman as a representative, as he so clearly embodies the three key values of the school: Faith, Knowledge and Character.



A mussel shell lies on the bank of a dried-up creek bed near Lake Arlington in Arlington, Texas, Aug. 1. The Texas drought was the second-worst on record, surpassing one that ended in 1918. Natural disasters around the world and all across the United States this year prompted prayers, charitable giving and outreach amid unthinkable destruction. (CNS photo/Tim Sharp, Reuters)

Creation is sacred, and the world is a Chalice of Grace

By Most Rev Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI
Bishop Emeritus of San Angelo

World Water Day, March 22, and World Earth Day April 22, focuses on our responsibility to reverence and enhance all of creation. These days call all of us to develop a new respect and appreciation for Mother Earth, Our Home, for all the gifts that we receive from the Earth, especially water that we people, and all living things, need to survive. On these two ecological days we celebrate the beauty and wonder of God's creation which has its origin in a plan of love and truth.

God gave human beings the gracious gift of Earth for our use and future generations and as his stewards we are to respect it and care for it. Our mandate from God is to complete the work of creation, to perfect its harmony and growth for our own good and that of our neighbor. As guardians of the environment, we are to ensure the proper balance of the ecosystems on which we depend.

The creation that surrounds us is a "chalice of grace," it is gracious, because it reveals God's abundant goodness. This grace, this goodness, is found everywhere and to treat it with disrespect is blasphemy. The imprint of the creator, as the patron of the environment, St Francis teaches us, is found in all of creation, especially in humans. The environment is sacred, as it comes from the Holy hands of our creator

and to ruthlessly exploit it is a sacrilege.

Pope Francis reminds us: "We are losing our attitude of wonder, of contemplation, of listening to creation and thus we no longer manage to interpret within it what Pope Benedict XVI calls "the rhythm of the love-story between God and man." Francis call us to be protectors of creation, of God's plan inscribed in nature. Ecologists seek the conversion of cultures and individuals from a focus on consumption to lives of temperance, and from being a "throw away" society, a "culture of waste" to being a sharing and sustainable community, recycling and repairing the environment, and using nature's gifts in a responsible manner. This calls for ecological conversion. As we care for creation, we realize that our Father Creator, indeed cares for us.

Our engagement of the world must transcend politics, policy, and science and focus on human ecology, which calls for a conversion of life style, and sharing of all of Earth's goods with all. We are living in a time of crisis, fracturing the environment in countless ways like global climate change. We see it in the nature that surrounds, but also we see it in men and women. Science and Technology have contributed much to progress to enrich the gifts of creation. However, there are moral limits to their use and application, among which is the effect on the environment. The proper ecological balance demands international cooperation, intergenerational solidarity and addressing

structures forms of poverty.

These two special days, focused on water and on planet earth filled with abundant gracious gifts, call us to reflect on the deeper meaning of ecology. Ecology stems from the Greek Oikos, which means "home" and shares the same roots with ecology and economy. Ecological living require us to care for our earthly "home" with an economy that respects creation in a pattern of sustainable development and prudent use of energy, water and food resources and sharing them with others.

Ecology implies a system of relationships and interaction, and we can say that maintaining a proper ecology of our natural environment is only possible when we foster a truly "Human Ecology" which is inseparably linked to natural ecology. All ecology is strengthen when we promote human relationships and interactions that respect the dignity of the human person, the crown of creation, the common good and all of nature.

World Water Day, calls all of us to a water management and resource distribution that must be guided by considerations for the common good of the people of the world and the natural systems of the planet itself.

Of all the precious gifts on Planet Earth, water is a basic right and has a preeminent place as it is essential for all life. How we use our water involves choices we all make. All can choose to participate in preserving and protecting the gift of water. I

present a practical way for this to happen as given in the manual "Water: Yours, Mine, Ours," which presents a three-part strategy for taking better care of water: Conserve it, capture it, and keep it clean.

Conserve water, which means changing our Water Culture from one that takes and uses water for granted and freely wastes it, to a New Water Culture that considers it priceless.

Capture water by harvesting rain so as to achieve water independence even during drought times.

Clean water, which means protecting the water underground and the water in our rivers and reservoirs by minimizing pollutants in our yards, on our rangeland and on our streets. Keeping water clean protects our health, reduces unnecessary purification costs and helps the whole environment.

World Water Day invites all of us, wherever we live, to join in water conservation by saving water on a daily basis. To do this, I invite you to take the "40 Gallon Challenge" 40gallonchallenge.org/pledge.cfm. This will save a minimum of 40 gallons a day in each household.

Our fundamental orientation toward the creative world should be one of gratitude and thankfulness. The world, in fact, leads people back to the mystery of God who has created it and continues to sustain it.

Speaking of Saints ...

Saint Colette's life devoted to meditation, prayer, helping the poor

By Mary Lou Gibson



Gibson

Mary Lou Gibson writes about saints for the *West Texas Angelus*. Gibson's column also appears monthly in the *Catholic Spirit*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Austin.

The Hundred Years' War from 1337 to 1453 pitted the kings and kingdoms of France and England against each other. The armies of both sides caused hideous casualties and destruction of land and people. Into this time, a daughter was born in 1381 at Corbie, near Amiens, France, to elderly parents (her mother was 60). She was baptized Nicolette in gratitude to St. Nicholas of Myra for her birth. Her father, Robert Bodet (or Boilet) was a carpenter who worked at Corbie's Benedictine Abbey.

Her parents died when she was 18 and Dom de Roye, the Benedictine abbot of Corbie, became her guardian. Omer Englebert writes in "Lives of the Saints" that Colette, as she was called, refused to be married and distributed all her goods to the poor. She had a natural inclination for prayer and meditation and tried different ways to live a spiritual life, first as a Benedictine, then as a Beguine.

Neither place satisfied her desire for prayer, penance and seclusion. She then became a tertiary of St. Francis and her guardian authorized her to take a vow of seclusion. For the next three years, Colette lived in a cell between two buttresses of Notre Dame de Corbie. The fighting between the French and English raged on and so many died that there were few left to bury the dead. The Church was also in distress and the West was in full schism.

Colette became well known for her holiness and spiritual wisdom. Her time in the hermitage was coming to an end. Editor Michael Walsh writes in "Butler's Lives of the Saints" that she began to have visions in which St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare of Assisi appeared to her. According to Rosemary Guiley writing in the "Encyclopedia of Saints," they instructed her to begin a reform of the Poor Clares. This was a contemplative Order of nuns founded by St. Clare of Assisi and St. Francis of Assisi in 1212. Woodeene Koenig-Bricker writes in "365 Saints" that by the early 15th century, the Poor Clares had lost much of its original spirit and had fallen into lax ways. Walsh writes that Colette hesitated and did not immediately answer the charge that St. Francis gave her of restoring the first rule of St. Clare in all its original severity. After, she was struck blind for three days and dumb for three days more, Colette recognized this as a sign from heaven and left her cell.

Walsh writes that she dressed in a habit made up of patches, and set out barefoot for Nice to see Peter de Luna, the antipope recognized by France as Benedict XIII. He was much impressed with her and gave her the veil and seraphic cord and named her superior of all the convents she might reform or found. She set out on her travels in 1406 and went from convent to convent. She believed she had found her true vocation at last – to restore the Poor Clares to their original charism, especially with regard to absolute poverty.

She was not always met with enthusiasm. Many times she encountered fierce opposition to her reforms and was sometimes treated as a fanatic and sorcerer. Eventually, she met with a more favorable reception, especially in Savoy. Besançon was the first house of Poor Clares to receive her revised rule in 1410. For the next 40 years she traveled all over France and Savoy founding 17 convents with the reformed rule and reforming several older convents. Guiley writes that Colette's reforms included: going barefoot, perpetual fasts and abstinence. She established her Colettine reforms in convents in France, Germany and the Low Countries. Poor Clare nuns observe the Gospel life lived within the bounds of papal enclosure. The nuns take vows of obedience, poverty, chastity and enclosure. They are the most austere women's order of the Roman Catholic Church devoted to

(Please See **SAINTS/22**)



Equestrian Order dinner

Bishop Michael J. Sis, center, with, from left, Jeanette Hollmann, Phyllis George, Patti Langford, and Margaret Carpenter, all members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. The group, also commonly referred to as the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre, provides support for the Christian Church in the Middle East. There are 88 members of the global organization in the Diocese of San Angelo. It met in Midland for its annual section dinner, February 28.

Lenten Penance Services

Date	Time	Location
February 26	6:30 PM	St. Joseph Parish, San Angelo
February 27	5:30 PM	St. Agnes Church, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Fort Stockton
March 2	7:00 PM	St. Mary Parish, San Angelo
March 4	6:00 PM	Sacred Heart Parish, Menard
March 4	6:30 PM	St. Ann Parish, Sonora
March 4	7:00 PM	St. Francis Parish, Abilene
March 10	7:00 PM	St. Mary Parish, Ballinger
March 11	6:00 PM	St. Theresa Parish, Junction
March 11	7:00 PM	St. Ann Parish, Colorado City
March 12	6:00 PM	St. Charles Parish, Eden
March 16	7:00 PM	St. Mary Parish, Odessa
March 17	6:30 PM	St. Margaret Parish, San Angelo
March 17	7:00 PM	St. Vincent Parish, Abilene
March 18	6:30 PM	St. Patrick Parish, Brady
March 18	7:00 PM	Holy Trinity Parish, Big Spring
March 18	7:00 PM	St. Mary Parish, Brownwood
March 19	7:00 PM	Holy Family Parish, Abilene
March 19	7:00 PM	St. Joseph Parish, Stanton
March 23	6:30 PM	St. Joseph Parish, Rowena
March 24	6:30 PM	St. Lawrence Parish, St. Lawrence
March 24	6:30 PM	Sacred Heart Cathedral, San Angelo
March 24	7:00 PM	Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Andrews
March 24	7:00 PM	Holy Spirit Parish, Sweetwater
March 25	6:00 PM	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Ozona
March 25	6:30 PM	Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Eldorado
March 25	7:00 PM	Sacred Heart Parish, Coleman
March 25	7:00 PM	Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Midland
March 25	7:00 PM	St. Ambrose Parish, Wall
March 30	7:00 PM	Sacred Heart Parish, Abilene
March 30	7:00 PM	Holy Redeemer Parish, Odessa
March 31	7:00 PM	St. Ann Parish, Midland

Making Sense of Bioethics

Medical help for the battle of the bulge

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Bariatric surgery, which often involves banding of the stomach, is a widely used procedure for treating severe obesity. Another approach that relies on an implantable "stomach pacemaker" also appears poised to assist those struggling with significant weight gain.

Many people have already benefitted from these kinds of surgical interventions, enabling them to shed a great deal of weight, improve their health and get a new lease on life.

At the same time, however, it's important for us to examine such interventions from an ethical point of view. It's not simply a matter of weight loss, achieved by any means whatsoever, but a rational decision made after carefully weighing the risks, benefits and alternatives.

Bjorn Hofmann, a medical ethicist who writes about the ethical issues surrounding obesity-correction techniques notes, "Bariatric surgery is particularly interesting because it uses surgical methods to modify healthy organs, is not curative, but offers symptom relief for a condition that is considered to result from lack of self-control and is subject to significant prejudice."

The healthy organ that is modified is the stomach, which may be either banded or surgically modified with staples to create a small stomach pouch. This causes food to be retained in the small pouch for a longer period of time, creating a feeling of fullness, with the effect of reducing how much a person ingests at a single meal.

Like any surgical technique, bariatric surgery has risks associated with it: Mortality from the surgery itself is less than one percent, but post-surgical leakage into the abdomen or malfunction of the outlet from the stomach pouch can require further surgeries. Nearly 20 percent of patients experience chronic gastrointestinal symptoms. Wound infections, clot formation, vitamin deficiencies, cardiorespiratory failure, and other complications like gallstones and osteoporosis can also occasionally arise.

A new device, sometimes described as a "pacemaker for the stomach," was recently approved by regulators at the Food and Drug Administration. This rechargeable and implantable device blocks electrical nerve signals between the stomach and the brain and helps to diminish the feeling of being hungry. The cost for the small machine, along with its surgical implantation, is expected to run between \$30,000 and \$40,000, making it competitive with various forms of bariatric surgery.

Because the stomach pacemaker does not modify the stomach or the intestines as organs, but instead reduces appetite by blocking electrical signals in the abdominal vagus nerve, some of the surgery-related complications associated with modifying or stapling the stomach are eliminated. Other surgical complications related to the

insertion of the device into the abdomen have sometimes been observed, however, as well as adverse events associated with its use, like pain, nausea and vomiting.

Bariatric surgery, it should be noted, is not universally successful in terms of the underlying goal of losing weight and some patients ultimately regain the weight they lose either through enlargement of the stomach pouch or a return to compulsive eating patterns or both. Results have been similarly mixed for patients receiving the stomach pacemaker: some lose and keep off significant amounts of weight; others show only negligible improvements when they are unable to adhere to the needed life-long changes in eating habits.

Among the ethical questions that need to be considered with regard to surgically-based approaches are: Should an expensive, invasive and potentially risky surgery be routinely used for an anomaly that might be addressed by modifications in diet and eating habits? What criteria should be met before such surgery is seriously considered?

It is also of ethical importance that physicians and surgeons not be unduly influenced by device manufacturers to utilize their various stomach banding apparatuses or their pacemaker devices.

In 1991, the National Institutes of Health developed a consensus statement on "Gastrointestinal Surgery for Severe Obesity" that offers guidance for clinical decision making. The statement notes that, beyond having a serious weight problem, patients seeking therapy for the first time for their obesity should "generally be encouraged to try non-surgical treatment approaches including dietary counseling, exercise, behavior modification and support."

These broad guidelines are intended to spark discussion on the part of patients and their medical team: How much support has an individual really received prior to looking into weight reduction surgery or stomach pacemaker insertion? Some patients may have tried diligently for years to lose weight, while others may have made only cursory, poorly-supported efforts. The need for support is also likely to continue following bariatric surgery or after the implantation of a stomach pacemaker.

In sum, there are notable differences between such surgical interventions and traditional weight loss techniques involving exercise and diet. With the surgical techniques, due diligence will be required both prior to and following such interventions, particularly in light of the ongoing discussions about the cost-effectiveness, safety, risks and outcomes of interventional surgery for the overweight patient.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org



Pacholczyk

What I learned in college

By Erick Rommel
Catholic News Service

I almost changed colleges after my freshman year. I never considered dropping out, but transferring crossed my mind many times. It wasn't because of my grades. I was doing well. It wasn't my social life. I had friends, and I still keep in touch with many of them. My dissatisfaction came from the enjoyment, or lack of, that I felt for my classes.

Looking back, my displeasure was probably nothing more than a freshman wanting to get involved and be active in his chosen, future career path. Unfortunately, the scheduling office had other ideas.

As a communications major, I had dreams of creativity. Instead, I was stuck learning theory. Even worse, I was stuck learning theory at 8 a.m., three days a week, with a professor whose demeanor encouraged a return to slumber rather than energized learning. I spent most of my time in that class struggling to understand ideas that made no sense to me. I couldn't grasp the concepts because I saw no relation to the real world.

When I wasn't learning theory, I was trying to learn probability and statistics. Throughout the class, we had to determine likelihoods for a variety of questions. In a jar with 100 jelly beans, seven black, what are the odds of picking a black jelly bean on your third attempt? If there are three people in a room named Jennifer, what are the odds they'll be the first three people you meet? The questions were endless, but in my mind the answer was always the same: You will or you won't.

I realize now that the ideas I struggled with have an application in life. I may not be able to determine how likely I am to meet one of the three Jennifers in a room, but I can evaluate the obstacles I face for any given project and determine the likelihood of achieving the outcome I want.

When considering what I want, I ask myself how to go about it. Do I appeal to a person's vanity? Do I explain my idea and its attributes? Or, do I make the case that it's something we can't afford to avoid? Even though I couldn't name the elements, I realize that I'm subconsciously falling back on the lessons I learned in college, which I learned during the courses that I didn't think were applicable in life. If nothing else, I can emphasize my points until they can't be ignored or denied.

Sometimes I wonder what my life would be like if I never realized how much I learned in those classes. I wonder what my life would be like if I had left? Who would I be today if I'd transferred to a different school? I would have different friends. I'd have a different degree. More than likely I'd live in a different state. How can I compare that life that never was with the life I currently have?

The moments that cause monumental shifts of what might have been are those we look back on the most. They don't need to be dramatic to make an impact. Sometimes they're as simple as sticking it out when you think of quitting.



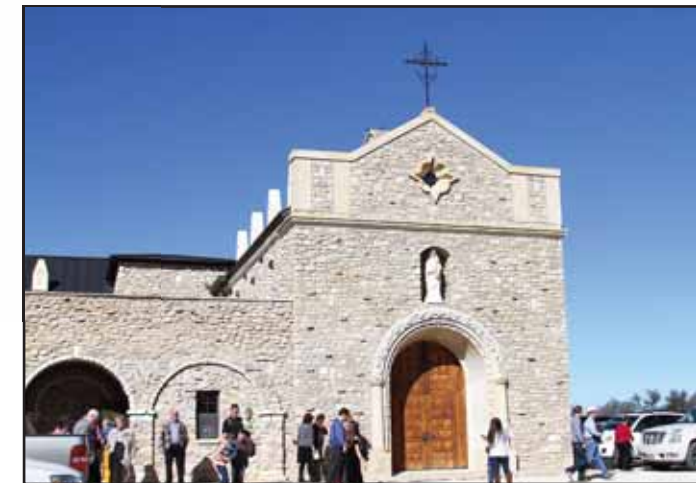
Rommel



“What we need most in order to make progress is to be silent before this great God with our appetite and with our tongue, for the language he best hears is silent love.”

— St. John of the Cross, OCD

Photos by Alan P. Torre / aptorre.com



On February 8, 2015, the Mt. Carmel Hermitage and the Our Lady of Grace Monastery, opened doors for visitors as part of the Year of Consecrated Life.

Clockwise from top left, Sister Mary Michael Nearlinger, O.Carm., of the Our Lady of Grace Carmelite Monastery, at podium ... Sister Mary Joseph; Sister Mary Michael, O.Carm.; Sister Elsa Garcia, CDP, of St. Ann's in Midland; Sister Mary Grace Erl, O.Carm., Superior at the monastery; Sister Malachy Griffin, OP; Sister Hilda Marotta, OSF, director of the Office of Education and Formation in San Angelo, and Sister Mary Theodore, O.Carm., address questions from visitors to the monastery ... visitors outside the monastery ... young people praying inside the monastery ... hermits with Fr. Fabian Maria, O.Carm., at the hermitage, and ... lower left, Rev. Martin Mary, O.Carm., teaches visitors about life as a Carmelite.

Catholic Voices

Look and you will find God in our communities

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Some years ago I attended a symposium on religious experience. A variety of speakers made presentations on how they tried to experience God. One woman, a professor of religious studies, shared how she spent nearly three hours each day meditating, using a strict method for centring prayer. She went on to say that, during those periods of prayer, she sometimes felt God's presence quite intensely.



Fr. Rolheiser

During the question period, I asked her this: "How would you compare the feelings you have when you meditate privately in this way to the feelings you have when you are at the dinner-table with family or friends?" Her response: "There's no comparison, not in terms of religious experience. At table, I sometimes have nice, secular experiences, but in prayer I really meet God!"

I'm both pagan and Christian enough to have reservations about that answer, not because I doubt the power or importance of private prayer, we could all use more of it, but because of what such an answer says

about God and our experience of God. What's at issue here?

Someone, I think it was Buckminster Fuller, once said: "God is a verb not a noun." At one level, that statement is dangerously false. At another, however, it affirms something very important and Christian about our relationship to God, namely, that God is not, first of all, a formula, a dogma, a creedal statement, or a metaphysics that demands our assent. God is a flow of living relationships, a trinity, a family of life that we can enter, taste, breathe within, and let flow through us.

"God is love," scripture says, "and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him or her." Too often, we miss what that means because we tend to romanticize love. We've all heard this passage read at weddings; appropriate surely, but, within that circumstance, all too-misunderstood for it is pictured as romantic love, as falling-in-love, wonderful and holy though this may be. Thus, at a wedding, we can easily miss the sense of what this text means. It might best be rendered this way: "God is community, family, parish, friendship, hospitality and whoever abides in these abides in God and God abides in him or her." God is a trinity, a flow of relationships among persons. If this is true, and scripture assures us that it is, then the realities of dealing with each other in community, at the

dinner-table, over a bottle of wine or an argument, not to mention the simple giving and receiving of hospitality are not a pure, secular experiences but the stuff of church, the place where the life of God flows through us.

By definition, God is ineffable, beyond imagination and beyond language, even the best language of theology and church dogma. God can never be understood or captured adequately in any formula. But God can be known, experienced, tasted, related to in love and friendship. God is Someone and Something that we live within and which can flow through our veins. To make God real in our lives, therefore, we needn't sneak off, shamrocks and triangles in hand, to try to somehow picture how three-can-be-one and one-can-be-three. Nor indeed need we read academic books on theology, valuable though these may be. No. God is a flow of relationships to be experienced in community, family, parish, friendship, and hospitality. When we live inside of these relationships, God lives inside of us and we live inside of God. Scripture assures us that we abide in God whenever we stay inside of family, community, parish, friendship, hospitality – and, yes, even when we fall in love.

This has huge consequences for how we should understand religious experience: Among other things, it means that God is

more domestic than monastic (monks will be the first to tell you that). It means too, that in coming to know God, the dinner-table is more important than the theology classroom, the practice of grateful hospitality is more important than the practice of right dogma, and meeting with others to pray as a community can give us something that long hours in private meditation (or, indeed, long years spent absent from church-life) cannot. Such a concept also blurs all simple distinctions between "religious" and "purely secular" experience. Finally, importantly, it tells us that, since God is inside of community, we should be there too, if we wish to go to heaven. Simply put, we can't go to hell, if we stick close to family, community, and parish.

The most pernicious heresies that block us from properly knowing God are not those of formal dogma, but those of a culture of individualism that invite us to believe that we are self-sufficient, that we can have community and family on our own terms, and that we can have God without dealing with each other. But God is community – and only in opening our lives in gracious hospitality will we ever understand that.

Ronald Rolheiser, a Roman Catholic priest and member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio.

Why having a heart of gold is not what Christianity is about

By Very Rev. Robert Barron

Many atheists and agnostics today insistently argue that it is altogether possible for non-believers in God to be morally upright. They resent the implication that the denial of God will lead inevitably to complete ethical relativism or nihilism.

And they are quick to point out examples of non-religious people who are models of kindness, compassion, justice, etc. In point of fact, a recent article has proposed that non-believers are actually, on average, more morally praiseworthy than religious people. In this context, I recall Christopher Hitchens remark that, all things considered, he would be



Fr. Barron

more frightened of a group of people coming from a religious meeting than a group coming from a rock concert or home from a night on the town. God knows (pun intended) that during the last twenty years we've seen plenty of evidence from around the world of the godly behaving very badly indeed.

Though I could quarrel with a number of elements within this construal of things, I would actually gladly concede the major point that it is altogether possible for atheists and agnostics to be morally good. The classical Greek and Roman formulators of the theory of the virtues were certainly not believers in the Biblical God, and many of their neo-pagan successors today do indeed exhibit fine moral qualities. What I should like to do, however, is to use this controversy as a springboard to make a larger point, namely that Christianity is not primarily about ethics, about "being a nice person"

or, to use Flannery O'Connor's wry formula, "having a heart of gold." The moment Christians grant that Christianity's ultimate purpose is to make us ethically better people, they cannot convincingly defend against the insinuation that, if some other system makes human beings just as good or better, Christianity has lost its *raison d'être*.

Much of the confusion on this score can be traced to the influence of Immanuel Kant, especially his seminal text *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. Like so many of his Enlightenment era confreres, Kant was impatient with the claims of the revealed religions. He saw them as unverifiable and finally irrational assertions that could be defended, not through reason, but only through violence. Do you see how much of the "New Atheism" of the post-September 11th era is conditioned by a similar suspicion? Accordingly, he argued that, at its best,

religion is not about dogma or doctrine or liturgy but about ethics. In the measure that the Scriptures, prayer, and belief make one morally good, they are admissible, but in the measure that they lead to moral corruption, they should be dispensed with. As religious people mature, Kant felt, they would naturally let those relatively extrinsic practices and convictions fall to the side and would embrace the ethical core of their belief systems. Kant's army of disciples today include such figures as John Shelby Spong, John Dominic Crossan, James Carroll, Bart Ehrman, and the late Marcus Borg, all of whom think that Christianity ought to be de-supernaturalized and re-presented as essentially a program of inclusion and social justice.

The problem with this Kantianism both old and new is that it runs dramatically

(Please See BARRON/23)

Catholic Voices

When the words change and the memory falters

By Maureen Pratt
Catholic News Service

It has been several years since the church instituted word changes to some parts of the Mass, but I still get tripped up from time to time. Perhaps it was hard for me because I was attending Mass in French when the changes were instituted.

But, even now, I still stumble over the words and I know I'm not alone. Each Sunday, I still hear someone stumble along with me, or fumble for the right page so that they can read the correct word-ing. For some of us, it's hard to memorize them.

I'm not complaining at all about the

changes, mind you. But, some days, it seems so difficult to do away with the old and embrace the new.

Bad Catholic, or just challenged?

Lately, I've been exploring information about memorization. I've learned that we start memorizing words as youngsters at home. We learn, as toddlers, for example, by asking "What's that?" and pointing to an object over and over, asking for its name. Spiritually, we learn some prayers at an early age, too. This establishes a "pathway" in the brain for prayer and that is the beginning of our conversation with God.

Parents sometimes coach us in prayerful memorization, which reinforces how and what we learn spiritually. That foundation remains into adulthood.

In school, memorization becomes an exercise of repetition and "meaningful learning." We learn to attach context to the words or phrases we want to recall. As we move through religious education, we attend classes that help us learn, not only

prayers but their context and meaning.

It's here that most adults today learned the "old" way of saying the words that were recently changed, and to reinforce them, we also learned where they are placed in the Mass and what they mean.

Many adult Catholics did not continue formal religious education beyond the sacrament of confirmation. But we have kept learning -- and memorizing -- encountering an ever-burgeoning amount of data that needs sorting, learning and recalling.

From school, to work, to home, to life in general, our days of having oodles of time to sit and memorize something are mostly past. Yet, our need to learn, retain and use information only increases.

Of course, as we age, the brain changes subtly, and memorizing becomes more of a challenge. Illness can interfere.

Environment and other distractions steal our focus. Fatigue affects us more. But this doesn't mean we give up. In fact, we can help our brains stay relatively resilient and

limber, benefiting from more confidence and ability to adapt to inevitable change.

To improve memorization, try some of these tips I gathered from websites, books and other available information:

Focus: Eliminate distractions while learning something new.

Write out what you want to memorize, over and over again, until you know the information by heart.

Sing the words or use other levels of your voice to key your brain into the newness of what you're trying to learn.

Visualize the words, their length and letters.

Be persistent and try to memorize at different times of the day, when your attention is strongest.

Finally, be forgiving and use a "crib sheet" or, in the case of Mass, a prayer book, instead of fumbling for the words. God knows what's in your heart and with time and attention we'll all be on the same page.



Pratt

Marching for life in all its phases

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

Advocates of the pro-life movement marched on Washington recently on the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion. Participants sprawled on cold concrete in a "die-in" in front of the White House.

I know several people who march every year. They participate in the ministries of my former parish in Croton-on-Hudson, New York. At dawn, they board buses for the 5- or 6-hour ride to Washington and return late that night. Much more than that is needed to safeguard a culture of life today.

Recently, the "PBS NewsHour" focused on the struggles of young working parents. Paul Solman, the PBS cor-

respondent reporting the story, said that the United States was one of a handful of countries that does not provide any paid time off for new mothers, unless you're lucky enough to work for a company such as Google or live in places like California that will provide some paid family leave.

The Family Medical Leave Act, enacted in 1993, provides for 12 weeks of unpaid leave but only for employees of firms with at least 50 workers. But a first-time mother interviewed by Solman said it was very difficult to get her employer's approval, and she had to return to work sooner than she thought because she and her husband could not afford to have her stay at home to care for her baby. She added that if she had known how difficult it would be, she would have opted not to have the child.

Caring for a newborn is only the first of many hurdles parents face today. Among industrialized countries, writes columnist Nicholas Kristof of The New York Times, 70 percent of 3-year-olds go to pre-

school, but in the United States only 38 percent attend pre-school.

"In America, we have subsidized private jets, big banks and hedge fund managers," Kristof wrote. "Wouldn't it make more sense to subsidize kids?"

My wife and I were married in the 1950s and we had six children. I earned only \$100 a week as a reporter for The Tribune in Albuquerque, New Mexico, supplemented by freelance photography and my pay as an Army reservist. My wife did not have to work full time.

We never worried about whether we could afford another child. I had health insurance through my employment to pay the prenatal and hospital bills. It is different today. The hospital cost of having a child adds up to \$30,000 or more. I was surprised to learn recently that sick leave for workers is no longer a given. We always had it.

Kristof bolsters my feeling that the times were better in the past: "Even with the global Great Depression," he recently said.

(Please See PEOPLE/23)

Marchar para apoyar la vida en todas sus fases

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

Los que apoyan el movimiento Provida marcharon en Washington recientemente, otra vez durante la fecha que reconoce el aniversario de la decisión Roe v. Wade, cuando la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos legalizó el aborto. Simbolizando la muerte, participantes se acostaron en la acera fría frente a la Casa Blanca.

Conozco a varias personas que marchan cada año. Algunos participan en los varios ministerios de mi antigua parroquia en Croton-on-Hudson, Nueva York. Abordan autobuses en la madrugada para el viaje de 5, 6 horas a Washington y no regresan hasta la media noche. Mucho más se necesita para dar apoyo a una cultura de vida hoy día.

La hora noticiera "PBS Newshour" recientemente sacó un segmento sobre la lucha de matrimonios jóvenes donde los dos trabajan tiempo completo para sobrevivir. Paul Salmon, en narrador, dijo que Estados Unidos y Papua Nueva Guinea son unos de los únicos países en el mundo que no requieren permiso materno con sueldo pagado para que nuevas madres puedan cuidar a bebés recién nacidos. Aquí, en los EEUU, solo una en ocho madres recibe sueldo durante los primeros meses de maternidad, y solo en lugares como California o en compañías como Google.

La Ley Familiar para Permiso Médico, promulgada en 1993, autoriza 12 semanas sin pago para nuevas madres pero sólo para las que trabajan en compañías con más de 50 empleados. No obstante, una madre quien pidió permiso bajo la ley le contó al r

(Mira SANDOVAL/23)



Sandoval

Our Faith

Real presence in the Eucharist; private info during eulogies

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. Recent polls indicate that some 70 percent of Catholics in the United States (and 66 percent in Ireland) do not believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, but rather a symbolic presence.

I happen to be one of them. I am Jesuit-educated, and I have written to my pastor with my question but have been greeted with stone silence. If these polls are even halfway true, why is this elephant in the room never addressed or even mentioned in church? Are we all condemned to hell for this belief? (Duxbury, Massachusetts)

A. The beliefs of the Catholic Church are not determined by plebiscite. That is to say, what is fundamental in determining the core content of the Catholic faith is not how people feel, but what Jesus said. And for that, we go to the sixth chapter of John's Gospel.

Jesus has just multiplied the loaves and the fish to feed 5,000 people, and the crowds are in awe. The very next day, Jesus says something that turns out to be very controversial (Jn 6:35, 51): "I am the bread of life ... the living bread that came down from heaven ... and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." People are shocked and ask: "How can this man give us (his) flesh to eat?" (Jn 6:52).

Even his followers are horrified. Christ has every opportunity to pull back and explain. "Wait," he might have said, "I was only speaking figuratively."



Fr. Doyle

Instead, he presses the point, watching as people start to drift away: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" (Jn 6:54-56).

Later, at the Last Supper, Jesus reaffirms this teaching in language that is virtually identical.

Polling data varies widely regarding this teaching. The National Catholic Reporter, for example, found in a 2011 survey that 63 percent of adult Catholics believe that "at the consecration during a Catholic Mass, the bread and wine really become the body and blood of Jesus Christ."

But as I said at the start, polling data is largely irrelevant, except to this extent (as your question suggests): If a fair number of Catholics do not subscribe to a long-held and central article of faith, the church should doubtless do more to proclaim and explain that teaching.

As to your last line, about the consequences of not believing, one thing is certain: No one is going to hell who sincerely follows the dictates of his own properly formed conscience. So why worry about that? Why not focus instead on determining what Jesus taught?

Q. Recently a close friend of mine died at the age of 77. He was very active in the church, involved in several parish ministries and outwardly seemed always happy, enjoying a near-perfect life. I did know that he had some family, health and business problems, but most people didn't have even a hint of that. He was universally respected and revered.

To my great dismay, his persona was dismantled by our pastor, who said in his funeral homily: "(Name omitted) recently came into my office and opened his

heart, telling me that he had physical, emotional, psychological and family problems. Who could think that this man who was always smiling -- friendly and ready to help everyone -- had so many serious issues?"

I was shocked that a priest would reveal private conversation and saddened that my friend's shining armor was tarnished for no reason. No one wanted to hear anything but the best about this beloved friend and brother. Did our pastor overstep his bounds and the vow of confessional privacy when he stepped on my friend? (City of origin withheld.)

A. First (and foremost), your last sentence mentions "confessional privacy." I am quite certain that nothing your pastor said in his homily had been revealed to him in the context of your friend's confessing his sins. Every priest I have ever known recognizes the sacredness of that seal and guards it carefully.

When the homilist mentioned the man's "problems," he probably meant to praise him for carrying himself with apparent joy even while dealing internally with such difficulties. Your question does serve, though, as a valuable caution for priests. Before delivering a homily, a priest ought always to imagine how his words might be received by people in the pews.

Funeral homilies demand a particular delicacy. If the issues the deceased dealt with are common knowledge, a reference might be proper; if, however, the congregation is largely unaware of such matters, they are best left unmentioned.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.

Using the long reach of prayer during Lent

By Father William J. Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

At the beginning of Mass on Super Bowl Sunday morning, I mentioned to my small congregation that they should be mindful of the large electronic "liturgy" later that day that would bring millions together for a football game between the New England Patriots and the Seattle Seahawks.

Being "mindful," I suggested, meant praying for all those people, asking God to bless the spectators gathered in the stadium in Arizona -- there would be 70,288 of them -- and the millions who would be watching on television -- there proved to

be 114.4 million of them according to the Nielsen count. It was the most watched broadcast in U.S. television history.

Those are large numbers, but not at all beyond the reach or reckoning of God. Certainly not beyond the reach of prayer. So it is a good thing to quantify the reach of your prayer from time to time and, as in the case of the Super Bowl, it is a good thing to see the large crowd in the stadium and imagine the legions of televiewers and realize that you can touch them and really help them with your prayer -- just by thinking of them, simply being mindful of them.

Through prayer, you have an unimaginably long reach.

A week earlier in Manila, some 6 million Filipinos gathered for a genuine eucharistic liturgy with Pope Francis, the largest ever turnout for a papal Mass. The Holy Father told them that God "created the

world as a beautiful garden and asked us to care for it," but due to sin, we have disfigured "the unity of the human family."

Large crowds present opportunities to think of the human family, the untold millions who are within reach of your prayer. God wants you to be mindful of them and mindful of your ability to weave them, through prayer, into the unity of the human family. That unity is a work in progress. Each human person has a role to play in advancing that work. That task is yours, although the power, of course, to achieve that task of bringing about the unity of the human community is the Lord's.

Psalm 103 helps you to wrap your mind around the dimensions of the challenge: "For as the heavens tower over the earth, so his mercy towers over those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us" (Ps

103:11-12). Those words describe the vastness of God's mercy. We call it infinite without adverting to the fact that infinite means no limits, no borders, no end.

We have just learned that Pope Francis will address a joint session of the U.S. Congress when he visits this country in September. Surely, there will be television coverage and the TV audience will be vast. He will celebrate a Mass during that visit in Philadelphia that will attract hundreds of thousands -- just how many, we don't know, but the number, large as it is, will be within reach of your prayer.

So, use this Lent as a warm-up, a good stretch for your prayer arm, and get in touch with the rest of the human family in whose unity you hold pride of place.

Jesuit Father Byron is university professor of business and society at St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia. Email: wbyron@sju.edu.



Fr. Byron

Family Life

A runner's advice to protestors: Heart the most vital muscle

By Father Eugene Hemrick
Catholic News Service

Unlike most other cities, Washington is a place of numerous marches and protests. To name a few, there are marches for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, pro-life, on the Fourth of July and to fight breast cancer.



Fr. Hemrick

Undoubtedly, marches are meant to call attention to deeply felt concerns. Are they, however, about more than this? Are they about ultimately achieving success in a cause? How can these marches or protests help and what should participants do to ensure success? Are there lessons that marchers can learn from runners when it comes to long-term success? Allow me to cite what I learned from my marathon days to reflect on this.

First, in marathon training, you spend laborious hours

getting into shape, and you realize that it takes very little time to get out of shape. Muscles need continuous maintenance to perform properly.

Second, muscles need nourishment to perform at their best. A healthy diet and proper aerobics are major fuels for sustaining a high level of energy and stamina.

Third, muscles require a regimen of stretching. To run smoothly, you must be flexible. When muscles are limber, the body works in harmony. Often runners don't take sufficient time to limber up and consequently run against muscles refusing to be pushed.

Speaking metaphorically, marches are about the most vital muscle in our body: the heart. For success, marchers should spend extended time listening to their heart and its purpose. As in running, they need to hear what it says lest they quickly lose heart. Achieving this requires going inside the self repeatedly and reflecting on why and what a march is truly about.

When running, one temptation is to be misled by excitement, to forget to pace oneself, and hence, not

achieve the goal. Prudence counsels "look afar, keep your eyes fixed on achieving your true purpose and don't let the clamor and excitement of others mislead you."

If marchers are to stay true to themselves and the course they have taken, they need to nourish their heart with sound literature, discussions and workshops. They need to fuel themselves with wisdom and understanding at its best.

Marchers are often tempted to get "locked" into an issue and, hence, end up with hardness of heart. The death knell of many a march is rigidity. Marchers or protesters who are unwilling or forget to stretch risk not expanding their hearts continuously.

The goal of most marathoners is feeling exhilaration at the finish line, and saying, "I did it!" The "it" of a march is somewhat different from the goal of a marathon; it is not about "I." It is rather about "you" and the heart of another. Ultimately, it should be a heartfelt desire to change another's heart for the better.

Observing the lenten season after the death of a spouse

By Bill Dodds
Catholic News Service

Lent has a way of sneaking up on all of us each year. It can be especially hard if you've recently lost a loved one.

On Ash Wednesday two years ago, shortly after my wife died of uterine cancer, I was determined to get to Mass and receive the ashes on my forehead. But as I drove closer to church, thoughts of the annual reminder, "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return," were just too much for me.



Dodds

I drove to the cemetery where Monica is buried and prayed and cried there. Later that morning, I was still wishing I had been able to get to Mass and receive the ashes when I headed to the assisted-living facility/nursing home where Monica's mother and my mom lived.

As I walked onto the nursing home floor where my mother was being cared for, the chaplain, a nun, gave me a big, smudgy thumbs-up from down the hallway. She was distributing ashes to the residents. Would I like to receive them?

I was close to tears, an oh-so familiar sensation. Yes!

And to receive Holy Communion?

Yes, yes, yes!

I realized that on a day when I couldn't get to church and to the Eucharist, Christ and his church came to me.

I went on to have lunch with my mom and to spend some time with my mother-in-law in her apartment. On my way home, I stopped by an electronics store and bought a PlayStation 3 video game console.

I started that Lent with a new toy, something that was out of keeping with the penitential season, a little silly for someone my age, out of character for me, and a wonderful distraction. A way to call a "timeout" from the overwhelming thoughts, emotions and necessary tasks associated with the death of a spouse.

Those 40 days were, without a doubt, a time of prayer and a time of reflection on life and death. But it was also a period of long walks, grief-support group meetings and hours playing video games. (Again and again saving the world from space aliens or earthly monsters!)

It was a challenge that, at the time, seemed completely impossible.

I'm telling this story for those who have recently lost their loved one, for those who would like to mark this Lent as they have in the past but just can't.

God knows. God understands. God is with you. Right here. Right now. Be kind to yourself. Be patient. And, sometimes, be pleasantly surprised.

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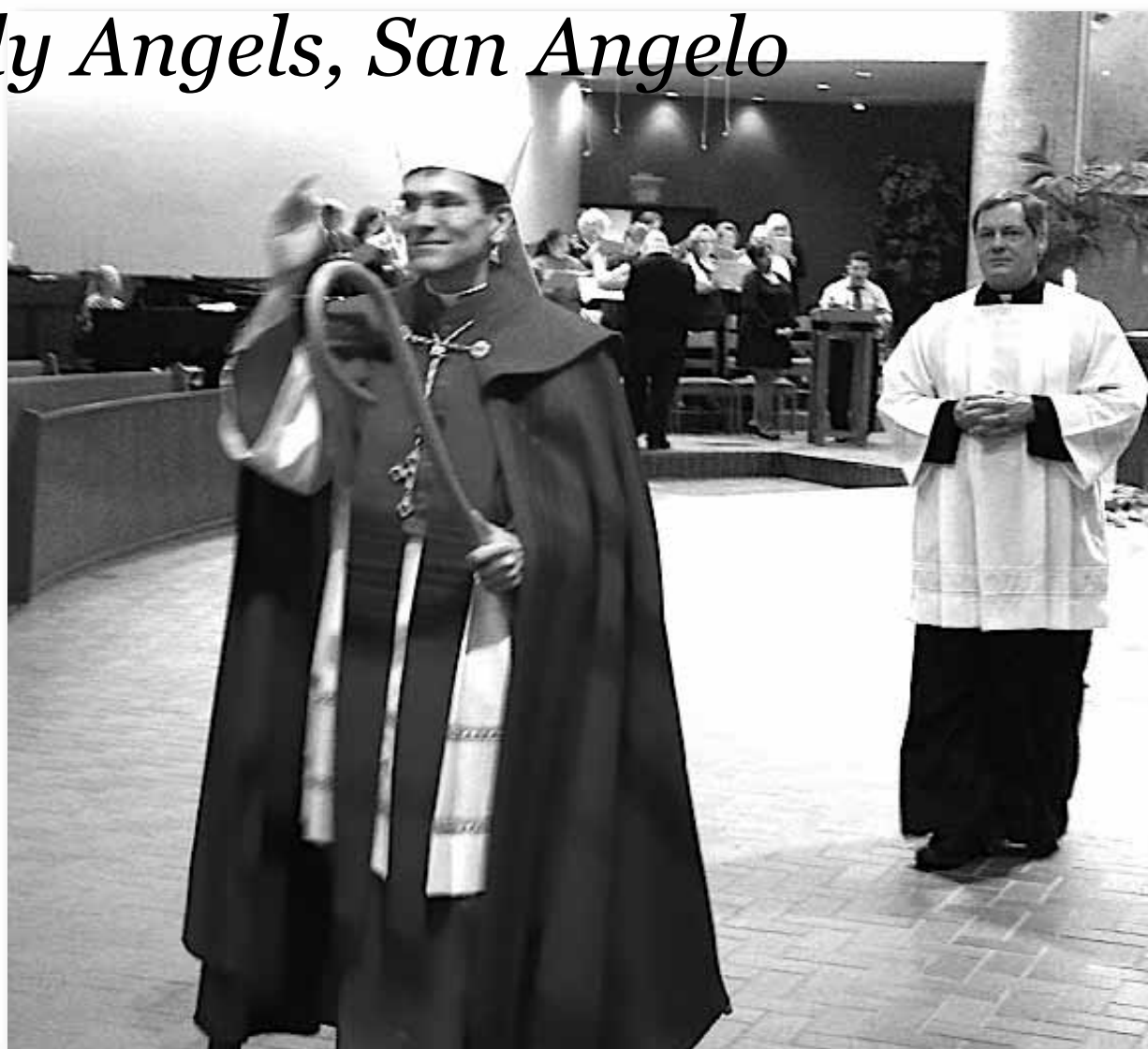
Rite of Election

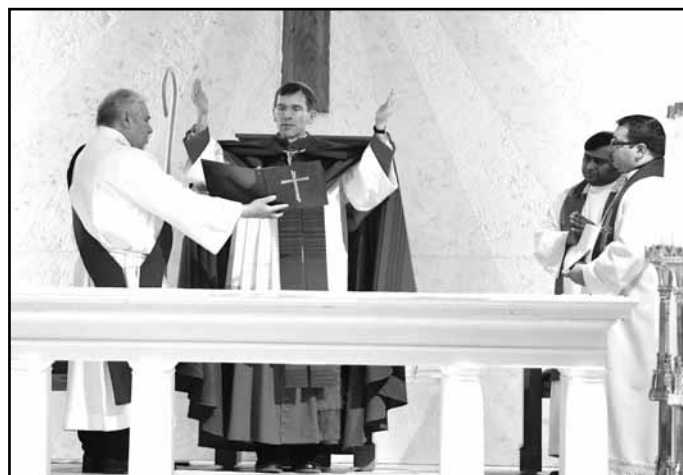
Holy Angels, San Angelo



Scenes from the Rite of Election at Holy Angels Church in San Angelo, February 22, 2015.

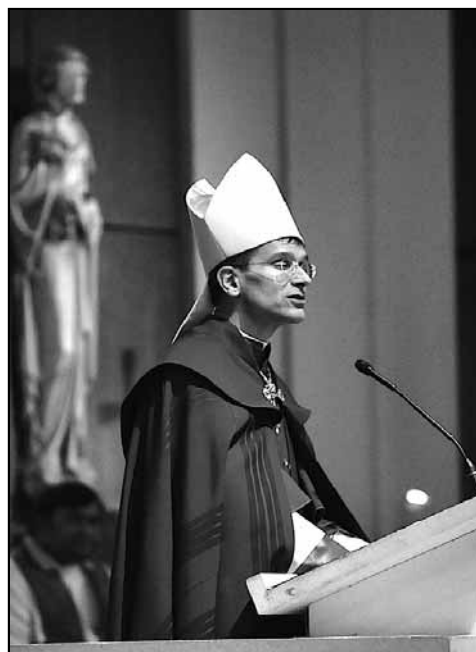
(Courtesy Photos by John Rangel)





Rite of Election

St. Stephen's, Midland



Scenes from the Rite of Election at St. Stephen's Church, Midland, March 1, 2015.

(Courtesy Photos by Joey Alaniz)



GRN RADIO PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The Guadalupe Radio Network (GRN) operates 3 English language Catholic radio stations in the Diocese of San Angelo:

- Abilene - **91.7 FM**, KQOS
- Midland-Odessa - **1150 AM**, KLPF
- San Angelo - **91.5 FM**, KPDE

The GRN (*Radio for Your Soul*) is an EWTN Affiliate. The Top 10 weekday programs (most are "live" call-in shows) are:

- 7 AM - Mass (EWTN Chapel)
- 8 AM - *Catholic Connection*
- 9 AM - Fr. Ricardo
- 10 AM - *Women of Grace* with Johnnette Benkovic
- 11 AM - *More to Life*
- 12 PM - *The Doctor Is In*
- 1 PM - *Called to Communion* (Tues./Thurs.)
- 2 PM - *EWTN Open Line*
- 3 PM - *Divine Mercy Chaplet*; *Kresta in the Afternoon*
- 5 PM - *Catholic Answers Live*

Schedule Exceptions

The GRN produces 3 other shows:

- Mon., 1 PM - *We Sing Our Faith*
- Wed., 11 AM - *Made for Each Other*
- Wed., 1 PM - *A Good Habit*

For a complete schedule, or to listen live, please go to:
www.grnonline.com

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SCHOOL

(From 1)

ple, four from Midland and four from Odessa; as well as diocesan superintendent of schools, Sr. Elizabeth Anne Swartz, SSND; a priest of the area, Rev. Michael Rodriguez; and Bishop Sis.

The board will next incorporate, locate an architect, and conduct a capital campaign.

"We hope to provide a well-rounded high school experience for our kids, including academics, athletics and other extracurricular activities," said Wendy Holland, of Midland, one of the original organizers of the project. "We believe Catholic education benefits the family, the students, and the community."

Bishop Sis said a Catholic high school in the Permian Basin has the potential of forming committed Catholic leaders for the future of both society and the Church.

"This effort will require much dedication and cooperation among the Catholics in the area to start and operate this school, but I believe we can do it with God's help," said Bishop Sis. "Catholic schools offer an environment that forms the whole person — academically, spiritually, ethically, and personally. They lead to lifelong friendships based on shared values. They train young people to understand and apply the social teachings of our Church, in order to shape the structures of our society with respect for life, justice, and human dignity."

An exact location has not yet been officially announced, but a generous benefactor is interested in donating land for the school. No name has been selected for the high school.

Holland said the effort to establish the high school has been ongoing for "a couple of years," but really took off when committee members and interested parents met with Bishop Sis in September 2014.

Holland said in the upcoming months, the board, known as the Permian Basin Catholic High School Committee, will be laying the groundwork such as identifying curriculum. The Texas Catholic Conference, comprised of the state's bishops, has already established a curriculum template that all Catholic high schools are expected to follow.

Current lay committee members include, from Odessa, Albert Casias, Mary Jaramillo, and Rosa Mendoza, and from Midland, James Herrmann, Elias Reyes, Jaime Ramos, and Holland. A fourth board member from Odessa has yet to be named.

"We are all so excited we can hardly stand it," Holland said. "It was such an uplifting experience to sit with the Presbyteral Council, go through the presentation and have them embrace it, and to be supported by the bishop. They are an absolute necessity for the success of this effort."

Cardinal Egan of New York dies, 82

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Cardinal Edward M. Egan, who retired as archbishop of New York in 2009, died March 5. The cause of death was cardiac arrest. He was 82.

After collapsing at his residence that afternoon, he was taken to NYU Langone Medical Center, where doctors pronounced him dead at 2:20 p.m.

A funeral Mass for Cardinal Egan is to be celebrated the afternoon of March 10 at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Visitation is scheduled for March 9 and early March 10.

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York told Catholics of the archdiocese he was saddened to tell them "our beloved" Cardinal Egan "has gone home to the Lord."

"Join me, please, in thanking God for his life, especially his generous and faithful priesthood. Pray as well that the powerful mercy of Jesus, in which our cardinal had such trust, has ushered him into heaven," said Cardinal Dolan, who succeeded Cardinal Egan.

"My sympathy to his natural family, who will grieve for their uncle, and to you, his spiritual family here in the Archdiocese of New York," he added.

Cardinal Dolan in his statement said that Cardinal Egan "had a peaceful death, passing away right after lunch today, with the prayers

OBISPO

(Para 1)

seguir la ley internacional y humanitaria. Al final, esta violencia en el Medio Oriente requerirá más que una solución militar. El Papa Francisco ha dicho, "Reiterando que es lícito detener al agresor injusto, aunque respetando siempre el derecho internacional, quiero recordar también que no podemos confiar la resolución del problema a la mera respuesta militar."

Es importante estudiar las circunstancias que contribuyeron al surgimiento de esta organización terrorista. Cuando los líderes gubernamentales no llevan a cabo su responsabilidad con justicia e imparcialidad, y cuando segmentos enteros de la población son excluidos de la vida política, y cuando derechos humanos básicos son ignorados, la desesperación resultante engendra fanatismo y es explotado por extremistas violentos. Lo que se necesita son gobiernos inclusivos que respetan los derechos humanos y la libertad religiosa para todos.

El "Estado Islámico" ha crecido con rapidez, aplicando una interpretación radical del Islam con tácticas de dominación del séptimo siglo, con recursos financieros abundantes,

con un uso sofisticado de los medios de comunicación sociales. Ellos no aceptan la idea de la coexistencia pacífica, la votación, o las fronteras entre las naciones. Su meta de la conquista mundial hace parte de una teología apocalíptica que es atractiva a un cierto porcentaje pequeño de los musulmanes.

Tal como sería injusto el culpar a todo judío por el dolor de los palestinos, y sería injusto el culpar a todo Cristiano por la historia de la esclavitud de personas de color, sería también injusto de culpar a todo musulmán por la violencia espantosa que se ha llevado a cabo por los terroristas como el "Estado Islámico." Mientras ellos tratan de usar su interpretación del Islam para justificar su brutalidad, su manera no es la única manera de ser musulmán.

Yo tengo algunos amigos que son musulmanes. Estoy seguro que varios de ustedes también. Ahora no es el tiempo de abandonar esas amistades; más bien, es el tiempo de construir sobre esas amistades como hijos de Abraham quienes reconocemos al Creador como el Dios único y misericordioso.

Mientras que debemos rechazar la brutalidad intolerable del "Estado Islámico," esto

no nos ha de llevar a odiar a todos los musulmanes. Hay lugares en este mundo donde cristianos, judíos, musulmanes, y otros han vivido juntos en paz por siglos. Yo creo que esto es aún posible hoy día y en el futuro.

Los deberes de la raza humana son inmensos. El terrorismo ha de ser confrontado. Las minorías étnicas y religiosas han de ser protegidas. Los gobiernos han de ser reconstruidos sin exclusiones políticas o económicas. Cientos de miles de refugiados han de ser cuidados con asistencia humanitaria de gobiernos, ONGs, y organizaciones basadas en la fe tal como Catholic Relief Services.

Algunos grupos que han sido desplazados probablemente no podrán volver a sus hogares, y necesitarán que reubicarse de manera segura en otros países donde podrán comenzar de nuevo. Los Estados Unidos tendrá que continuar aceptando algunos de estos refugiados. Cuando ellos vengan, podremos ayudarlos a integrarse y a recobrar su salud, su esperanza, y su humanidad.

Al fin, debemos rezar a Nuestro Señor Jesucristo por su intervención divina, y debemos poner nuestra completa confianza en su poder infinito.

Favor de orar conmigo por justicia y paz en el Medio Oriente y alrededor del mundo

Favor de orar conmigo por justicia y paz en el Medio Oriente y alrededor del mundo. Aquí me gustaría compartir con ustedes una oración escrita por el Patriarca Caldeo Católico de Irak, Su Beatitud Louis Rafael Sako:

"Señor,

Los conflictos en nuestro país son profundos y el sufrimiento de los cristianos es severo y atemorizante.

Por eso, te pedimos Señor que protejas nuestra vida, y que nos des paciencia y valentía para seguir dando testimonio de los valores cristianos con confianza y esperanza.

Señor, la paz es el fundamento de la vida; concédenos la paz y la estabilidad que nos permitan vivir unos con otros sin miedo ni ansiedad, y con dignidad y alegría.

Gloria a Ti por siempre, Señor."

DEACON

Current Diaconate Formation Class

Candidates will be ordained in 2018.

Carlos Barrios
Tom Collier
Andrew Davis
Tommy Flores
Jose Gallegos
Roberto Garcia
Edward Gonzalez
Joel Gutierrez
Jesse Martinez
David Mendez
Orlando D. Mendoza
Alan Pelzel
John Rangel
Carlos Reyes
Reynaldo Sanchez
Floyd J. Schwartz
Ron Stegenga
Israel M. Tijerina
Jose Villagrana
Bobby Wright

(From 1)

Diocese of San Angelo since April 2014, was born in South Plainfield, New Jersey, where his father had moved the family in the great migration of the 1950s, when large numbers of Puerto Ricans came to America because of its ample opportunities for jobs, education and a better life.

But the ugly part of America reared its head a decade later. Barely 10 years old, Medina and his family became frequent targets of racist slurs and other bully tactics during the race riots of the Tri-State area in 1967-68. Medina was frequently beaten up by other boys.

"In Jersey, we were either too dark to be in some neighborhoods or too light to be in others," he said. "The words we were called really upset my father, and he told me never to repeat them."

"One day, my father said enough is enough and moved the family back to Puerto Rico where he was born."

Forty-five minutes up Interstate 95 from the Medina home in South Plainfield, NJ, lived another Puerto Rican family, the Ocasios.

"My wife, Maria, and her aunt were at a park in Palisades Park, NJ, when there was an explosion during one of the race riots."

The fear brought by the violence also prompted the Ocasios to move back to Puerto Rico in 1967.

When the two families returned to Puerto Rico independently — they did not know each other while living in New Jersey — the two

pre-teens both enrolled and finished primary and secondary school in Ponce.

Victimized by racial violence, forced to flee America and brought together through happenstance, or perhaps divine intervention, at the same Catholic school, Freddy and Maria became friends, and eventually married in 1976.

The two will celebrate 40 years of marriage in 2016. Together they have taken a horrible, negative experience and turned it into a life filled with joy; one that has brought two grown sons, and enhanced others' lives through their work and service.

Before his appointment to head the diaconate last year, Medina spent 36 years as active duty military, including most recently as a work life consultant for the United States Air Force. Maria is a certified school librarian. They have served the diaconate since Freddy's ordination in 2010.

A deacon cannot enter the diaconate without the constant support of his wife.

"There are three formal points along the road to formation that wives must write letters granting their permission for their husband to continue in their studies," Medina said. "Maria also regularly asked me early on if I was sure I wanted to do this."

Medina said in his formation years he thought the diaconate would give him the opportunity to serve the church, but quickly learned that a deacon's work is often outside the church walls.

"Jesus said to go where people are sick," Medina said. "So our work is not so much in the parish, but outside, in the workplace. A dea-

con should be in the field, to let people know that we are there and that they can feel comfortable coming to us if they need, and we should also exhibit our faith to others through our daily actions."

His active military status with the USAF has also included work as an engineering technician before his duties as a work life consultant. In the latter role, Medina described his responsibilities as somewhat akin to what a deacon does.

"I provided a service, helping others to take care of finances, relocation, informing airmen about their local community when they would come in to a new base."

As Director of Deacons, Medina is also in charge of coordinating not only the current diaconate class's formation, but those in the future.

As director of the diaconate, Medina will help take a contingent of the faithful from the diocese to Austin on March 24 for Advocacy Day, when Catholics from around the state will, along with bishops and priests, make their legislators aware of issues important to Catholics. The Texas Catholic Conference is primarily focused on six areas of public policy, including:

- ▶ Protecting Human Life
- ▶ Children and Families
- ▶ Health and Human Services
- ▶ Justice for Immigrants
- ▶ Protecting the Poor and Vulnerable
- ▶ Criminal Justice

(Email Deacon Freddy if interested in attending, at fmedina@sanangelodiocese.org).

BISHOP

(From 2)

that led up to the emergence of this terrorist organization. When governmental leaders do not carry out their responsibility with justice and fairness, when entire segments of a population are excluded from political life, and when basic human rights are ignored, the resultant desperation breeds fanaticism and gets exploited by violent extremists. What are needed are inclusive governments that respect human rights and religious freedom for all.

The "Islamic State" has grown rapidly by taking a radical interpretation of Islam and applying it with 7th-century tactics of domination, extensive financial resources, and sophisticated use of social media. They do not accept the idea of peaceful coexistence, voting, or borders. Their goal of world conquest is part of a particular apocalyptic theology that is appealing to a certain small percentage of Muslims.

Just as it would be unfair to blame all Jews for the pain of the Palestinians, and it would be unfair to blame all Christians for the history of black slavery, it is also unfair to blame all Muslims for the shocking violence being carried out by terrorists like the "Islamic State." While they attempt to use their interpretation of Islam to justify their brutality, theirs is not the only way to be Muslim.

I have some friends who are Muslims. I know that some of you do, as well. Now is not the time to abandon those friendships; rather, it is the time to build upon them as fellow children of Abraham who acknowledge the Creator as the one, merciful God.

While we must reject the intolerable brutality of the "Islamic State," this should not lead us to hate all Muslims. There are some places in this world where Christians, Jews, Muslims, and others have lived together peacefully for centuries. I believe this is still possible

today and in the future.

The tasks before the human race are immense. Terrorism must be confronted. Ethnic and religious minorities must be protected. Governments must be rebuilt without political and economic exclusion. Hundreds of thousands of refugees must be cared for with humanitarian assistance from governments, NGOs, and faith-based organizations such as Catholic Relief Services.

Some displaced groups will likely not be able to return to their homes, and they will need to be resettled safely to other countries where they can start over. The United States will need to continue accepting some of these refugees. When they come, we can help them to integrate and to regain their health, their hope, and their humanity.

Finally, we must pray for the divine intervention of our Lord Jesus Christ, and place our complete trust in his infinite power.

Prayer for the Middle East

Please pray with me for justice and peace in the Middle East and around the world. Here I would like to share with you a prayer that was written by the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Iraq, His Beatitude Louis Rafael Sako:

"Lord,
The plight of our country
is deep and the suffering of Christians
is severe and frightening.
Therefore, we ask you Lord
to spare our lives, and to grant us patience,
and courage to continue our witness
of Christian values
with trust and hope.
Lord, peace is the foundation of life;
Grant us the peace and stability
that will enable us
to live with each other without fear and anxiety,
and with dignity and joy.
Glory be to you forever."

PATTERSON

(From 3)

“This week,” he said, “the doctor told me that my cancer is back. It is in my lungs and in my brain.”

I was struck not only by the man’s words and the honesty in his voice but by his countenance as he made his announcement. I’ve been searching since that day for the word that would best fit him as he delivered that news — “My cancer is back and it is in my lungs and my brain” — to both friends and strangers alike.

Courage. Fearlessness. Perhaps those two sum it up better than most others.

There was not a trace of distress in his appearance; no alarm in his eyes, no crack in his voice or waver in his delivery. His message conveyed one of the bravest walks of faith I have heard of late. The man had accepted what lie ahead and it was clear that he would meet head on whatever the future brings, with the help of his faith and his Lord.

Certainly the other message that came through between the lines was this: enjoy every moment. You know not the hour or the day ...

A couple of weeks after the homily we heard in Lubbock, an unrelated post popped up on my parish’s Facebook page. It asked for urgent prayers. There was a clear note of desperation.

The message was posted late the morning of Friday, February 13. It was written by a young woman whose husband had taken a turn for the worse in a brief illness he had been fighting for the last several days.

The parish community quickly rallied around him and his family with prayers and visits, but by 7:30 that night, a man who had been a friend to hundreds of people in many walks of life in Midland and elsewhere, was dead. He was a good, good man. A newlywed. A doting father. Thirty-two years old. He left a 9-year-old daughter from a previous marriage, a three-month-old son and a 26-year-old widow. The news of his passing was devastating to the community.

I will miss my friend, Caleb. But his passing is not for naught. He taught while he was here. He spread a message of joy, of faith, of family and of love. In his death, he taught us one other thing. Like the deacon in Lubbock, the message of loving others every possible moment you have, of never taking one more day as if you have ten-thousand more is a message we should hold on to. Too often, though, our lives return to status quo before we even return to our work or our homes -- even after a friend’s funeral. News like the return of cancer to a total stranger and the reality of the death of a friend should make us all look at life with more respect — and not just during the time we mourn at a funeral.

I am ashamed for becoming impatient while driving to Mass that day in Lubbock, and for growing irritated at a sick, innocent child. I have yet to discover why sweating the small stuff is so easy. What am I missing? Am I so surface that it takes death or illness to show me the way? If so, I owe apologies to the deacon and to my friend.

I recently listened to a TedTalk about happiness. In it, the presenter said that the best gifts God gives us are moments. If we have a bad moment, we’ll always have another one waiting just behind the present one. Moments, the speaker said, are free, and always there for us to make the most of.

Until one day they aren’t.

How should we best spend the moments that remain? I know a deacon who knows. And I had a wise friend who made beautiful his every moment.

Lord, show me the way before it’s too late.



TMII

(From 4)

From his Houston office in February, Bollman said the program he spent many months pulling together is “truly Catholic.”

“It brings together everything from the teachings of the church and all the wisdom of the saints, but also calls on modern science. It puts together the vision to bring the man fully alive.

“With 40 percent of all marriages ending in divorce today, a percentage that is only slightly less among Catholics, we obviously live in a challenging environment. We felt we owed it to the men who have been kind of attacked and challenged by this culture to bring that info to light.”

Bollman said the program begins with a vision for men about marriage and then proceeds to show how you live that vision in today’s environment.

The first year’s program features:

- ▶ a scriptural vision of man and the overwhelming scientific evidence that supports this vision;
- ▶ the four leadership roles that have been entrusted to men and the five personal traits necessary for fulfilling these leadership roles;
- ▶ how and why Satan always attacks the union of a man and woman;
- ▶ the three main obstacles to living as authentic men and the means for overcoming them, and
- ▶ the wonderful renewal God is offering to men and their families through the Church.

The program calls not only on Scripture and the wisdom of the saints, but on occasion even more

SAINTS

(From 10)

prayer, penance, contemplation and manual work.

The Colettine Poor Clares are a reform branch of the Order of St. Clare. They follow the interpretation of the Rule of St. Clare established by Colette in 1410. Today, the Colettine Poor Clares are mostly in France. Several houses of Franciscan friars also accepted her reforms.

In time, Colette became renowned for her sanctity, ecstasies and visions of the Passion. She worked many miracles and had many mystical experiences that included a mystical marriage with St. John the Apostle early in her religious life. Editor Bernard Bangley describes another vision in “Butler’s Lives of the Saints.” In it, Colette saw a multitude of souls falling away from God. They reminded her of

modern cultural examples. The single-most talked about moment in the program, Bollman says, is its use of, “When I’m Gone,” a dramatic, emotional music video about absent fathers by rapper Eminem.

“We never planned on doing this,” said Bollman. “A friend of mine suggested we do this. We put it together and we were told it wasn’t going to work and that literally nobody would show up. The first week, 124 men showed up and we’ve just kept going since then.”

What’s more, Paradisus Dei, the company that oversees “That Man is You,” is launching or has already launched programs for women (SHE) and for couples (The Choice Wine).

Bollman credits the quality of the program’s content combined with the shared discussions as being the cornerstones of the program’s success.

“That Man is You” has been endorsed by numerous bishops and priests, and at least one Cardinal: Houston archbishop Daniel Cardinal DiNardo calls the program, “a sign of the new evangelization.”

Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput says TMII, “does a tremendous job of forming men in their Catholic faith and reshaping their hearts to be disciples of Jesus Christ -- in other words, setting men on fire with the courage and zeal that come from being sons of God. I highly recommend this program. It is a gift to the church.”

For information on how to introduce this program in your parish, visit paradisusdei.org, email info@paradisusdei.org or call 281-974-3541.

snowflakes in a winter storm. She began to pray daily for lost sinners.

Due to many miraculous events during her life, Colette is venerated as the patron saint of women seeking to conceive, expectant mothers and sick children.

Colette foresaw her death at her convent in Ghent, Belgium. Guiley writes that she donned her veil in February 1447. One month later, she lay down on her bed and said: “This is the last time I shall lie down.” She died two days later. She was beatified in 1740 by Pope Clement XII and canonized in May 1807 by Pope Pius VII. Her feast day is March 6. Her attribute is a lamb depicted as a Poor Clare with bare feet.

The first U. S. monastery of the Order of St. Clare was built in Cleveland, Ohio in 1877. Today, there are monasteries in California, Illinois and South Carolina.

SANDOVAL

PEOPLE

(Para 15)

reportero Salmon que fue muy difícil conseguir ese permiso. Además, tuvo que regresar a su empleo más pronto de lo planeado porque ella y su esposo necesitaban el sueldo para sobrevivir económicamente. Dijo que si hubiera sabido que difícil sería no hubiera optado por ser madre.

Cuidar a un bebé es sólo el primero de muchos desafíos que nuevos padres enfrentan. En los países industrializados, escribió el columnista Nicholas Kristof, del periódico The New York Times, 70 por ciento de niños de tres años van a la preescola, pero en los Estados Unidos solo el 38 por ciento.

“En América, subsidiamos aviones, jet privados, grandes bancos y fondos de bolsa de bolsa de bolsa”, escribió Kristof. “¿No tendría más sentido subsidiar a los niños?”

Mi esposa y yo nos casamos en los 1950s y dimos vida a seis hijos. Recibía sólo \$100 por semana como reportero para el periódico Tribune en Albuquerque, Nuevo Mexico. El sueldo lo complementaba con ingresos de fotógrafo autónomo y mi pago por servicio militar en reserva. Mi esposa no tuvo que trabajar tiempo completo.

No nos preocupábamos por mantener a otro niño. Tenía seguro de salud en mi empleo principal para pagar los costos prenatales y del hospital. Hoy es distinto.

BARRON

(From 14)

counter to the witness of the first Christians, who were concerned, above all, not with an ethical program but with the explosive emergence of a new world. The letters of St. Paul, which are the earliest Christian texts we have, are particularly instructive on this score. One can find “ethics” in the writings of Paul, but one would be hard pressed indeed to say that the principal theme of Romans, Galatians, Philippians, or first and second Corinthians is the laying out of a moral vision. The central motif of all of those letters is in fact Jesus Christ risen from the dead. For Paul, the resurrection of Jesus is the sign that the world as we know it—a world marked by death and the fear of death—is evanescent and that a new order of things is emerging. This is why he tells the Corinthians “the time is running out” and “the world in its present form

Cuesta hasta \$30,000, y más. tener un hijo. Me sorprendió recientemente que tiempo pagado cuando uno esta enfermo no es garantizado en el trabajo estos días. Siempre lo teníamos.

Kristof refuerza mi sentido de que los tiempos entonces eran mejores: “Los Estados Unidos la llevo a cabo brillantemente en los primeros tres cuartos del siglo veinte, con los ingresos y la educación mejorando y la desigualdad estable o desvaneciendo -- y la ganancia compartida entre los pobres y ricos”.

Pero la “mañana en América” de Ronald Reagan fue un crepúsculo conduciendonos a la oscuridad de estancamiento y desigualdad, dice Kristof.

La economía crece pero sólo los ricos benefician. El ingreso mediano de la familia casi no ha mejorado desde 1970, y la típica familia canadiense parece estar mejor que la estadounidense, Kristof escribió.

Si deberás nos preocupamos por el futuro de nuestra patria, y una cultura de vida, hay que marchar a Washington vez tras vez, literalmente y metafóricamente, demandando permiso pagado por maternidad, aumento del sueldo mínimo para que los jóvenes puedan tener hijos, permiso pagado, para todos, cuando estamos enfermos, y leyes y pólizas que reduzcan la desigualdad.

Los seres humanos son nuestro recurso más grande.

is passing away;” this is why he tells the Philippians that everything he once held to be of central importance he now considers as so much rubbish; this is why he tells the Romans that they are not justified by their own moral achievements but through the grace of Jesus Christ; and this is why he tells the Galatians that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the “new creation.” The new creation is shorthand for the overturning of the old world and the emergence of a new order through the resurrection of Jesus, the “first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

The inaugural speech of Jesus, as reported in the Gospel of Mark, commences with the announcement of the kingdom of God and then the exhortation to “repent and believe the good news.” We tend automatically to interpret repentance as a summons to moral conversion, but the Greek word that

(From 15)

wrote, “the United States performed brilliantly in the first three-quarters of the 20th century, with incomes and education mostly rising and inequality flat or falling -- and gains were broadly shared by poor and rich alike.”

But Ronald Reagan's "Morning in America," turned out to be the twilight leading to the darkness of "stagnation and inequality" in which we find ourselves today, Kristof said.

The economy continues to grow, but the rich are the only ones who gain. Median household income is little better than it was in 1979, writes Kristof, and the typical family in Canada appears better off than the typical American family.

If we really care about the future of our country and a culture of life, we must march on Washington again and again, literally and metaphorically, demanding paid maternity leave, an increase in the minimum wage so that young people can afford to go to school and have children, sick leave for everyone, and laws and policies that lessen inequality.

People are our greatest resource.

House, Senate
Contact Information

HOUSE OF
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Mark employs is metanoiete, which means literally, “go beyond the mind you have.” On Mark’s telling, Jesus is urging his listeners to change their way of thinking so as to see the new world that is coming into existence. It is indeed the case that Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Jews, atheists, and agnostics can all be “good people.” In terms of what we privilege today, they can all be tolerant, inclusive, and just. But only Christians witness to an earthquake that has shaken the foundations of the world and turned every expectation upside down. A key to the new evangelization is the rediscovery of this revolutionary message.

Father Robert Barron is the founder of the global ministry, Word on Fire, and the Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary. He is the creator of the award winning documentary series, "Catholicism" and "Catholicism:The New Evangelization."

The Church in the Middle East



Pope Francis meets Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq during a private audience at the Vatican March 2. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Assyrian Christians freed; concerns remain for those still held

By Dale Gaviak
Catholic News Service

AMMAN, Jordan — Christians in the Middle East welcomed the release of nearly 20 Assyrian Christians abducted by Islamic State militants in northeastern Syria, but expressed concern that more than 200 others remained in captivity.

"I can confirm the release of 19 persons (17 men and 2 women) who were captured by the Islamic State in the Khabur region," said Father Emanuel Youkhana, who heads the Christian Aid Program Northern Iraq, CAPNI.

"We pray and hope for the others to be released," he added.

Bashir Saedi, a senior official in the Assyrian Democratic Organization, said all those released were around 50 years of age or older, suggesting that age might have

been a factor.

Vatican Radio reported that Osama Edward, who heads the Assyrian Human Rights Network, said the Christians were released because jizya, an Islamic protection tax levied on non-Muslims, had been paid.

They are now "in the church of the city of Hassakeh," Edward said. The network published photographs on its Facebook page that appeared to show people in Hassakeh greeting the returnees.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also reported that an Islamic court had ruled the captives be freed, but it said the reasoning behind the decision was unknown.

On Feb. 23, Islamic State militants raided a cluster of villages along the Khabur River near Syria's northeastern province of Hassakeh and abducted Assyrian Christian residents and other minorities.

There have been conflicting reports about the actual number of the captives still held by the extremists, and their fate remains unclear. The Observatory said there were 220. Other activists said the figure was higher than 260.

Sunni Muslim Arab tribal leaders have been mediating with the extremist militia to secure the captives' release. Many observers believe most captives were taken to Shaddadeh, about 30 miles south of Hassakeh.

The abductions have added to growing fears among religious minorities in the Middle East who have been repeatedly targeted by the Islamic State group, especially in Syria and Iraq. During the militants' campaign in Syria and Iraq over the past year, minorities have been repeatedly targeted and killed, driven from their homes, had their women enslaved and places of worship and

cultural artifacts destroyed.

The attacks along the Khabur took place just weeks after video was released of Islamic State beheading 21 Egyptian Christians that it called "crusaders."

At the Vatican, Pope Francis called on everyone to help the people of Syria and Iraq, many of whom are suffering because of their faith.

After praying the Angelus with those gathered in St. Peter's Square March 1, the pope underlined his dismay over the ongoing "dramatic" events unfolding in the area -- the "violence, kidnappings and oppression to the detriment of Christians and other groups."

He said the church has not forgotten about the minorities and their plight and said Catholics were "praying urgently that the intolerable brutality" they are suffering "may end as soon as possible."

Catholic aid group channels money to help Christians displaced in Syria

By Doreen Abi Raad
Catholic News Service

BEIRUT — A pontifical aid organization has begun sending aid to families who fled their homes when Islamic State militants raided a cluster of Assyrian Christian villages on the Khabur River in northeast Syria.

The Catholic Near East Welfare Association, upon learning about the Islamic

State attacks, contacted Bishop Aprim Nathaniel of the Assyrian Church of the East in Hassakeh, with whom the agency had collaborated on previous projects, said Michel Constantin, CNEWA's regional director for Lebanon, Syria and Egypt.

"What we learned from Bishop (Nathaniel) is that so far, there are around 900 families that have been displaced from around 18 villages out of 35," Constantin told Catholic News Service Feb. 27 from

Beirut. "Another 200 families are expected to come as soon as the fighting cools down a little bit."

He said most of the 900 displaced families have been temporarily settled in homes in Hassakeh abandoned by fellow Christians -- Assyrians, Syriac Catholics and Syriac Orthodox -- who had earlier fled out of fear because Islamic State groups were very close.

"There were many individual houses that

were vacant, so the bishop took the initiative to open these houses, knowing that nobody would mind," Constantin said. Although the homes are furnished, the displaced families were in urgent need of food, heating fuel, gas for cooking and medication.

"It's very important to reach out to them with something very basic to sustain them at least for a couple of weeks," he said.