

West Texas

ANGELUS

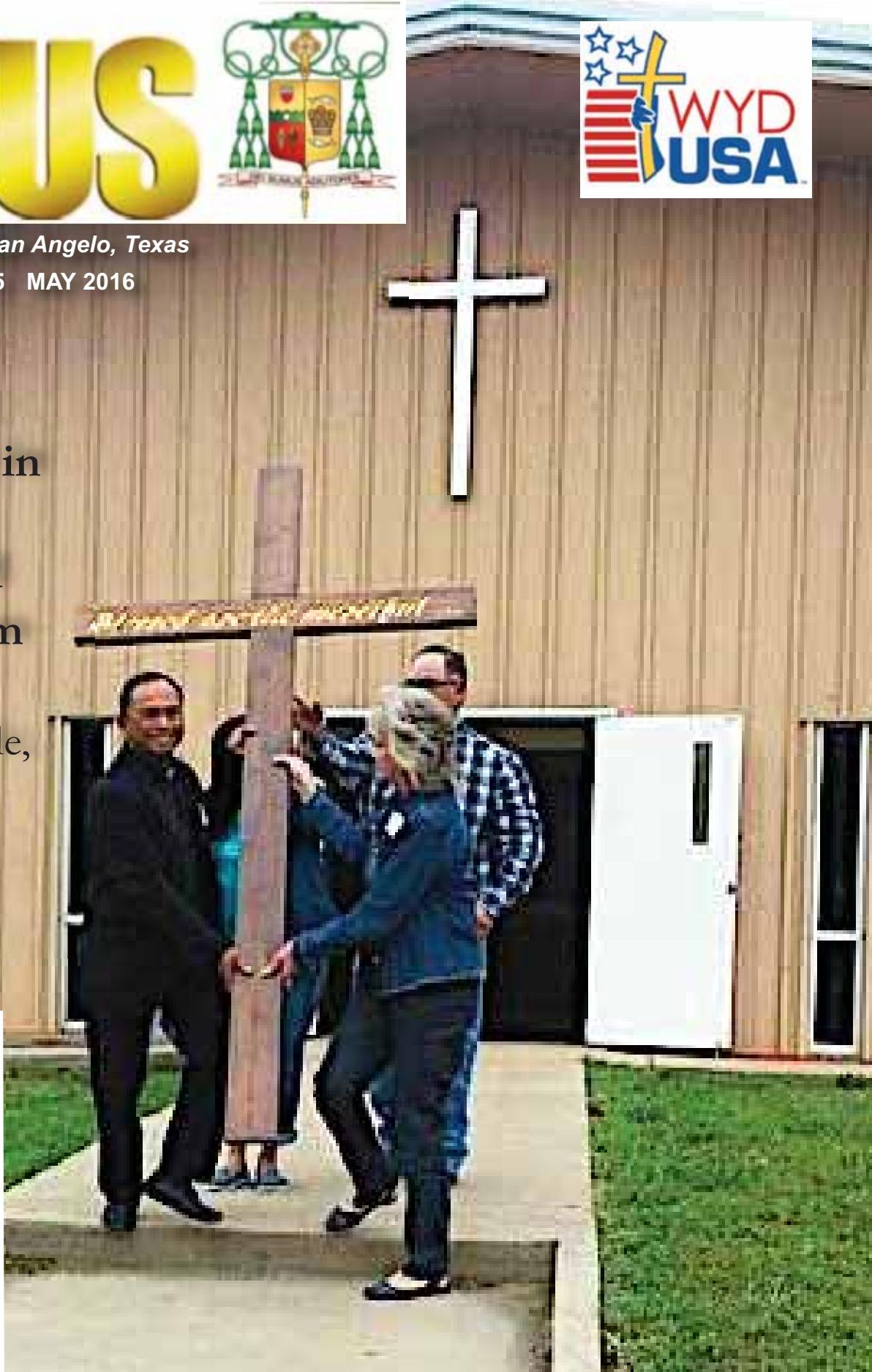


Serving the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas

Volume XXXVI, No. 5 MAY 2016

Holy Spirit Parish in Sweetwater Welcomes World Youth Day Pilgrim Cross

Related story, schedule,
Pgs. 2, 5



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The Inside Front

Organizers working diligently on WYDUSA-San Angelo

By Jimmy Patterson
Editor

SAN ANGELO — Young adults from throughout the diocese will converge on San Angelo on July 30 as part of a global observance of World Youth Day.

WYDUSA-San Angelo begins at 9:15 a.m. as the Pilgrim Cross, which has processed throughout the diocese since April 6, will be carried by young adults from Our Lady of Guadalupe in Eldorado. The procession begins

at the intersection of Bell Street and Rio Concho Drive and proceeds to San Angelo's McNease Convention Center, site of the WYDUSA-San Angelo event.

A daylong celebration of faith, featuring an address by Bishop Michael J. Sis, other presenters, workshops and opportunities for song, prayer, devotion and reconciliation will continue until the closing Mass at 4 p.m. presided over by Bishop Sis.

Roselva Ruiz, a parishioner at Holy Redeemer in Odessa, is chairing the commit-

tee of volunteers overseeing the coordination of WYDUSA-San Angelo which, despite its name, is not targeted for youth, but for young adults aged 18-39.

"Since last October we've been discussing our vision and what we actually are being asked to do, based on what the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops want us to focus on, and the call of Pope Francis that no young adult is to be excluded from having

(Please See **WYDUSA/4**)



Diocesan Awards Banquet and Dinner



Bishop Sis, center, with adult award recipients from the annual Diocesan Awards Banquet and Dinner, April 22 in San Angelo.

Bishop: Your whole person communicates Jesus

By Becca Nelson Sankey

SAN ANGELO — As bishop of the San Angelo Diocese, the Most Reverend Michael Sis is tasked with serving parishes in 29 counties within a 37,433 square-mile radius. At the Diocesan Awards Banquet, an annual dinner and ceremony hosted by the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis on April 23, Bishop Sis stressed the importance of the diocese's catechetical leaders in being instruments of Christ and connecting with the Church's young lay people

in ways he cannot.

"You young people give witness by the way you live," he told the crowd of approximately 100 gathered at Cathedral Church of the Sacred Heart. "You teenagers can connect to teenagers in ways I cannot. You hang out in the places young people hang out, you speak the lingo, you use the apps. ... That means God is calling you to be a witness."

"The best way to communicate our faith in catechesis is personally. Your whole person is communicating Jesus."

The awards banquet recognized a

host of individuals — youth and adults alike — whose parishes nominated them for demonstrating outstanding Christian leadership characteristics within and outside the Church.

"I think it's important to recognize that we thank them for all they do," said Sister Adelina Garcia, associate director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis — Youth and Young Adult Ministry. "It's good to bring them together

(Please See **AWARDS/21**)

Sister Elizabeth Swartz honored for contributions

The Angelus

Sr. Elizabeth Ann Swartz, SSND, superintendent of schools in the dioceses of San Angelo and El Paso, was presented the 2016 "Lead. Learn. Proclaim. Award" at the National Catholic Education Association Convention in San Diego. This award recognizes her outstanding efforts, contributions and achievements on behalf of Catholic schools.



Sister Elizabeth

For over 50 years, Sr. Elizabeth Swartz has actively improved the quality of Catholic school education as a teacher, school principal and diocesan superintendent. Her generosity with knowledge, time and Catholicity are greatly appreciated by the faculty, staff and the communities she serves. Ever present at sports events, science fairs, fundraising events, service projects and professional development opportunities, her gifts and dedication have impacted so many children's lives. Sr. Elizabeth is truly a visible servant leader.

The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) has a longstanding tradition of honoring and recognizing excellence and distinguished service in Catholic education.

CALENDARS**BISHOP MICHAEL SIS' SCHEDULE****MAY**

1 — GARDEN CITY, St. Lawrence, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.

1 — SAN ANGELO, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Marriage Jubilee Mass at 3:00 p.m.

6 — SONORA, St. Ann, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.

7 — OZONA, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.

8 — FORT STOCKTON, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.

8 — SANDERSON, St. James, Confirmation Mass at 4:00 p.m.

10 — SAN ANGELO, St. Joseph, San Angelo Deanery Meeting at 10:00 a.m.

12 — ODESSA, St. Joseph, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.

13 — MIDLAND, San Miguel Arcángel, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.

14 — ODESSA, St. Mary, Confirmation Mass at 11:00 a.m.

15 — ANDREWS, Our Lady of Lourdes, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.

15 — MIDLAND, St. Stephen, Confirmation Mass at 5:00 p.m.

17 — CORPUS CHRISTI, Kenedy Foundation Board Meeting

18 — COLEMAN, Sacred Heart, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.

20 — BROWNWOOD, St. Mary, Queen of Peace, Diaconal Ordination of Josh Gray at 6:30 p.m.

21 — ABILENE, St. Vincent Pallotti, Confirmation Mass at 5:30 p.m.

22 — ABILENE, St. Francis of Assisi, Confirmation Mass at 9:00 a.m.

22 — SAN ANGELO, Museum of Fine Arts, Lady in Blue Annual Celebration at 5:00 p.m., Mass at 7:00 p.m.

25 — SAN ANGELO, St. Mary, Confirmation Mass at 6:30 p.m.

26 — SAN ANGELO, Angelo Catholic School, Graduation Mass at 8:30 a.m.

27 — STANTON, Rural Life

Mass at the Tom Ranch at 6:30 p.m.

28 — ODESSA, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Confirmation Mass at 11:00 a.m.

29 — ELDORADO, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Confirmation Mass at 11:30 a.m.

30 — SAN ANGELO, Pastoral Center, Vocation Team Meeting at 2:00 p.m.

30-June 3 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Priests' Retreat

JUNE

MAY 30-JUNE 3 — SAN ANGELO, Christ the King Retreat Center, Priests' Retreat

3 — SAN ANGELO, Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Priestly Ordination of Deacon Tony Franco at 6:00 p.m.

5 — ABILENE, St. Vincent Pallotti, 25th Anniversary Jubilee Mass of Rev. Terry Brenon at 10:00 a.m.

5 — ODESSA, St. Joseph, 40th Anniversary Jubilee Mass of Rev. Frank Chavez at 5:00 p.m.

7 — SAN ANGELO, Pastoral Center, Meeting of Finance Council and Presbyteral Council at 11:00 a.m., and Meeting of Presbyteral Council at 2:00 p.m.

8 — MIDLAND, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Confirmation Mass at 6:00 p.m.

11 — ODESSA, Holy Redeemer, Installation of Lectors at 10:00 a.m.

12-17 — Diocese of Orange California, USCCB Special Assembly

18-19 — DALLAS, Steubenville Lone Star Catholic Youth Conference

23 — SAN ANGELO, Pastoral Center, Priestly Life & Formation Committee Meeting at 1:00 p.m.

25 — FORT STOCKTON, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Diaconal Ordination of Tim Hayter at 10:00 a.m.

26 — COLORADO CITY, St. Ann, Confirmation Mass at 10:30 a.m.

(Continued, Pg 9)

From The Bishop's Desk**An introduction to *Amoris Laetitia***

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

Pope Francis has published a landmark document on marriage and family life in the form of an Apostolic Exhortation entitled "*Amoris Laetitia*: The Joy of Love: On Love in the Family." It is the sort of book that merits a slow, patient, and meditative reading. I highly recommend it, especially for any Christian who is married or thinking of getting married.

The book reads more easily and smoothly than many Vatican documents. It will soon appear on the shelves of bookstores, and it is already available in several languages on the Vatican website www.vatican.va. The text consists of 256 pages organized into nine chapters. Like all papal documents,



Bishop Sis

**■ Related Coverage,
Pgs. 6-7**

it is organized according to paragraph numbers. When I make reference to the text in this article, I will refer to the paragraph number.

The document is the fruit of two worldwide consultative events called Synods of Bishops, held in Rome in October 2014 and October 2015. The preparation for the discussions in the synods included questionnaires that were used around the world.

Amoris Laetitia is very concrete and realistic. It is based in human experience, the Holy Scriptures, and almost 2,000 years of Church teachings. It is full of warm pastoral guidance about the daily life of the family. It cites the writings of Francis' predecessors, particularly Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. It also draws upon Francis' own previous writings as bishop and pope.

Pope Francis was motivated to write this document because of his

concern for the future of marriage. He reminds us that the family is the basis of society, yet the family throughout the world is in crisis. He laments the falling birth rate in Europe. He sees that many young people are not interested in getting married. He is disturbed by the fact that economic conditions cause many mothers to have to get two jobs, leaving their children alone.

These facts have motivated the Holy Father to write a positive work that seeks to make marriage more desirable and attractive. It presents the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and family. It offers a perspective of hope and compassion, filled with concrete reminders of the beauty of family life. It encourages couples to trust in the grace of God for living out their marriage.

What does the document not do? It does not give up on marriage. It does not express hopelessness or helplessness in the face of moral failings. It is not just trying to be

(Please See BISHOP/20)

Una Introducción a *Amoris Laetitia*

Obispo Michael J. Sis

El Papa Francisco ha publicado un documento histórico sobre el matrimonio y la vida familiar en la forma de una

Exhortación Apostólica titulada

"*Amoris Laetitia*:

La Alegría del Amor: Sobre el

Amor en la Familia."

Es el tipo de libro que

merece ser leído de

manera lenta,

paciente, y medita-

tiva. Lo recomiendo

encarecidamente, especialmente para

cualquier Cristiano que está casado o

está pensando en casarse.

El libro se lee con mayor facilidad

y suavidad que muchos documentos

del Vaticano. Pronto aparecerá en

los estantes de las librerías, y ya está

disponible en varios idiomas en el

sitio web del Vaticano



Obispo Sis

www.vatican.va . El texto consiste de 256 páginas organizadas en nueve capítulos. Al igual que todos los documentos papales, se organiza de acuerdo al número de párrafo.

Cuando hago referencia al texto en este artículo, me referiré al número de párrafo.

El documento es el fruto de dos eventos de consulta mundiales llamados Sínodos de los Obispos, que se llevaron a cabo en Roma en octubre de 2014 y octubre de 2015. La preparación de las discusiones en los sínodos incluyó cuestionarios que se utilizaron por alrededor del mundo.

Amoris Laetitia es muy concreto y realista. Se basa en la experiencia humana, las Sagradas Escrituras, y casi 2,000 años de enseñanzas de la Iglesia. Está lleno de guía pastoral cariñosa sobre la vida diaria de la familia. Cita los escritos de los predecesores del Papa Francisco, en particular el Papa Juan Pablo II y el Papa Benedicto XVI. También se basa en los propios escritos anteriores del

Papa Francisco como obispo y papa.

El Papa Francisco fue motivado a escribir este documento debido a su preocupación por el futuro del matrimonio. Nos recuerda que la familia es la base de la sociedad; sin embargo, la familia en todo el mundo está en crisis. El Papa lamenta el descenso de la natalidad en Europa. Nota que muchos jóvenes no están interesados en casarse. Él se ve perturbado por el hecho de que las condiciones económicas hacen que muchas madres tengan que conseguir dos trabajos, dejando solos a sus hijos.

Estos hechos han motivado al Santo Padre a escribir una obra positiva que busca hacer el matrimonio más deseable y atractivo. Presenta las razones y motivaciones para escoger el matrimonio y la familia. Ofrece una perspectiva de esperanza y compasión, lleno de recordatorios concretos de la belleza de la vida familiar. Anima a las parejas a confiar en la

(Please See OBISPO/19)

SEMINARIAN OF THE MONTH

Ordination growing closer for seminarian

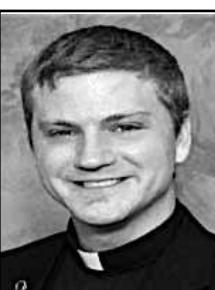
Upcoming Ordinations

May 20 -- Josh Gray, 6:30 p.m., St. Mary, Brownwood, (Transitional Diaconate)

June 3 -- Deacon Tony Franco, 6 p.m., Sacred Heart Cathedral (Priesthood)

June 25 -- Tim Hayter, 10 a.m., Our Lady of Guadalupe, Fort Stockton (Transitional Diaconate)

Ordination is approaching so fast! It seems like just yesterday I was entering seminary with two other brothers, with plenty of time to spare. This ordination is a call that I accepted many years ago, and I know I cannot do it alone. There has been so much support over the years from friends and family. As I am looking forward to being ordained, it is the reverse of what any other big ceremony or celebration entails. I am not being promoted or given a great honor to boast of. No, I am being called to serve even



Josh Gray

more. I must wash the feet of the poor and serve the table. I am following Christ the servant, to whom I am continually dedicating my life. As I have faced many struggles, the one constant in my life has been Christ. His patient love and presence has filled me with peace time and time again. As I approach the altar, I expect to be changed. Not in a moment of sudden and complete transformation, but in the little things. I am called to put aside my own life, and live for Christ who came not to serve but to be served. -- Josh Gray

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Personnel Changes

In service of God and the people of the Diocese of San Angelo, the following changes of assignment will take place:

Rev. Michael Rodriguez will become Vocation Director of the diocese as of July 1.

Rev. Fernando Bonilla, MSP, will become pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish in Odessa as of July 1, 2016

Rev. Miguel Romero, MSP, is parochial vicar of Holy Redeemer Parish in Odessa as of April 15, 2016.

After his priestly ordination on June 3, **Deacon Tony Franco** will become parochial vicar of St. Ann Parish in Midland as of July 1.

The date of the assignment of **Rev. Innocent Eziefule** as parochial vicar of Sacred Heart Parish in Abilene will begin on June 1 rather than July 1.

Rev. Kumar Juijuvarapu will become parochial vicar of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Odessa as of June 7.

St. Vincent parish to celebrate pastor's 25th anniversary

ABILENE — The parish of St. Vincent Pallotti Catholic Church, 2525 Westview in Abilene, will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Father Terry Brenon to the priesthood. A Mass of Thanksgiving is scheduled for Sunday, June 5, 2016 at 10 am. Father Terry was ordained by Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, Bishop of San Angelo at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, San Angelo, on May 25, 1991. Assigned to St. Vincent Pallotti Church in 2005, he serves as pastor of St. Vincent Pallotti and Our Mother of Mercy Mission in Merkel. In his priestly service, he has served parishes in Fort Stockton, Sanderson, Coyanosa, Imperial, Stanton, Lenorah, San Angelo, Carlsbad, Sterling City, Abilene and Merkel.

St. Margaret Church in San Angelo to host spring festival May 22

SAN ANGELO — St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church will be having its spring festival on **Sunday, May 22, 2016** at 2619 Era St, San Angelo. There will be a delicious BBQ chicken dinner being served from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. for only \$10 per adult plate and \$6 per child plate. There will also be drive-thru plates to go at \$10 each. The festival will run from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. with a raffle, auction, silent auction, and games for all ages. Come for a day of family fun and fellowship.

Coleman soph headed to Australia to compete in cross country competition

Marie Rosales, a Coleman High School sophomore and parishioner at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in

Coleman has been invited to represent Texas as a cross country athlete in Australia this summer. Marie, a 2015 state qualifier in cross country as well as a two-time district and regional competitor, received the invitation shortly after running in the state competition in Round Rock.

"I am excited for the opportunity to represent my family, school, community, state and country in this once-in-a-lifetime experience," Rosales said.

Marie will compete in the Down Under Sports Tournament, on the Gold Coast of Australia, where she will run two races.

In order to achieve this goal of competing internationally, Rosales is asking for donations of any amount to go towards the costs of competing Down Under.

"When we participate in sports, we glorify God, who created our bodies and who sustains us in life. Athletic competition is an important form of socialization, and it inspires hard work and self-discipline," Bishop Michael Sis said. "I encourage people of all ages to get involved in some form of exercise on a regular basis. We have many young people in the Diocese of San Angelo who participate in Track and Cross Country. I admire their dedication. For Marie, this is a beautiful opportunity to see another country and meet runners from around the world."

Marie's grandmother, Terry, will also be attending as a chaperone. Anyone interested in donating, can do so by sending contributions to 1415 Hillcrest Street, Coleman, Texas 76834 or by visiting www.downundersports.com/payment?160921

Cemetery plot price adjustment

Effective June 1, 2016 the price for plots in Calvary Cemetery, San Angelo, will be \$1,800. Half plots for cremains will be \$900. The price for Mausoleum plots is from \$2,550 to \$4,500 depending on level and location.

Solo: Balancing personal devotion with Catholic social teaching important

By Jimmy Patterson

Editor

West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — The difference between adults and young people, Sal Solo says, is that when an adult hears of a huge global societal problem, they oftentimes will respond in a way that recognizes the problem but questions how they can do anything to make a significant difference. But a young person, for instance, hears that 162 million people in the world live on 50 cents a day and says, "I can help fix that."

In fact, it was precisely that response that led to Solo's "50 Cents a Day" relief effort, which challenges people to set aside 50 cents each day, then, at the end of the month, donate \$15 to hunger efforts.

"The great thing is that idea came from a kid," said Solo, who spoke to a group of young adults and high-school age youth, April 9, at Sacred Heart Cathedral gymnasium. "That's one of the things I love about teenagers. Oftentimes, adults feel just overwhelmed at a problem, whereas as a teenager knows exactly what they are going to do to help. They'll say, 'I heard that, so I'm going to do this.'"

Solo, former front man for the 1980s British New Wave band Classix Nouveux, has turned his attention to subjects higher than the popular music culture. Today, he lives in Florida and travels the country evangelizing youth about not just what young people can receive from the Church — but what they can give.

When he presents to retreatants, he often focuses on the Sacraments and what Catholics receive in the morning, while in the afternoon centering on Catholic Social teaching.

"The sacraments, for us, that's our spiritual food, so we can be blessed and then go out and share it with others," he said. "Catholic social teaching ... it's social, it's what we do with others and for others."

"It's necessary for every Catholic to remember that on the judgment day, Jesus is going to ask you, 'When I was hungry, did you feed me?' He's not going to ask how many Novenas did you pray or how many Masses did you celebrate. We should of course go to Mass and we should pray, but we are going to be judged by what we did on earth for others."

Sally Pena, a parishioner at Holy Spirit Church in Sweetwater, helped facilitate one of the small groups during Solo's appearance at the Cathedral gymnasium.

"Our communities need to be together to make a difference," she said. "If one person doesn't do anything then that will hurt our effort. I may not be the brightest person in terms of some things, but I do know that in my heart there is a lot that I am supposed to do for others. And I need the Lord to guide me and show me what I am supposed to do."



Pilgrim Cross Visits

The World Youth Day Pilgrim Cross (photo at left) will stop at many parishes in the Diocese of San Angelo before July 30, 2016, the date of the World Youth Day-USA event at San Angelo's McNease Convention Center. Following is a schedule of when the cross will be at each parish:

APRIL

- 6 — Brownwood, St. Mary
- 9 — Abilene, Sacred Heart
- 13 — Abilene, St. Vincent
- 16 — Sweetwater, Holy Spirit
- 20 — Big Spring, Holy Trinity
- 23 — Stanton, St. Joseph
- 27 — Midland, St. Stephen
- 30 — Midland, St. Ann

MAY

- 4 — Garden City, St. Lawrence
- 7 — Midland, San Miguel
- 11 — Odessa, St. Joseph/St. Anthony
- 14 — Andrews, Our Lady of Lourdes
- 18 — Odessa, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- 21 — Odessa, St. Mary
- 25 — Odessa, Holy Redeemer
- 28 — Crane, Good Shepherd

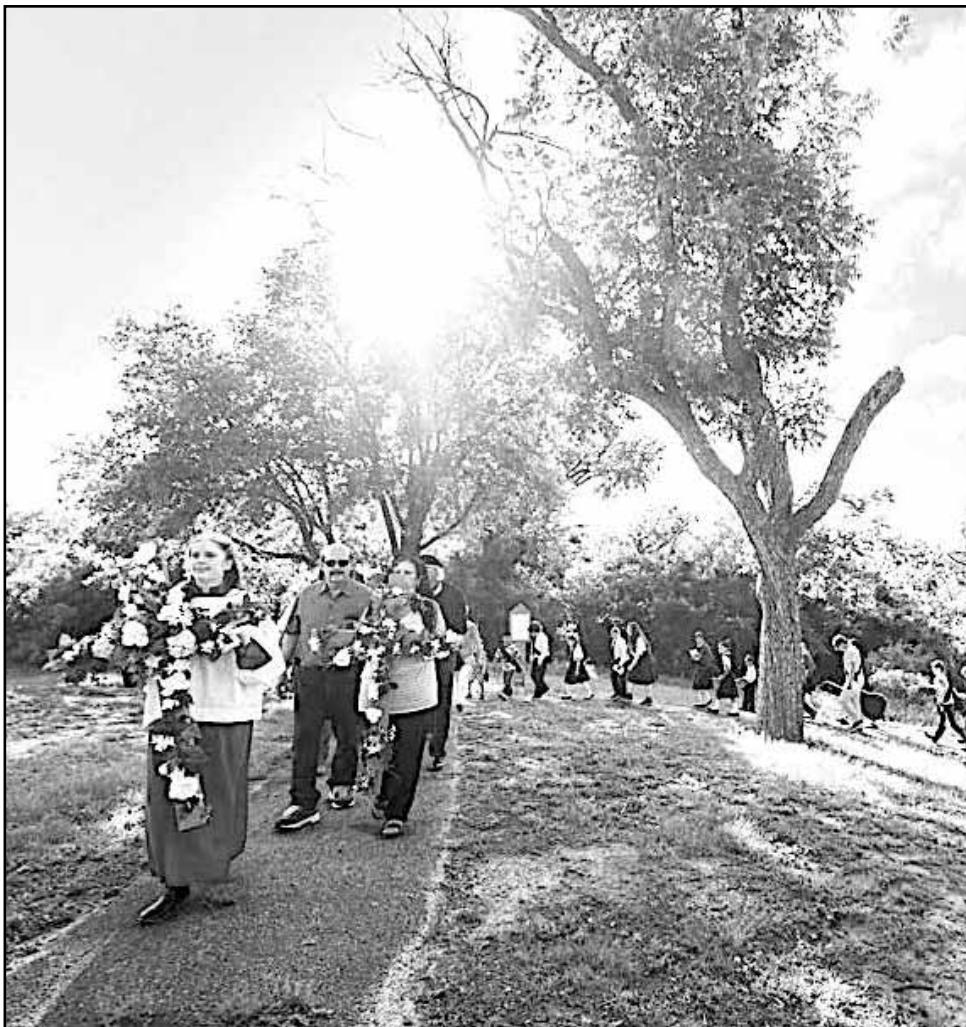
JUNE

- 1 — McCamey, Sacred Heart
- 4 — Ft. Stockton, Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 8 — Sheffield, Good Shepherd
- 11 — Ozona, Our Lady
- 15 — Sonora, St. Ann
- 22 — Menard, Sacred Heart
- 25 — Brady, St. Patrick

JULY

- 2 — Wall, St. Ambrose
- 9 — Rowena/Olfen/Miles, St. Joseph
- 13 — San Angelo, Sacred Heart Cathedral
- 20 — San Angelo, St. Margaret
- 23 — Eldorado, Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 30 — Eldorado, Special Procession

Lady in Blue celebration set for May 22



A procession was led at Christ the King Retreat Center during last year's observance of Lady in Blue Day in San Angelo (Courtesy photo).

The Angelus

SAN ANGELO — The eighth annual Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda "The Lady in Blue" celebration will be held Sunday, May 22 at 5:00 p.m. at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts.

The event has been held at the Christ the King Retreat Center in recent years, but crowds have outgrown that venue.

The celebration will begin with a brief ceremony by the Jumano Native Americans beside the Concho River at the Celebration Bridge, followed by the Procession of Flowers across the bridge to the museum, where Bishop Michael Sis will celebrate the Mass of the Holy Trinity and Bishop Michael Pfeifer will concelebrate. The Mass will satisfy your Sunday Mass obligation.

Refreshments will be available after the Mass at the museum.

Known as "The Lady in Blue," Sor María de Jesús de Ágreda was a cloistered nun who lived in Ágreda, Spain in the 1600s. She is known for her legendary bilocation — being in body at her convent in Spain while evangelizing in spirit to the Jumanos, indigenous Indians of this area.

The arrival of missionaries as a result of María's appearances secured San Angelo's place in history as the site of the first missionary efforts in Texas.

Heart of Mercy Prayer Group attends charismatic conference

The Angelus

On March 4-5, 2016, members and friends of the Heart of Mercy Catholic Charismatic Prayer Group, at right, attended the Annual Catholic Charismatic Conference in San Antonio. The theme was "Mission Possible... You CAN Do It" and was held at St. Mary Magdalen Church. The main speaker this year was Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR. Fr. Dave is a full time missionary preacher and teacher. He is a dynamic speaker with a gift of reaching young and old alike!

At the conference we were given tools to help us live the year of mercy, not only for a year, but to change our lives. We explored what mercy means

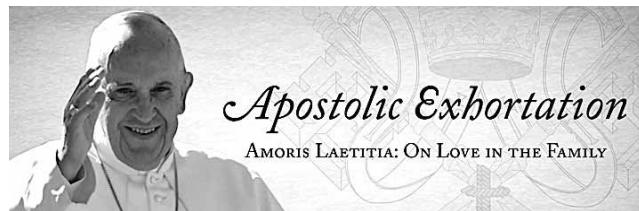
in our lives and how we can share that message with others. We learned that we CAN be the mercy that others need.

This year's conference starts the preparation for the 2017 50th Anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Mark your calendar for March 18, 2017 for the Jubilee Celebration in San Antonio at the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center.

The Heart of Mercy Prayer Group meets at Christ the King Retreat Center, in San Angelo, every Monday evening at 7 p.m. All are invited to join us as we pray and praise our Lord! Visit our website at: sanangeloheartofmercy.com, or call JoAnn Turner at 325-763-9400.



See Bishop Sis' column on
Amoris Laetitia / Pg. 3



Bishop introduces *Amoris Laetitia* to media, public

By Jimmy Patterson
West Texas Angelus

SAN ANGELO — With the April 2016 release of the apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, Bishop Michael J. Sis said the best way of ensuring Pope Francis' words are heeded is to further develop the Church's marriage formation and marriage support programs.

The pope's exhortation focuses on love in marriage and family. The document is the fruit of two worldwide consultative events called Synods of Bishops, in Rome, October 2014 and October 2015. The synods included questionnaires completed by Catholics around the world.

"The key (to a good marriage) is preparing well, getting to know your partner well and inviting God in from the very beginning."

— **Bishop Michael J. Sis**

At a news conference introducing the

(Please See CONFERENCE/23)

This work is based in human experience, the Bible, and almost 2,000 years of Church teachings. It cites the writings of Francis' predecessors, particularly Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, and also draws on Francis' own previous writings as bishop and pope.

"*Amoris Laetitia* is a very positive work which seeks to make marriage more desirable and attractive. It presents the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and family," Bishop Sis said. "It offers a perspective of hope and compassion, filled with concrete reminders of the beauty of family life. It encourages couples to trust in the grace of God for living out their marriage."



Bishop Sis, second from right, with David and Linda Erickson, and, at right, Tom Burke.

Observers: Document a model of mercy for families

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on love and the family invites the church to see the daily struggles of families as an opportunity to encounter people the way Jesus encountered people with mercy throughout his life, Catholic observers said.

Because of its length — 256 pages — and the depth to which the pope explores love, marriage and church teaching on the family, the document deserves to be unpacked with patience and careful discernment for mercy to take root in the church's response to real human needs, Catholic leaders told Catholic News Service.

The exhortation, "*Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), on Love in the Family," was Pope Francis' reflection on the discussion, debate and suggestions raised during the 2014 and 2015 meetings of the Synod of Bishops on the family.

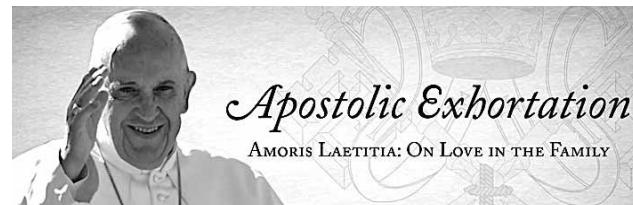
Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, noted Pope Francis' repeated calls of the importance of clergy taking time to get to know individual circum-



(Please See POPE/22)

"Families should not see themselves as a refuge from society, but instead go forth from their homes in a spirit of solidarity with others. In this way, they become a hub for integrating persons into society and a point of contact between the public and private spheres."

Amoris Laetitia, para. 181



Marriage as a covenant of Mercy — the much discussed Ch. 4

By Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

In Chapter 4 of *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis' new Apostolic Exhortation, he writes about "Love in Marriage." Seeing marriage as a "Covenant of Mercy" is an appropriate description of his understanding of love in marriage, especially in this Jubilee Year of Mercy. In this article are some reflections on the Pope's teaching that we think are especially significant for married couples and the

Church and then reflections on some implications and extensions of the Pope's teaching.

The Pope begins the chapter with a lengthy exposition of St. Paul's great teaching on love in I Cor. 13 (paragraphs 89-119). This is a welcome beginning, since marriage and family are the primary contexts in which we learn to receive and give love and in which we can be most hurt by a lack of love. The remainder of this chapter is further commentary on St. Paul's teaching on love.

'Engaged Encounter' one way church living *Amoris Laetitia*

Editor's Note: The following are remarks by David and Linda Erickson, leaders in the Diocese of San Angelo's Engaged Encounter program for adults preparing for marriage. The comments were made at an April 8, 2016 news conference regarding the papal exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.

By David and Linda Erickson

Six Engaged Encounter retreats are conducted each year in the Diocese of San Angelo, based on a proven format that goes back some 40 years. Each retreat has an average of 25-30 engaged couples in attendance.

On occasion, in attendance, only one person that makes the engaged couple is Catholic.

Before our marriage in 2004 we attended the Engaged Encounter marriage preparation retreat at the beautiful Christ The King Retreat Center, located next to the diocesan pastoral center in San Angelo.

Our experience was life changing in many ways, especially in how we viewed marriage and our relationship with God at the center of our marriage. Soon after our Engaged Encounter weekend, we knew we had to be part of the ministry and we joined the team nine years ago.

The Engaged Encounter Retreat program is a couple-centered and spiritual experience where couples listen to talks from the team presenting on various subjects related to marriage. They then write separately and dialogue together on what they have written. The sharing and learning how to have a Christ-centered marriage is important to their relationship. We witness each weekend how the couples are transformed



David and Linda Erickson

(Please See EE/21)

"The sacrament of marriage is not a social convention, an empty ritual or merely the outward sign of a commitment. The sacrament is a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses, since 'their mutual belonging is a real representation, through the sacramental sign, of the same relationship between Christ and the Church. The married couple are therefore a permanent reminder for the Church of what took place on the cross; they are for one another and for their children witnesses of the salvation in which they share through the sacrament." (para. 72)

In marriage it is necessary both to give and to receive love. To do this we must be willing to receive God's love for us and know in this receiving that He also loves others. This means we must be willing to receive God's forgiveness and allow ourselves to be the conduit of God's forgiveness of others (107, 108). Giving and receiving love means seeing others and ourselves with the eyes of

(Please See KNICKERBOCKERS/9)



Fr. Knick and Sandie Knickerbocker

Exhortation will bring no changes to church's annulment process

Editor's Note: The following are remarks made at a April 8, 2016, news conference to introduce *Amoris Laetitia* by Tom Burke, Canon Lawyer and member of the diocesan marriage tribunal.

By Tom Burke
Diocese of San Angelo

On August 15, 2015, Pope Francis promulgated an Apostolic Letter *motu proprio* entitled *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus*. This document had full effect in the law of the Catholic Church on December 8, 2015.

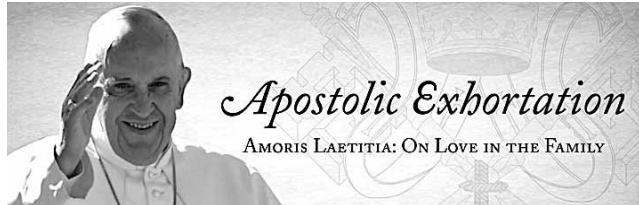
The changes in the law affected by Pope Francis dealt specifically with the procedures of adjudicating matrimonial cases - commonly referred to as "annulments." Prior to December 8, a matrimonial case was required to be adjudicated twice: in the Tribunal Office of the local diocese and in an Appellate Tribunal. *Mitis Iudex* kept the same fundamental principles that still apply to all matrimonial cases. What changed is that the appellate process is no longer mandatory. Consequently, the time it took for the required "appeal court trial" has been removed and it is much less likely to delay justice.

In addition to this ordinary process of "annulment," Pope Francis created an extraordinary process. This new process is to be utilized only when the facts of the marriage warrant swift justice. It involves the direct participation of the bishop of a diocese and the case must be so perceivably clear by means of the facts that the bishop deems it worthy of this new and briefer process. Thus far, this briefer process is employed rarely throughout our world. Instead, the pope's removal of the mandatory appeal has been sufficient to bring justice



Burke

(Please See BURKE/21)



Amoris Laetitia

Comments from church leaders

"*Amoris Laetitia*" is a joyful invitation for families to live the works of mercy and to receive the gift of God's healing where there is sin and brokenness. As he has done time and again, Pope Francis challenges us to approach the weak with compassion, to 'enter into the reality of other people's lives and to know the power of tenderness."

— Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston

"Personally, I was encouraged by what the pope has to say about preparing men and women for marriage and about our need to accompany couples, especially during those early years when they are just starting out on the path of their life together. I was also touched by our Holy Father's call for all of us in the church to reach out with compassion to wounded families and persons living in difficult situations."

— Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles

"*Amoris Laetitia*" is a serious and extensive reflection on Christian marriage. While it changes no church teaching or discipline, it does stress the importance of pastoral sensitivity in dealing with the difficult situations many married couples today face. Pope Francis is skilled at analyzing the cultural forces that make Christian marriage a unique witness, and often a special challenge. His recognition of the importance of children and the value of adoption are great expressions of support for family life. Happily, the kind of pastoral discernment called for in *Amoris Laetitia* is already happening in many of our parish communities, and the Holy Father's encouragement, coming just months after

the World Meeting of Families, is a great gift."

— Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia

"With '*Amoris Laetitia*' ('The Joy of Love'), Pope Francis has provided the church with an in-depth reflection on Christian marriage, the intricacies of relationships, and the struggles that people face in modern society. ... In the introduction of '*Amoris Laetitia*', Pope Francis advises everyone to carefully read through the document because of its length and sometimes complex passages on matters of great significance. While many commentators and pundits will make their interpretations known in the media in the coming days, the Holy Father's advice is sound. I will also follow this advice and will offer my own thoughts after careful reflection and consideration."

— Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila of Denver

-- "This compassionate approach asks the church to walk with families, to help them navigate the many challenges they face in the world today with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the truth of Catholic teaching. Our priests, deacons and laity are accompanying these people, staying close to them and reaching out to them. While the journey toward ideal situations might seem slow in coming, God is working in their lives, and we should appreciate that fact. '*Amoris Laetitia*' ... is a joyful invitation to families to live the works of mercy and to receive the gift of God's healing where there is sin and brokenness."

— Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio

Commentary

The joy of the family

Responding to editors' requests for a regular sampling of current commentary from around the Catholic press, here is an editorial titled, "The joy of the family," which appeared in the April 24 issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*, a national Catholic newsweekly based in Huntington, Indiana. It was written by the newspaper's editorial board.

The church has a marriage problem.

The number of couples marrying sacramentally in the United States is down more than 60 percent from 1970. Cohabitation is becoming the norm. Secularization is growing rapidly. The U.S. divorce rate, even among Catholics, hovers around 30 percent. Children are seen as rights and commodities rather than as gifts from God. Fewer babies are being baptized. In short, the church is losing its people.

In his newest papal document, "*Amoris Laetitia*" ("The Joy of Love"), Pope Francis tries to stop the bleeding. He tackles head-on the fact that the church is generally viewed as out of step with the modern reality of 21st-century family living. And, in classic Francis style, he urges the church to descend to the level of a "field hospital" — to meet couples and families, who perhaps fall short of the church's ideal, where they are.

"The church," he said, quoting the final report from the 2014-15 family synods, "must accompany with attention and care the weakest of her children, who show signs of a wounded and troubled love, by restoring in them hope and confidence" While not changing doctrine, Pope Francis conveys how necessary it is for the church to witness to the beauty and joy that abounds when marriage and family life are centered on Christ -- even within all the messiness and realities of 21st-century humanity. This, he admits, is a challenge for the church. "We find it difficult to present marriage more as a dynamic path to personal development and fulfillment than as a lifelong burden," he writes.

Yet this is what we are called to do. Unlike "*Laudato Si'*," Francis' encyclical on ecology that was addressed to "every person living on this planet," "*Amoris Laetitia*" is addressed directly to Catholics. It is first and foremost a document written for the new evangelization. "We need to find the right language, arguments and forms of witness that can help us reach the hearts of young people, appealing to their capacity for generosity, commit-

(Please See **COMMENT/11**)

KNICKERBOCKERS

(From 7)

God (96) — from the inside out. If this is to happen, others must reveal themselves to us, and we must be willing to receive that revelation. When we are open to the revelation of another person, we are also revealing ourselves to that person. This is so because we are created in the image of God, who is a Trinity of Persons. Each Person of the Trinity reveals Himself to the other Persons of the Trinity and receives the revelation of the other Persons. When we become the willing subjects of God's revelation of Himself to us, we also reveal ourselves to God. We have the capacity to be the willing subjects (receivers) of revelation or to decline such revelation. There is no revelation without a subject to receive it. For there to be the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation, Mary had to be the willing subject of that revelation.

Husbands and wives, in their love for each other, continually reveal themselves to each other in their marital covenant of mercy. This self-revelation includes the nuptial act, open to life, which brings children into this world, children who are the fruit of this marital covenant of mercy. Not only are husband and wife the icon of the relationship of Christ and His Church but also husband, wife, and child are the icon of the Holy Trinity and the Holy Family of Bethlehem and Nazareth. Father, mother, and child are meant to participate with the Holy Family in the perfect triune love who is God Himself.

We become willing subjects of revelation by living the virtue of humility (98). Humility means forgetting about myself in order to love others for their own sakes, and, in so doing, loving myself in the proper virtuous way. Humility means being able to rejoice in the good of others (109). A husband and wife rejoice in the unique gifts God has given each one of them, and a mother and father rejoice in the unique gifts God has given each of their children. Parents help their children see God's unfolding plan for their lives and never try to contradict that plan by saying, "This is not what I had planned for you."

Humility leads to joy in marriage and family life. Joy is distinguished from pleasure, which can be good in itself but which can come and go. Joy is being taken out of ourselves into the Triune love-life of God and His plans

for us and the lives of others. When this occurs, we lose ourselves to find ourselves as we truly are in God's eyes. Humility and joy join as fruits of God's love for us and of His love for others through us.

Love, forgiveness, humility, and joy are all aspects of God's mercy, which we should find first in the family. To receive this bounty of mercy, all we must do is ask for it in the language of repentance for trying to make ourselves into someone we are not. Repentance means recognizing we are on a journey and are somewhere between who we have made ourselves by our sin and who we will become when we are fully the person God wants us to be, a person always intended by God and now redeemed by Him who saves us to become who we really are.

In marriage and family we have the primary locus of this bountiful mercy of God's love. In marriage and family we are bound in a covenant of mercy that is the domestic Church, the Church in the home, the primary unit of the parish Church. Unlike other Christian communions, the Catholic Church counts its membership by families, those primary communities bound to the Triune God in His covenant of mercy.

What are some possible implications and extensions of the teaching of Pope Francis on marriage and family? What we say here can be regarded as our private opinions. We believe that what we say does not contradict Church teaching about marriage and family but extends it in a fruitful way.

Pope Francis, in his exposition of I Corinthians 13, writes about St. Paul's teaching that "love hopes all things." He writes: "Here hope comes more fully into its own, for it embraces the certainty of life after death. Each person, with all his or her failings, is called to the fullness of life in heaven. There, fully transformed by Christ's resurrection, every weakness, darkness and infirmity will pass away. There the person's true being will shine forth in all its goodness and beauty" (#117). Furthermore, the Pope says that "when a man and a woman celebrate the sacrament of marriage, God is, as it were, 'mirrored' in them; he impresses in them his own features and the indelible character of his love? Isn't this in keeping with the Pope's teaching that God makes of the husband and wife "one single existence"? Isn't this in keeping with his teaching that in marriage husband and wife are joined in "an indissoluble exclusivity"? And, isn't this in keeping with his teaching that "lovers do not see their relationship as merely temporary"? What about marriage as a covenant of mercy that is perfected in eternity? We live our married lives here in the faith and hope that the perfection of our married love will be found in heaven.

mystery of marriage: God makes of the two spouses one single existence" (121). He speaks of married love as "a dynamic process..., one which advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God" (122, quoting St. John Paul II). Pope Francis teaches that "after the love that unites us to God, conjugal love is the 'greatest form of friendship' (St. Thomas Aquinas). It is a union possessing all the traits of a good friendship: concern for the good of the other, reciprocity, intimacy, warmth, stability and the resemblance born of a shared life. Marriage joins to all this an indissoluble exclusivity expressed in the stable commitment to share and shape the whole of life. Let us be honest and acknowledge the signs that this is the case. Lovers do not see their relationship as merely temporary" (123).

However, Pope Francis then says that "A love that is weak or infirm, incapable of accepting marriage as a challenge to be taken up and fought for, reborn, renewed and reinvented until death, cannot sustain a great commitment" (124). Our question is: "Why does this marital commitment end at death?" Jesus teaches that in heaven we will neither marry nor be given in marriage (Mt. 22:30), but He does not say it will be as though we had never married. We talk much today about divorce, annulment, re-marriage, communion for the divorced, and even so-called same-sex marriage. But, what about a marriage on earth that reaches the fullness of its life in heaven? Isn't this in keeping with what Pope Francis teaches about each person being called to the fullness of life in heaven, where the person's true being will shine forth in all its goodness and beauty? Isn't this in keeping with his teaching that God is "mirrored" in husband and wife, in whom God impresses his own features and the indelible character of his love?

Isn't this in keeping with the Pope's teaching that God makes of the husband and wife "one single existence"? Isn't this in keeping with his teaching that in marriage husband and wife are joined in "an indissoluble exclusivity"? And, isn't this in keeping with his teaching that "lovers do not see their relationship as merely temporary"? What about marriage as a covenant of mercy that is perfected in eternity? We live our married lives here in the faith and hope that the perfection of our married love will be found in heaven.

CALENDAR (cont'd)

(continued from 3)

CHRIST THE KING RETREAT CENTER MAY

13-15 Deacon Formation
16 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
19 DOSA Staff Mass & Lunch
20-22 Engaged Encounter
22 Natural Family Planning
23 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
27-29 Blessing Team
29 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
30-June 3 DOSA Priests' Annual Retreat

JUNE
May 30-3 DOSA Priests' Annual Retreat
3-5 Deacon Formation
6-10 Lubbock Priests Annual Retreat

11 Unbound Retreat
13 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
16-19 Women's Small Town ACTS
20 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
23-26 Girls Chrysalis
27 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
30 DOSA Staff Mass & Lunch

JULY
4 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
9 Deacon Formation
11 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group

13-17 Small Town Teen ACTS
18 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
20 Parish Staff Development Day
21-24 Boys Chrysalis
25 Heart of Mercy Prayer Group
26 DOSA Staff Mass & Lunch
28-31 Women's Walk to Emmaus

PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS MAY

13 — Fr. Bhaskar Morugudi (1999)
14 — Fr. Hugh Wade (1977)
24 — Msgr. Benedict Zientek (1958)
25 — Fr. Tom Barley (1991)
25 — Fr. Terry Brenon (1991)
25 — Fr. Martin Hubbs (2012)
26 — Msgr. James Bridges (1962)
27 — Fr. Charles Greenwell

(1982)
27 — Fr. Luis Hernandez (1995)
27 — Msgr. Fred Nawarska (1967)
27 — Fr. Mark Woodruff (1972)
29 — Msgr. Bernard Gully (1962)
30 — Msgr. Timothy Schwertner (1965)
31 — Fr. Joey Faylona (2003)
31 — Fr. Gilbert Rodriguez (1974)
31 — Fr. Rodney White (2003)

JUNE

1 — Fr. Joseph Uecker, CPPS (1968)
3 — Fr. Ruben Covos (2006)
3 — Fr. Ariel Lagunilla (2006)
4 — Fr. Patrick Akpanobong (2011)
4 — Fr. Prem Thumma (2011)
5 — Msgr. Robert Bush (1969)
5 — Fr. Mario Catungal (2004)
5 — Fr. Frank Chavez (1976)
5 — Fr. Steven Hicks (1982)
7 — Fr. Stephen Kennelly (1969)
8 — Fr. Innocent Iziefule (2013)
8 — Fr. Lorenzo Hatch (2013)
8 — Fr. Sam Matthiesen (2013)
8 — Fr. Francis Onyekozuru (2013)
15 — Msgr. Larry Droll (1973)
20 — Fr. Serafin Avenido (1977)
24 — Msgr. Maurice Voity (1979)
29 — Fr. Joseph Ogbonna (2002)
29 — Fr. Richard Regan (1985)

NECROLOGY JUNE

7-Rev. Ray Corr, O.P. (2005)
8-Rev. Felix Cubelo (2007)
13-Rev. David Espitia (2003)
17-Rev. Barry Mclean (2012)
18-Rev. John Lucassen (1993)
20-Deacon William Smith (2003)
22-Rev. Msgr. Alvin Wilde (1996)
28-Bishop Stephen A. Leven (1983)

Shared Parishes

Msgr. Larry Droll, vicar general of the Diocese of San Angelo and pastor of St. Ann's in Midland, addresses a group of about 80 priests, deacons and church workers, April 8 at Holy Angels Church in San Angelo. The "Shared Parishes" program being instituted in the diocese helps parishes work together. The program stresses that although we come at our faith from a variety of backgrounds we are all one in our journey to Christ.

(Photo by Jimmy Patterson)



Trust me! The four signs of trustworthiness in a person

Dr. Greg Popcak

Trust is in the news a lot these days as candidates from both parties present their ideas and ask us to trust them to lead the nation. But the campaign raises an interesting question. How do we ever know whom we can really trust? It can be especially difficult to know whether to trust someone on a personal level — particularly if that person has hurt you in the past.



Popcak

Some people respond to this dilemma by trusting people too much and too quickly, backing off only after they've been wounded. Others do the opposite, withholding trust until someone has jumped through enough hoops to prove themselves. Obviously, neither approach works well. As Christians we have to balance our moral right to defend our dignity and integrity with the moral obligation to reach out to others and create loving communion with the people in our lives. Having a healthy perspective on trust allows us to find the response that serves both important needs.

The most important thing to remember

is that trust is not an all or nothing proposition. It is possible to trust a person in some areas or with some responsibilities but not in other areas. But how do you know what those areas are and to what degree you can trust a person in any context? It comes down to four factors.

Trust Factors: Ability, Integrity, Benevolence, Consistency.

Psychologists believe that trustworthy people exhibit four qualities; ability, integrity, benevolence and consistency.

Ability refers to a person's capacity for doing what they say they are going to do. To what degree does a person only promise what they are actually capable of doing? Does that person actually follow through on promises or do they say all the right things in the moment only to fail to show up later? The answer to questions like these demonstrates how much a person has the ability to be trusted. By contrast, untrustworthy people can be charming and well-meaning, but they are unreliable in that they overpromise or lack follow-through.

Integrity means that a person has a sufficiently well-developed value system and they tend not to give offense in the first place, or they tend to self-correct when they do, or are at least willing to generously hear and respond proactively

when they are told they have been offensive. A person with impaired integrity doesn't tend to care that he has given offense and becomes automatically defensive if told he has been hurtful in some way. Such a person gives apologies grudgingly and rarely displays the humility necessary to learn from missteps. People who behave this way can't be trusted because they don't have a well-developed moral sense. They tend to do what they think they can to get away with or manage to explain away and only repent under pressure — and then, only half-heartedly. People with integrity, on the other hand, see the offenses they commit against others as a mark against their own character, and because they are committed to living out a particular set of values, they work hard to be faithful to those principles no matter what.

Benevolence refers to the degree to which the person you want to trust has shown you that he or she is willing to work for your good, especially when it has required some sacrifice or inconvenience on his or her part. A person who is willing to put themselves out for your sake is more worthy of your trust than someone who isn't. People who lack benevolence could be friendly and charming on the outside, but when you need something, their selfish tendencies come

out along with their catalog of excuses.

Consistency — Even the most irresponsible person manages to follow through occasionally. Even the abusive person manages to say, "sorry" or do something nice once in a while. It is our ability to count on a person to demonstrate ability, integrity and benevolence consistently that makes them truly trustworthy. Inconsistently demonstrating the qualities of a trustworthy person is the same as not demonstrating them at all.

Evaluating a person's ability, integrity, benevolence and consistency vs. their unreliability, defensiveness, selfishness and inconsistency enables you to have a clearer sense of how much you can trust someone, in what contexts, and to what degree. It can also give you a guide for dealing with those you have a hard time trusting by helping you highlight why and what might be done to resolve those obstacles to trust.

To learn more about whom to trust and how to heal broken trust, check out *God Help Me, These People are Driving Me Nuts! Making Peace with Difficult People* (Crossroads).

Dr. Greg Popcak is the author of many books and the host of More2Life Radio. To learn more about Catholic counseling and other resources, visit CatholicCounselors.com

On *Amoris Laetitia* ...

"Pope Francis stresses the very different challenges families face around the world and calls on Catholics to "let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together. Pope Francis clearly sees the challenges Catholic Relief Services faces in serving more than 100 countries around the world. He sees the single mother with her children fleeing violence in Syria, he sees the farmer realizing that his children will not have enough food for the next season. He also shows us the way ahead by calling us to walk together with these families. It is beautiful that he calls for us to act as one human family to strengthen families throughout our world."

-- Carolyn Woo, president,
Catholic Relief Services.



COMMENT

(From 8)

ment, love and even heroism, and in this way inviting them to take up the challenge of marriage with enthusiasm and courage," he writes (No. 40).

In its practicality and accessibility, "*Amoris Laetitia*" is a highly effective document for encouraging and inspiring couples and families in the trenches of everyday life. The pope's goal is the mission of the church: to bring Christ to people and the people to Christ. It is rich in practical advice and conveys a real understanding of humanity in all its successes and failings. It will be effective in offering support to couples and families and in renewing and sustaining their efforts to live as Christ intends.

Of course, "*Amoris Laetitia*" isn't without its challenges. The eighth chapter alone, on "Accompanying, Discerning and Integrating Weakness," has been the cause of much immediate consternation within the Catholic com-

munity. Some are concerned that the pope was too pastoral and still others that he wasn't accommodating enough. Here, we echo the words of the pope himself, as well as many church leaders: that it is critical to read the document carefully, slowly and in its entirety. It is helpful, too, to remember that "*Amoris Laetitia*" is written fully within the context of Catholic teaching. Kurt Martens, a professor of canon law at The Catholic University of America, spells this out explicitly.

Perhaps the biggest loss, however, would be for Catholics to focus only on the controversy rather than on the majority of the content that is both rich and inspiring. "*Amoris Laetitia*" is an opportunity for evangelization. Let us embrace it.

The views or positions presented in this or any guest editorial are those of the individual publication and do not necessarily represent the views of Catholic News Service or of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Speaking of Saints

Sister Maria Ursula left legacy in schools, universities for girls

By Mary Lou Gibson

Many priests, bishops and popes have guided the Catholic Church through countless religious upheavals and national calamities over the centuries. In addition, the men and women in religious orders nurtured and strengthened the faith through their work with people in schools, hospitals, orphanages, homeless shelters and other institutions.



Gibson

One such religious congregation that has served the poorest of the poor since the early 20th century is The Ursuline Sisters of the Heart of Jesus in Agony, also known as the Grey Ursulines because of their habits.

The foundress of the Grey Ursulines was Julia Maria Ledóchowska. She was born in Loosdorf, Austria in 1865 into an old and distinguished Polish family. Matthew Bunson writes in "John Paul II's Book of Saints" that the Ledóchowska family had long been hailed as the "cra-

dle of faith and vocations."

Julia was 21 years old when she entered the Ursuline convent in Kraków, Poland in 1886 taking the name of Maria Ursula of Jesus.

Her father, Count Antoni Halka-Ledóchowska had given her his blessing to enter the convent before he died in 1883.

Sister Maria Ursula spent the next 20 years teaching in girls' schools. In 1904, she was elected as Mother Superior of the monastery. In Kraków, she opened a home for female university students which at the time was considered a new phenomenon. (www.catholic.org/saints)

This was just the first of many projects that Mother Ursula started. Sarah Gallick writes in "The Big Book of Women Saints" that her next assignment was in St. Petersburg, Russia. With the special blessing of Pope Pius X, she went there to found St. Catharine House, a boarding school for Polish girls. There were many Catholic immigrants in St. Petersburg, then a cosmopolitan, industrial city.

Mother Ursula and her nuns wore civil clothes in St. Petersburg because Roman

Catholic institutions were illegal then in the Russian Empire. Catholic Online reports that the nuns were under constant surveillance by the secret police.

Finally, the government opposition to Catholics forced Mother Ursula to move to Russian-controlled Finland. In 1914, at the beginning of World War I, Mother Ursula was expelled from Russia as an Austrian national. Catholic Online reports that she fled to neutral Sweden where she organized relief efforts for war victims and charitable programs for Polish people living in exile. She also founded a monthly Catholic newspaper and made extensive ecumenical contacts with Lutherans in Scandinavia.

It would be 1920 before she was able to move back to Poland with 40 other nuns who had joined her in her mission. This was the beginning of a growing Ursuline community with a distinctive charism and apostolate. Editor Dom Basil Watkins writes in "The Book of Saints" that Mother Ursula founded her own Congregation, the Ursuline Sisters of the Heart of Jesus in Agony.

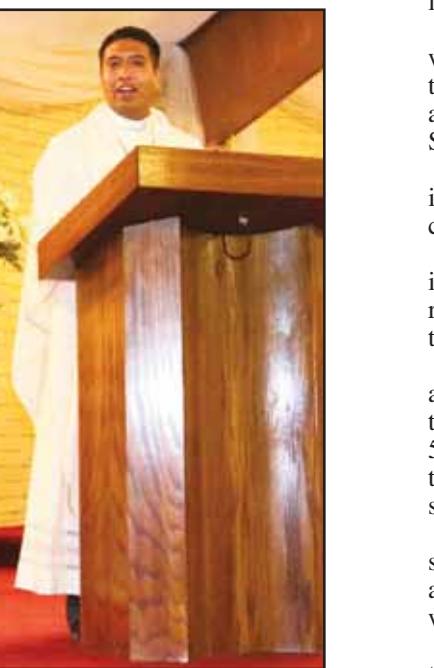
Her brother, Vladimir, helped to obtain Vatican approval of the new institute,

which was to be "devoted to education and training of children and youth and service to the poorest and the oppressed among our brethren."

According to Catholic Online, Mother Ursula and her nuns taught catechism in the factory town of Lodz between the two world wars. She organized a "Eucharistic Crusade" among the working class children and encouraged them to write to Pope Pius XI in honor of his 50th anniversary of his ordination. Mother Ursula is described as a noted orator who frequently spoke before royalty and national leaders. She defended the right of Polish independence and inspired others. (catholicsaints.info/saint-ursula-ledochowska/)

She died in Rome in early May 1939 at the age of 74. She was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1983 and canonized by him in 2003. Her feast day is May 29. Since 2006, she is the patron of Sieradz, Poland.

Today, there are about 900 Grey Ursuline sisters working in Poland, Italy, France, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Finland, Germany, Tanzania, Belarus and the Ukraine.

The Ordination of Father Miguel Romero, MSP

Father Miguel Romero, MSP, was ordained Friday, April 15, 2016, at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Odessa. Fr. Miguel, of the Missionary Servants of the Word (MSP) order, was named parochial vicar of Holy Redeemer upon his ordination. Father Fernando Bonilla, also a Missionary Servant of the Word, will become pastor of the parish on July 1, 2016.

Photos by Alan P. Torre / aptorre.com

Former priest in San Angelo diocese kidnapped, beaten

From staff and wire reports

NEW DELHI — A Catholic bishop in southern India was kidnapped and assaulted by unknown attackers demanding money, April 25.

Bishop Prasad Gallela of Cuddapah was blindfolded, handcuffed and forcibly taken away while he was traveling home after celebrating Mass at Karunagiri Shrine, reported ucanews.com.

He said unidentified kidnappers came in two vehicles and took "me to an undisclosed location."

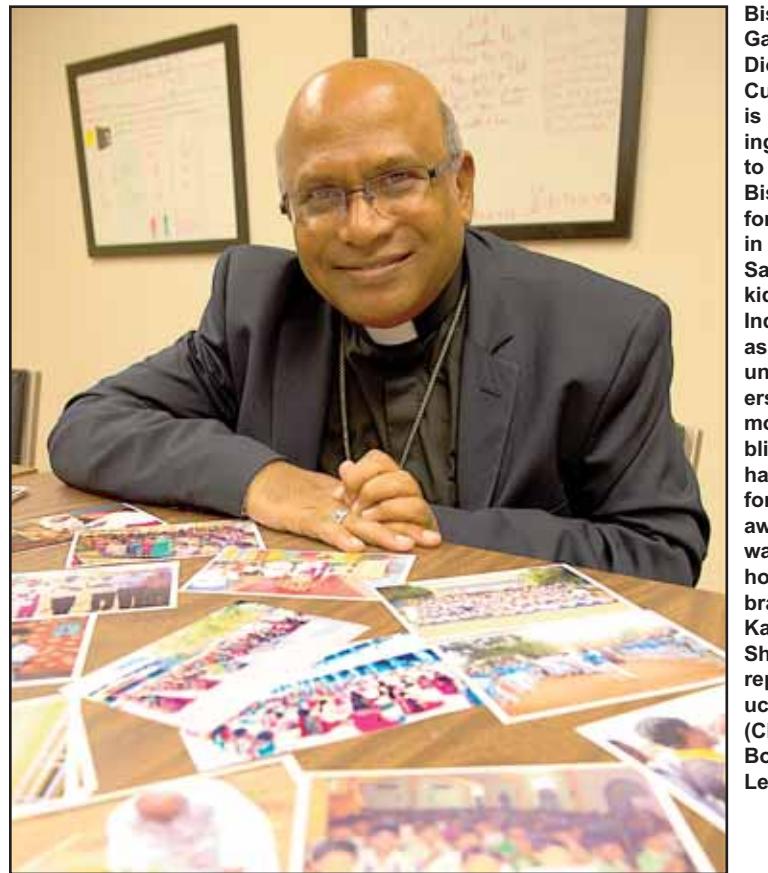
"They hit me and punched me, resulting in injuries all over my body. I did not resist," Bishop Gallela said. "Police are trying to find those behind the incident."

The bishop said the kidnappers kept asking him about the financial transactions of the diocese. They also demanded 5 million rupees (US\$75,325) and said that since "I help so many people, I should help them too," the bishop said.

"When I asked who they were, they said they are from the police," but he added that police did not behave that way.

Early April 26, the kidnappers released the bishop, about 55 miles away from where his diocese is based.

Bishop Gallela served the Diocese of San Angelo as a priest in Big Spring, and in the Miles/Rowena/Olfen cluster of parishes from 2000-2004. In 2004 Bishop Gallela returned to India to teach in a



Bishop Prasad Gallela of the Diocese of Cuddapah, India, is pictured during a 2015 visit to Kansas City. Bishop Gallela, formerly a priest in the Diocese of San Angelo, was kidnapped in India and assaulted by unknown attackers demanding money. He was blindfolded, handcuffed and forcibly taken away while he was traveling home after celebrating Mass at Karunagiri Shrine April 25, reported ucanews.com. (CNS photo/Joe Bollig, The Leaven)

ized." The archbishop appealed to law enforcement authorities to investigate the case thoroughly and find the culprits.

San Angelo Bishop Michael J. Sis said the bishop's abductors are in need of God's mercy.

"Bishop Prasad Gallela is a man of peace and respect. This incident of kidnapping and beating demonstrates how much the perpetrators are in need of the mercy of God," said Bishop Sis. "We pray not only for Bishop Prasad's healing and safety, but also for the conversion of the souls of his attackers."

Former San Angelo Bishop, the Most Reverend Michael D. Pfeifer, considers Bishop Gallela a close friend.

"I got to know him about 12 years ago when he first came to the diocese," Bishop Pfeifer told CRUX News. "I invited him, and he served as a priest here for several years. He was one of the best priests from outside the country I ever received. He's very capable, he's got a great pastoral sense and he adapted very well to the culture of West Texas."

Father Arockiaraj Gali, pastor at St. Lawrence Church, and Fr. Balachandra Nagipogu, parochial vicar at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Odessa, are both priests incardinated in the Diocese of Cuddapah, and are serving in the San Angelo diocese with the permission of Bishop Gallela.

Knights' CEO: World must respond to Islamic State genocide actions

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — While religious freedom in much of the Middle East is under siege and the civil war in Syria seems to have no end in sight, Carl Anderson, CEO of the Knights of Columbus, and others called the United Nations to action.

The U.N. plays a crucial role in securing the future of the region, particularly for people being tortured, kidnapped and killed because of their religious beliefs, Anderson said during a daylong conference April 28.

Anderson's presentation came during one of three panel discussions at the conference sponsored by the office of the Vatican's permanent observer to the U.N. and joined by In Defense of Christians and other organizations focusing on human rights abuses in the Middle East.

Presenters included people who experienced or witnessed atrocities being committed against religious minorities.

Led by remarks from Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Vatican's permanent observer to the U.N., the event had an

intensely sensitive agenda.

A 278-page report submitted to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry that was co-authored by the Knights of Columbus and the group In Defense of Christians in March outlined what it called "genocide" being carried out against religious minorities by the Islamic State. Its contents focused largely on Christians who have been murdered and those indigenous communities who will or have been displaced from their region.

On March 17, Kerry designated Islamic State actions as genocide, but the United States has yet to offer a plan to respond.

The U.N. estimates that more than half of Syria's pre-civil war population of about 22.1 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Four million Syrian refugees now live outside of their homeland.

Overall, at least 8 million people have been displaced throughout the region, human rights organizations estimate.

Anderson mentioned published threats in the Islamic State's magazine, Dabiq, specifying what the group has called the "Crusader army" from the West. Such threats have not only been carried out in many parts of the

Middle East but have haunted the lives of innocent men, women and children, he said.

The Knights of Columbus has raised more than \$10.5 million for relief since 2014 while partnering with dioceses and religious organizations to provide victims with food, clothing, shelter, education and medical attention, he said.

Anderson concluded his presentation by proposing that the U.N. take legal action against the Islamic State and other terrorist groups to prevent the eradication of long-standing and indigenous communities in the Middle East. He called for punishment of the perpetrators and for the establishment of international standards of justice, equality, the rule of law and religious freedom.

Sister Maria de Guadalupe Rodrigo, a member of the Congregation of the Incarnate Word who has spent 18 years in the Middle East as a missionary, spoke of her experienced living in Aleppo, Syria, a major battleground in the civil war.

"I remember the first two months when this all started, we all remained inside," she said. "There were constant explosions and gunshots. We couldn't sleep. But these weeks turned into months and the months into years."



Anderson

St. Margaret of Scotland Confirmation



Bishop Michael J. Sis celebrated Mass at St Margaret of Scotland on April 24, 2016, confirming four candidates. Twenty five members from First Methodist Church in San Angelo attended our confirmation. After mass, Bishop Sis had a question-and-answer session.

(Courtesy photos)



More confirmation photos, Pg. 24

Galveston-Houston Diocese welcomes 2,240 new Catholics

By James Ramos
Catholic News Service

HOUSTON — Laurel Devins couldn't help but smile when she saw Ella Claffy be confirmed by Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston during Easter Vigil Mass at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Houston March 26.

"I was definitely enjoying watching the interaction between (Ella and Cardinal DiNardo) knowing that I would be next," Devins said. "She was very good at communicating with the cardinal, it was a nice moment to see."

Nine-year-old Claffy, who was confirmed right before Devins, used one word to describe her Easter Vigil experience: "Wow."

Then Claffy swayed excitedly when describing St. Illuminata, her confirmation saint: "Most of her records were burned, but she was the patron saint of Todi, Italy. In most of her icons, she's holding a book and a quill pen, and I love to read and I love to write."

Angel Lopez, 10, was a bit more sheepish when describing St. Gabriel the Archangel, his confirmation saint. He deferred to his mother, asking her to help him explain Gabriel's importance. "He's nervous," she said, laughing.

He said he was excited about all of this, and that he appreciated all of his friends and family who stayed through the late-

WYDUSA (From 2)

the opportunity to experience World Youth Day," Ruiz said.

This year's international World Youth Day celebration is in Krakow, Poland. The local celebrations around the world give young adults the chance to experience the global event in their communities if they are unable to attend the main event in Europe.

Eleven parishioners from the Diocese of San Angelo, however, will be making the trip to Krakow, and will, at one point during the WYDUSA-San Angelo event, communicate via video conference with those attending the local event.

Presenters at the San Angelo event include Dr. Robert O'Connor, of St. Mary's University in San Antonio, who will speak on "Morality vs. Society"; Dr. James Sulliman, of Holy Family Parish in Abilene, who will present on "Finding the Divine in Relationships"; Bonnie LaMelle Abadie, of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, will address the young adults on prioritizing their life in a workshop entitled "Jesus Take the Wheel," and Leota Roesch, MA, will present on "I Am Catholic!" The workshops begin at 11:05 a.m.

The afternoon is devoted to spiritual opportunities with the prayer of the Divine Mercy, Stations of the Cross, Sacred Space, Reconciliation and a Multi-Cultural Rosary all beginning at 2 p.m.

The event will also feature many different ethnic groups that are representative of the multi-ethnicity in the diocese.

"We are hoping to have people from different parishes representing the Nigerian community, India, the Matachines, Hispanics, Filipinos and other ethnic groups in their native dress and perhaps participate in dance during our lunchtime," Ruiz said.

Catholic Voices

Experiencing the world through the eyes of another person

By Fr. Eugene Hemrick

Catholic News Service

Recently, I listened to Junlei Li, of the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media, speak about his work with children. He spoke to our advisory board at St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. I wondered what seeing the world through a child's eyes would be like. The question struck me as we viewed a video of captivated children working with electrical conductors.

I experienced the same type of wonder at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in Portland, Oregon, where I saw children literally diving into their science projects.



Fr. Hemrick

What goes on in the minds of a child when captivated? What do they see that we adults miss?

In his studies, Konrad Zacharias Lorenz, an Austrian zoologist, ethologist and ornithologist, raised the same questions, but applied to birds. To answer how birds see the world, he observed their behavior for months, trying to figure out what moves them. One of his conclusions was that something is imprinted on them from birth that causes them to act as they do.

As adults, more often than not, we see the world based on our experiences. Unfortunately, this can lead to misunderstandings. To see through the eyes of another person -- be it our husband, wife, children or neighbors -- requires an effort.

First, it means imagining what they see that we don't see. Practicing wonderment requires that we stop, gaze, sort through and avoid our usual way of seeing things. The same patience Lorenz practiced in exploring animal

behavior is an absolute necessity. Distractions must be shut out and being "all there" with another is a priority.

Seeing through the eyes of another requires amazement of another's uniqueness and studying the causes behind that uniqueness. We must put ourselves in their shoes (or eyes).

It also requires reverence and a sense of awe. Unique behaviors are imprinted within each of us. My mother would remind us, "It's the genes that only you possess, they're awesome, respect them!"

Seeing through the eyes of a child means keeping alive a childlike fascination and allowing it to captivate and draw us into the mind of another.

We must apply it when we wonder what Christ desired when he said, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3).

Is he prompting us to possess a child's eyes fascinated by God's creation and goodness?

New and modern challenges for young women and girls

By Effie Caldarola

Catholic News Service

I am not one who thinks everything was better when I was young and that the younger generation is doomed. Instead, I think growing up has always been tough. From my female perspective, I think it has been hard being a girl from day one.

Despite the women's movement, more equality, less discrimination and more opportunity in the workplace, I think the challenges facing girls remain, perhaps in different forms and certainly with new technology.

Those challenges were spelled out recently in a PBS interview with Nancy Jo Sales, who has written a book called, "American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Life of Teenagers." It's enough to make you want to hold off on buying your daughter a smartphone until she's 18.

Today's generation, perhaps in the past eight years, has become the first to grow up with the ubiquitous phone as a main component of their intellectual and social lives as kids.

When my oldest daughter was younger, she sometimes subscribed to the typical teenage girl magazines, the ones that were predominantly about clothes, makeup and hair. These magazines might offer an article or two on study habits or the risks of anorexia, but mainly they



Caldarola

sold the need to look good, as determined by fashion and commercialization.

When she was older, my daughter told me that once she gave up those magazines, her body image improved considerably. She liked who she was, not the person the glossy rag told her she should be.

Today's girls, instead of opening the occasional magazine, are confronted daily by social media in which being "hot" is a primary value, and hot has a distinctly sexual overtone. In her book, Sales describes girls who have plastic surgery so their Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook shots are better, and boys who text girls asking for nude photos.

"This is the swamp they're swimming in," Sales said.

People are different online than they are in person. One only needs to read the anonymous postings in the comments section of an article to know that behind a screen, people can become vile and uncivil in short order.

And even when the postings are not necessarily anonymous, social media brings out lascivious and cruel comments. Sexualization of females is pretty blatant today, and social media bullying is a reality.

Then there's the prevalence of pornography. Gone -- long gone -- are the days when it was pretty naughty just to have a Playboy magazine tucked beneath the mattress where you hoped Mom would never find it. Pornography, which is increasingly full of violence toward women, is

Cartoon Corner

(Please See CALDAROLA/23)

Making Sense of Bioethics

On humans aging gracefully

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

It seems odd, even a bit repulsive, when we encounter tales of elderly men running after women who are young enough to be their granddaughters. The wheelchair-bound billionaire oil tycoon J. Howard Marshall was 89 years old when he married the 26 year old Anna Nicole Smith. He had met the Playboy model and reality TV star in a strip club. Anna insisted that she really did love the old man, and wasn't in it for the money.

With age should come wisdom. It's appropriate and fitting for older men to leave behind their former ways, and no longer live and act like college frat boys. It's right to expect growth in self-control as we mature, and to expect a more reflective and sober approach to life. Growing old invariably offers us the opportunity to redirect our focus, and as our body weakens, our mind and soul can be drawn to consider matters we may have previously avoided, like death and that which awaits us beyond death's threshold. Our later years can powerfully provoke us to come to terms with our destiny and with higher truths.

In a recent column, Father Ron Rolheiser, quoting James Hillman, speaks to the graces that aging and infirmity can bring our way:

"Why have God and nature so structured things that as we age and mature and are finally more in control of our lives, our bodies begin to fall apart, and we need a bevy of doctors and medicines to keep functioning? Is there some wisdom in the very DNA of the life process that mandates the breakdown of physical health in late life? Hillman says, yes. There's an innate wisdom in the process of aging and dying: the best wines have to be aged in cracked old barrels. The breakdown of our bodies deepens, softens, and matures the soul."

I once overheard a hospital nurse chatting with one of her patients and was caught a bit off guard when she nonchalantly declared, with a little twinkle in her eye, "...when we get to be over 40, who doesn't have hemorrhoids?"

The comment, I thought, reflected a healthy, positive attitude toward aging and infirmity. Unavoidably, our bodies decline.



Pacholczyk

Our strength wanes. We get hemorrhoids and warts and cancers and high blood pressure and male pattern balding.

In the midst of it all, we can accept our lot with grace and gratitude. A serene acceptance of our struggles, and even of the specific death that awaits us, is surely a great virtue.

But aging gracefully is not something many of us tend to do well. We resist the idea. We may cling to the fantasy of eternal youth. Some in our society even push the notion that we shouldn't have to put up with the challenges of infirmity, and instead ought to receive help from the medical system so we can beat a hasty retreat to the exit. By pushing for physician-assisted suicide, they encourage us to despise the good of our own lives and to reject the graces that arise from our struggles by choosing to ingest any of a number of doctor-prescribed poisons.

On the other hand, by embracing our particular path into death, and by offering up our trials, we acquire a poise of soul and human maturity that orients us towards our destiny, a destiny in the hereafter that so many seem largely oblivious to. By letting our infirmities existentially speak to us, and coming to realize how true it is that we have no permanent dwelling here, we begin to grapple with that mysterious truth that heaven and home are synonymous.

Aging gracefully also involves recognizing and accepting the shortening of the time ahead of us and the lengthening of the time behind us. Even as we achieve a much-sought independence in our lives, we begin to cycle back towards a renewed dependence on others, on caregivers, family and the community, and we may even come to the realization that our own mind will have to be surrendered if dementia comes our way. All of this can instruct us, if we accept it with grace, in the wisdom of relinquishing our own willfulness once again like little children, and returning to a humble framework of interdependence in our shared destiny with others and with God.

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

A friend's journey home

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

In 2006, when my book, *On The Move: A History of the Hispanic Church in the United States*, was published, Father Virgilio Elizondo was one of those whose comments appeared on the flyleaf.

He wrote:

"Sandoval's book is a real gem! Reads like a diary. Such a book could have only been written by someone who has lived most of the journey himself and has reflected critically on the tears and laughter, the persistence and perseverance, the sacrifices and the fiestas of a people determined to remain faithful Catholics."



Sandoval

I quote this only to point out the juxtapositions: tears and laughter, persistence and perseverance, the sacrifices and fiestas. They were the blueprint of his life. Recognized as the leading Mexican-American theologian, he wrote that one of the gifts that his people bring to the church is the ability to celebrate life, no matter how bleak and discouraging the times may be.

Father Elizondo wrote that the totality of life is reflected in the fiesta. "It brings the whole day into the celebration of the fact that life is a gift. Life is to be lived, appreciated and celebrated." For him, our celebrations, large or small, were the precursors of the celebration that awaits us when we reach our eternal destiny.

This is why his recent death, of a self-inflicted gunshot, caused such profound sadness. It seemed that his vision failed him at the end. Those of us who knew him hope that a lavish fiesta nonetheless awaited him, for he was an inspiration to many of us: always cheerful, insightful, creative, helpful, hopeful, a joy to be with.

As I thought and prayed for Father Elizondo, a great friend of many years, I became aware of how our lives were linked. In 1981, when Celebration Books in Kansas City published a small volume titled *A Martyr's Message of Hope: Six Homilies by Archbishop Oscar Romero*, I was invited to do a note at the beginning of the book and Father Elizondo wrote the one at the end. In 1983, when the Mexican American Cultural Center published *Fronteras*:

(Please See **SANDOVAL/22**)

El viaje de un amigo a casa

By Moises Sandoval

En 2006, cuando se publicó mi libro "En movimiento: la historia de la Iglesia Hispana en Estados Unidos," una pequeña evaluación escrita por el Padre Virgilio Elizondo apareció en la hoja de guarda.

Escribió:

"El libro de Sandoval es una joya. Se lee como un diario. Tal tipo de libro sólo se puede escribir por alguien quien ha hecho la jornada y ha reflexionado críticamente sobre las lágrimas y la risa, la persistencia y la perseverancia, los sacrificios y las fiestas de un pueblo aferrado a permanecer fiel Católicos..."

Cito esto sólo para señalar las yuxtaposiciones: lágrimas y risa, persistencia y perseverancia, los sacrificios y las fiestas. Era el cianotipo de

su vida. Elogiado como el teólogo mexicanoamericano más eminentes, él escribió que uno de los dones que su pueblo presenta a la Iglesia es la capacidad de celebrar la vida, aún cuando es triste y desalentadora.

El padre Elizondo escribió que la totalidad de la vida se reflexiona en la fiesta. Incorpora el día entero en la celebración del hecho que la vida es un don. La vida es para vivirla, apreciarla y celebrarla. Para él, nuestras fiestas, grandes o pequeñas, son precursores de la celebración que anticipamos al llegar a la vida eterna.

Por eso es que su muerte de un disparo de arma contra sí mismo suscita tan profunda tristeza. Parece que su linda visión falló en su último momento. Todos nosotros quien lo

(Mira **MOISES/22**)

Catholic Voices

You shall have no other gods before me

By Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Among all the commandments, the first is the most difficult to keep. We are forever worshipping strange gods. Idolatry, more so even than atheism, is what is natural to us. But how do we, believers, Christians, sincere churchgoers – break the first commandment? How do we have strange gods before us?

The answer is not easy. The idolatry that afflicts us has little to do with worshipping icons, misguided devotions, and other such things. It is subtler. It has to do with the false images of God to which we give obeisance. Allow me to name 10 such false gods whom we habitually substitute for the real God, Yahweh, the Father of Jesus Christ.

- 1) The arbitrary god of fear.
- 2) The insecure, defensive, threatened god.
- 3) The dumb, non-understanding god.
- 4) The exotic god of special places.
- 5) The ascetic god whose Christ does not proclaim feast.
- 6) The emasculated god of unbalanced piety.



Fr. Rolheiser

7) The orthodox god of strict theological formulation.

8) The unholy god of our own image and likeness.

9) The overly intense, wired, god of our own neuroses.

10) The anti-erotic god, anti-enjoyment, god of our guilt.

Space does not allow for a commentary on each of these, but allow me a few, more general, reflections. I apologize as well about the directness of some of the comments. They are not meant to be irreverent, but ... iconoclasm, smashing false gods, is never a gentle business.

In the Greek myth of Prometheus, humanity is punished for stealing fire from the gods. In ancient mythology, the gods have life and want to keep it for themselves. We, humans, are an unwanted pregnancy, unwanted children. Hence everything we do, especially anything creative, is a threat to the divine realm.

We have never overcome this. By and large we still believe that God is petty, defensive, and threatened by us. We feel that God likes us better when we are uncreative and docile, when we don't steal his fire. It is no accident that many creative persons leave the church and that the church has so often been defensive about progress, evolution, and human creativity. The God we believe in is too threatened

and defensive.

We also, habitually, worship a god whom, unconsciously, we consider to be rather dumb and non-understanding of our human complexity. Just one typical example: I once officiated at a funeral for a young man from a very religious family who, while away from the church and living rather dissolutely, was killed accidentally while drunk. The people at his funeral, good churchgoers all of us, were not only grieving his loss, we were also fearing for his eternal salvation. One woman remarked to me: "He was a good soul, underneath it all. I knew him. If I were opening the gates of heaven, I would certainly let him in, despite his irresponsibility." She was an understanding woman, but she was not giving God credit for the same thing. All of us tend to mirror that attitude. We do not give God credit for being as bright as we are.

The god we worship is also, most often, an ascetic, an anti-erotic, celibate who does not want his children to enjoy sex and who is less happy when his children are smiling than when they are suffering. This god sends us, as messiah, not a Jesus who declares that the kingdom is a wedding feast, but an ascetic who never says: "Weddings must increase and I must decrease!" Rarely do we worship a smiling, relaxed God, who makes forgiveness

as easy to access as the nearest water tap.

We commit idolatry too when we make God more monastic than domestic, when we limit God's presence to churches and holy places and do not notice God in our kitchens. When I cannot see the wounds of Christ in the pained face of the person across the table from myself, then my crucifix is more gold calf than icon.

Finally, we break the first commandment when we make worship of God more a question of proper orthodoxy and correct doctrine than a question of letting the life of the Trinity, Love, flow through us. God, I suspect, prefers a loving, gracious heretic to person who is theologically correct, but bitter and unloving.

Whenever we conceive of God as somehow being defensive, exotic, anti-enjoyment, less compassionate and intelligent than ourselves, and preferring orthodoxy to compassion, we are breaking the first commandment. Such is idolatry.

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. He is a community-builder, lecturer and writer. His books are popular throughout the English-speaking world and his weekly column is carried by more than seventy newspapers worldwide.

www.ronrolheiser.com

First thoughts on 'Amoris Laetitia': a great service to suffering souls

By Bishop Robert Barron

On a spring day about five years ago, when I was rector of Mundelein Seminary, Francis Cardinal George spoke to the assembled student body. He congratulated those proudly orthodox seminarians for their devotion to the dogmatic and moral truths proposed by the Church, but he also offered some pointed pastoral advice. He said that it is insufficient simply to drop the truth on people and then smugly walk away. Rather, he insisted, you must accompany those you have instructed, committing yourself to helping them integrate the truth that you have shared. I thought of this intervention by the late Cardinal often



Bishop Barron

as I was reading Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. If I might make bold to summarize a complex 264-page document, I would say that Pope Francis wants the truths regarding marriage, sexuality, and family to be unambiguously declared, but that he also wants the Church's ministers to reach out in mercy and compassion to those who struggle to incarnate those truths in their lives.

In regard to the moral objectivities of marriage, the Pope is bracingly clear. He unhesitatingly puts forward the Church's understanding that authentic marriage is between a man and a woman, who have committed themselves to one another in permanent fidelity, expressing their mutual love and openness to children, and abiding as a sacrament of Christ's love for his Church (52, 71). He bemoans any number of threats to this ideal, including moral relativism, a pervasive cultural narcissism, the ideology of self-invention,

pornography, the "throwaway" society, etc. He explicitly calls to our attention the teaching of Pope Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae* regarding the essential connection between the unitive and the procreative dimensions of conjugal love (80).

Moreover, he approvingly cites the consensus of the recent Synod on the Family that homosexual relationships cannot be considered even vaguely analogous to what the Church means by marriage (251). He is especially strong in his condemnation of ideologies that dictate that gender is merely a social construct and can be changed or manipulated according to our choice (56). Such moves are tantamount, he argues, to forgetting the right relationship between creature and Creator. Finally, any doubt regarding the Pope's attitude toward the permanence of marriage is dispelled as clearly and directly as possible: "The indissolubility of marriage—'what God has joined together, let no man put asunder' (Mt 19:6)—should

not be viewed as a 'yoke' imposed on humanity, but as a 'gift' granted to those who are joined in marriage..." (62).

In a particularly affecting section of the exhortation, Pope Francis interprets the famous hymn to love in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (90-119). Following the great missionary Apostle, he argues that love is not primarily a feeling (94), but rather a commitment of the will to do some pretty definite and challenging things: to be patient, to bear with one another, to put away envy and rivalry, ceaselessly to hope. In the tones of grandfatherly pastor, Francis instructs couples entering into marriage that love, in this dense and demanding sense of the term, must be at the heart of their relationship. I frankly think that this portion of *Amoris Laetitia* should be required reading for those in pre-Cana other similar marriage preparation programs in the Catholic

(Please See BARRON/23)

Funeral Mass years after death; Mercy for priests

By Fr. Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Q. You noted in a recent column that the Mass is "the most powerful prayer that can be offered on a deceased person's behalf." That comment brought back a wave of sorrow for my wife and me. Ten years ago, her father died after a lengthy and progressive illness. Due to the fact that we were living out of state at the time, and worsened by some unresolved hard feelings toward their father by other surviving family members, Dad was shuttled into a grave at a veterans' cemetery before my wife and I could intervene.

Despite the fact that he was a lifelong practicing Catholic, he was buried without even a public wake, and worse still, without the Catholic funeral Mass he richly deserved. So my question is this: Can he still have a full funeral Mass, not just a memorial Mass, celebrated in his name even though he is already buried, even without the presence of his remains? (If so, I would contact our family's original pastor.)

It would be an opportunity for Dad's soul to enjoy a proper requiem, and it would also allow close family and longtime friends a chance to prayerfully ask God's graces on Dad's behalf, an opportunity they were deprived of (and shocked by) at the time of his passing. (City of origin withheld)

A. Yes, you could have a Mass celebrated for your



Doyle

father-in-law even now, 10 years after his death. Technically, I suppose, it would be called a memorial Mass, but in most respects it would be similar to a funeral Mass, except that the body would not be present. (And these days, with cremations becoming more frequent, that is already the case at many funeral Masses.)

I would suggest that you contact your family's pastor and see if he would be willing to celebrate a separate, special Mass for your father-in-law. (In other words, you would not simply add the deceased's name to the other intentions at one of the regularly scheduled parish Masses.)

You may want to announce the Mass in a newspaper notice or by contacting friends and family directly. Perhaps you would want to call it an anniversary memorial Mass for your loved one. At the Mass, you might consider having a small table with your father-in-law's picture and a bouquet of flowers. (That table could be placed either where people first enter the church or, if the priest is willing, in front near the altar where the casket would ordinarily go.)

Your question, and your sadness and lingering regret, remind me how important it is, at the time of a death, for a family to set aside differences and join in planning funeral rites that best honor the deceased and respect his wishes. Clearly, your father-in-law would have wanted a funeral Mass.

Q. On the third anniversary of his election to the papacy, Pope Francis once again stressed the critical importance for followers of Christ to show mercy. How would that attitude manifest itself toward those priests dismissed from their ministry because they were found guilty of some sexual crime? (These men

are well-known and often their names have been listed on diocesan websites.) (Wynantskill, New York)

A. In a 2002 meeting in Dallas, the U.S. Catholic bishops fashioned the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and adopted a policy of "zero tolerance." In other words, any cleric found to have sexually abused a minor could never again be allowed to function in public ministry.

Having been present at that meeting, I recall that there were a few bishops who spoke in favor of a more nuanced approach. There are varying levels of gravity, they argued, and each case should be weighed separately, especially when a single offense had occurred many years before, rehabilitative therapy had taken place and a man had functioned productively and flawlessly in ministry ever since.

Having been present at that meeting, I recall that there were a few bishops who spoke in favor of a more nuanced approach. There are varying levels of gravity, they argued, and each case should be weighed separately, especially when a single offense had occurred many years before, rehabilitative therapy had taken place and a man had functioned productively and flawlessly in ministry ever since.

But the will of the majority prevailed. Zero tolerance was set in place and that policy continues in the church today. If you are asking whether someone who has been credibly accused will ever be allowed back into ministry, I believe that to be unlikely.

The mercy to which we are called as Christians obliges us, however, to offer forgiveness to those men who have been removed, many of whom helped a fair number of people during their years in ministry and deeply regret the hurt and the harm they caused to individuals and to the church.

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

Always be firm in your convictions ... but always be nice about it

By Karen Osborne
Catholic News Service

Stand up for yourself. You're told it's important. You're told if you don't do it, you shouldn't expect anyone else to do it for you. You're told it's necessary so people don't walk all over you.

Everything you're told is correct. But there's more to consider.

Part of knowing when to stand up for yourself means knowing when you shouldn't have to defend yourself. There are some things in life that require no defense. You shouldn't defend yourself when those topics arise.

First and foremost, there is no need to defend your religious beliefs. Whether you're devout or more casual in your faith,



Osborne

your faith is exactly that: It's yours. It makes you who you are. Embrace it. Share it. Use the challenges you face to make it stronger. Don't let anyone take it away from you because their beliefs are different.

Never feel obligated to defend your friends or significant other. You pick the people closest to you because they have meaning to you. They make you complete in ways you never would be if you were entirely on your own. Others don't have to like those who surround you, but they do have to accept them. If they don't, they're saying they don't truly accept you.

Get an education that matches your passions. If you decide higher education isn't a good fit, don't let anyone convince you otherwise. I know many people who attended college out of obligation. Few stayed long enough to earn a degree. If you choose college, pick a school where you feel comfortable. The Ivy League isn't

for everyone; neither is a state school. Your place is in an environment where you're excited by the opportunities that surround you.

Be passionate in all your beliefs, especially your political ones. As much as some people believe there is one clear, correct path, chances are that they're wrong, no matter what that path may be. Very little in life is black and white.

Finally, never feel obligated to defend your personal needs. Sometimes we need companionship. Sometimes we want to be left alone. These needs should be respected, just as we respect others. If you need to get away, find a way to do it. Don't feel guilty. You'll feel better and be a better part of your community if you listen to yourself.

While these areas of life require no defense, that doesn't mean you shouldn't listen when people ask questions about the choices you make. Doing that would be

indefensible. You don't have to defend your choice in friends, but you should always be aware of what others see. They'll see flaws you miss. We all have them. Always embrace friendship, but be cautious before putting trust at risk.

If you choose to bypass higher education or choose an unexpected school, listen to what's said in response to your choice. Be true to yourself, but use the counsel of others to strengthen your confidence in the choice you made. Use their perspective as you continue to seek your truth.

Don't be so passionate in your beliefs that you're blind to those with different perspectives. Right is right, but dismissing the differing views of others who are equally as passionate is wrong.

Some things in life require no defense. Be true to your beliefs and considerate to others while doing so, and you'll be showing who you truly are, not through confrontation but by example.

OBISPO

(Para 3)

gracia de Dios para vivir su matrimonio. ¿Qué es lo que el documento no hace? No se rinde en el matrimonio. No expresa desesperanza o desamparo al enfrentarse a fallas morales. No está solo tratando de estar a la moda o “hip”. No está denunciando los males de la época actual o denunciando a un mundo decadente. No trata de imponer normas por pura autoridad. No es un tratado teológico abstracto sobre el ideal del matrimonio. No declara un cambio en nuestras doctrinas Católicas fundamentales.

Amoris Laetitia presenta los temas principales del matrimonio, la sexualidad y la vida familiar en una celebración inspiradora del camino del amor. Los siguientes son algunos puntos sobresalientes del documento.

Capítulo Uno ofrece la base bíblica para el matrimonio y la familia. Habla del “plan divino primordial” para el matrimonio. Abarca un claro entendimiento de que el matrimonio es entre un hombre y una mujer, abierto a los niños, fiel, basado en el amor, y un compromiso por toda la vida.

Capítulo Dos considera la situación actual de las familias. El Papa Francisco procura basarse en la realidad al hacer una lista de los muchos desafíos que enfrentan las familias, como la migración, la “cultura de lo provisional”, la mentalidad antinatalista, la falta de vivienda, la pornografía, la violencia contra las mujeres, el abuso de menores, la falta de respeto por los de edad avanzada, y el individualismo rampante.

También incluye una sección sobre la “ideología de género” (56), en la que se muestra en desacuerdo con una ideología que trata de la identidad personal totalmente independiente de la diferencia biológica entre hombre y mujer. Dice que somos criaturas, no el Creador: “Lo creado nos precede y debe ser recibido como don.” (56) Dice que tenemos que aceptar y respetar nuestra humanidad como ha sido creada.

Capítulo Tres ofrece los elementos centrales de la enseñanza Católica clásica sobre el matrimonio y la familia. El Papa Francisco hace hincapié en el matrimonio como un compromiso de por vida y fiel, la perspectiva Católica del matrimonio como un sacramento, el derecho a la vida, y la importancia de la educación de los niños. Él dice: “Tan grande el valor de una vida humana, y es tan inalienable el derecho a la vida del niño inocente que crece en el seno de su madre, que de ningún modo se

puede plantear como un derecho sobre el propio cuerpo la posibilidad de tomar decisiones con respecto a esa vida, que es un fin en sí misma y que nunca puede ser “un objeto de dominio” de otro ser humano.” (83)

Los tres capítulos que yo más recomiendo a las parejas casadas y para aquellos que se preparan para casarse son los Capítulos Cuatro, Cinco y Siete.

Capítulo Cuatro es sobre el amor en el matrimonio. Comienza con una larga explicación del pasaje de San Pablo en el amor en I Corintios 13:4-7. Este capítulo es como ninguna que he visto en ningún documento papal, entrando profundamente en el mundo emocional de los cónyuges. Presenta la dimensión erótica del amor humano como un regalo de Dios.

El Papa Francisco nos ayuda a comprender la naturaleza de la alegría en el matrimonio. Esta alegría abarca tanto las experiencias positivas y negativas: una “combinación de gozos y de esfuerzos, de tensiones y de descanso, de sufrimientos y de liberaciones, de satisfacciones y de búsquedas, de molestias y de placeres.” (126) El Santo Padre dice que el famoso pasaje en Efesios 15:6 (“esposas, estén sujetas a sus esposos”) es realmente acerca del don recíproco de sí mismo de marido y mujer. Él dice que la mujer nunca ha de ser considerada como una esclava o sirvienta del marido. (156)

Capítulo Cinco trata de la fecundidad del amor y de recibir la nueva vida. Aquí el Papa muestra que la familia incluye algo más que la familia tradicional “nuclear”; también incluye una red más amplia de muchas relaciones.

Capítulo Seis es especialmente útil para los ministros pastorales en las iglesias. Propone métodos mejorados para la formación de familias saludables, especialmente la preparación de las parejas comprometidas y el ministerio a las parejas en sus primeros años de matrimonio. El documento establece que la enseñanza de la Iglesia sigue siendo clara que el matrimonio es entre un hombre y una mujer, y las uniones homosexuales no se pueden colocar en el mismo nivel que el matrimonio Cristiano. Aun así, párrafo 250 dice, “Deseamos ante todo reiterar que toda persona, independientemente de su tendencia sexual, ha de ser respetada en su dignidad y acogida con respeto, procurando evitar ‘todo signo de discriminación injusta’ y particularmente cualquier forma de agresión y violencia.”

En este capítulo, el Papa Francisco también hace referencia a sus recientes reformas de los procedimientos de declaración

de nulidad de los matrimonios. Estas fueron promulgadas por todo el mundo el 8 de diciembre de 2015.

Capítulo Siete es acerca de la crianza de los niños, el cual incluye la formación ética, la disciplina adecuada, transmisión de la fe, y la educación sexual. En este capítulo, el Papa es a la vez práctico y lleno de esperanza. A medida que describe la vida de la familia, incluso menciona la frustración de la escena común de una familia estando juntos en la mesa de la cena, mientras que todo el mundo está en sus teléfonos celulares.

Algunos pueden recordar que gran parte de la controversia en los medios de comunicación seculares que rodea el Sínodo de los Obispos, sobre todo en octubre de 2014, era tocante a la recepción de la Santa Comunión por los Católicos divorciados que se han vuelto a casar civilmente. Capítulo Ocho de Amoris Laetitia trata sobre este tema a través de una extensa exposición de cómo las reglas generales no se pueden aplicar en absoluto a todas las situaciones particulares.

En este capítulo, el Papa Francisco dice que estas parejas son parte de la Iglesia. Ellos no están excomulgados. Él aplica las enseñanzas morales de Santo Tomás de Aquino, así como la “ley de gradualidad” que se encuentra en las enseñanzas del Papa Juan Pablo II. Los pastores tienen que hacer todo lo posible para ayudar a las personas en estas situaciones para encontrar una manera de ser incluidos activamente en la vida de la comunidad de fe. Tenemos que mostrar comprensión al encarnarnos a circunstancias excepcionales, al mismo tiempo, nunca ocultar la luz del ideal más pleno ni proponer menos que lo que Jesús ofrece al ser humano. (307)

Al presentar la “lógica de la misericordia pastoral,” el Papa Francisco también nos advierte que la excepción no hace la regla. Él dice: “Si alguien ostenta un pecado objetivo como si fuera parte del ideal Cristiano, o quiere imponer algo diferente a lo que enseña la Iglesia, no puede pretender dar catequesis o predicar a otros.” (297)

Capítulo Ocho se ha convertido en un tema de intensa discusión en los medios de comunicación social. Continuará siendo explorado por los teólogos y pastores durante muchos años. Con el tiempo, los obispos y los sacerdotes estarán en una mejor posición para ofrecer una orientación más concreta para el discernimiento personal madura, que se denomina en el presente capítulo.

Capítulo Nueve habla de la espiritualidad del matrimonio y de la familia. El

Papa Francisco dice que todas las familias necesitan crecer y madurar constantemente en su capacidad de amar. El documento concluye con esta hermosa oración a la Santa Familia:

“Jesús, María y José, en ustedes contemplamos el esplendor del amor verdadero; a ustedes nos dirigimos con confianza. Santa Familia de Nazaret, hagan que nuestras familias, también, puedan ser lugares de comunión y oración, escuelas auténticas del Evangelio y las pequeñas iglesias domésticas. Santa Familia de Nazaret, que nunca más haya en las familias episodios de violencia, de cerrazón y división; que quien haya sido herido o escandalizado sea pronto consolado y curado. Santa Familia de Nazaret, hagan tomar conciencia a todos del carácter sagrado e inviolable de la familia, y de su belleza en el proyecto de Dios. Jesús, María y José, amablemente escuchen nuestra oración

EDICTAL SUMMONS

April 26, 2016

CASE: BROWDER -- BROWN
NO.: SO/16/17

The Tribunal Office of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo is seeking Lauren Elizabeth Brown.

You are hereby summoned to appear before the Tribunal of the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo, at 804 Ford Street, San Angelo, Texas 76905, on or before the 26th day of April 2016, to answer to the Petition of Chase Carroll Browder, now introduced before the Diocesan Tribunal in an action styled, “Chase Browder and Lauren Brown, Petition for Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage.” Said Petition is identified as Case: BROWDER -- BROWN; Protocol No.: SO/16/17, on the Tribunal Docket of the Diocese of San Angelo.

You may communicate with the Tribunal in person or in writing. Failure to communicate within the prescribed period of time will be considered your consent for the Tribunal to continue its proceedings in the above-named case.

Given at the Tribunal of the Diocese of San Angelo on the 26th day of April 2016.

Rev. Tom Barley, MSW, MBA, M. Div.,
JCL
Judicial Vicar

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name, address and phone number
when submitting letters.

BISHOP

(From 3)

fashionable or "hip." It is not decrying the evils of the present age or denouncing a decadent world. It is not trying to impose rules by sheer authority. It is not an abstract theological treatise on the ideal of marriage. It does not declare a change in our fundamental Catholic doctrines.

Amoris Laetitia presents the major themes of marriage, sexuality, and family life in an inspirational celebration of the way of love. The following are some highlights from the document.

Chapter One offers the biblical basis for marriage and family. It speaks of the "primordial divine plan" for marriage. It clearly embraces an understanding of marriage that is between a man and a woman, open to children, faithful, loving, and a lifelong commitment.

Chapter Two considers the current situation of families. Pope Francis seeks to be grounded in reality as he lists the many challenges faced by families, including migration, the "culture of the provisional," the anti-birth mentality, lack of housing, pornography, violence against women, abuse of minors, lack of respect for the elderly, and rampant individualism.

He also includes a section on "gender ideology" (paragraph 56), where he expresses disagreement with an ideology that tries to separate completely personal identity from the biological difference between male and female. He says that we are creatures, not the Creator: "Creation is prior to us and must be received as a gift." (56) He says we need to accept and respect our humanity as it was created.

Chapter Three offers the central elements of classic Catholic teaching on marriage and the family. Pope Francis emphasizes marriage as a lifelong and faithful commitment, the Catholic view of marriage as a sacrament, the right to life, and the importance of the upbringing of children.

He says, "So great is the value of a human life, and so inalienable the right to life of an innocent child growing in the mother's womb, that no alleged right to one's own body can justify a decision to terminate that life, which is an end in itself and which can never be considered the 'property' of another human being." (83)

The three chapters that I would most recommend to married couples and to those who are preparing to marry are Chapters Four, Five, and Seven.

Chapter Four is about love in marriage.

It begins with a long explanation of St. Paul's passage on love in I Corinthians 13:4-7. This chapter is like none I have ever seen in any papal document, entering deeply into the emotional world of the spouses. It presents the erotic dimension of human love as a gift from God.

Pope Francis helps us to understand the nature of joy in marriage. This joy embraces both positive and negative experiences: a "mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfactions and longings, annoyances and pleasures." (126) The Holy Father says that the famous passage in Ephesians 15:6 ("wives, be submissive to your husbands") is really about the reciprocal self-gift of husband and wife. He says that the wife should never be regarded as a slave or servant of the husband. (156)

Chapter Five is about the fruitfulness of love and welcoming new life. Here, the pope shows that family includes more than just the traditional "nuclear" family; it also includes a wider network of many relationships.

Chapter Six is especially useful for pastoral ministers in churches. It proposes improved methods for the formation of healthy families, especially the preparation of engaged couples and ministry to couples in their early years of marriage. The document states that Church teaching remains clear that marriage is between a man and a woman, and homosexual unions cannot be placed on the same level as Christian marriage. Even so, paragraph 250 states, "We would like before all else to reaffirm that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration, while 'every sign of unjust discrimination' is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression and violence."

In this chapter, Pope Francis also makes reference to his recent reforms of the procedures for the declaration of nullity of marriages. These were enacted around the world on December 8, 2015.

Chapter Seven is about the raising of children, which includes ethical formation, proper discipline, passing on the faith, and sex education. In this chapter, the pope is both practical and hopeful. As he describes family life, he even mentions the frustration of the common scene of a family being together at the dinner table while everyone is on their cell phones.

Some may recall that much of the controversy in the secular media surrounding the

Synod of Bishops, particularly in October 2014, was about the reception of Holy Communion by Catholics who are divorced and civilly remarried. Chapter Eight of *Amoris Laetitia* takes on this issue through a lengthy exposition of how general rules cannot apply absolutely to all particular situations.

In this chapter, Pope Francis says that these couples are part of the Church. They are not excommunicated. He applies the moral teachings of Thomas Aquinas as well as the "law of gradualness" found in the teachings of Pope John Paul II. Pastors need to do everything possible to help people in these situations to find a way to be included actively in the life of the faith community. We need to show understanding in the face of exceptional circumstances, while never dimming the light of the higher ideal, and never proposing less of what Jesus offers to the human being. (307)

As he presents the "logic of pastoral mercy," Pope Francis also cautions us that the exception does not make the rule. He says, "If someone flaunts an objective sin as if it were part of the Christian ideal, or wants to impose something other than what the Church teaches, he or she can in no way presume to teach or preach to others." (297)

Chapter Eight has become the topic of much heated discussion in the social media. It will continue to be explored by theologians and pastors for many years. With time, bishops and priests will be in a better position to offer more concrete guidance for the mature personal discernment that is called for in this chapter.

Chapter Nine speaks of the spirituality of marriage and the family. Pope Francis says that all families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love. The document concludes with this beautiful prayer to the Holy Family:

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love; to you we turn with trust. Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families, too, may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches. Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing. Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer. Amen."



BURKE

(From 6)

about much more swiftly. So, the ordinary process has been the most practiced process since December 8, 2015.

In Pope Francis' release today of *Amoris Laetitia*, we see a consistent movement in the same direction of *Mitis Iudex*. Pope Francis is exhorting his bishops, priests and laity to help reintegrate swiftly displaced members of the Church. With this new apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis recognizes God's divine plan that men and women enter marriage for the whole of their lives. If this couple suffers a divorce, they need to be accompanied back into the fold of our Church sooner rather than later. By means of simplifying tribunal processes, Pope Francis gave to bishops throughout the world much more tangible means to reach out to God's people and welcome them home.

Overall, nothing has changed in the process of annulments. The principles have remained the same and the Catholic canonical requirements for divorced men and women who have remarried are the same. What has changed is that justice is upheld because it is meted out more swiftly since December 8. What *Mitis Iudex* and *Amoris Laetitia* trumpet is that displaced men and women can and should participate actively in our Church because they belong with us.

EE

(From 6)

from Friday night when the retreat starts to Sunday Mass, which concludes the retreat.

The team shares several talks throughout the weekend. Topics include "Becoming a Family," "Managing Conflict," "Stewardship," "Forgiveness," "Communication," "Decisions in Marriage," "Unity" and "The Sacrament of Marriage." In the talks we share our story on how we have dealt with many issues in our married life. We are present for the engaged couples as role models and tell them we are not experts in marriage but have experiences to share. We talk with the couples about the importance of praying together as a couple and a family.

Getting married in the Church requires engaged couples to prepare by taking an approved marriage prep program. After various meetings with a priest, the engaged couple will sign up for the Sponsored Couple Program, a Pre-Cana Program, or the Engaged Encounter Retreat weekend.

Several couples have admitted that when they first arrived on Friday, they were not excited about spending the weekend preparing for marriage, but as the weekend began to unfold, they were thrilled to have the time together and found they needed this time with each

other and learned several new things about their fiancé.

On virtually every Engaged Encounter weekend, we have couples who are civilly married. They may even have children from that marriage. But we often hear these same couples say they have a longing to have their marriage blessed in the Church. So like other engaged couples, they go to a marriage prep program. It is beautiful to hear how important it is to them to have their marriage blessed. By having their union convalidated by the Church, they are an inspiration to us and to all the couples on the retreat.

How we view marriage as a Sacrament

The differences between a contract and a marriage covenant are clear:

With a marriage contract, either party can cancel, the couple sets the conditions for their marriage and they create a sort of "I will love you if you love me," 50/50 contract.

A marriage covenant is binding, irrevocable and permanent. It is a commitment to love as God loves – freely, totally, faithfully, and open to life.

We need covenant love to sustain us.

Some brief characteristics of the Sacrament of Matrimony:

- Our couple love is an outward sign of matrimony.
- We are a visible sign of God's presence and His love for us.

► We administer the sacrament to each other by daily acts of loving, serving and forgiving.

► By being life-giving to each other we find unity.

As a married couple, it is our responsibility to help each other get to Heaven and his responsibility to help me get to Heaven.

Finally, always remember: The wedding is for a day, but the marriage is for a lifetime.

Annual collection for Honduran dioceses

The "Hermanamiento" (partnership) among the Dioceses of San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba, Tyler, and San Angelo is in its 15th year! The special collection taken up in the Diocese of San Angelo for our Honduran partners is a couple of years older than that; it began in 1999 as a response to Hurricane Mitch. The hurricane is a distant memory now; but the relationship among the dioceses is alive and well.

Our annual special collection will take place on the weekend of July 17, 2016. The collection was formerly held in November, but the schedule has been changed.

The collection is divided between the Diocese of San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba. Parishes in partnership share their collection directly with their partner parish. The diocese and parishes use the income for various religious and social service needs. They express their gratitude for the generosity of the people of the Diocese of San Angelo.

AWARDS

(From 2)

because this is a diocesan endeavor."

Twenty-two adults from Andrews, Big Lake, Big Spring, Brownwood, Coleman, Mertzon, Midland, Miles, Odessa, San Angelo, Stanton, Sweetwater and Wall were recognized. Sixteen youth also were honored; those students came from Andrews, Big Lake, Big Spring, Brownwood, Coleman, Garden City, Mertzon, Midland, Miles, Odessa, San Angelo, Stanton, Sweetwater and Wall.

At just 13, Matthew Purtell of San Angelo was one of the youngest youth recognized. The Glenn Middle School student attends Our Lady of Peace Catholic Community at Goodfellow Air Force Base.

Matthew said he was surprised to receive an award at the reception.

"I thought I was going to go up against everybody else for an award," he said, adding that the recognition "feels very good. It makes me think I'm going to be

a leader. It's something (good) to wake up to."

Matthew's church involvement includes being an altar server and attending church PIM each Sunday, as well as CDC every weekend, except when he has Boy Scout campsouts.

"I'm in all pre-AP classes" at school, Matthew said. "I'm in band. I'm in a lot of athletic activities. In Boy Scouts I usually do (volunteer) cleanups and volunteer work."

Matthew takes seriously the Boy Scout oath, which instructs, in part, to always do one's best.

"You've always gotta try to do the best you can do, go above and beyond," he said.

Asked if they tried to instill community involvement in Matthew, his parents Jeff and Theresa Purtell said he comes by it naturally. "He's done a lot on his own," Theresa Purtell said. "He wants to be (involved) in everything."

"We feel like we're taxis," joked Jeff

Purtell, adding, "It's an honor. We're pretty proud of him."

Diocesan Awards Banquet Youth Recipients

Larissa Cabrera, Our Lady of Lourdes, Andrews

Samantha Sosa, St. Margaret, Big Lake
Kappi Villarreal, Holy Trinity, Big Spring
John Christian Allen, St. Mary, Brownwood
Tyler Ransberger, Sacred Heart, Coleman
Seth Miller, St. Lawrence, Garden City
Oscar Narvaez, St. Peter, Mertzon
Adrian Jimenez, San Miguel Arcangel, Midland

Daniel Lander, St. Ann, Midland
Villaruel Anahi, St. Thomas, Miles
Guerrero, Priscilla, St. Joseph, Odessa
Matthew Purtell, Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo

Robert Garcia, St. Joseph, San Angelo
Adriana Isabel Muniz, St. Joseph, Stanton
Daniel Avila, Holy Spirit, Sweetwater
Paige Kubena, St. Ambrose, Wall

Adult Recipients

Pat Alaniz, Our Lady of Lourdes, Andrews
Sarah Rodriguez, St. Margaret, Big Lake
Trish Soto, St. Margaret, Big Lake
Merlinda Moron, Holy Trinity, Big Spring

Sady Cady, St. Mary, Brownwood
Juana Gonzalez, St. Mary, Brownwood
Terry Dulin, Sacred Heart, Coleman

Liz Jefferson, Sacred Heart, Coleman
Sylvia Carrillo, St. Peter, Mertzon
Mari Maldonado, San Miguel Arcangel, Midland

Michele Halfmann, St. Thomas, Miles
Larry Cortez, St. Joseph, Odessa
Gloria Medina, St. Joseph, Odessa
Mary Rivas, St. Joseph, Odessa
S. Elizabeth Villegas OND, St. Joseph, Odessa

Sally Hagen, Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo
Angela Lopez, St. Joseph, San Angelo
Elizabeth Martinez, St. Joseph, San Angelo
Amparo Pena, St. Joseph, San Angelo
Senaida Garza, St. Joseph, Stanton
Ray Longoria, Holy Spirit, Sweetwater
Dcn. Dan Shannahan, St. Ambrose, Wall

Companion on the Journey Award (adults)

Sr. Elizabeth Villegas, OND
Larry Cortez from St. Joseph/St. Anthony, Odessa.

Timothy Award (youth)

Tyler Ransberger from Sacred Heart, Coleman.

POPE

(From 6)

stance and discuss with people how they can discern God's teaching for their lives.

The pope points to "dialogue, which requires both speaking and listening, and discerning to help people see what their next step is" as key to his call for mercy, Archbishop Kurtz, a member of both synods, said in an interview after participating in an online news conference at USCCB headquarters.

The archbishop said the pope is attempting to help people encounter Jesus and through that encounter feel the love of God. "There is that sense of being very intentional because we carry with us the capacity to walk with people to Christ. And he's saying husbands and wives, you also have that potential," Archbishop Kurtz said.

"We all share that responsibility to conversion about what does it mean to deepen our sense and let Christ shine more clearly through so people don't see the rule (of the church), they see the person of Jesus coming through," he explained.

During the news conference, Archbishop Kurtz described the exhortation as a "love letter to families" that invites all people to "never stop growing in love."

"It is also a love letter calling the church, the family of God, to realize more and more her mission to live and love as a family," he said.

MOISES

(Para 16)

conocíamos y valorábamos su persona y éxitos oramos que Dios en su misericordia lo esperará con una linda fiesta, porque el padre Elizondo fue una inspiración -- siempre entusiasta, perspicaz, creativo, servicial y alegre. Era un deleite compartir con él.

Mientras pensaba y oraba por el padre Elizondo, amigo de muchos años, me di cuenta de lo mucho que nuestras vidas habían compartido. En 1981, cuando Celebration Books en Kansas City publicó un pequeño libro titulado "A Martyr's Message of Hope: Six Homilies by Archbishop Oscar Romero", yo escribí el prefacio y él contribuyó el epílogo. En 1983 cuando el Centro Cultural Mexicoamericano publicó

Bishop Richard J. Malone of Buffalo, New York, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family, Life and Youth, said the exhortation invites the church to heal wounds that families experience because of poverty, human trafficking, immigration, domestic violence and pornography.

"We also have room to grow and improve and we welcome the pope's encouragement for the renewed witness to the truth and beauty of marriage of a more tender closeness and families who are experiencing real difficulties," Bishop Malone said.

Both prelates said the exhortation builds on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council as well as Pope Francis' post-conciliar successors, Blessed Paul VI, St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI and invites ministers to welcome people who may have turned away from the church because they feared their status -- as single parents or being in same-sex relationships, or being divorced and civilly remarried -- would mean they are unwelcome in the church.

"I think the call is for the whole church, the bishops, the priests, the lay leadership, but also each family to be able to say 'God has given me such beauty in my family and things with his help can be much more. I think that's what he is talking about the grace that is at work in each one of our lives,'" Archbishop Kurtz said in response to a question.

Helen Alvare, professor of law at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University, who was the third news conference participant, described the document as balancing the natural longing for marriage in society with a "raw appreciation for how bad the situation can be on the ground."

The pope acknowledges misperceptions about church teaching on sex, that some perceive marriage as evil so avoid it, the fear of raising children, and ideas that marriage has become an "empty ritual," Alvare said.

She also identified the pope's deep concerns for children, whose rights are often overlooked because of the challenges facing many families.

While the exhortation upholds church teaching on the sanctity of marriage and cites the importance of family life to the church, it calls people to do more than simply reiterate that teaching, but to put it into "pastoral motion," Catholic leaders told Catholic News Service.

John Grabowski, associate professor of moral theology and ethics at The Catholic University of America and an expert tapped to attend last fall's Synod of Bishops on the family, said the document serves to help church leaders "form and equip families to that families can become the pastoral instruments of ministry and evangelization to families."

"He's not diverging from the teaching of his predecessors. He's saying 'Let's put

this into pastoral application now,'" he said.

Grabowski, who with his wife, Claire, lead a marriage ministry for couples in their parish, St. Ignatius in Ijamsville, Maryland, sees the need for such programs emerging from the exhortation. "We need to stop seeing marriage formation as ending at the wedding," he said.

The pope's exhortation discusses how the church can be "honest, realistic and creative" in response to the needs of families, explained Jesuit Father Allan Deck, distinguished scholar in pastoral theology and Latino Studies at Loyola Marymount University.

He said the pope's emphasis on the need to be open to ongoing discussion within the church and its response to "real families" would serve all families.

"He shows great sensitivity on the various positions people have in the church," Father Deck told CNS. "He's not moving back from his conviction that mercy and the attitudes that flow from mercy are at the foundation of the way the church needs to proceed because those are the qualities that we see in God."

Father Deck added that he sees the influence of the pope's Latin American roots in the document. "That means in our dealing with people, the church needs to show an ability to step into other people's shoes, to go where they are instead of immediately requiring them to come where we are," he said.

SANDOVAL

(From 16)

A History of the Latin American Church in The USA Since 1513, I was the editor and he wrote the introduction. That was the pattern.

If I was invited to speak at a conference, he was likely to be a speaker as well, giving the keynote while I likely had a workshop; he was better at that game than I was.

I do not recall the first time I met Father Elizondo, but when I started traveling regularly to the Mexican American Cultural Center, which he founded with Archbishop Patrick Flores in 1972, he welcomed me with the traditional: "Mi casa es tu casa." And when he saw I did not take him seriously, he said: "No, I mean it. When you come to San Antonio, you stay with us. No

reservation needed. We will find you a room."

The center was then in an old building, formerly the seminary, and without air conditioning. It was so hot at night in the summer that one could not sleep. But the hospitality and the people one met there made up for it. "When we are together, we have no doubt that we are a family," Father Elizondo wrote in the introduction to "Fronteras. Pues somos en todo sentido una familia," which means "Well, we are a family in a total sense." And that is how it felt to be there.

Because I believe that an entire life cannot be nullified by a crushing moment of despair, I am confident that when Father Elizondo arrived at his eternal home, he heard the welcoming words: "estás en tu casa," or "You are home."

CONFERENCE

(From 6)

exhortation to the people of the Diocese of San Angelo, the bishop was joined by Tom Burke, a canon lawyer who serves on the diocese's marriage tribunal, and Dave and Linda Erickson, leaders with the diocese's Engaged Encounter married preparation program (see related stories).

Bishop Sis said both personal economics and culture play a role in what he called a reduced number of couples marrying in the Church today.

"I ask people to consider marrying in the Church today," he said. "You don't have to spend a lot of money. It can be a very simple ceremony. The key is preparing well, getting to know your partner

well and inviting God in from the very beginning."

Pope Francis used part of his exhortation to write about how technology and social media can and often does serve as an impediment to family relations. Bishop Sis said that while cell phones and other forms of new technology can connect us all more easily, they can also serve as a method of disconnecting from others right next to us.

"My recommendation is, with a tool like a computer or a cell phone, use it to connect rather than to disconnect," Bishop Sis said. "When I was in college, I hardly ever talked to my parents because I was a thousand miles away and long distance phone calls were

expensive. Today's college students talk to their parents all the time through text messages, Snap Chat and email. The electronic media can become a means of communicating and networking even better rather than being an obstacle. We just have to use the tool in the proper way. The pope discusses this when he writes of people sitting at a dinner table all talking on their cell phones and not to one another. He also talks about a couple where one of the spouses late at night is engaged in video games or on their computer as the other one falls asleep alone and the painfulness of that. We know that gadgets can get in the way of relationships. We also know a lot of beautiful ways they can build relationships."

CALDAROLA

(From 15)

now available to nearly everybody. What kind of message is that sending young men about respect for our daughters?

The "hook-up" mentality in colleges naturally springs from this sexualization. Sex is casual and uncommitted, often fueled by wild binges of alcohol and drugs.

But Sales' book isn't talking about col-

lege girls. She's talking about teens and tweens, whoever has access to a smartphone and social media. She's talking about the depersonalization of relationships and a dearth of true friendship and respect.

It's enough to make a grandma worry, but as I said, I think every generation faces challenges. Women today -- including young women -- should be raised to know they are tough and can stand up and resist

this pressure.

That's where good parents come in, parents with strong values who can raise strong women, parents who show more than a little interest in what's happening on their children's screens, parents who promote and give examples of true friendships. Parents must be the lifeboat in this particular swamp.

BARRON

(From 17)

Church. Now Francis says much more regarding the beauty and integrity of marriage, but you get my point: there is no watering down or compromising of the ideal in this text.

However, the Pope also honestly admits that many, many people fall short of the ideal, failing fully to integrate all of the dimensions of what the Church means by matrimony. What is the proper attitude to them? Like Cardinal George, the Pope has a visceral reaction against a strategy of simple condemnation, for the Church, he says, is a field hospital, designed to care precisely for the wounded (292). Accordingly, he recommends two fundamental moves. First, we can recognize, even in irregular or objectively imperfect unions, certain positive elements that participate, as it were, in the fullness of married love. Thus for example, a couple living together without benefit of marriage might be marked by mutual fidelity, deep love, the presence of children, etc.

Appealing to these positive marks, the Church might, according to a "law of gradualness," move that couple toward authentic and fully-integrated matrimony (295). This is not to say that living together is permitted or in accord with the will of God; it is to say that the Church can perhaps find a more winsome way to move people in such a situation to conversion.

The second move—and here we come to what will undoubtedly be the most controversial part of the exhortation—is to employ the Church's classical distinction between the objective quality of a moral act and the subjective responsibility that the moral agent bears for committing that act (302). The Pope observes that many people in civil marriages following upon a divorce find themselves in a nearly impossible bind. If their second marriage has proven faithful, life-giving, and fruitful, how can they simply walk out on it without in fact incurring more sin and producing more sadness? This is, of course, not to insinuate that their second

marriage is not objectively disordered, but it is to say that the pressures, difficulties, and dilemmas might mitigate their culpability. Here is how Pope Francis applies the distinction: "Hence it is can no longer simply be said that all those in any 'irregular' situation are living in a state of mortal sin and are deprived of sanctifying grace" (301). Could the Church's minister, therefore, not help such people, in the privacy of the rectory parlor or the confessional, to discern their degree of moral responsibility? Once again, this is not to embrace a breezy "anything-goes" mentality, nor to deny that a civil marriage after a divorce is objectively irregular; it is to find, perhaps, for someone in great pain, a way forward.

Will *Amoris Laetitia* end all debate on these matters? Hardly. But it does indeed represent a deft and impressive balancing of the many and often contradictory interventions at the two Synods on the Family. As such, it will be of great service to many suffering souls who come to the Field Hospital.

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* (Mon./Tues./Wed. /Thurs.)
- 9 AM - *Fathers Know Best*
- 10 AM - *Women of Grace* with Johnnette Benkovic
- 11 AM - *More to Life*
- 12 PM - *The Doctor Is In* (Except Mon.)
- 1 PM - *Called to Communion* (Mon./Tues./Thurs./Fri.)
- 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., 12 PM - *We Sing Our Faith*
- Wed., 1 PM - *A Good Habit*
- Fri., 8 AM - *GRN Alive*

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



Confirmations**St. Thomas-Miles Confirmation**

In top photo, back row, left to right, Deacon Charlie Evans, Nathan Schraer, Andres Gomez, Nicholas Perez, Bishop Michael J. Sis, Alex Gutierrez, and Jared Flores. Front Row, Dayton Halfmann, Mirella Ornelas, Joseph Meza, Edgar Carbalal, Omar Tirado, Christopher Llanas, and Father Ariel Lagunilla. Confirmation was April 17, 2016. (Courtesy photo)

St. Margaret of Cortona-Big Lake Confirmation

At right, top row, left to right, Bishop Michael J. Sis, Abel Rodriguez, Tony Zapata, Fr. Prem Thumma. Middle row, Angel Gallegos, Elijah Martinez, David Carrasco, JR Esquivel, Mariana Rodriguez. Bottom row, Marissa Ybarra, Isabel Holland, Maggie Ortiz, Alexis Garcia, Alex Garcia Confirmation was April 6, 2016. (Courtesy photo)



The St. Stephen's-Midland RCIA group was baptized and/or confirmed at the Easter Vigil Mass, March 26, 2016. (Courtesy photo)